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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 28, 1996

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 28, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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 14 petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the committee, I have the honour of tabling the first report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

This report deals with Chapter 12 of the auditor general's report of October 1995, entitled "Systems under Development: Managing the Risks". This report contains three key recommendations.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee is asking the government to table a comprehensive response to this report.

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table in this House a petition signed by a number of my constituents, who are asking the government to protect their right to self-determination as a people; they want to live together in Canada and not in a sovereign Quebec.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. On March 11, I placed on the Notice Paper four questions addressed to the Minister of Human Resources Development, which dealt with the advisability of relocating the regional Canada Human Resources Centre in Shawinigan rather than Trois-Rivières.

This is the second time I raise this point. According to the Standing Orders, these questions should be answered within 45 days. The 45 day period ended April 27; we are now at the end of May and I still have not received answers to my four questions, answers that would shed some light on this very nebulous matter.

I am counting on the Chair to make the necessary representations. It is a simple matter of respect for elected members, who have a right to question the executive.

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader could answer his colleague from Trois-Rivières.

[English]

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 47 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 47—**Mr. Easter:**

What agreements, operating or otherwise, exist between the federal government, Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific (CP) with respect to the railways' right of first refusal in terms of any sale of the government's grain hopper car fleet, including but not limited to the agreement signed between the federal government and the railways in 1993?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Transport Canada advises as follows: The only agreement that exists is the operating agreement between the federal government, Canadian National, CN, and Canadian Pacific, CP, dated April 1, 1993. As the railways have indicated, they share our interest in moving to a more efficient grain transportation and handling system. The government does not expect that the existing operating agreement will be an obstacle to an open bidding process for the sale of the cars. Officials are beginning discussions with the railways on possible changes to the operating agreement. Based on these

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discussions, the government will determine the appropriate way of modifying or terminating the current agreement.

[English]

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

I have heard my hon. colleague. I thank him for his patience with regard to the particular questions he has raised. The expectation is that very soon the questions concerning the issues he has raised will be addressed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—MAIN ESTIMATES AND THE SENATE

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.) moved:

That, given that the Senate has failed to respond to a message from this House requesting that a representative of the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration appear before the Standing Committee of Government Operations to account for \$40,000,000 of taxpayers' money, this House express its dissatisfaction with the Senate for disregarding modern democratic principles of accountability and, as a consequence, notice is hereby given of opposition to Vote 1 under Parliament in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Reform supply day motion for debate today. I will repeat the motion.

Given that the Senate has failed to respond to a message from this House requesting that a representative of the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration appear before the Standing Committee of Government Operations to account for \$40,000,000 of taxpayers' money, this House express its dissatisfaction with the Senate for disregarding modern democratic principles of accountability and, as a consequence, notice is hereby given of opposition to Vote 1 under Parliament in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997.

• (1010)

One of the functions of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations is to examine the main estimates of the Senate. As a member of this committee I moved a motion to send a message to the other place requesting that the chair of the Senate's board of internal economy appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations to account for Senate expenses. My motion was approved by a majority of the committee and following unanimous consent in this House a

message was delivered to the other place on May 9. However, to this date members of the House have heard nothing from the other place.

Main estimates can only be examined in committee until June 21 and the committee agenda is quickly filling up. I subsequently sent a follow-up letter on May 21, again requesting a commitment from the upper House by Monday, May 27, but I have not received a response. We must have a firm commitment immediately, yet the other House refuses to respond to this request.

Accountability in public institutions is the most basic and fundamental requirement which Canadians demand from their representatives. No body, particularly an unelected body, should be exempt from this basic requirement. Canadians are demanding greater accountability to determine how their hard earned dollars are spent and during these times of extreme fiscal restraint when Canadians are forced to make difficult financial decisions, they expect the same from their institutions.

Canadian taxpayers pay out over \$40 million a year to fund the Senate. This is public money and the expenditures of these funds must be accounted for to the Canadian public. Many Canadians are concerned about how their tax dollars are spent in the upper House. According to the auditor general's report of the Senate written in 1991, it appears many of their concerns are completely justified.

The Senate proposes to spend over \$28 million on personnel, \$4.5 million on transportation and communication, over \$5 million on professional and special services and another \$3 million on miscellaneous expenses. This is an enormous sum of money and it is little wonder that Canadians are concerned. It is time for the upper House to come clean and justify these expenses.

Although the total budget for the other place is listed as \$40 million in the main estimates, in fact it will be spending more. The auditor general estimated that on top of the \$40 million in the main estimates another \$11.5 million will be spent on government entities to supply services for the Senate. These additional funds are not separately identified in the estimates or in the public accounts.

This public institution spends over \$51 million a year and no accountability is attached to these funds. The Senate makes and enforces its own rules and is not subject to the same laws as government. The Financial Administration Act and the usual accountability mechanisms simply do not apply to the Senate. Perhaps this made sense in the 1890s, but it sure does not make any sense in the 1990s.

The auditor general reported that Senate accountability is inadequate. He stated the upper House does not adequately report on its administrative, financial or human resource management perfor-

mance and does not possess sufficient information to enable it to do so systematically.

How can Canadians be satisfied that Senate expenses are managed with sufficient concern for economics and efficiency when none of the usual accountability mechanisms apply? When it comes to accountability I wholeheartedly agree with the auditor general that there is nothing to hold that place accountable to the public as it presently stands.

In the event we find something terribly wrong or something is way out of whack, the members do not face re-election. They are not subject even to minimal reporting requirements and this is completely wrong. Accountability in public institutions is not only vital, it is clearly essential. It assures those who provide the institution with authority and funds either directly or through their representatives in Parliament that the goals required are achieved and that funds are well spent with due regard to economy and efficiency.

• (1015)

There are many reasons Canadians are concerned about accountability in the upper House and concerns of the auditor general make it absolutely necessary that the other place hold itself accountable. The fact that members in the other place are taking liberties with tax dollars should be of great concern to Canadians, in particular when the auditor general has brought into question the use of the non-taxable allowance by members of the Senate.

According to the auditor general, Senate administrators cannot distinguish operating expenses from personal expenses and there is no way to determine that amounts received for such expenses are expended in the manner they were expected to be.

Fiscal accountability is clearly a problem when according to the auditor general there seems to be no limit on personal non-Senate expenses particularly for travel and telecommunications incurred either by senators or by members of their families.

In addition the auditor general also noted that there is no assurance that travel expenses are incurred for the service of the Senate. To make matters worse, restrictions on Canadian destinations or origins of trips either for senators or their families were eliminated and researchers were added to the list of permitted travellers. Rather than tightening up on restrictions, the other House is relaxing restrictions and allowing more junkets.

For example, last year the upper House spent almost \$3 million in travel expenses and the year before that, it spent a similar amount. What is absolutely astounding is that there are some outlandish travel bills from members of the other place who represent and reside in Ontario. For example, one member from the

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other place who represents Markham, Ontario spent over \$74,000 in the past two years on travel. A senator from Toronto Centre, a one hour plane ride from Ottawa, spent over \$71,000. Another senator who represents Rideau here in Ottawa spent over \$64,000 over the past two years.

There is simply no excuse that members in the other House whose ridings are right here in Ontario should have travel bills over \$70,000. Furthermore, travel points given to members in the other place do not include travel on behalf of committees, parliamentary associations or parliamentary exchanges. The utter waste of taxpayers' money in this area is unbelievable and unforgivable.

The auditor general found many discrepancies within the system and noted that one senator travelled three times to the third world, twice to Europe, once to the U.S. and three times to various locations within Canada for a total of 55 days. Clearly, more accountability is required on travel expenditures in the other place. I agree with the auditor general's recommendation that the upper House periodically publish information on all Senate funded travel for each senator.

The auditor general also noted that members in the other place have insufficient incentives to manage their office expenses with due regard for economy and efficiency particularly with respect to secretarial services and telecommunications. He recommended that details of senators' office expenses be publicly reported.

Office expenses in the other place have jumped from over \$2.5 million to \$3 million in the past two years. The member for Terrebonne here in this House referred to one senator who had his office remodelled for \$100,000.

The upper House must follow the auditor general's advice and publish at least annually details of senators' research and discretionary office expenditures including names of suppliers and purchases in excess of amounts determined by the committee on internal economy.

Also the auditor general noted that one of the problems with the gross overspending in the upper House lies in the fact that staff generally accept a senator's signature as sufficient evidence that the funds are requested for the service of the Senate. The auditor general did not feel this was adequate. He came to the conclusion that given the unique nature of the upper House, such difficult decisions cannot be made appropriately by officials alone and therefore should be open to public scrutiny.

I certainly agree. It is time we opened the books to Canadians so they can see exactly what is going on. Opening the books to public scrutiny is the simplest and most efficient and cost effective way of achieving accountability.

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• (1020)

In addition, committee expenses in the other place have also run up huge bills only to have the subsequent reports shelved or ignored. For example, the Senate Pearson airport committee ran up a \$210,000 bill after failing to find anything clearly wrong with the airport bill. Last year, \$153,000 was also approved for a special study by the Senate Special Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. Of that, \$123,000 was allocated for transportation and communications alone. On it goes, all without any accountability.

According to the chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce, the budget for \$8,000 was “a token budget for a few lunches and some possible outside professional services”. A token budget for a few lunches. I wonder what they eat for lunch that is going to run up an \$8,000 tab. Try to explain that to the long suffering Canadian taxpayers.

On it goes. The committees went \$100,000 over budget last year. When they ran out of money they began to look at funds that were saved from the previous years’ budgets.

What concerns me is the fact that the auditor general found that amounts reported in the public accounts were incomplete and did not give sufficient information to determine whether the expenses were incurred for the service of the Senate or otherwise. Administrators could not identify what was or was not official business.

The time has come for the other place to improve reporting of expenditures and to account for the performance of their administration. The main purpose of the upper House is to provide checks and balances for the House of Commons. However, how can it function in this role when its actions are called into question because of lack of accountability?

Many Canadians view the upper House as having no more authority than to rubber stamp legislation. They have no confidence that members in the other House defend their interests. This must change.

I will turn to another facet. When job insecurity is a fact of life for many Canadians, it is difficult to justify blatant patronage appointments that last until age 75, particularly when most people are forced to retire at 65 years of age.

In the infamous red book the Liberals criticized the Conservatives for their “practice of choosing political friends when making thousands of appointments to boards, commissions and agencies that cabinet is required by law to carry out”. However, the continued practice of patronage appointments and lack of accountability in the other place clearly break this promise.

On the issue of patronage, Premier Klein of Alberta stated his intention to hold an election to fill the recent vacant Senate seat.

Despite the fact that Alberta has a Senate election act and that Albertans were in support of an elected Senate representative, the Prime Minister chose to appoint a senator to fill the vacant seat.

It is most apparent that as it stands, seats in the upper House are nothing more than an opportunity for the ruling party to pay off their political friends. Members in the other place are appointed for their political connections and longstanding service to the Liberal Party of Canada, nothing more, nothing less. Whatever happened to the principle of ability to do the job?

Clearly this institution lacks the credibility and accountability necessary to make it an effective body of government. Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney stacked the upper House to pass the GST. Now the present Prime Minister is doing the same thing to ram through Liberal legislation.

We clearly need a strong and effective national government to protect Canadian interests which means that both Houses need to be effective. The House of Commons is dominated by representatives from central Canada because of representation by population. The upper House is in place in order to balance representation from Atlantic and western Canada.

Canada is one of the few democratic countries that do not have an elected upper House to represent regional interests. According to a Gallup poll in 1989, majorities in all regions except Quebec support the principle of an elected upper House. Many members on the other side of this House have voiced support for Senate reform in the past. Now is the time to take the steps necessary to give Canadians the democratic accountability they have been demanding.

• (1025)

To illustrate, the member for Winnipeg South Centre, the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, said:

It is crucial to find a formula which would provide for a more equal representation, by region and by province. Clearly there must be Senate reform. It is the only way of correcting the imbalances, the inequities and inequalities that have existed in federalism since its inception. There is not one federal state in the world that does not have a second chamber which works effectively to represent regional interests.

Our Senate is not an elected body. It does not have the credibility or the legitimacy of being democratically elected by the people. Therefore its ability to provide a check and balance upon the role of the executive which is dictated by the majority of members from the heavily populated provinces is constantly undermined. We see it repeated time and time again in many decisions.

The member for Davenport surveyed his constituency and found that 85 per cent of his constituents were in favour of an elected Senate. The member for St. Boniface surveyed his constituents and found 87 per cent support for a triple E Senate. The member went on to say that he hoped all provinces and territories would decide to elect their senators. Obviously the support is there.

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The Reform Party proposal for a triple E Senate, a Senate which is elected by the people with equal representation from each province and which is fully effective in safeguarding regional interests would make the upper House accountable to Canadians. Implementing changes to the Constitution to provide for a triple E Senate, an extension of Alberta's Senatorial Selection Act into other provinces, is the best means to proceed in permitting Canada's regions to have a greater say in Ottawa and bring democratic accountability to government.

Accountability is obviously the key to good government. As elected representatives, members in the House of Commons must take seriously their responsibility of holding public institutions accountable. Ultimately members of the House of Commons will be held accountable to the public by the public. As a member of Parliament I regard this responsibility as one of my key functions.

Reform members cannot and will not approve spending for the other House unless members of the other place can account for their spending. To do otherwise would simply be irresponsible. Any member in this House who approves this budget without representation from the other House to account for its spending is doing Canadians and this House a great disservice.

The other House must respect the modern democratic principle of accountability and justify its spending. Vote 1 in the main estimates must be rejected by this House until such time as the upper House takes the necessary steps to hold itself accountable to the taxpaying public.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have in hand the Senate *Debates* for May 9, 1996. There is a rather interesting exchange. It relates to the \$50,000 and \$20,000, the so-called accountability of its Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration.

Senator Lynch-Staunton, the leader of the opposition, is asking questions. He asked: "As I understand it, the amounts that can be allocated to research run up to \$50,000. Is that correct? There are also guidelines for office expenses, what used to be called the discretionary budget which was \$20,000, where are the guidelines for those?" He asked questions back and forth about this \$50,000 and \$20,000, which was rather interesting.

Senator Kenny said: "Hon. senators we have before us the only guidelines that the Senate has dealt with or approved of. There are no further guidelines that have ever come to this Chamber for approval".

The leader of the opposition returned to the \$20,000 and \$50,000 and Kenny replied: "You really are confused. That is true hon. senators, the limit for sharing would still be \$20,000. If you are of the view that it should be raised to \$50,000—". Then Senator Lynch-Staunton said: "No, contrary to what people might expect, I

am trying to be helpful to the chairman of the committee. I would like to know if the senators are still allowed up to \$20,000 for office expenses".

• (1030)

Mr. Kenny said: "No, sir. As the report read, there would be full flexibility in the two previous budgets". Senator Doyle asked: "What are the guidelines".

The leader of the opposition said: "Just when I thought I had it, I fall back into confusion. Does that mean there is a complete discretion to spend the \$50,000 exclusively of office expenses?" Then Mr. Kenny tried to explain it. This keeps on going. It would be laughable if it were not Canadian taxpayer money.

The leader of the opposition said: "Hon. Senators, I thought the question period had ended. I find this whole thing extraordinary. We are being told by the chairman of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy Budgets and Administration that because a report is before the Senate regarding research expenditures, the system that has been in place for years has now been abandoned".

Mr. Kenny said: "No, on the contrary". The leader said: "Yes, we are being told we cannot use our research fund to pay our researchers and that we must use our discretionary funds".

Mr. Kenny said: "No, that is not so". Then the other guy said: "That is exactly what we just heard". This one really caps it. Another senators said: "No, that is not what you just heard". The leader said: "That is exactly what we have been told". The first guy said: "Have you been sleeping?"

Senator Lynch-Staunton said: "We have just been told that every senator can dip into his or her \$20,000". It goes on and on.

This must be exactly the kind of thing being talked about where \$20,000 or \$50,000 is taxpayer money.

Mr. Gilmour: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his interjection. This points out particularly well why we would like to get the Senate in front of the operations committee. The guidelines, the rules, appear to be extremely flexible. Why should an unelected, unaccountable body not account for its spending?

Some of the interesting answers we have been getting are we really do not think Senators should appear before committee because it has never been done before. This is the first time in the history of the Canadian Parliament that a request has been sent for the Senate to justify its expenses. It is perfectly rational, perfectly normal and it is absolutely necessary.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate the motion which I will not repeat because of its verbosity. This is a motion brought forward by the Reform Party which clearly demonstrates

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yet again how out of touch that party is with the issues of concern to Canadians.

Today we could be lending our collective wisdom to find a solution to the issues of concern to the women of this country, violence, economic independence for them and their children, access to work. Then I forget the Reform Party considers women to be a special interest group and not worthy of its attention.

Today when the government is meeting with groups across the country to discuss pension reform which would secure the retirement of Canadian seniors, the House could be lending its wisdom to that discussion from the perspective of our constituents, we are wasting our time with arcana.

Instead of discussing issues related to the economy and the concerns of youth and safety of homes and communities, we have before us a motion which demonstrates a profound ignorance of one of the basic principles of our Constitution, that the two Houses of Parliament are independent of one another and self-regulating within their own sphere of authority.

I intend to speak further to these issues, but I must ask why this motion and why today. Where are the priorities of the Reform Party? I suspect we could spend the day listening to speeches extolling the virtues of Senate renewal, Reform style. A worthy enough topic. Let us get our priorities straight. Why not talk of employment equity issues, especially when Canadians are still in a state of anxiety that some may have to work at the back of the shop?

Today's motion reminds me of the distinction lawyers make frequently between the law as it is and the law as it should be. Everyone in Canada agrees Senate reform would be a worthwhile undertaking. Yet when Senate reform was proposed in the Charlottetown accord years ago, that party was adamantly opposed to it. Why? It was unable to deal with multiple issues at the same time. It was unable to prioritise or find common ground. I guess this motion today shows it still has not learned.

• (1035)

For the present, however, we have a Senate, we have a Constitution and we have the benefit of centuries of precedents governing relations between upper and lower houses in parliamentary democracies. As we know, the parliamentary tradition has helped to build one of the best countries in the world. While there is need for reform, there are other issues which should have priority, issues that go to the heart of the social and economic union and concerns which affect all Canadians, issues which touch Canadians where they live.

Reform instead would have us focus on the academic dissertation of the relationship between the two Houses of our bicameral legislature. It almost puts me to sleep just to talk about it.

The motion has the potential to disrupt the relationship of mutual respect and co-operation which exists between our two Houses at this time, which is supported by centuries of precedents in Canada and the mother of parliaments. What is that relationship?

Today's motion is about the operation of the other place. Learned scholars of Parliament and constitutional law refer frequently to the right of each House to regulate its own internal affairs and procedures free from interference. That is one of the basic truths of our Constitution. The House of Commons and the Senate are equal within our parliamentary system. Convention and practices temper interaction between the Senate and this House. In law our two Houses are largely equal.

For example, the approval of the Senate is required to enact any bill. In the same vein, our Constitution cannot be amended without the involvement of the Senate.

Part V of the Canada Act, 1982, the amending formula, states the powers of the Senate and the method of selecting senators cannot be amended without Senate participation, not to mention the approval of the provincial legislatures.

There are exceptions to this principle, for example section 53 of the Constitution Act, 1867, and section 47 of the Canada Act, 1982, dealing with money bills and the suspension veto. However, I will not go into those details.

I will now turn from powers to the privileges of Parliament. We find that the privileges of the Senate correspond completely with those we enjoy. One can see this merely by examining section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867, which states that the privileges of the Senate and the House of Commons flow from the ancient lineage of the mother of parliaments, the British parliamentary system. The party opposite always seems to confuse the parliamentary system with that of the system to the south.

The principle of independence, equality and autonomy of each House can easily be ascertained by examining the works of the most respected students of Parliament. For example, page 141 of the 21st edition of Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* states:

Since the two Houses are wholly independent of each other, neither House can claim, much less exercise, any authority over a member or officer of the other, and thus cannot punish any breach of privilege or contempt offered to it by such member or officer.

This is not a new principle. Members opposite have been here long enough to understand the relationship. Or maybe it is beyond them.

It is therefore difficult to understand the basis of this motion today, which is to take up a whole day of discussion, when there are so many issues of concern to Canadians.

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I have spoken on the law of Parliament and its privilege, but I would be remiss if I did not draw to the attention of the House the conventions which animate our Constitution, and I will do so now.

The subtle but most important convention which governs the Senate in exercising its authority is based on the very same principle of democratic accountability referred to in the motion under debate. This convention recognizes that in its key legislative role, the role of the Senate is secondary to that of the elected House of Commons.

Professor Peter Hogg, a leading scholar of the Canadian Constitution, illustrated this point in the second edition of his text "Constitutional Law of Canada". It is accepted by opposition as well as government senators that the appointed nature of the Senate must necessarily make its role subordinate to the elected House. The result is that very few government bills are rejected or substantially amended by the Senate. This convention clearly limits how the authority of the Senate may be exercised but through oversight or misunderstanding did not restrain Reform members from encouraging the Senate to reject the firearms bill after it had been approved by this House. There is a double standard already at work here.

• (1040)

However, the issue before us today is much narrower than Senate reform or even the present role of the Senate. The issue is whether the Senate is the master of its own internal affairs, and that is undeniable. This result is dictated by the constitutional law of Canada and the conventions governing its application. Once again, we are wasting a whole day discussing issues we can not in any way hope to change in this debate today.

What do these principles mean? Do they affirm that the Senate shares the privileges of this House and the autonomy enjoyed by this House? Yes, they do. Do they provide definitive answers to resolve disputes which may arise between the Houses? No, they do not, but we are not faced with a dispute, not yet at least. Were we to endorse today's motion, however, we might be.

We have been asked to consider a hypothetical motion and we all know that hypothetical debates can be very unproductive. Does this matter to the Reform Party? I do not think so. What is not hypothetical are the bedrock principles of the Constitution which provide for two independent self-regulating Houses of Parliament. The government is not prepared to jettison this principle today. This is not to say the status quo cannot be approved. We supported the ambitious package of changes, including Senate reform, contained in the Charlottetown accord.

As stated in the speech from the throne in February, the government believes the desire for change is broadly shared across

Canada. The government intends to focus priority issues and positive issues to prepare Canadians for the 21st century, initiatives that will improve the lives of Canadians and which would bring them economic prosperity, jobs, equality, social justice, security in their retirement and safe communities.

When I debate this motion and we talk about the issues of concern here, instead of debating a motion that is negative and very poorly prioritized, akin to decorating the living room while the roof needs repair, what we want to deal with are issues that are of real concern to Canadians, issues that would change their lives and make the country move forward into the 21st century and prosper. That of course is too much for the Reform Party to deal with because it does not have any answers to those problems.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the member across has been reading but I get her point that this is a hypothetically debate. We are to vote on the estimates. It is the first vote in the House on the estimates. It is the money for the Senate. There is nothing hypothetical about this at all. It is a \$40 million vote for the other place. What we are talking about is accountability.

Does the member across disagree that the Senate should be accountable to the taxpayers of Canada? That is a pretty basic premise.

Ms. Fry: Mr. Speaker, no one, least of all the government, disagrees with accountability. We have practised it ever since we came into power.

What we speak to is that the other place is accountable within its own right and within its own jurisdiction. This House is also accountable within its own rights and within its own jurisdiction.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange the parliamentary secretary would stand up when it is her government that is in the process of cutting funding to women's programs. I had people come in from the Women's Resource Centre in Cranbrook who spoke to me about this issue. They wanted to know what her government would do about it.

Yet she is standing up in the House of Commons saying it is fine that the other place is not accountable for spending over \$40 million. How in the world can she have it or try to have it both ways? The hon. member in her self-righteousness is standing there as supposedly the defender of women's programs when her own government is cutting women's programs, saying the Senate is unaccountable for the millions of dollars it wastes.

• (1045)

Ms. Fry: Mr. Speaker, the concept of accountability is obviously very foreign to the Reform Party. In discussing the issue of women's programs we have been meeting as a department with women around the country for the last two months to discuss how

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we can change our programs so that they will meet the real needs of women in their real lives.

This is something that is called accountability. It means starting from the bottom up. Talk about hypocrisy. When we talk about a party that has said that women's issues are special interest groups, it is really unbelievable to have this question asked by the member of the Reform Party.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the arrogance across the way is astounding to me. I cannot believe some of the things this member said in her speech.

This is a country where a member stands up and says that all people who vote for a certain party are bigots or racists. That is the kind of country this member would like to see and talk about. That is truly unfortunate.

In my opinion this member is poorly informed and does not represent the views of many people across the country, in particular those in her riding, about the Senate. How can the hon. member feel she can separate the responsibilities of the House of Commons from the Senate when the House must approve a vote relative to the Senate? How can she say it is none of our business when this House must vote on it and yet the Senate spends the money?

Ms. Fry: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I did not speak clearly enough or perhaps I did not enunciate the principles well enough. I thought that is exactly what I just answered in my speech, that the two Houses are separate and that they are accountable and autonomous within their own right.

I suppose that if one repeats that statement over the course of today it might finally sink in.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on the motion put forward by my hon. colleague for Comox-Alberni. The motion before us today, which calls for control—I will not say greater control, just control—to be exercised over how public money is spent at the Senate, is a timely topic.

In fact, the Senate of Canada, as we have known it since 1867 and whose functions have changed very little since, but I will come back to this later, has already become something of an anachronism in a democratic society such as ours. For all intents and purposes, there is no longer any institution similar to the Canadian Senate in the western world. The House of Lords has seen its powers drastically reduced by the Parliament Acts of 1911 and 1949; today, all it has left is protocol powers, as it only has a suspensive veto.

We are in a situation where, in all matters except constitutional matters, the Canadian Senate has powers identical to those of the House of Commons. Several books have been written about the rights and privileges of the Canadian Senate, and the powers in question are enormous. The only difference between the Senate and the House of Commons, aside from the 180-day constitutional suspensive veto acquired in 1982, is the fact that money bills cannot originate from the Senate, but they still have to be approved by the upper House, which has the same powers as this House, at least in theory, in terms of legislation.

The members of the other place are appointed and therefore are not accountable. On the other hand, every five years, if not more frequently, all of us members of the House of Commons must account to our voters for our management of public funds and our individual budgets. People can ask us: "What did you do with the money you collected in taxes?" While they have, in law, the same powers as us as far as managing public funds and passing legislation are concerned, the members of the other place are not accountable.

● (1050)

There is a serious anomaly here, and our party has always been opposed to this way of doing things. A motion that will be a votable item will even be debated in this House, on Monday. I am referring to the motion of the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, asking this House to support the principle of abolishing the Senate in its present form.

For the sake of history, let me quote a text prepared by the late Jean-Charles Bonenfant, a librarian for the Quebec legislature and an emeritus professor at Laval University's faculty of law, where I had the pleasure of being one of his students during a few years. This was written in the sixties, but his opinion about the Senate never changed much throughout his career. It is a well known fact that Mr. Bonenfant turned down several offers to sit in the Canadian Senate, because of what he thought of that august place.

I will read excerpts from an article published by professor Jean-Charles Bonenfant from Laval University. He wrote the following, and I basically agree with his views: "Rightly or wrongly, the Canadian Senate is the legislative body that seems to have the worst reputation in the whole world".

In 1942, journalist Grattan O'Leary wrote that the position of senator was not a job and that the Senate was not a place where one was supposed to work. Mr. O'Leary became a senator in 1962.

In 1961, Jean-Luc Pepin, who became the member of Parliament for Drummond and a cabinet member, passed a number of judgments on the Senate. He described it as "a political hospice, a sepulchre, the pound of flesh demanded by the parties, the most exclusive retirement club in the world, the fifth wheel of govern-

ment, the hollow echo of an optimistic past, the only sure weakness in the Constitution Act, 1867, a divorce mill, a tourist attraction, and the list goes on”.

Finally, Marcel Faribault and Robert Fowler, imagining a new Constitution with a revamped Senate, in their book *Dix pour un*, wrote: “Whether you judge it by its achievements or its reputation, the Canadian Senate has not been a particularly auspicious institution”. That is putting it mildly.

And yet, in a federation such as ours, the Upper House could have played a very important role. Representation in the Lower House is usually determined on the basis of population. Representation in the Upper House attempts to create a certain equality between the constituent parties.

This is why each of the fifty states in the United States, regardless of its size or population, has two senators representing it in the Senate.

In Australia, each of the six states sends 10 senators to the Senate, and in Switzerland the 46 members of the Council of States are divided equally among the 23 cantons.

The Canadian Senate has never played the true role of an Upper House in a federation type country. From the beginning, its composition has been along regional rather than provincial lines. In 1867, membership was 72: 24 for Ontario, 24 for Quebec, 24 for the maritimes, that is Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which, when Prince Edward Island joined, had to give up 4 seats.

As new provinces appeared, the Senate added new members, finally settling, in 1915, at four divisions of 24 members. Quebec and Ontario remained unchanged; the maritimes division had 10 senators for New Brunswick, 10 for Nova Scotia, and 4 for Prince Edward Island; and the western division had 6 senators for each of the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

These 96 senators were joined, in 1949, by the six senators from Newfoundland, and later by 2 senators for the territories, raising the maximum to 104.

• (1055)

Under the administration that was in place during the 33rd and 34th Parliaments, a Conservative administration, we saw the hitherto unused clauses of the Constitution allowing the number of senators to be raised to a maximum of 110 or 112 put into application in order to push through the GST legislation.

Senators are appointed by the Governor General, and thus to all intents and purposes by the government, the Prime Minister even if he controls his government properly. Although a few examples of appointments outside political considerations can be found, we can

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state that one of the primary prerequisites for a senator is membership in the party in power.

The British North America Act requires certain qualities of senators, qualities in the sense of eligibility requirements. They must possess \$4,000 in real and personal property, a quite exceptional amount in 1867. The Senate was therefore reserved for a quite specific category of person. Nowadays, it is quite easy to qualify. You can take your MasterCard or Visa, get a cash advance, and buy some property quite quickly, which was not the case in 1867.

In Quebec, theoretically, the senators represent 24 senatorial divisions. These correspond to the 24 divisions of the legislative council elected between 1856 and 1867. The territorial divisions act gives the divisions represented by senators. It is worth pointing out that, according to my personal research, not one Quebec senator has a division office.

One might wonder what is the point of dividing Quebec up into senatorial divisions if the people serviced, if I may use that expression, cannot track down their senators.

Moreover, if you carry out a survey of no scientific value whatsoever, asking passers-by to name their senator, it is rare to find anybody who can do so. This is far different from the situation with their MP. Whether they like the person representing them in the House of Commons or not, they are generally able to identify that person and to say: “So and so is my representative in the House of Commons and I will vote (or not vote) for him or her in the next election”. Generally, members of the House of Commons are recognized, while the members of the other House do not enjoy the same high profile. This does not mean that there are not some fine people there. It is not my aim to judge the members of the other House, but rather the institution, which, as I said earlier, is completely outmoded.

We must remember that, until 1965, senators were appointed for life, and a number admirably benefited from the privilege. There was the Hon. David Wark, from Fredericton, for example, who was appointed in 1867, at the time of Confederation, and died in 1905 at the age of 102. The Hon. Georges Dessaules of Saint-Hyacinthe died in 1907 at the age of 103.

Under Bill C-98 introduced on April 27, 1965 by Prime Minister Pearson, which was passed by both Houses, a senator appointed after the bill became law would remain in the position until he reached the age of 75.

I have always wondered whether the Governor General could reappoint someone to the Senate, who had retired at the mandatory retirement age of 75, once they turned 76, since the 1965 legislation contains no such prohibition. Perhaps we might see people like Senator Wark or Senator Dessaules come back to sit in the Senate if such an interpretation were possible. A senator can always resign,

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of course, and risks losing his seat in the Senate if he no longer fulfils the requisites of his appointment.

• (1100)

As with what happens in an elite club, the Constitution provides that the decision rests with the Senate in the case of a vacancy in the Senate or on the matter of a senator's ability to sit there.

This is sort of the way it was in the United Kingdom in the 1940s. At that time, the House of Lords had the power to judge any of its members accused of a crime. That practice continues today here, even though it was abolished nearly 50 years ago in the United Kingdom.

Yesterday, my hon. colleague from Vancouver Quadra made a brilliant speech before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs on the powers of upper houses in British type parliaments. My hon. colleagues should refer to the proceedings of this committee.

I can therefore say that the Senate is an upper chamber similar to the British House of Lords, on which the Fathers of Confederation modeled the Senate to some extent when they established it. But contrary to popular belief, its powers are not as limited as those of the British Upper Chamber following the Asquith Bill of 1911. This first Parliament Act to be passed was complemented by the 1949 Labour bill. These two bills considerably reduced the powers of the House of Lords, which is now left with only a suspensive veto.

On the other hand, the Canadian Senate has all the powers of the House of Commons except, as I mentioned earlier, that it cannot introduce a bill providing for a tax or an expenditure.

In 1918, the subject of Senate powers was thoroughly examined by two great Canadian legal scholars: Aimé Geoffrion and Eugène Lafleur. They submitted a conclusive and momentous opinion in writing supporting the Senate's omnipotence, which the Lower House, the House of Commons, still does not recognize, particularly as regards financial matters.

Note that, since 1982, the powers of the Senate regarding constitutional amendments were slightly curtailed, as this House now has only an 180-day suspensive veto, as I indicated earlier.

It is strange, to say the least, for a House where appointed members sit until they turn 75 not to have any public accounting procedure and to hide behind its privileges and some pretty outdated traditions to justify itself.

I think that, in requesting that representatives of the Senate appear before the Standing Committee of Government Operations to review annual expenditures of approximately \$40 million, the committee was acting not only in good faith, but also in response to

the public's wish to know how their money is being spent. To try to see how the money is spent is, of course, a first step.

In every riding I travelled to, but I will focus on my own riding, the majority of people do not see the use of an upper house like the one we have at present. It should be either abolished or reformed. In the present circumstances, as desirable as it may be to everybody, a reform is clearly not possible.

Seventy years ago, and even at the Charlottetown conference and the Quebec conference, such a reform was discussed before the Senate was even established. Some advocated an elected Senate, based on the model of the united Canada legislative council, while others wanted an appointed house. The decision to establish the Senate in 1867 was not a unanimous one. Some wanted to reform this institution before it was even set up, which was definitely a bad start. They never could reform it. Given the constitutional yoke created by the 1982 amending formula, we can wonder whether such a reform will ever take place.

All the parties in this House have taken a stand regarding the Senate. The Prime Minister and member for Saint-Maurice clearly indicated that he is in favour of having an elected upper house. His position is clear. As for the Reform Party, it is in favour of a triple E Senate, even though some Es are disappearing. A Senate that is equal, effective—there is also another E—oh yes, a Senate that is elected, equal and effective.

• (1105)

Some E's are disappearing right now, including the E for equal, because we realized it did not really make sense to have the same number of senators representing a small province and a larger one such as Quebec or Ontario.

As for us, we say that, in its present form, the Senate must be abolished. If it must be brought back to life to reflect a different Canada, then it should have another structure. It is unacceptable to keep a non-elected house with such large powers. If it were an advisory body, and if we could afford it, it might be helpful, but it is no longer acceptable, in 1996, to have a house with powers equal to those of the House of Commons.

This is why the Bloc Québécois is in favour of a single house system of government whose members are elected by the population as a whole. This is an issue that we should tackle at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must commend the hon. member for his in-depth study of our Senate's origins and the influence of the Mother of Parliaments, Great Britain, and especially its 1911 legislation, the Parliament Act.

I would like to ask the following question: Since our Senate has already caused endless delays in dealing with several bills passed

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by this House, does the hon. member consider this a violation of customary constitutional law inherited from Great Britain? Is this an established fact, yes or no?

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend from Vancouver Quadra for his question. In my opinion, the Senate's attitude, especially in relation to Bill C-69, the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, is usually a prerogative of the people's elected representatives. By not only considering but unduly delaying consideration of this bill so that it died on the Order Paper between the two sessions of this Parliament, the Senate has hijacked the powers of this House and shown contempt for this House as well as for traditions that have been clearly established for decades.

This is a literal interpretation of the Constitution Act, 1867, which is totally unacceptable. I think this must be the last action taken by the Senate, especially on an issue so central to the privileges of this House as the readjustment of electoral boundaries.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting debate because it brings up the entire issue of accountability, an issue that seems to be very foreign to the Liberals and particularly to the member for Vancouver Centre in her comments earlier. She spoke about the issue of being accountable for taxpayer dollars as being an academic dissertation.

Nothing could be further from the truth. This House must be accountable for the expenditure of Canadian taxpayer dollars. We are talking about the expenditure by the Senate of \$40 million. She is correct to a great extent when she says the Houses are equals. However, she is absolutely incorrect when she comes to the issue of their being equal if she is saying this Chamber, elected members, is equal to the other Chamber, appointed members. This simply cannot be the case.

It has been shown by the member from the Bloc who pointed out the House of Commons is the place where expenditures of Canadian dollars are controlled or should be controlled. In that respect the two Chambers are not equal and never could be equal.

The difficulty we are experiencing at this juncture is we have an unelected, unaccountable body that is nonetheless functioning as part of the parliamentary process.

• (1110)

I received a communiqué on May 22, as I am sure did many of the members from the Senate, stating the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology will be beginning hearings on the employment insurance bill, Bill C-12, the employment insurance bill which passed from this Chamber to that Chamber.

That it is before that Chamber is the clearest possible indication and the most current example I can give of the Senate's being responsible for the ultimate passage of government legislation, which is why the Prime Minister goes out of his way to make sure his Senate is stacked the way he wants it to be stacked, the same thing the Conservatives have done. All the traditional parties have done it and continue to do it.

The Senate is supposed to be a chamber of sober second thought. Considering it is supposed to be a chamber representative of the regions, it is very interesting to see the composition of the Senate committee on social affairs which is discussing the employment insurance Bill C-12. There is one member from Newfoundland, two members from Quebec, three members from Ontario, three members from New Brunswick, three members from Prince Edward Island but none from western Canada.

It is particularly interesting that of the four senators, the four Senate seats given to the province of Prince Edward Island, three out of four of those members are sitting on this pan-Canadian bill on the Senate committee. How many of the 24 Senate seats from western Canada are represented? Zero, none, zip. Western Canada is cut out.

That kind of thing simply would not ever happen in an accountable body. It would never happen where the members would have to go back to western Canada and say "I am sorry but you guys do not count, you do not matter, your point of view is not to be represented in this committee hearing".

They have set up some meetings. Every now and then a little serendipity happens. It is very interesting. Potential meeting times for the standing Senate committee on social affairs for Bill C-12, employment insurance, are to be held in room 256-S in the Centre Block, Thursday, May 30, and this is the serendipity, when the Senate rises but not earlier than 4 p.m. I thought that was a rather neat bit of serendipity because as we saw during the delivery of the governor general's speech from the throne, perhaps some of the senators had not risen before 4 p.m. They had just been carried to the Chamber to continue their snoozing.

What is wrong with the Senate at this point? While senators are effective, or at least have the potential to be effective, they are not elected and therefore not accountable. We have gone through the issue of it not being equal. There is not equal balance, regional representation on this committee or in the Senate Chamber itself.

That the province of Ontario has 24 senators, that the province of Quebec has 24 senators and that the four provinces in western Canada between them have 24 senators clearly shows there is a very distinct regional imbalance.

What is the first step? The first step in Reform's process of making this an important part of the parliamentary process, a full functioning body, elected, effective and equal, the triple E Senate, the first step that can happen outside of the Constitution is that we

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see the next Senate appointments be elected. The first step is to make it accountable through election.

It is interesting we have had one elected senator. Reform Senator Stan Waters, who passed away unfortunately a few years ago, was the first and only elected member to that body. We have precedent. The Alberta government through its Alberta Senate selection law elected Senator Stan Waters and he was appointed after his election.

• (1115)

When there was a vacancy in the Alberta lieutenant-governor position, the Prime Minister simply reached into the Senate and said: "Okay Bud Olson, you are no longer a senator. You are now the lieutenant-governor". That is fine, but within 10 minutes the announcement was made that Senator Nick Taylor would be the next senator. It should be noted that Senator Taylor did run against Stan Waters. I guess if you cannot get into the Senate one way, you will get in another.

In a statement made in the House by my colleague from Calgary West, he made note of this fact: "It may take 10 years to balance a budget, 10 years to lower taxes, 10 years to reform people's pensions, but it only takes 10 minutes to reward friends with Senate appointments". That is the shame of the Senate.

There are people who would accept these positions when in Alberta the Senate selection act is in place. I have been encouraging the province of British Columbia, and with the new government that will be elected today I will be encouraging it, to re-enact the B.C. senate selection act. This can happen outside of the Constitution.

The Prime Minister appointed Bud Olson as lieutenant-governor. Then he appointed Nick Taylor. Then what? I went back and came up with the adopted resolutions of the biannual convention of the Liberal Party of Canada in 1992. I would think this was a good document. These were the adopted resolutions of the Liberal Party of Canada from 1992.

Resolution 20 is on Senate reform. After it goes through all the whereases it resolves that the Liberal Party would commit itself "to an elected and effective Senate comprised of, but not limited to, equal representation from each of the 10 provinces of Canada". This resolution was brought forward to the Liberal Party of Canada by the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador and adopted by the Liberal Party of Canada.

It is interesting that Senator Rompkey, out of the goodness of his heart, following the adoption of the resolution of the Liberal constituency organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador, accept-

ed an appointment to the Senate. I guess that is having it two ways, is it not?

This is a matter of accountability. This is a matter of what our legislative process is, where it should go and how it should get there. But what of the most recent Liberal appointment? First, the leader of the Reform Party asked the Prime Minister in this House what he was going to do.

I had a conversation with Premier Klein who indicated that he was very distressed—unhappy, we will say—about the fact that the Prime Minister had moved with such obscene haste to make sure that Nick Taylor got his just reward. After the unfortunate passing of Senator Hastings, the premier was going to write to the Prime Minister asking that the people of Alberta be permitted to go ahead with the senatorial selection act.

I believe I spoke to him on the Wednesday, which was only a day or two following the passing of Senator Hastings. He felt constrained because the funeral would be on the Friday. Premier Klein naturally and justifiably felt constrained in writing to the Prime Minister and saying: "I know you went with unseemly haste to get your friend Nick Taylor appointed, but I would like people in Alberta to be able to exercise their democratic right". He did not want to do it at least until the funeral of the senator.

• (1120)

The funeral of the senator was on Friday and in the first part of the week what did the Prime Minister do? He knew from the questions of the leader of the third party what our party wanted. He knew from the reports in the newspaper what Premier Klein wanted. He knew from comments that I had been making in the news media what was going on. What did he do? The Prime Minister of Canada pre-empted democracy and denied the people of Alberta the ability to vote on who they wanted to represent them in that chamber.

I wrote this letter to the editor:

The arrogance of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in appointing a Senator from Alberta, is only overshadowed by the hypocrisy of the appointee Jean Forest. Jean Chrétien proved that he doesn't give a hoot what Albertans want and what they are legally entitled to through the Province's Senatorial Selection Act. He told the leader of the Reform Party in the House of Commons, "I will name a Senator who I will choose and who will represent my party in the House of Commons". What about someone to represent Albertans?

The last time I checked, the Senate was supposed to represent Canadians not the Prime Minister's Liberal Party.

As if that wasn't bad enough, the Prime Minister's Senate appointee Jean Forest has proven that the Senate is out of touch and unaccountable. She is either ignorant or hypocritical. On her first day in Ottawa she said, "if it could all be worked out, I would be in favour of an elected Senate".

It has been worked out. It was worked out when Senator Stan Waters was elected and appointed to the Senate. What does she

mean when she says: "If it could all be worked out, I would be in favour of an elected Senate?"

Considering her credentials, it is doubtful she is ignorant. She must know about Alberta's Senatorial Elections Act and the written request from Premier Ralph Klein to Prime Minister Chrétien. The new Senator was grossly insincere when she went on to say, "it doesn't seem to be in the works now. I accepted the appointment thinking I could, perhaps, make a contribution in the meantime".

Albertans have shown they support an elected Senate. Jean Forest has lost the small fragment of integrity she may have had by accepting her appointment to the Senate with her stated support of an elected Senate.

If she truly believed her own words she would not have accepted her own appointment. She has only one honourable course of action and that is to resign and give Albertans what is rightfully theirs—the ability to elect a senator to represent the wishes of the electorate.

We must speak with respect of the other place. I do so, but nonetheless I must say this. If those people really believed in the democratic process, if those people really believed that the people should be represented by a legitimate house of sober second thought, if those people in that chamber really believed that the people should hold them accountable, every one of them would resign and stand for election.

This can be done outside the Constitution. I am not talking about constitutional reform at this time. I will restate that the purpose of the Reform Party is to ultimately get a triple E Senate: effective, elected and equal. That is our goal. That is our objective. That is a foundation stone of our party.

In the meantime, without tinkering with the Constitution, I say to all the senators: Do the honourable thing. Resign.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not surprisingly, the opposition motion tabled by the Reform Party brought back to me on my way here this morning how much I was opposed to the very existence of the other House, given the present state of affairs in Canada. Furthermore, with what I have heard so far, I cannot help but have more questions.

• (1125)

What were the Fathers of Confederation thinking when they created the Senate? Were they not hoping for some sort of safeguard, a watchdog over democratic constitutional guarantees, all the guarantees that could be included in the Constitution, particularly the distribution of legislative powers and all that?

With the emergence of regional parties, when there is talk of an elected Senate. What worries me is that a senator elected in a given division will be a clone of a member elected to the House of Commons, an exact replica of an MP representing a riding, in my case, for example, the riding of Chambly. There is a good chance that a senator elected in the riding of Chambly would be pretty

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much my duplicate. For democracy, this would definitely constitute a risk.

The problem, when you come right down to it, is that, with the emergence of these regional parties, with the responsibility of elected senators to get elected, they are open to compromise, they have to bend, a bit like certain judges in the United States who are elected. We have seen the abuses that led to.

When we look at the budgets, I agree with members of the Reform Party that the amounts spent are astronomical, but before handing the Senate a death sentence, I would like someone to suggest an alternative to us, and I am not entirely convinced that an elected Senate is the best one.

What I wanted to ask the member who has just spoken is, if he is not worried about abuses, and I know about abuses, I know them as well as he does, I know that Bill C-22 on Pearson Airport is still languishing in the other place, and is not ready to be sent back to us, giving rise to costs, of course, for the Department of Transport or for the department concerned, in the form of additional compensation for those who invested in Pearson, except that two wrongs do not make a right.

I am not sure where the Reform Party is headed with its motion. Are they criticizing the very foundation of our British parliamentary system? Do they have better solutions to offer than saying that a senator must be elected to be effective? I know that in my case, with respect to the regulatory question, for example, I needed the senators at one point and they did their job of representing the regional interests they are there to represent. I would therefore ask the hon. member if he could edify me. Is he in the process of reviewing the Canadian parliamentary system?

[*English*]

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect to my colleague, he has a very elitist perspective on how people in Canada should be governed.

Members of Parliament should be representative of the viewpoint of the people in their constituencies. The fact that senators may have to bend to the will of the people, in my judgment, is a very positive thing as opposed to an elitist approach where one person, the Prime Minister of Canada, has taken it upon himself to appoint those who would represent his point of view only and represent his party only in the other chamber.

At the outset of his intervention the hon. member asked what I thought the Fathers of Confederation had in mind. It is well documented that the Fathers of Confederation had two things on their minds: regional representation and a house of sober second thought.

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The reason Prince Edward Island delayed coming into Confederation for four years was the fact that it did not like the idea of entering into Confederation in 1867 with an appointed Senate. That was the delay.

There was a desire on the part of the Fathers of Confederation to have an elected Senate, an elected second chamber. However, after not coming to an agreement, they decided to move forward. Perhaps my colleague from Vancouver Quadra could enlighten me on this as I believe he is an expert on these matters.

In 1871 the politicians of Prince Edward Island wanted to become part of Confederation. They finally agreed in spite of the fact that there was an appointed Senate. Perhaps the hon. member will be able to enlighten me on that.

• (1130)

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I compliment members opposite for the thoughtful contributions they have made in their several ways to the debate on this subject.

It is axiomatic today that the Constitutional legitimacy of a legislative chamber comes from election and only from election, although there may be argument whether the election in the case of the upper House should be by indirect or direct process.

Nevertheless, legitimacy comes from election. There is therefore a standing anachronism in a body that exercises legislative powers under the Constitution virtually equal to those of the House of Commons but which no longer can claim constitutional legitimacy.

Granted the evolution of thinking on democratic constitutionalism since the mid-19th century, our problem always is that since the reforms of 1982, we are in a much more rigid constitutional system than we were before. For all intents and purposes, it is impossible to change the Constitution.

We have seen this in the recent experiments in the late-1980s with Meech and Charlottetown irrespective of the substantive merits or the contestable merits, depending on one's point of view, of those proposals. The thing emerging is how difficult it is to change the Constitution.

I was impressed with the address by the hon. member for Bellechasse and the research he had done very thoughtfully on the origins of the modern House of Lords dating back to Mr. Asquith's Parliament Act, 1911, which replaced the complete veto of the House of Lords by a suspensive veto of two years, knocked down in 1949 to virtually nothing.

One of the interesting things is the House of Lords has a high quality of debate that comes from the fact that its powers have been whittled away. It has accepted that. Members devote time when

they debate to issues of substance that the lower House is too busy to be occupied with.

The problem I see in our country is that although we pride ourselves on receiving our institutions from Great Britain, we tend to apply them much more mechanically and with less sense of humour than the British themselves. One can become more British than the British. One of the interesting things we have not picked up from the Parliament in Westminster is the concepts of self-restraint of an unelected house which were at the core of the thrust of Prime Minister Asquith in 1911 and which really explain the Parliament Act of 1911 and the subsequent amendment of 1949.

There is a principle of conventional law of Parliament concerning an unelected upper House, granted there may be nothing it can do itself even if it wants to end its non-elected status. There is the principle of constitutional self-restraint in relation to measures currently voted by the lower House and passed on.

I regret the interminable delays we have seen in this Parliament the Senate apply to measures adopted by the lower House but I also agree with the hon. member for Bellechasse that it is a violation of the constitutional conventions that this has been so.

What I regret is that perhaps there has not been more attention in this House to exercising the machinery already in place for resolving conflicts between the two Houses and a conflict that comes from a really colourable studying of measures passed by the lower House on the pretence or the assertion that more time is needed to reflection.

This amounts in my view to a rejection effectively of measures passed by the lower House. I regret therefore that one did not pursue the machinery already available under our constitutional system to explore jointly between the Speaker of the Commons and the President of the Senate the issue of whether the privileges of the House of Commons as understood in a contemporary sense were being fully respected.

• (1135)

I say that with some regret and I put forward the suggestion that in the future this House should be more vigilant in assuring a prompt follow-up by the Senate to measures passed by the lower House where they have been fully debated. That is to say, either reject and take the political consequences of that as an unelected upper House or pass or send back to the House with suggestions for change that the House reserves primary powers to consider and in its own good judgment as an elected body to reject those measures.

I note the comments, again a very thoughtful case, by the member for Kootenay East. This generation of Canadians has a rendezvous with the Constitution Act. Eventually and perhaps not too far away we will have to do something about fundamental reform of institutions.

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The five region conception of Canada, which is very dear to electors in my home province, was recognized by the Prime Minister in December by the grant of the regional veto to British Columbia and in measure the regional veto to the three prairie provinces. It is an important step forward.

The principle of an elected upper House is again, I think, very clear. It is also intimately related to other changes in institutional structures, the nature of the court, the nature of judicial legislation and the nature of the supreme court which now de facto and not necessarily with its own will is becoming a constitutional court very much like the European courts and the United States Supreme Court in the sort of responsibilities it has been asked to exercise.

We have before us in the House at this very time measures that in Europe would be decided by a constitutional court that are ending up with the House of Commons and Parliament. It may well be that the best approach to institutional change is to consider all the institutions together in the light of this larger optic, the evolution of democratic constitutionalism of which the respect of a non-elected upper House or an elected lower House is one of the core principles.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the comments of the member for Vancouver Quadra. However, I note he did not speak specifically to the motion.

The motion gives notice of opposition to the Senate estimates. The purpose of this is to put pressure on the Senate to make it account for the \$40 million of taxpayer money it will be spending.

In this House we need a majority to indicate they are prepared to vote down the Senate funds if Senators refuse to appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

What is the Liberal position on this? Should the people of the upper Chamber be held accountable to the people of Canada, to the Canadian taxpayers, yes or no?

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is addressing issues of substantive constitutional change on which he has spoken most learnedly and thoughtfully under the rubric of a vote on estimates. While this is customary in American constitutional law and with the United States Congress, there are more direct arenas available.

For example, it has been indicated by the opposition party that the issue of institutional change and Senate reform will be introduced by it on its merits next week. I suggest a more direct route would be better for approaching the substantive constitutional changes he desires. I do not think we need the device which the Americans for want of a similar opportunity of a direct debate have

done; that is to say, tacking substantive constitutional change issues on to a motion on estimates or the budget.

• (1140)

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I can be very incisive with a very precise rifle shot question. The question is should the Senate be accountable to the Canadian taxpayer for the \$40 million it is to spend, yes or no?

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is avoiding the response that I did give which was the key one. However, it seems the answer to this rifle shot question, as he calls it, was already given by my hon. colleague, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism.

Granted that the anachronism of a non-elected Senate exists and that the existing law of Parliament gives autonomy to each House for its proper expenditures, it seems it is properly an issue for the Senate, much as one may regret it.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the member is being hypothetical. We have an actual instance here where we will vote on the estimates for the Senate. Therefore to say something else, that this would be preferable going in another direction, is fine in the future. Right now in fact we have to vote on the estimates.

Will the member vote for or against accountability of the Senate?

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, while the Senate exists one must respect its autonomy. The principle of parliamentary comity requires that. The issue of fundamental change in the Senate is another issue that should be addressed in its own proper context.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the House of Commons, the Lower House, is responsible to the Canadian electorate for the funds it commits here, while the other House has to answer to no one for the sums allocated to it, there is one part of the federal government's budget that cannot be justified to the public. This is the primary concern of Reform Party members.

Since we are holding the cheque book, we ought to at least be told what the cheque they are writing over there will be used for. That is the primary purpose of today's motion.

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, I must respond to the hon. member by pointing out that we owe the Senate the same respect we demand it show the House of Commons. That is the principle of reciprocity, parliamentary courtesy between the two Houses. The Senate, as it is at present, is an institution of our Parliament.

*Supply**[English]*

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the House gives \$40 million, for instance, for road building in Nova Scotia the government would expect some accountability. Would the government not expect the same amount of accountability for \$40 million spent for any other organization out of its estimates, including the Senate?

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, let us forget the road building. We are discussing something else.

As far as the Senate is concerned, I thought I had made it very clear in my address that we expect the Senate to extend to us, as the House of Commons, the courtesy respecting our majority decisions. The Senate exists as an institution of our Parliament and we have to respect its autonomy too. It works both ways. We cannot have it on both counts.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think it important to put the the motion brought forward by the Reform Party in its true context. The Standing Committee on Government Operations asked representatives of the Senate to come and defend the upper House's budget requirements.

- (1145)

The Senate did not respond to this request. We are talking about a budget of \$43 million. It is defensible in terms of the principles prevalent at the time the two Houses and Canada's parliamentary system were created, but today we have to ask ourselves whether we can afford to pay the cost of principles and situations of this sort.

Today, \$43 million is still a fairly significant sum. It covers a whole lot of things. If we were certain the spending of the Senate were exemplary, we might have fewer questions. I would refer to the report of the Auditor General of Canada.

In the Senate in 1991, a number of anomalies and questionable practices were reported. In the case of the messenger service, for example, the senators decided that there was no limit and that they could spend however they liked so long as there was a need.

The report of the auditor general also drew attention to the matter of attendance. A lot of senators are absent much of the time, thereby not generating a lot of expenditures. There are, however, a minority who generate a lot of expenditures.

These things are perhaps justifiable. This is the aim of the motion by the Reform Party, further to the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

The Senate's response is all the more surprising because, when our fellow citizens learn that there is a House of unelected people who are accountable to no one or just about, they are shocked. Any

comparison may be flawed, but you have, on the one hand, the requirements imposed on the public, for example, how UI recipients may use their benefits—they are required to understand some very complex laws—and, on the other hand, a House of unelected people, most of whom were recommended for appointment for having contributed to the activities of a political party such as the Liberal Party of Canada and the Conservative Party. Most senators were appointed because of their involvement in political organizations.

Is it still appropriate on the eve of the 21st century to have a House that can spend \$43 million without being in any way accountable for how this money is spent? Is it appropriate that we cannot ask questions to find out, for example, if the money to be spent on salaries is justified in light of the Senate's activities?

Is there any justification for the way Senate committees operate and unelected senators' travelling expenses, in today's Canada? This calls for a short history lesson. The Senate was modelled after the British House of Lords. The Senate was first created as an unelected body because it was said that elected members did not have all the abilities required to properly manage the affairs of state, that wiser people were needed, people with special training, and so on.

The situation has changed since then. Today, the House of Commons includes people with experience in various sectors, people who have the technical skills required. We also have support teams of assistants and researchers who do a very good job. They must help elected members, because of the fundamental notion that elected members of Parliament are accountable for the effectiveness of their work if they want to be re-elected when their mandate expires.

It is quite a different matter for senators, who are appointed practically for life without being accountable for their effectiveness.

To illustrate this, I would like to ask a question; I think I could even put it to the members of Parliament here in this House. Do you know who is the senator responsible for the general area of your riding?

- (1150)

How many people can identify the senator representing the Senate divisions of Lauzon, De la Vallière, De Lorimier, Wellington, De Salaberry, Grandville, Rougemont, Mille Isles or Motarville for example? I think it would be quite a challenge to ask Canadians which senator represents what division.

This is an exaggerated example to show that the Senate does not meet an essential criterion for management of public funds, the accountability criterion. Senators are not accountable, neither individually nor collectively. Senators are not required to account to the people for their performance and we cannot get them to appear before a House committee to account for the way the

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Senate's budget is spent and for its operational effectiveness. This goes to show how archaic an institution the Senate is.

We could even go as far as to say that the Senate is somewhat of an anachronism. By refusing to do as requested in the motion and accounting before the committee for the use made of its appropriations, it may add fuel to arguments in favour of the motion, soon to be debated in this House, to abolish the Senate as we know it.

A full debate could be held across Canada on this issue. I think we will have an opportunity to have such a debate when my motion to abolish the Senate is considered. We will be able to discuss what kind of upper House we want. Do we want an elected upper House? Would we rather not have any upper House at all? Should proportional representation by region be introduced? There are many options to consider.

I am deeply convinced however that, as it stands today, the upper House does not meet in any real way democratic requirements for the turn of the century.

Coming back to the auditor general's report for 1991, which contained 27 recommendations regarding various aspects of day-to-day administration, it would be very interesting to see to what extent the Senate has taken these recommendations into account. For example, if a committee could ask how budgets are allocated and divided regarding messenger services, salaries, trips, including those in the senators' divisions and in the rest of Canada, we would get answers to all sorts of questions that are of interest to us.

Members of Parliament are accountable to the public. If we do something wrong or if we make bad decisions, the public decides whether or not to give us a new mandate. The Reform Party motion is nothing but a request for a minimum of respect for our role as members of this House. Will we tolerate the fact that senators can spend with impunity, without being accountable?

Does the principle upheld by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, namely that the two houses are independent from each other, still apply today? If we asked Canadians whether the Senate should be accountable for its spending, I think they would be unanimous in saying that it should be. Canadians would say that the Senate must be accountable for its activity and its work in the same way members of Parliament are accountable to them through the election process.

The fact that we have an obsolete rule does not mean we cannot change it.

• (1155)

When we visit our ridings, we are asked a lot of questions such as: "How are you going to ensure that the federal system reaches an adequate level of efficiency, so as to put an end to the list of

horrors related to a lack of control over spending?" People give examples. They mention losses such as forgone tax revenues from family trusts. They refer to what is going on at the Department of National Defence. And then there is the Senate.

We saw it very clearly when the last speech from the throne was delivered. Do you think Canadians were impressed when they saw a few senators having a little nap during the speech? This situation is truly unacceptable from a democratic point of view, and it must change.

When you think of it, the request made to the Standing Committee on Government Operations is a healthy initiative. The Senate is not an elected house. It is important to always remember that senators in Canada are not elected. Our system is not at all like the one in the United States or in other countries where senators are elected. When people are elected, they know that it is for a given period of time, for a mandate.

If they do not do their job properly, the public has the last word. This is not the case with senators in Canada: they face no sanction. Whether they are effective or not does not change anything. It makes no difference in the way they are treated. You are not accountable to the public for the position you adopt.

I therefore think the motion is entirely justified. I urge the government to vote in favour. I even think that a message could be sent. If the senators truly wanted to avoid this sort of non-confidence motion, they have all day today to come and tell us that they have changed their position and that they would be ready to appear before the committee. If that happens, the motion would at least have provided an opportunity, through the resulting public debate, to bring home to all Canadians the need for the Senate to be accountable, the need to be able to know to what use the money people pay through their taxes is being put, and whether this money is being spent on the right things. At the same time, it is a perfect opportunity to launch a debate on whether we should continue to pay for a House of non-elected representatives and whether we can afford to have a House that operates like this.

If I were a senator today, I would have jumped at the opportunity to come and defend the manner in which the money was allocated. By refusing to appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations, the senators are leaving themselves even more open to criticism of their activities, because those who do not defend themselves must often bow to their critics' version of events.

In the present situation, it is very clear and very obvious that the senators appear to have a great deal of difficulty in defending the way they use their budget. It is a very bad sign, and a very poor message to be sending to the Canadian people, a message which encourages us to ask other questions, and to question the very idea

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of the Senate. The members of this House will have the opportunity to do so, thanks to the vote there will be on a motion, and to decide whether or not they are in favour of abolishing the Senate.

The motion, which will be discussed next week, will go still further into the problem. It will raise basic questions such as: Do we need a House whose members are not elected? Do we need a second House?

Finally, this is one way of updating the parliamentary process. Just because an institution has been in place for 125 years is not necessarily a reason for maintaining it. This is but a small example, but in a way the very structure of the country is somewhat the same.

It is not true that, just because Canada was created in 1867, the relationship between the various communities of which it is composed, between the people of Quebec and the people of Canada, must remain the same in future. Populations create their own structures; the structures are not there to be a hindrance and to create inefficiency.

In conclusion, I will state that the Reform Party motion is a valid one. It is too bad that this motion is not votable. I would have liked us to have been able to send a message to the Senate, through a vote in the House, that we here are really frustrated, dissatisfied, and somewhat insulted, by the fact that the senators have not deigned to come before the committee on government operations to defend their votes. As a result, we could tell them: "You do not wish to be held responsible, so we will not make the money available".

• (1200)

If the government were to take such a position, we would really have an opportunity to see which House has the upper hand, since this is an important issue. Which one ought to have the final say, in Canada?

Now I understand from the debate on the motion and from the government's position that the government is ignoring the Senate's inefficiency. It is saying: "This can go on the way it has for several years". Senators representing Senate divisions can carry on this way.

I would say to the people of the Senate divisions of Grandville, La Salle, Repentigny or Thousand Islands: "Call your senator and ask him what he is doing with the money he is responsible for. I know very well, however, that there is a basic problem: Canadians do not know which senator is responsible for their area, because no representations are ever made.

Do you remember seeing senators touring your area to discuss local issues? Never, because they lack the basic credibility of being elected by the people. I think, today, that the Senate is archaic, somewhat of an anachronism. The fact that the senators are

refusing to come and defend their budgets is even clearer evidence of this anachronism.

I think the Senate's and senators' behaviour needs correcting. The government must take note of today's debate and require the Senate to provide an accounting. If the Senate refuses, we have one more argument for its abolition.

[English]

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in this debate on the accountability of the Senate of Canada.

I first want to congratulate my colleagues who have spoken before me on this subject, especially the member for Comox—Alberni from my home province of British Columbia. I wish to associate myself with his comments and the fact that the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has refused to send a representative to justify Senate expenditures. Rather, the other House chooses to disregard modern democratic principles of accountability.

My colleague's motion actually reads:

Given that the Senate has failed to respond to a message from the House requesting that a representative of the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations to account for \$40,000,000 of taxpayers' money, this House express its dissatisfaction with the Senate for disregarding modern democratic principles of accountability and, as a consequence, notice is hereby given of the opposition to Vote 1 under Parliament in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997.

As my colleague has explained, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations has made such a request and we have only had the Senate's refusal to appear as a response. A year ago I was Senate critic for the Reform Party. I wish I could say the Senate is changing or showing signs of change, but the same arrogance is still there. The Senate does not feel it is accountable to Canadians. This is unacceptable to my colleagues, it is unacceptable to me and it is unacceptable to Canadians.

There is enough disillusionment in this country with accountable elected politicians. Surely the members of the Senate of Canada do not need to add to it by arbitrarily increasing their own budget.

• (1205)

The question today is: Should the Senate be accountable to the Canadian taxpayers for the \$40 million plus in taxpayer dollars that it wants to spend? The Canadian people can do nothing about making senators accountable if the government's will is not there. The only answer is an elected Senate.

We as Canadians have watched many parts of the world move toward more democratic forms of government. Will any of us ever forget our feelings of disbelief followed by joy when the Berlin wall was destroyed? It opened the eastern bloc to the fresh spring

breezes of democracy. Right now the media is full of complete reports of the democratic election for the president in Russia. The people of the former Soviet Union can now look forward to electing their political leaders and also holding them accountable.

Why then do we in Canada have to put up with an unelected second chamber of our central Parliament? The answer is that if we had a government that had the political will to make the Senate elected and accountable, then it would happen.

As the former Reform critic of the Senate I introduced a motion for a triple E Senate. It was selected by the House committee to be debated for one hour. The motion stated: "That in the opinion of this House, representation in the Senate should be equal from each province, elected by the people and have sufficient power to make it effective in order to better represent the people of the less populous provinces". Advocating a triple E Senate has been part of the platform of the Reform Party of Canada virtually from its inception.

As past Senate critic I had the opportunity to research the Senate. Senate reform, for the Reform Party and for all of us from the less populous provinces, addresses a feeling of alienation from central Canada and the central government which has grown through the last two decades. We believe that equality of representation of provinces in the second chamber of Canada's central Parliament would give the people of the less populous provinces real clout over the policy agenda of the federal government.

This feeling of alienation stems from the reality that governments will respond positively to pressure exerted by the provinces or the regions that contain the largest portion of our population. We know where that is: in Ontario and Quebec. Sometimes these policy responses are at the expense of the desires of the smaller provinces.

The Senate was designed to perform two main functions. It is a safety check, the review of legislation emanating from the Lower House. It must also provide a forum wherein the regions would have a voice in the central Parliament's law making process. It was intended to provide an institutional voice to small governments and perhaps to minority groups against the popular majority of the lower House. One could say that it was designed to act as a political bridge between the component parts of the federation and the central government.

The work of the Senate as presently constituted in the scrutiny of legislation has been praised by most political commentators. Senate committees have carried out useful investigative studies over the years which have added new information to policy development.

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Yet criticism has been levelled against senators who have stayed in the post regardless of the fact that they may show up only once a year, some less than that. An elected Senate would get rid of this practice. This criticism stems from the fact that senators used to be in for life. Also because of undeserving patronage appointments, Canadians have lost respect for the Senate, so much so that it has resulted in uncomplimentary terms of reference such as the old boys club.

The main criticism of the role played by the Senate in our country concentrates on the inability of the institution to represent the regions. This has led to great frustration predominantly in western Canada. There is a definite perception that because of sheer numbers central Canada sets and controls the public policy agenda.

Following this argument is the feeling that because they are not elected, Senators have no legitimacy to act. Therefore even if senators decided to start voting in regional or provincial blocks, they would not have the ultimate legitimacy to do so since they are not elected by the people of Canada. This is a strong reason for an elected Senate.

Bear in mind as well that our present Senate's powers are virtually equal to those of the House of Commons except that while it can initiate legislation, except money bills, it cannot hold up constitutional amendments for longer than 180 days. With these two exceptions, it is important to note that it can defeat, amend or indeed stall all legislation coming from the House of Commons. However, because of its lack of legitimacy its exercise of these powers is constantly subject to criticism. Therefore, this lack of equality of representation and legitimacy to act to either defend or promote the interests of the smaller provinces has given great impetus to the movement of Senate reform.

● (1210)

While the impetus to a triple E Senate seems to have grown out of actions by the previous Liberal government to implement the national energy program, there have been other proposals for reform. In fact, I have a Canadian Press release which speaks of the idea for an elected Senate. It is dated July 1992, before many of us were in this House. The Canadian Press release states:

At least 19 senators are interested in running for a seat in an elected Senate, a survey of the upper House shows. But 34 of the existing 99 appointed senators told the Canadian Press they would not run if an election were called under the current plan for a revamped Senate—.But even if the plan is ratified by the federal government and the provinces, the first Senate election is not expected before 1997.

Most of us are aware that we have already had an elected senator in Stan Waters from Alberta. So this prophesy did not hold true.

Quebec Tory Gerald Beaudoin, who was co-chairman of a Commons-Senate committee on constitutional reform, was initially critical of the Senate proposal.

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saying it would mark an unacceptable loss of power for Quebec. But now he thinks the proposed Senate will be interesting and he will probably be a candidate.

Other prominent Senators interested in running include: Conservative Pat Carney of B.C., a former Tory cabinet minister, and Liberals Joyce Fairbairn of Alberta, and Michael Kirby, Jerry Grafstein and Royce Frith, all of Ontario. Gil Molgat a Liberal from Manitoba says he is interested but wants more details on the proposed Senate. "Our system needs checks and balances and that is what an elected Senate would provide", he said.

Even at that time it was recognized that the Senate is not accountable.

Then there is Nova Scotia's John Macdonald, one of two lifetime appointees left in the Senate. At age 86 he said he is ready to take on all comers. "I would be prepared. I like being a Senator. I have been there a long time. I would like to complete it".

It is not an unacceptable position for some senators to be elected. Obviously, the idea has been discussed at length. In actual fact, the idea of an elected Senate attained prominence in 1981 with the publication by the Canada West Foundation of "Regional Representation: The Canadian Partnership". It was based on work done by Dr. David Elton of the foundation and Mr. Burt Brown of Alberta. In 1982 Senator Duff Roblin, former Premier of Manitoba, proposed that senators be elected on a basis similar to that in Australia.

The first federal parliamentary report to espouse an elected Senate was written by the Special Joint Committee on Senate Reform and released in 1983. It is noteworthy that the Senate co-chair of the committee is now the Speaker of the Senate, Senator Gil Molgat of Manitoba. More recently the Meech Lake accord in 1987 proposed a hybrid type of appointment procedure for Senate vacancies. In 1992 we are all aware that the Charlottetown accord proposed an elected Senator.

I remember how this was interpreted in British Columbia by our present NDP government. As a matter of fact it was the B.C. provincial government's interpretation of proposals for Senate change in the recent Charlottetown accord that helped to precipitate my entry into politics. At that time there was some suggestion that the provincial government would control the format of how the elections by the people would proceed. In B.C. statements were made by elected government MLAs and the premier that we would have equal men and women and that the government would look after the candidate selection for Senate seats. Hardly democratic.

The first statement flies in the face of Canadian tradition. Canadians have long been committed to a system of merit for job applications, that is, those who can do the job best should do it. Any potential candidates for a Senate position must come from all spectrums of the province, not from government's patronage lists.

We in the House know that during the 1980s a unique event in the history of the Senate occurred in Alberta. Alberta enacted legislation to enable persons to stand for election on a province-wide basis to contest a vacant Senate seat. The election was held and Reform Party member Stan Waters topped the polls. He was subsequently summoned to the Senate by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. Unfortunately we lost Stan Waters before he had the opportunity to show Canadians just how valuable an accountable senator could be.

● (1215)

However, the election of Senator Stan Waters is a valuable precedent. Unfortunately it was not followed with later Senate appointments from Alberta. The recent Senate appointment of Senator Jean Forest is a travesty against the recent democratic election process in Alberta which elected Stan Waters.

Very briefly, that is the history of how we got to where we are now. One would conclude that the Reform Party of Canada definitely reflects the will of Canadians with its policy of an elected triple E Senate. However, until we have a government that believes in democracy, rather than rewarding old party faithfuls, we will have no change in the Senate.

It is not just in our dealings with the other place. Democracy seems to be a rare commodity with the government in committees as well. When the members of the House give unanimous consent at second reading to a private member's bill and refer it to a committee, under this government, government members of the committee can disregard all expert testimony by witnesses; witnesses who were brought in by the committee and paid for by the Canadian taxpayer. Government members of the committee can vote down the bill without giving any reason for doing so. Even judges must give reasons for their judgments.

Do we assume that these elected members of the committee are to be held in higher esteem than judges? Are they not accountable to the members of the House for the business of the House? They can go one step further than voting down a bill. They can vote down returning a private member's bill to the House.

How can this be in a democratic country? How can 7, 8 or 9 government members tell 295 elected members that a bill which unanimously passed second reading can disappear? Democracy? I think not.

I am told that a committee is a master of its own fate. That is an interesting phrase. Is it an excuse wherein committee members can act with arrogance, which is so typical of this government which promises one thing on election day, yet does quite the opposite in practice? They promised open, honest government. Shame. De-

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mocracy? Certainly not. I forget, as Mark Antony was heard to say "that these are all honourable men. So were they all honourable men".

I believe the government is as arrogant as members of the other House. The one reality, however, is that this small group of elected MPs, who arrogantly made fun of the very real grief and pain suffered by our senior citizens who, for no legitimate reason, no longer are able to see their grandchildren, is that they will be held accountable for their actions by the Canadian electorate. That time is coming soon.

This government is a master of deceit. In the preamble of Bill C-33 it preached protection of the family. Then it gave special rights to special interest groups and in the same breath destroyed the very foundation of our families, our grandparents, the Canadian citizens who gave us all our present social programs through their many years of hard work and contributed tax dollars.

Is it possible that the Prime Minister can change the present system of appointment and patronage in the Senate? It is a simple matter for the Prime Minister, in conjunction with the government of a province where there is a vacancy, to hold an election. It was done in Alberta quite successfully, as we have heard, resulting in the election of the late Stan Waters.

We recently received direct support from the premier of Alberta to hold an election to fill Alberta's vacant Senate seat. However, the government has convinced itself that it can ignore the wishes of the people and still remain popular. It might be successful for a while, but in the long term ignoring the wishes of Canadians is a fateful political game.

It may take 10 years to balance the budget, 10 years to lower taxes and 10 years to reform the Canada pension plan, but with the Liberals in power it only takes 10 minutes to reward friends with Senate appointments.

In this era in which democracy is sweeping eastern Europe it is shameful that the government continues to treat Canadians with such disrespect. When we are trying as desperately as we can to restore the faith of Canadians in our public institutions, how can we sit by and allow members of an appointed body to ignore their duty to be accountable?

We are in a time of fiscal restraint. All Canadians are being asked to bear some of the burden of reducing the deficit so we may get to a balanced budget. All Canadians seem willing to accept part of the burden, except of course those in the Senate. It seems that Senators are immune from deficit reduction, immune from accountability and immune from the reactions of the people of Canada. The more they defy democracy, the more they make the case for Senate reform.

• (1220)

I am proud to be a member of the Reform Party of Canada. It is the only political party that believes in true Senate reform, the triple E Senate, a Senate which is characterized by equality, effectiveness and above all elected by the people of Canada.

It is a fundamental belief of members of the Reform Party that all Canadians are equal before the law. All Canadians are equal and all Canadian provinces are equal. The Senate's membership should reflect this equality. Let the House of Commons reflect the population differences in Canada's provinces but let the second chamber reflect equality and accountability.

When the Senate is considering legislation let it be said that no one province is above or better than another. The second chamber visualized by Reform would have sufficient power to ensure it is effective. At present the Senate has powers virtually equal to that of the House of Commons. Except for the introduction of money bills and the possible veto the Senate holds over constitutional changes, its powers equal those of the House of Commons. However, its powers are rarely exercised. But when it is elected I would hope that with legitimacy would come the exercise of power.

Therefore, in order to make Senate reform meaningful the result must be a Senate with real significant powers that can be exercised should the government fail to take into consideration the wishes of those in Canada's less populous provinces. How many times have we seen the government fail to heed the wishes of Canadians?

In order for Senate reform to be successful, the end product must be elected senators. The second chamber must become a truly democratic chamber. The people of Canada must have a direct say in who will represent them in the Senate.

As I said at the outset, this could be done now. In fact my colleagues and I are appalled that it has not been done. Perhaps if the Prime Minister had moved in this direction we would not be dealing with a situation where the Senate is defying the House of Commons on budgetary matters.

I deplore the actions of the Senate and I urge all members of the House to support the motion before us today. I would like to echo the question that was asked by my colleague. What is the Liberal position on our motion? Should the members of the government be held accountable to Canadians for spending taxpayers' dollars?

Following that line, should the Senate be accountable to the Canadian taxpayer for the \$40 million plus of the taxpayers' money it is going to spend? The reality is that this is a part of the federal government's plan to spend the taxpayers' money which is not accountable. From what I have heard from the few people speaking on the opposite side of the House today, there is nothing to suggest that they intend answering our question and dealing in a satisfacto-

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ry way with the wishes of all Canadians on spending money which we do not yet know what it is for.

I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House that this motion be made votable.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is there unanimous consent of the House to have this motion votable?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): We do not have unanimous consent.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if my colleague would like to make a comment about a short speech made by the hon. Senator Edward M. Lawson in the Senate within the last week or two. He was referring to myself and I thought the House might find this interesting.

He said:

Honourable senators, I am sure that honourable senators are as sick and tired as I am of hearing statements made by Reform Party members—

One statement that is troubling me presently is a recent remark from one of our Reform MPs from British Columbia, Jim Abbott. He ventured the opinion that, of B.C.'s six senators, only one is making a visible contribution, and that is Senator Pat Carney. However, I am sure that if you asked him on what basis this statement was made, or if he had researched it, his answer would probably be, "Research? In the Reform Party we do not need research. We are encouraged to make spontaneous statements without benefit of research." Did he interview any senators as to their record of service? Did he interview Senator Perrault, who has a lifetime of service inside and outside the Senate, or Senator Austin, or Senator Marchand, or Senator St. Germain across the way? No. Did he check it out?

Any British Columbian can look in any direction, from Canada Place to the new airport, and see the fingerprints and stamp of B.C. senators who made some of those things possible.

• (1225)

Some hon. senators went hear, hear. I guess they woke up. Senator Lawson continues:

I, for one, am a little tired of hearing these statements by Reform Party members. I do not know if they are on a quota system, under which they are encouraged to make so many dumb statements per week or per month. In any event, these attacks come like waves—

I think I should draw to Preston Manning's attention that it is—wrong for MP Jim Abbott to be making false accusations against heterosexual senators from British Columbia.

What a speech. What does my colleague think?

Mrs. Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments and his question regarding Senator Lawson's comments. On the one point, members of the Senate in the past have worked well on individual issues.

We are all aware of Pat Carney of course because of the hard work she has done to save our light stations, which we really have to maintain on the B.C. coast.

I must point out that Senator Lawson has a lot of fallacies in what he said. First of all, I would like to make it known right now that when Reform members get up, our material is researched and we know what we are talking about. We speak as a direct response of the Canadian people. I think we do a fairly good job of that.

Senator Lawson is speaking about something that is the problem with the Senate. It is not good enough to say that in the past Senator Perrault did such and such, or in the past, another senator did such and such. If senators are going to be effective and accountable to the Canadian people, they have to do something all the time, the same way that elected members of Parliament must maintain their vigilance and respond constantly to issues that are in front of the Canadian electorate.

I would say to Senator Lawson that my colleague's comments were quite accurate. To my knowledge and according to what I have read, the only Senator I have heard from B.C. in the last two years has been Senator Pat Carney who has done an excellent job. I have heard of the other senators in past years before I was elected but very little now. I would have to ask Senator Lawson to please update his material a bit and do a little research to speak from knowledge.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the Senate was asked to respond to a message requesting it to send a representative to a House of Commons committee to justify the \$40 million it spends of Canadian public money.

The senators disregarded the request so the Reform Party put a motion forward for debate that says: "Since you do not want to come and justify any of your \$40 million, then we would like to see the House of Commons vote down or be in opposition to vote 1 which is the \$40 million budget of the Senate".

In this day and age in Canada, if you cannot appear before a committee to justify the expenditure of \$40 million, do you deserve it? Should you have it? Are you accountable? When are you going to be accountable? Why not?

If we are not going to be accountable for Senate expenditures in this House, then where? If we are not going to be accountable in 1996 or in any other year, then when?

• (1230)

We heard the member for Vancouver Quadra talk about the lack of restraint of an unelected House, which the Senate is. It is a bunch of appointed Liberal and Conservative party hacks. Where is the accountability? Do we just throw the senators \$40 million every year and tell them to spend it the way they like and go do their job,

whatever it is? Or, do we tell them to appear before a committee to tell us what is going to happen?

The member for Vancouver Centre spoke this morning and these are some of the things she said about this issue. She said that they are separate Houses, the House of Commons and the Senate, so it is none of our business. She said we are wasting time on this issue. I am going to address each one of these in a moment.

The member gave numerous innuendoes of things like bigotry and so on. I am going to address that. She then said that the Reform Party is digging up another issue and let us get on to more important issues. I sure as heck am going to address that.

The Senate spends over \$40 million a year but hey that is okay, it is only our tax money, folks, so do not worry about it. We can see the interest over there in the \$40 million. The people in the gallery can see from the attendance just what the interest is.

Let us talk about the separate Houses. If the House of Commons is responsible for approving \$40 million of taxpayers' money of another House down the hall, then it cannot be all that separate. Is it mutually exclusive? If it is so mutually exclusive then why does the Senate not approve its own \$40 million? This is taxpayers' money we are talking about. I really do not care who it is spent on, it is taxpayers' money and we are responsible in this House for it. Senators should appear before a committee and justify it just like anybody else in this country.

The Houses are separate. Okay. If they are separate Houses there should be no linkage between political parties. If they are separate Houses then they must somehow get into the Senate by some separate elected process, right? No. They are not separate Houses at all. The people who are put into the Senate are appointed by the Prime Minister of each government. They are very objective appointments, right? All good Canadians have a shot at getting a Senate position, right? Yeah, right.

Let us look at a couple of appointments from the list. One was a former Manitoba MLA, a former provincial Liberal leader in Manitoba. I guess that is not too objective. Another one was a former provincial cabinet minister. That is not too objective. He was from the right party, though.

Another person recently appointed was the former MP for Ottawa—Vanier. He was pulled out of a job he had actually campaigned for. He left the people who had elected him. These people were never given a choice as to whether he stayed in the House of Commons or went to the Senate. He was plucked right out of the riding and someone else ran in his place. That is really objective.

Another appointment is of a former New Brunswick Liberal campaign manager for a leadership bid. And the member over there has the gall to try and tell the rest of Canada that these are separate

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Houses? These are not separate Houses. Yes, you can look for the rest of your members. They are not around, are they? These are not separate houses at all. The people in one House have been put there as a result of personal selection of the head of government, the Prime Minister.

• (1235)

Is that wrong? The opposition the last time around, which was the Liberal Party, said this:

“The issue is not whether he has had some good appointments”, Deputy Liberal Leader Sheila Copps said, “this issue is that once again Brian Mulroney is manipulating the system for his own ends, all the while publicly claiming to be holier than thou”.

That was when the Conservatives made Senate appointments, but hey, it is okay now that the Liberals are in government. That makes a difference. Here is another quote:

“He is building a huge millstone which is going to be hanging on the neck of Jean Charest or Kim Campbell”, said Boudria. “They have to go into the next election with that around their necks”.

That comment on an appointment to the Senate was made while the individual was in opposition. He happens to be in government now. “This one just boggles the mind”, said a Liberal in opposition. She has been almost everybody's favourite cabinet minister but that was over here. That is not now.

The member for Vancouver Centre is wrong when she says these are separate Houses. Unfortunately they are not separate Houses. If they were, the Senate would be elected, it would be equal and it would be effective.

“We are wasting our time on this issue”, says the member for Vancouver Quadra. “It is only \$40 million. Heck, it is only taxpayers' money”. That is a sad commentary for \$40 million, \$1 million, \$40,000 or \$400. A lot of people have to work and pay taxes for that. For a Liberal to stand up and say we are wasting time on this issue is irresponsible.

Some of the innuendo that was put—hi, George, it is nice to see you.

Mr. Proud: I just came in to see you.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): It is nice to see another Liberal.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): They are heckling. All four are heckling. This is hard to take. It is worse than question period.

With respect to some of the innuendo by the member for Vancouver Centre, there is something wrong with a government that says a person or a party which disagrees with something like immigration policy is racist or when a party, groups or individuals disagree with the gay rights legislation that they are homophobic. There is something wrong with the message the government is

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sending out across this land. The innuendo by the member that was said earlier is strongly resented.

• (1240)

The most important comment we have to look at is: "Let us get on to more important issues". Well, let us do that. Let us deal with the Young Offenders Act. Yes, the Liberals looked after that one, did they not? They did a good job on that one except for virtually every victim across the country who says: "You did not do what we asked". So let us get on with more important issues. Just when is the Liberal government going to do that? The government has had ample opportunity to deal with that issue and has not done so.

There are a number of useless bills coming through the House of Commons. For anybody who has the time to look at the list of bills that have been put through this place in two and one-half years, bills that do not matter at all to the average Canadian outside of this House, it is astounding.

For a Liberal member to say: "Let us get on with more important issues", I would agree. Just when is that going to happen? Those folks over there are three years into their mandate. Hello, is anyone home?

Mr. Proud: The lights are on.

Mr. Abbott: Not too brightly.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): George, you stop heckling me. My mother is watching this.

It took three years for the Reform Party to bring victims rights into the House and we had to stuff them at the members opposite, to get them to do something. And the member says: "Let us get on with more important issues". When will that come?

Of course this year we are only overspending \$35 billion or close to that. What does it matter to them? It is only \$35 billion, over \$100 million since the Liberals were elected, \$100 billion, a million billion. I do not think they know the difference anyway. There is the problem. The Liberals are overspending to the tune in excess of \$100 billion over three years and the member says: "Let us get on to more important issues". Give me a break.

There are kids up there in the gallery wondering just exactly when the government will get on to more important issues. Whilst we are overspending \$35 billion and with a debt load in excess of \$570 billion, where does the motion we have today fit in with this? "It is not much; it is only \$40 million. Heck, we overspend by \$35 billion a year". It is petty cash to you guys, is it not?

So do not bring the Senate in here. Do not ask the senators how they are spending their money. Do not ask them about their jaunts around the country. Do not ask them about where they are splurging or how they can cut back. That does not appear to be important.

The member for Vancouver Quadra said it all. What we have here, he said, is a lack of restraint of a non-elected House. That is okay. It reminds me of the minister of immigration's policy with the Immigration and Refugee Board: "It can make mistakes. It is autonomous. That is another place. It has nothing to do with us. I cannot have any input into that".

If the government makes enough of these organizations autonomous, then we will not have to have anybody appear at all, do we? We will just overspend every year, raise the debt and we will go on our merry way. It is only the next generation that is sitting up there who will have to worry about that.

• (1245)

I do not know. We give \$30,000 or \$40,000 away here and there on grants. We are only talking about \$40 million to an organization which does what exactly?

An hon. member: Sober second thought.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Sober second thought. I would say second thought.

This motion is serious. We have no speakers over there because they have been told by the boss, I am sure, not to speak to this because it is about their friends over there. Forty million dollars is being spent and the people who spend it are not accountable. We owe more than that to the people who are paying the bills. Regardless of whether it is the Senate, the RCMP, Correctional Service Canada, MP salaries, MP pensions or whatever else, one must be held accountable. For the Liberal Party to say or do otherwise is irresponsible.

It is no wonder a large segment of society today is concerned about politicians and governments or any group of people that would whisk the money from their pockets to an unaccountable group. It is a very sad commentary.

I suppose I cannot ask for unanimous consent again. They will not give me unanimous consent, so I will not ask. I wish these folks were not so much like sheep. It would be a really nice place to come to and talk about accountability, about spending money and even about trying to get a Senate elected, effective or equal. However, we are dealing with traditional party mentality where you do as you are told and you do as we say. It will not change until we move this government out.

There are only 52 of us here. Every time we stand up to speak about something they put their PR people on it and they fight us as best they can. However, we will not go away on this issue or on any other issue because of lack of performance, because of lack of caring or because of plain arrogance. That is the best way I can put it.

I am sure my time is up. I have made my point. It is very difficult and frustrating to come from British Columbia or any other province into the House knowing full well a majority government will not change. It will continue to put its friends and party hacks in a place it calls a chamber of sober second thought. Those people

will continue to be unaccountable. They will spend money the way they wish. The government will continue to ignore the wishes of many Canadians until it gets booted out of office, just like the other party from Jurassic Park.

• (1250)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the member for Vancouver Centre got up and displayed her ignorance of this issue. Then the member for Vancouver Quadra got up and expressed his knowledge of this issue. The reason the Liberals are not putting anyone up is the difficulty the member for Vancouver Quadra got into.

Because this motion gives notice of opposition to the Senate estimates we pointed out the purpose of this was to put pressure on the Senate to make it account for the \$40 million or so of spending. We do need a majority in this House to approve spending. We asked the member for Vancouver Quadra for his perspective.

It was very instructive that he was not prepared to state the obvious, that the people of Canada should have some kind of control over the amount of money being spent by the upper Chamber, that the people of Canada have a right to know these things. He would not admit it.

I take the member for Vancouver Quadra as being an honourable gentleman. He waffled and he side stepped and he gave all sorts of soft answers. Even when we tried putting a very precise question to him, as did a member from the Bloc, the member would not answer the question.

Would the member for Fraser Valley West agree that the real reason the members of the Liberal Party, the people who are in control of the government, will not put up any speakers is they are afraid they will be seen in the hypocritical position they are taking on this issue? Would he agree they are not prepared to stand up and be counted in this House to answer whether this House as the elected people of Canada, responsible to the people of Canada, not also exercise responsibility for the \$40 million currently being spent by the Senate. I suggest to my colleague the Liberals have no backbone, no courage and will not stand up again in this House on this issue.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, no I do not agree with that, right?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: The answer is yes, Randy.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): The answer is yes, and I was told to say that by my party, just like the Liberals.

There is a problem over here, is there not? This place is full of people. Why do they not all get up? Why does one of them not get

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up, talk to this issue and explain why a member of the Senate cannot come forward and justify spending \$40 million in taxpayer bucks? Let us have at them in the questions after their speeches.

What is wrong? It is embarrassing. I hope people watching and listening are asking why the Liberals will not stand up and justify, why they will not support the Senate's coming forward to a committee of the House of Commons to justify how it spends \$40 million of taxpayer money.

Perhaps we should stop paying \$40 million in taxes. Perhaps we should say if you do not want your money you will not operate. That takes backbone, something the Liberals do not have.

An hon. member: You are getting personal.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Getting personal? You have not seen personal yet.

This is serious, and we do not know how to make the government see it is serious, and it is sad. It is sad that my kids have to pay the taxes they do. It is sad that my kids my not have jobs like us baby boomers. It is sad that perhaps my mother's pension will be a lot less than what she thought. It is so sad that a government cannot even look at \$40 million and why it is spent. The real reason I suppose is it is like firing your sister, is it not? We do not want to question these folks over here, after all we did put them in. They did work for us on the campaign trail, did they not? They are in touch with everything today even though Mr. Trudeau appointed a few and lord knows who else.

• (1255)

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the member for Fraser Valley West is a hard act to follow.

Do we need a Senate? Many Canadians do not think so. They think it is irrelevant, it is held in contempt or it is the butt of jokes, and the polls would indicate that is the case as well.

We do not hear this about other senates in the democratic free world where we have elected senates. We do not hear that about the senate to the south of us. What is the main reason? It is very clear the main difference and the main reason why they are credible and accepted is they are elected and very often they are the prime people who are responsible for regional interests. They are accountable and that follows from being democratically elected.

There are times in Canada when our Senate has been very relevant. Primarily this is when it is not a rubber stamp. There are a few times when the Senate is not nominated by the government of the day. We saw this in this Parliament for the first couple of years and there were some issues on which the other place did some very responsible things. Of course, that is not convenient or comfortable for the government of the day.

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There are two kinds of senators. There are many ways we could categorize senators. There are those who were previously elected officials, such as members of Parliament, who know what democratic accountability is. From my province of British Columbia there are a couple of members who leap to mind as being in that category. Generally speaking, if we were to ask the public in British Columbia who were the B.C. senators, those two individuals would be most recognizable. If we were to ask for a credibility quotient those two individuals would once again have the highest credibility quotient. Very often they are head and shoulders above the rest.

There is a reason for this. They carry the tradition, the responsibilities and the accountability that had to go with everything an elected official has in their terms of reference. They have carried that into that other place.

The Senate has left itself wide open for criticism on so many fronts. All of our institutions are challenged if they do not change with the times. We need look only at royalty in Great Britain and other places.

• (1300)

The old political institutions, the old political parties, the whole party discipline system, these practices are changing. There is a new found interest in direct democracy. The Reform Party is a reflection of direct democracy coming to the House of Commons.

Some of the party discipline that has been traditional in the House of Commons is starting to change in the governing parties in my view as a consequence of the Reform Party's presence in the House of Commons. We saw that on the sexual orientation bill, Bill C-33, with the backbench Liberals wanting to express a non-government point of view. We understand the same thing is to express itself with regard to Newfoundland schools coming up.

This will not go away. It is the thin edge of a very fat wedge. The old political parties will have to reinvent themselves, as will the Senate. The more the House of Commons changes and the more the Senate entrenches itself in its non-elected and non-accountable ways, the more irrelevant it will become. This is a shot across the bow for the other place. If the Senate were elected it would follow that this would create accountability and we would not need to be having this debate in all likelihood.

Once again, by bringing this motion to the House, Reform is rocking the boat on the status quo. I was delighted to hear the comments from our Bloc colleague who sees our point. Once again we find the Liberal government defending the status quo. It has exploited the current system to its advantage for decades. It is not difficult to understand why it wants to defend the status quo even though it is indefensible in the public's mind. What a sad spectacle this is.

The senators will stand on principle, so the speculation goes, and not appear before the House committee to defend their estimates.

This is not a House of Lords. This is Canada where our young country should be creative, constructive and invigorated by fresh challenges, not cloistered and defensive in every way and entrenched in historical irrelevance.

No senator has appeared before a committee of the House of Commons since 1888. This would be the first time since 1869 that any senator has ever appeared before a House committee to defend expenditures. Does this precedent mean this should be the case? No, quite the contrary.

This is a very important reinventing of a very important institution. There is symbolism that in the main estimates this is vote one. One could hardly say this has simply been overlooked through all the years, nor could one say that this time. By virtue of its mere placement, it is impossible to overlook.

Canada has had in its history one elected senator, Stan Waters from Alberta. Stan Waters from Alberta ended every speech in the Senate with, I believe: "And besides all that, the Senate should be reformed". I understand he did that every time. A wake up call is needed. It is unfortunate the late Stan Waters is not here to witness what we are going through today, which appears to be of such little interest to the government.

• (1305)

The Senate has always tended to be the home for those of privilege, accustomed to perks, travel and expense accounts. Audits generally turn a blind eye to those individuals who enjoy such prestige. It was only in the 1980s that the House of Commons got control of its operations and procedures. Until that time it also was enjoying very loose control procedures. Now it is time for the Senate to get under the microscope and face those same expectations of the taxpayers if it wishes to be something that was once revered and not held in contempt.

I co-operated with a senator from British Columbia and a senator from Nova Scotia to carry on an ad hoc parliamentary committee, joint committee hearings in British Columbia on the light station issue. This was a good and valuable exercise. It was good for British Columbians, it was good for me, it was good for the senators, it was good for these institutions and in my mind displayed some of the things that could occur and would occur on a regular basis if we had two institutions reformed in some minor and in some major ways.

It took creativity on our part. In a sense we were battling the status quo in order to get this ad hoc parliamentary committee on the road. We did not get help from very many people. When we made the final report, which I think was a valuable report, the House denied me the unanimous consent to table it in the House. I think it was a loss to the House, and there should be a provision for doing things differently. If members want to participate in these kinds of things the House should encourage them and the product

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of those hearings or procedures should automatically be tabled in the House.

The two senators with whom I participated are previous members of Parliament of long standing. They understood the system, accountability and their responsibility to the people and the taxpayers. One senator was in cabinet for an extended period of time and has a very high credibility index, in particular in British Columbia which is where she is from.

I do not want to see an end to the Senate. We get a taste of how useful the Senate could be from time to time, especially when representing regional interests. Let us join the 21st century before we leave the 20th century.

A 1991 auditor general's report was referred to in earlier speeches by other members. It is useful to look at what is being said. This is important stuff. I have gone through the executive summary. I do not think very much has changed since 1991 in this regard. If it has changed, let us hear about it. The only way we will hear about it is if we have vote one of the estimates defended by the very people who prepared those estimates, the senators from the appropriate committee.

• (1310)

We found the Senate has neither formally nor informally delegated clear responsibility to management, nor has it made clear for what it will hold management accountable. That is a pretty straightforward recommendation from the auditor general.

The Senate does not adequately report on its administrative, financial or human resource management performance and does not possess sufficient information to enable it to do so systematically. That is pretty straightforward.

To improve accountability the Senate should periodically publish details of travel, telecommunications and office expenditures of senators. It is amazing what public disclosure will do for accountability.

Senators have insufficient incentives to manage their office expenses with due regard for economy and efficiency. The details of the expenditures should be publicly reported.

There are lots of reports in every bureaucracy that sit on shelves and gather dust. When we are talking about expenditures of taxpayer funds, there is no more important single role for members of Parliament and for the House of Commons than to be watchdogs and to be calling for accountability for the expenditures of taxpayer funds.

When we get vote one on the estimates and an organization, the other place virtually thumbing its nose at the House of Commons

standing committee responsible for going over the estimates, there is something very wrong. The public deserves better.

The final statement in the auditor general's report recommends that where appropriate the operational mandate should be clarified, costs ascertained, opportunities for productivity improvement seized and the types and levels of service provided should be re-examined to see if other less costly levels of service might also be acceptable to senators.

I felt very blessed to talk to this item today. I was beginning to wonder if there were any way as members of Parliament we could talk in a substantive way about the functioning of the other place.

I understand there is historical reticence to do so but I also understand that historical reticence is leading us nowhere. It is leading to the abolition of the Senate. I do not endorse the abolition of the Senate. I would like to see the Senate reformed.

Organizations that dig in their heels are setting themselves up for a much bigger fall than institutions that embrace change, that smell the winds of change and decide they want to seek a fresh mandate, new systems, that they want to be in step with or ahead of the times. It is long overdue in this longstanding Canadian institution that we are speaking about today. That is my strongest recommendation.

• (1315)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, there must be some reason that not only this Prime Minister, but Brian Mulroney, Pierre Trudeau and all of the prime ministers before them from the traditional parties have gone out of their way to ensure that their selected people go to the Senate.

I wonder if the hon. member would agree with me that perhaps it has something to do with the fact that many of these people are put there to be bagmen for the tradition parties. In other words, these people are given taxpayers' dollars to travel around the countryside, to wine and dine people to get contributions for the Liberals and Conservatives.

For example, let us look at a statement of seasonal expense allowances, travel and office expenses paid in 1993-94 for Senator Buchanan. The former premier of Nova Scotia spent \$49,930 in that year travelling around the countryside. Senator Fairbairn is from Alberta. She spent \$49,019. Senator Hays who, it is absolutely no secret, is a Liberal bagman going around collecting money for the Liberals, spent \$42,528 on travel. One of the most interesting cases is a senator who lives in Ottawa. It could be assumed that this senator, who comes from Ottawa and lives in Ottawa, would not have any expenses. Senator Kenny spent \$29,328 going around Canada collecting money for the old line parties.

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There is absolutely no possible way that any Liberal will stand up to be counted in the House today. They realize how absolutely, totally disgusting the process is. These people were appointed by today's Prime Minister and by Brian Mulroney. The traditional parties have continually appointed people to the upper chamber, given them an expense account and told them to go out and collect money for our political party.

I am sure the member would agree with me that this is an absolutely reprehensible practice that must be stopped. But how can it be stopped if these people will not even be accountable for the \$40 million that the Senate is currently spending? It is quite reprehensible.

Mr. Keyes: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Not to cast aspersions on hon. members of this place or of the other place, which in itself is reprehensible, I would point out that Senator Colin Kenny went across Canada on Bill S-7 which is the alternate fuels bill that successfully passed this place.

Mr. Duncan: Madam Speaker, one of the concerns that has been expressed about the Senate is that the people who are appointed to the Senate are there to provide a variety of functions, one of which is the function mentioned by my colleague, to be bagmen. I do not know if there is a gender neutral term. Bag people? Is that what we call bagmen now? I am not sure. Because of the potential negative connotation of the word bagmen maybe nobody is seeking gender neutral terminology for it.

Mr. Volpe: A replenisher of the treasury.

Mr. Duncan: A replenisher of the treasury. That is gender neutral. Other functions, of course, would be to act as a party researcher and to be a part of the election readiness machine.

• (1320)

There are also other concerns about the role of Senators. Certain senators hold corporate directorships. Senators are held to a different set of standards than members of Parliament because they are not elected and the Senate does not deal with legislation in a substantive way. Well, I am afraid they do. The potential is there and I do not think the Criminal Code should be the standard of conduct for any government institution. That is not good enough.

I share concerns that the terms of reference in the selection by patronage of appointment to the Senate often reflect the political wishes of the governing party rather than the greater good of the nation or of representing the regional interests of the region from which the senator is appointed. I believe that is clear.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have here the adopted resolutions of the biennial convention of

the Liberal Party of Canada 1992. I want to read a statement about the Senate which was made at the convention.

“The members of the current House of Commons who are suddenly advocating Senate abolition have no interest in establishing any checks and balances on themselves, in particular, the regional checks and balances which a reformed Senate provides. They are simply seeking to consolidate power in their own hands”. Basically that says that if there is a Senate then there cannot be a consolidation of power in the House of Commons.

I would like to ask the hon. member how he feels about that, particularly since the government makes it a point when it comes to power to appoint a majority in the Senate of their party members. If that is done, how can the Senate remain independent, from the House of Commons?

Mr. Duncan: Madam Speaker, I addressed that in my speech. The Senate does not represent regional interests except when it is not dominated by the government of the day. The government of the day will post haste, at full gallop, do everything in its power to ensure that it dominates the other place. We have seen this in Canada's history time and time again.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the debate and especially to the introductory speech of the Liberals this morning. They said that we should be talking about more relevant things in this place.

The theme of my speech today is, and I have said a hundred times, that unless the system in this country is changed, nothing much else can be changed. The system needs to be changed to bring in democracy. I am going to say that over and over again.

When I was first elected by the people of Yorkton—Melville, they told me two things. They said: “We want you to speak up on our behalf. Breitkreuz, we want you to go to Ottawa and be our voice in Ottawa”. I have tried faithfully to do that on issues like gun control, justice reform, reduction in the size of government, preservation of health care, education, pensions, protection of agricultural issues, more recently on the issue of sexual orientation, and yesterday on the funding of abortions.

• (1325)

They also asked me something else. They wanted me to tell them what is going on in Ottawa. They wanted to know. I want to tell the people of Yorkton—Melville and all Canadians what is going on in the Senate today.

The Senate is not elected. How then do we get our senators? The Prime Minister appoints them. How does he decide who goes into the upper chamber? He chooses the people who have worked the hardest on the Liberal Party campaign, or in the Liberal Party, or in the case of Mr. Mulroney when he was Prime Minister, those who worked hardest for the Conservative Party. The other place is full

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of faithful Liberals and Conservatives, those who have helped those respective governments to get elected. Senators are patronage appointments.

Patronage appointments go to the party faithful, the Liberals and Conservatives who have helped get those parties elected. It is their reward. It is an incentive for them to do what they are told in an election campaign. They do not get to the Senate on merit.

Some people may ask: What is wrong with this? It gets people involved in politics for the wrong reason. They do not get involved to serve their country. They do what they are told to do by the Prime Minister. If they do what they are told they get appointed to the Senate.

The whole system stinks. There is no democracy in it. Those senators are there because they were faithful campaign managers, fundraisers or whatever.

They are still faithful party workers. They are still working for the Liberals and Conservatives raising funds and managing campaigns. Just because they were appointed to the Senate does not mean they begin doing the work of senators, at least not solely. They are still campaign managers, faithful party workers and fundraisers.

Listen to that, Canadians. That is what you are paying for. That is happening right now. That is what is going on here in Ottawa.

I am a watchdog. I was sent here for that reason by my constituents. I am barking loud and long about what is happening here. Taxpayers' funds are being used to pay campaign workers and fundraisers through the Senate of Canada. Public funds go to senators' salaries, expense accounts and travel. Over \$100,000 per senator goes for blatant political reasons. That is wrong.

Some of the names which are coming to light are Joyce Fairbairn, Dan Hays, Ron Ghitter. Joyce Fairbairn and Dan Hays are faithful Liberals. Ron Ghitter was appointed by Mulroney. His whole purpose in being in the Senate is to be the western campaign manager for the Conservatives in order to build that party up. That is happening today and it is wrong, plain and simple. The people ought to know that and I am objecting.

When I came here over two and half years ago I actually thought there was some mechanism by which Parliament was accountable to the people between elections. I am sad to report to Canadians that there is no accountability existing in this House or in the Senate. Frankly, I think that the House of Commons is masquerading as a democracy. It is pretending it is a democracy. The hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia said it best about this time last year when he said: "Canadians elect 295 members of Parliament to represent them in Ottawa, but with all the decision making power resting with a dozen or so ministers

who refuse to be influenced by reasoned argument and persuasion, I have to question the purpose of all the shenanigans that go on in the House in the name of parliamentary debate".

● (1330)

When I was elected I told the voters of Yorkton—Melville that I would be their voice in Ottawa. If all the members in this House had the same attitude the entire process would be opened up so that real democracy could express itself. The Reform Party believes in true democracy, not democracy by cabinet decree as we have it here.

The Liberal government reminds me of a leader of the Soviet Union who once said: "How can you expect me to run a country if no one obeys my decrees?" That was said in the Soviet Union but what is happening here? The Liberal cabinet has nothing to worry about because it has all the power and the full force of government to have all of its decrees implemented.

Under a Reform government all MPs would be able to vote freely on bills such as those concerned with gun control, sexual orientation, immigration, the GST and MP pensions. Another topic I wish I had time to discuss today is the obscene MP pension plan. I hear members opposite mumbling. They do not like some of the comments I am making as they are feeding at the trough of that MP pension plan.

Principle number 16 of the Reform Party constitution states: "We believe in the accountability of elected representatives to the people who elect them, and that the duty of elected members to their constituents should supersede their obligations to their political parties".

A Reform government would not only give MPs the power and responsibility to represent their constituents but would also transfer the power to the people by giving them the right to recall their MPs. There would be MP recall if their member failed to represent them properly in the House, which is a very important democratic measure. Once put in place there would seldom be a need to exercise it.

A Reform government would also give power to the citizens to initiate a referendum by petitioning government to put a question on the ballot at each federal election. That is called citizens' initiative. It would allow people direct input into what is happening in their country. It is very very important to have those kinds of changes made.

I remind everyone that my theme is that unless we change the system we will not change much else in the country. We need to bring democracy back to Canada. Four democratic reforms will guide government between elections when Reform forms the government: free votes, recall, referenda and citizens' initiative.

Supply

The next step in making any federation work is an elected, equal for all provinces and effective Senate, commonly known as the triple E Senate. This is not only essential to making Canada operate more democratically and more effectively, but it is also necessary to ensure that the Senate is accountable to the people, not just the Prime Minister who appointed them in this perfect patronage plum I just described.

Why is this called the highest court in the land? Because we should be sitting here debating the laws that are laid before Parliament. We should be discussing the pros and cons. We should be deciding if it is good legislation that is before this House.

Why do we see very few people here? Because it is not a democratic institution. The people opposite are not allowed to vote on the legislation in a free vote to decide whether or not it is good legislation. They are simply told how to vote. Why sit and listen? This is not the highest court in the land. We are not debating these things and deciding whether or not they are good laws.

Similarly, that is what should be happening in the Senate. Elected senators would not be able to thumb their noses at a request from the House of Commons to explain how they will spend \$40.7 million a year. They would be accountable. Right now they are not accountable to the taxpayers. If they fly across the country on the Liberal or Tory election campaigns, there is nothing the taxpayers can do even though it is their money. The senators are not accountable to the taxpayers of Canada for the \$40 million being spent. "Just give us the money and shut up" is the attitude of the Senate.

• (1335)

The question on whether the Senate is accountable for the money it spends would not even arise if the Senate were doing its job. And if senators were elected, if the Senate was effective and made each province equal in the upper chamber, this question would not even come before this House but that is not the case. They are not doing their job.

For a true federation to work it must have both a lower House and an upper House. The lower House, the House of Commons, gives voters representation by population based on the principle of one person, one vote. The upper House, the Senate, is supposed to represent the regions or the provinces based on the principle of Canada being a federation of 10 equal provinces. Unfortunately Canada's federation of equal provinces was corrupted from the start by giving the Prime Minister the power to appoint senators instead of letting voters in each province elect them.

There have been 16 Senate seats vacated since the election in October 1993. The Prime Minister has appointed a Liberal 16 times. Even Brian Mulroney had a better record than that. The

blatant patronage that is going on in this place rewarding party workers by giving them these hundred thousand dollar positions in the Senate is unconscionable.

Another unfortunate development was when the Senate seats were divided among the four regions of the country instead of equally among the provinces. Because Quebec and Ontario are defined as regions, they have 24 senators each while a province like Saskatchewan only has six senators. There are those who are going to complain that Ontario has more people than Saskatchewan and should have more senators, but remember that Ontario already has 99 members of Parliament to represent its large population. Saskatchewan only has 14 members in this House.

The state of California has two senators, as does North Dakota. We do not hear Californians clamouring for more senators because they know that the only way a true federation can work effectively is if each voter is equal and each state or province is equal.

Remember that the purpose of the Senate is to provide equal representation to each province in the federation. Until our Senate is reformed along these lines, our federation will always suffer from the tyranny of the majority in central Canada. That is one of the key objections the people in my province have about what goes on in this place.

The Prime Minister wants puppets in the Senate so he can simply pull their strings and have them do as he wishes. That is why there are no, or very few, Liberals present today to debate this issue. It makes them very uncomfortable. Absence and silence make a huge statement on this issue.

Why do the Liberals and the Conservatives not want to make changes to the Senate? I have already explained that briefly. They would not have a place to put their party faithful. Where would they put these faithful fundraisers and campaign managers? How would they reward those faithful Liberals who tirelessly worked to get the Liberals elected to the House of Commons? Liberals and Conservatives cannot defend an appointed Senate and that is why they are silent on this issue today.

What is the purpose of the Senate? It is to ensure that legislation does not pass and become law without being properly vetted and to make sure that minorities, regions and certain provinces are protected. The province of Quebec has some valid concerns if it is not properly protected in the Senate. It should ensure that minorities are properly protected and that is one of the reasons we have the Senate. It also could be a control on government spending, spending that is often out of control.

One of the Liberals who introduced the topic on that side of the House asked: Are the two Houses not independent of one another? How can they be independent when the Prime Minister appoints those who will faithfully carry out his wishes? That cannot happen.

Supply

• (1340)

I heard the member complaining that Reformers tried to get the Senate to overthrow Bill C-68. I would like to remind the House that it was the justice minister who lobbied hardest to get his bill through the Senate. It was the justice minister who lobbied hard and the member talks about the need for them to be independent or that Reformers were concerned. Reformers were responding to what the justice minister did.

Until we change the system we will not change much else in this place. We need democracy, not just one day out of every four or five years.

I should also point out that when Bill C-68 on gun control went to the Senate, the Prime Minister ensured it would get through by appointing more senators. Is that independence between the two Houses? Are they separate? Hardly.

One of the reasons members of the Reform Party received the support of 2.5 million Canadians in the last election is that they objected strongly to the elitist system of government. Traditionally Canadians have trusted their leaders. That trust is seriously eroding as they find out more and more how the system works, or in this case does not work.

The government often engages in an exercise called public consultation. It looks at public input as being nice but it never listens to it. If the government would listen to the public input on the Senate, this motion today would become votable. If a free vote were held and if government members were representing their constituents, things would drastically change in this place.

I was involved in some of the public consultations. I was on the human resources committee in 1994 and we went across the entire country. What happened when we were all done? There was hardly a room big enough to hold all the papers the committee received, but nothing ever happened. The same thing happened on the gun control issue. Now the government is doing it on agriculture. What a joke. These public consultations are not even taken into consideration.

What should the Senate be doing? It should be the chamber of sober second thought. Instead of running across the country campaigning for the Liberals and Conservatives, senators should be consulting Canadians in their home provinces to see if the legislation that is being brought forward and intended to be passed is acceptable to them.

I want to talk about one more issue while I am talking about accountability. This issue has been raised with me by my constituents. It is the huge issue of the Supreme Court of Canada. We cannot just talk about the accountability of the Senate without talking about what is also happening in the Supreme Court of Canada.

Through our charter of rights and freedoms our country's fundamental rights are in the hands of nine judges, judges who are not accountable. They are appointed. They interpret laws and determine the direction of justice taken in this country. The laws and the rights in our country are very general and not well defined. Their ultimate meaning is determined by these nine people who may not represent the same views of most Canadians. They can in fact destroy the very fabric of our country. These judges can actually impose their views on the country with disregard for the intent Parliament may have had when the legislation was put in place. They even provide guidelines for legislation that Parliament should pass.

The fear Canadians have with the recent inclusion of sexual orientation as a category in the Canadian Human Rights Act is an example. How do those judges get where they are? They are appointed by the Prime Minister, just like senators are appointed. Will they redefine marriage, the traditional family? These are all concerns people have.

The topic we are discussing today is whether the Senate should be accountable to the taxpayer for the \$40 million it spends. Let us ask the people of Canada. Let us do as I have done. Let us put out an item on a people's tax form—

• (1345)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I remind members not to refer to the presence or absence of members in the House since we all know they are now working in committee or doing constituency work.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, again I make note, even in the light of your comments, that I doubt very much that we will get any Liberals on their feet in the House today to defend that they are not prepared to hold the Senate accountable for spending \$40 million without accountability to the Canadian people.

It is quite shameful that there is no accountability to the Canadian people. I lay it completely at the doorstep of the Liberal majority government. There will not be one more member of the Liberal Party who will stand up because they know it is indefensible.

We also know they will not permit a vote on this. They will not give unanimous consent to make this motion votable because it would be too embarrassing to them and too embarrassing to their friends.

On the issue of accountability, I notice in today's *Maclean's* the following brief comment: "In 1920 the Senate protective services took over security for the Senate side of the Parliament buildings. At that time there were only three guards, each working eight hours a day, seven days a week".

Supply

Today there are 78 personnel, although remaining unarmed, who rely heavily on modern technology. We can understand there might have to be guards in the Senate considering its obscene performance recently over the GST where senators were yelling and ranting and raving and carrying on with kazoos. Maybe that was why we needed the number of guards there.

The point is from 1920 when we had three guards working seven days a week, eight hours a day, and yet today there are 78 personnel in security over there, this increase has never been accounted for. It has never been justified to the Canadians who pay the bills.

I am sure my colleague would agree with me. The people on the opposite side, the Liberals and their predecessors, the Conservatives, same thing, Liberal-Tory, same old story, are not prepared to make the other chamber accountable to the Canadian taxpayer. It is shameful.

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, at the end of my speech I touched on the fact that Canadian taxpayers do not have a direct say into what is happening in the Senate.

If they were asked whether they want to spend \$40.6 million on the Senate, the answer would be very clear. They want to see some bang for their buck. They want to know if these huge increases in security, the huge increases in the spending that have taken place in the Senate over these many years, are actually necessary.

Are there results for the money they are spending? Taxpayers want to know that. They are entitled to have an answer to that. When the Senate refuses to come and give account of how that money is being spent, there is something seriously wrong with our system.

The worst thing in a democracy is an unaccountable system. That is an oxymoron. There cannot be a democracy where there is unaccountability. There needs to be both.

The answer to my colleague's question is that the taxpayers would question the spending that has taken place there. Maybe we should ask them directly in a question what they feel about this whole issue.

Mr. Abbott: Madam Speaker, I wonder if my colleague is also aware that within the time of this Parliament there was actually a move by Progressive Conservative senators to get an increase in their research budget.

• (1350)

I do not know what they would be researching. It became very clear that the reason Conservative senators were asking for an increase in their research budget was they wanted to tap into the Senate research dollars and cents so that Progressive Conservative senators could use their budget for the benefit of a loan to Progressive Conservatives that remain in this Chamber. The Conservative Party had the same arrogant attitude the current

government has and it was wiped down to two seats in the last election

Again it is a question of accountability. I am sure anybody who would go along with the idea in this case of 40 million Canada taxpayer dollars to be used at the whim and will of senators and particularly to divert these research dollars from the Progressive Conservative senators to the lonely two in the back row here, any Canadian of right thinking, would realize this is obscenity of the first order.

When will the Liberal government wake up to the fact that it has a responsibility Canadians for how taxpayer dollars are spent?

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, I was not aware of this. I was aware of some of the other things going on with regard to patronage appointments. This is a shame, an absolute atrocity, using taxpayer money to do research for the Liberal and Conservative parties to see how they can get re-elected. That is a complete misuse of funds and I find it unconscionable and totally unacceptable.

When members across laugh and joke about this issue, I think it is something all Canadian should know about. This is absolutely the lowest form of politics we could get, absolutely the worst. I hope all Canadians give a loud no to the government at the next election.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Yorkton—Melville spoke but I have not heard anybody on this side of the House laughing, chuckling. I question that kind of comment—

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Right over there.

Ms. Catterall: The member keeps trying to interrupt me and it is a little difficult to concentrate. I question that kind of comment. It casts aspersions on the members of the House who are listening to the debate. I ask the member to show a little more respect for his colleagues and not to suggest to the public that something is happening in the House which is not happening.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Resuming debate.

Ms. Catterall: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. As you noted, members spend time in committee. I have been in committee all morning and not in the House.

I wonder if you could clarify the procedure taking place here today. I had understood this is an opposition motion which was tabled late yesterday and it is the choice of the opposition party whether it wishes it to be a votable motion. The opposition did not choose to make it votable.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): This is not a point of order, although I appreciate the clarification of the situation.

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I want to know if I could reply to what the member said because behind her were the people who were laughing and joking.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The 10 minute period allotted for questions and comments is finished. We are now continuing debate.

• (1355)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Madam Speaker, in this land that stretches from coast to coast called Canada, every citizen is represented by three parliamentarians: a member of the provincial legislature, a member of the House of Commons—there are 295 of us playing this role—and a senator in the other House.

As you can see, this is a lot of representation. We could even talk about redundancy, although redundancy sometimes has its merits. For example, every airplane has two control circuits: one on the left and one on the right; the same goes for ships. Thanks to this built-in redundancy, if one circuit fails, the other can take over and ensure the safety of passengers. This shows that redundancy has its uses.

We must now ask ourselves whether redundancy in our parliamentary system, the so-called bicameral system, enhances the safety, reliability and effectiveness of government operations?

If the other House had helped us a few years ago to avoid plunging the country so deeply into debt, we would all undoubtedly agree that our bicameral system, our other House of Parliament, can be effective, but such was not the case. Despite its redundancy, our parliamentary system does not improve government operations or enhance public administration. In fact, the exact opposite is true.

I thank my colleagues from the Reform Party for allowing us today to reflect on the usefulness of the other House. What I find regrettable is that this reflection is restricted to the other House because this House has its own operating flaws. If you consider the obligation to toe the party line, the way the House fulfils its responsibilities, the extent to which each member can represent his or her constituents, you will agree with me that the problem extends to the whole parliamentary system.

We must contemplate a comprehensive review of the parliamentary system from coast to coast. In conclusion, let me say that the partnership proposed by Quebec would lead us not only to a review of the system but also to a modern system that would enable us to face the challenges of the 21st century.

[English]

The Speaker: It being two o'clock, we will now proceed to Statements by Members.

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STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across Canada and around the world volunteerism has contributed immensely to the well-being of our communities.

Here are a few examples of my own community of Mississauga where volunteers play a major role: Interim Place, a shelter for battered women; Distress Line Peel; the cancer, heart and lung associations; the volunteers at hospitals, senior homes and others serving the needy; the many people who have helped coach and run youth activities; the service clubs such as Rotary, Lions and Kinsmen; and all the other men and women who serve on boards and committees to sustain operations, to raise money and to promote goodwill, good health and good communities.

All of their time is given freely without reservation to contribute to making Canada remain the best country in the world.

We all should take the time to thank volunteers for their very special contributions. We do not need to wait for a special day of recognition because I am sure all would agree that every day is a good day to say thank you.

* * *

REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, over three weeks ago Reform urged the government to reverse its current policy on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and grant immediate diplomatic recognition to this country.

Unfortunately the minister has not taken Reform's advice. I have been given a recent letter, dated April 4, 1996, sent by the minister on this topic in which he makes it clear that the government is not prepared to grant diplomatic recognition.

The reason given for this is "concerns regarding bilateral disputes between FYROM and the Republic of Greece". This is a poor excuse, considering that Greece willingly recognized this country on September 13, 1995 and signed an accord to this effect over nine months ago. I have a copy of the accord if the minister would like to read it.

The UN has also recognized the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, so why cannot the Canadian government get its act together, learn the facts and grant diplomatic recognition today?

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[*Translation*]

CHILD FIND

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for several years now the month of May has been the month of the green ribbon of hope campaign sponsored by Child Find.

It is with sadness that I draw attention to this campaign, but at the same time I am convinced of the need to take action to combat this problem, terrible as it is. Tens of thousands of children go missing every year. Whether they just run away or are abducted by a stranger or a parent, the fact remains that, in all these cases, children are lost, which is unacceptable.

To combat this scourge, Child Find takes positive steps at various levels, such as establishing contact and information networks to help in the actual search for missing children and developing public education and training programs.

This year, the month of May is dedicated to awareness as well as fund raising. I urge everyone to support this organization.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is apparently on the verge of announcing a drastic reduction in coast guard services on Lake Winnipeg, the tenth largest lake in the world. The plan to de-commission the *Numao* and the *Avocet* and to downsize the coast guard facility in Selkirk demonstrates a unique combination of gall and short-sightedness.

In public hearings held last year the government was told time and again by the affected communities that Manitoba needs better, not fewer, coast guard services and that the services now being provided were both essential and appreciated.

The Liberals have caught the downsizing disease from large corporations and the result is a decline in the quality of essential public services and a loss of jobs that is deeply wounding to Selkirk, Gimli and other communities all around the country.

The NDP calls on the government to reconsider its plans and preserve this useful public service. Leave the boats in service. Public safety and public protection should be a top priority.

CRAIG SWAYZE

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to a great Canadian, Mr. Craig Swayze.

Craig Swayze started rowing in 1939 as a coxswain in Brockville. He competed in rowing for 13 years, winning a medal at the Royal Canadian Henley in 1947.

With a career in journalism, he promoted rowing with the Brockville *Recorder and Times*, the St. Catharines *Standard* and the *Canadian Press*.

He represented Rowing Canada at the highest international level, FISA, and has received a host of medals and awards for his work in the Canadian and international rowing community and in the media.

As an active member of the rowing community in St. Catharines he has coached high school and club crews, and worked with the rowing club and the Royal Canadian Henley Rowing Corporation.

In 1970 St. Catharines hosted the first world rowing championships outside Europe. Craig Swayze was the chair of that regatta.

The world rowing championship is coming to St. Catharines in 1999 and Mr. Swayze has played a major role in making that a reality.

On May 4 the rowing community in St. Catharines honoured Craig Swayze for his immeasurable contribution to rowing. His dedication to the sport and to his community is an example to all Canadians.

I know my colleagues in the House join me in honouring the man known as the voice of rowing in Canada, Craig Swayze.

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[*Translation*]

PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 16, the 1996 Galien Canada Prize, the highest honour for pharmaceutical research in Canada, was awarded to Hoechst Marion Roussel Canada, of Laval, for the research and clinical studies the company has conducted to determine the effectiveness and safety of the drug known as Sabril.

Research plays a leading role in our society, as it helps improve our quality of life while at the same time increasing our life expectancy and, just as important, reducing treatment costs.

Thanks to pharmaceutical companies, their breakthroughs and their entrepreneurship, Canada can be said to be a leader in pharmaceutical research.

I am proud to associate myself with all Canadians and Quebecers in congratulating the entire staff at Hoechst Marion Roussel Canada and thanking them for their perseverance, determination and professionalism.

* * *

• (1405)

PARTI QUEBECOIS

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, Jackie Robinson arrived in Montreal. Today, we are proud of his accomplishments. However, it is obvious that the Parti Quebecois is not inspired by his example.

The very day that Montreal recognized the key role played by Jackie Robinson in the fight against discrimination, my province of Quebec discriminates against students wishing to pursue their studies outside the province, most of them in English.

While Jackie Robinson overcame the colour barrier, the Parti Quebecois is imposing a territorial barrier and, by the same token, a linguistic barrier.

While Jean Lesage and the Liberal Party promoted freedom, Lucien Bouchard and the Parti Quebecois are driving Quebec back into darkness.

Quebecers no longer have the option of studying in other provinces, amongst their fellow Canadians with whom they built our beautiful country. They can no longer enjoy the freedom of expression, the freedom of movement and the freedom of choice.

It is obvious the Parti Quebecois does not have—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but her time is up.

* * *

LE FLEUVE DAILY NEWSPAPER

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on May 16, the first issue of a much awaited publication was released. I am referring to the daily *Le Fleuve*, in the Lower St. Lawrence. The event did not go unnoticed, since *Le Fleuve* is the first daily to be launched in Quebec in several years.

Published by a team of some 30 workers forming a co-op, *Le Fleuve* has a circulation of 20,000 throughout the Lower St. Lawrence region. The newspaper provides national and international information, in addition to regional information on social, economic, cultural and sporting events.

Let us salute the first daily to be published in the Lower St. Lawrence. Thanks to this publication, people will be in daily contact with their region and with the world.

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Congratulations to the whole team of *Le Fleuve* and long live this new media, which is a long awaited tool of collective development in the Lower St. Lawrence region.

* * *

[English]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when an 11-year-old boy commits a violent crime, the only thing that authorities can do is send him home or to the Children's Aid Society, nothing more.

Such was the case in Toronto this month when a 13-year-old girl was allegedly attacked by three young boys and then raped by an 11-year-old. Apparently this boy was already known to police for auto theft and robbery. He was and still is immune from charges because the Young Offenders Act exempts children under age 12.

The system is failing these young people and their victims. Bill C-228, which I introduced in March, would include children as young as 10 under the YOA. If members are actually listening to the outrage of Canadians over this tragic event, then I urge them to support this change. These kids are capable of committing violent crimes, they are certainly capable of knowing they have done wrong and they must be held accountable for their actions.

* * *

COLONEL SAM SMITH PARK

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore we celebrate Colonel Sam Smith Park on the shores of Lake Ontario.

With the support of Environment Canada's Great Lakes Clean Up Fund, this waterfront facility has developed into a regional park which provides a diversity of aquatic and wildlife habitat and a variety of shoreline enhancement projects.

This year visitors can learn about the environmental assets of the park through a new trail sign system which will point out the various projects. The rehabilitation of fish and wildlife habitat in an urban environment is both beneficial to the environment and to the growth of industries that will concentrate on new environmental technologies.

I recommend and commend the work of the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the municipality of Toronto, the city of Etobicoke and the community of Etobicoke—Lakeshore for the creation of Colonel Sam Smith Park.

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This co-operative adventure toward sustainable development demonstrates that when government and communities work together we can achieve a healthy environment, economic growth, and a better community.

* * *

SPACE PROGRAM

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has renewed its commitment to the Canadian space program by investing another \$317 million this year. This commitment will continue the proud accomplishments of Canadian astronauts.

Marc Garneau will return to earth tomorrow from his second mission in space, having successfully reeled in the Spartan science satellite using the Canadarm, a creation of Spar Aerospace headquartered, of course, in my riding of Mississauga East.

Canadians have reason to be proud of their nation's achievements at the forefront of space exploration and especially proud of the encore performance of our first astronaut, Marc Garneau.

• (1410)

[Translation]

Thanks to Marc Garneau and his Canadarm, Canada is now famous even in space. Congratulations.

* * *

[English]

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank several high school students and others in my riding who took the time on Friday to provide their views on youth employment initiatives. The chair of the ministerial task force on youth was good enough to stop in Parry Sound—Muskoka to listen to the ideas of youth representatives in my riding.

I thank Mike Sporar from Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School, David Lamy and Marc Baron from Huntsville High School and Danielle Gliddon and Lynn Kameka from Gravenhurst High School for their insightful presentations at the forum.

The government remains committed to improving the environment for youth in Canada so that our younger generations have access to the training, tools and support they need to prosper as adults.

However, improving the process starts with feedback from the young people themselves so I encourage young people from across Canada to participate and to provide their input.

[Translation]

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was deeply wounded by the offensive remarks directed at me by the Minister of Human Resources Development. He suggested that I find myself another country, if I was not happy with his government's policies.

The minister's remarks are discriminatory towards all immigrants and refugees. The worst is that his Liberal and Reform colleagues applauded him.

I am proud of my Chilean background and I share the profound aspirations of the people of Quebec. Far from intimidating me, the minister's remarks have only served to strengthen my sovereignist convictions and to encourage me to work even harder to build a pluralist country that is open to differences and more tolerant.

There is only one thing a minister who makes such remarks can do: resign.

* * *

[English]

PENITENTIARIES

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, under this Liberal government a judge has decided to give prisoners the right to vote.

During the next campaign let us look at what these Liberals will offer prisoners to get their votes. Free condoms so they can have safe sex? No, they already have that. Cultural cuisine like walrus and caribou steaks? No, they already have that. Old age security? No, they already have that. The right to overtime pay or to refuse work? No, they already have that. How about a nice golf course at a prison? No, they already have that. Maybe stereos and televisions while they are in the hole? No, they already have that too.

I do not have to campaign in prisons because prisoners already have more than I would offer. I am sure these Liberals will come up with something else for them like a signing bonus after each three-year stint.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have again demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that Canadian resources are conserved and protected.

The minister recently announced the development of a system that allows photographs of fishing vessels at sea to be taken at night. This system produces high quality photos that clearly

Oral Questions

identifies the fishing vessel and can be entered into evidence if charges are to be laid for violations of fisheries regulations.

This night photographic system, the first of its type in the world, advances Canada's position as the world leader in civilian air surveillance and is a clear demonstration of the use of state of the art technology in the protection of our ocean resources.

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INCO LIMITED

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to offer my congratulations to Inco Limited for its recent \$250,000 contribution for the construction of a special needs centre at Cambrian College. The donation adds to a longstanding tradition of Inco supporting communities across Canada.

The special needs centre will offer 1,200 students with physical and developmental disabilities the opportunity to develop the skills needed in today's economy and to access cutting edge technology that challenges the very notion of barriers.

Cambrian College, the community, Inco, all donors and the people behind the scenes who have made the centre a reality merit special recognition. The federal and Ontario governments also deserve mention for their contributions to the centre through the national infrastructure program.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources Development stated that he had had his fill of seeing a new Canadian sitting in the House preaching separatism. This unacceptable remark was made by a government minister and speaks volumes about the minister's opinion on Canadians by adoption.

Would the Prime Minister tell us whether the remarks of the Minister of Human Resources Development reflect his government's position on new Canadians?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in question period, the hon. member was criticizing the department of immigration. What I said then and I repeat now is that it is unacceptable, in my opinion, for someone who came to Canada, was honoured with Canadian citizenship and entered this House as an elected representative to

the Parliament of Canada to attack policies on refugees coming to Canada, and I stand by it.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister has a short memory, but the blues bear witness. *Hansard* records what was said, exactly, and what was repeated and added to today just after the cabinet meeting.

My question, and it is a serious one, is for the Prime Minister. I would like to know how the Prime Minister can allow a member of his government, a minister, to decide that there are two sorts of citizens in Canada: those born and bred here, who may be either federalists or sovereignists, and new Canadians, who may only be federalists or find themselves another country, as he put it.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I made my comments yesterday and when I made my comments today at the end of the ministers' meeting, I was trying to explain and I will explain now for the Leader of the Opposition that—except the people who have been here from the start, the native peoples—everybody in Canada comes from another country, including my ancestors.

What I said is that someone who benefited from Canada's generosity and openmindedness and who then—because in the blues yesterday as well there was a question by the hon. member about the legitimacy of the situation involving the department of immigration—

Mrs. Tremblay: That is not true; that was not the question; that is wrong.

Mr. Young: Everything I said yesterday, I repeat today. Someone coming to Canada—

Mrs. Tremblay: You do not even know how to read.

Mr. Young: —who is elected, who enters Parliament and who defends separatism by attacking the system that enabled him to become a citizen—that is unacceptable.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, clearly the Prime Minister has decided to let his Minister of Human Resources Development compound what he said yesterday about new Canadians. It is an insult.

My question is for the Prime Minister, and I think it is his responsibility as Prime Minister to respond. The Prime Minister was delighted recently by the suspension of three members of the third party for similar reasons. Is he going to act responsibly today as he ought as Prime Minister? Will he act quickly and demand the resignation of this minister, who brings shame onto the entire government with remarks he made that are clearly unacceptable in a democracy?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Oral Questions

• (1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am moved by the words of the Leader of the Opposition, by his sudden concern for the respect of individual rights.

The other day in Quebec, the Leader of the Opposition alluded to the leader of the government, the Prime Minister, as being an Ontarian, although I have had the privilege of sitting in this House since 1963, have served the people of Quebec and New Brunswick here in the House of Commons and have followed the francophones of Quebec for 33 years.

I think the Leader of the Opposition should first clean up the language of his own members, who are accusing federalists of being traitors to Quebec because they believe in Canada. The members of the Bloc Québécois are not about to teach us a lesson in good manners.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister certainly is having trouble understanding the terms used by his Minister of Human Resources Development. He did not understand the question yesterday, and you are confusing manners—

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, you must always address the Chair.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is confusing manners and respect for democracy with unacceptable speech. Yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources Development said, and repeated, “While it was Canada which gave him citizenship, here he is now seated in this House preaching separatism. Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker”.

Can the Prime Minister tell us if the government’s policy toward Canadians by adoption is this: “Welcome to Canada, but you are not entitled to your political opinions”?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an opinion expressed by a minister concerning an elected member sitting legitimately in this House. He told the hon. member that he was preaching separatism in a country which had welcomed him. I think that is realistic. If the member in question wishes to say that he is a federalist, we will welcome him with pleasure, but he is a separatist. Is there any shame in being labelled a separatist, when a separatist is what one is? That is not shameful.

That is what the minister said. He is a separatist and a new Canadian, and he is working to destroy this country. He is entitled to do so, just as the minister is entitled to point out to him that he is a new citizen and involved in trying to destroy the country that welcomed him. He is entitled to do so. That is the beauty of Canada, to have absolute freedom.

There are a good many countries which would not allow new immigrants to work to destroy the country, but we in Canada have sufficient confidence in democracy to do so.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not even have the courage of the leader of the Reform Party.

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, it is not a question of being or not being courageous. We all have the courage of our convictions. I would ask the hon. member to choose his words with a little more care.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Human Resources Development said yesterday was that, if the hon. member for Bourassa continued to express those ideas, he would do better to find himself another country. That is what he said.

Will the Prime Minister’s convictions lead him to denounce these words, as the leader of the Reform Party denounced the members of his party who made unacceptable statements? Can he do that, rather than trying to camouflage the truth?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I simply stated that he is entitled to defend his ideas in Canada, and that there are not many countries that would allow that. If we were to start going back over unacceptable statements made about members of this House, there is one person who could be on his feet every day: myself.

However, I accept the political debate and the opinion expressed by an Acadian, a francophone outside Quebec, who knows that the separation of Quebec would endanger the cultural life of his fellow francophone citizens in New Brunswick or elsewhere in Canada. His feelings are true. I believe that he is describing a reality, which is that there is a member of this House who is an immigrant and who is working to break up Canada. That is something he does not like.

Considering that a member of the party across the floor from me said, not all that long ago, that people who were not born in Canada ought not to be entitled to vote in the Quebec referendum, we do not need the Bloc Québécois’ advice.

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[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, during the last election campaign the Liberals criss-crossed the country promising worried Canadians jobs, jobs, jobs.

Oral Questions

Almost three years later we have 1.4 million Canadians unemployed, we have almost a third of our workforce underemployed and we have about one out of four Canadians worried about their future job security.

In other words, we have massive economic insecurity. How does the Prime Minister respond to this situation? He responded on his recent western trip by saying Canadians will just have to live with it.

Is the Prime Minister really telling 1.4 million unemployed Canadians they will simply have to learn to live with yet another broken promise, the broken promise of jobs, jobs, jobs?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the leader of the third party what I said. I have the transcript. I said that in the last two and a half years we have seen unemployment go down, although not enough to my liking. I have said that many times in the House of Commons. I will not be happy until all people who want to find work find it.

In January 1994 we were at 11.5 per cent and now we are down to 9.4 per cent. The economy has created 636,000 new jobs in two and a half years, a record unmatched anywhere in the world.

Germany and France together have not created as many jobs as Canada was able to create in the last two and a half years. I wish we had created more. That is why we had this budget. It is why we managed to reduce the interest rate to four points below what it was a year ago so that there would be more jobs created.

As long as there are Canadians who want to work, the government will work to create jobs. We have not done too badly, 636,000 new jobs in the last two and a half years.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the number of jobs the government claims to have created, even if it were taken at face value, is completely inadequate in relation to the millions of jobs required.

If we subtract the number of jobs lost over the last three years, if we subtract the number of temporary jobs and if we subtract the number of Canadians who have given up looking for work, the government's job creation record is simply atrocious.

The government professes to have firm targets for deficit reduction. What is the government's target for reducing the unemployment rate and when will it be achieved?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the statistics published by Statistics Canada, it is very clear these jobs are after the deduction of the loss of other jobs. The net figures are 636,000 new jobs.

It is a very good record and we will keep working on it, as we are doing now. That is why we said we would reduce the level of unemployment. We went from 11.5 per cent to 9.4 per cent. With

the policies of the Minister of Finance, approved by the government, we are doing better than any other country in the western hemisphere on that score.

• (1430)

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, these answers are simply not enough for the 1.4 million unemployed, for the underemployed and for the one out of four Canadians worried about their jobs.

On the 1993 campaign trail the Prime Minister slammed Kim Campbell for saying unemployment would not substantially improve until the year 2000. He called it an admission of failure. Then after only two and a half years in office he turns around and says almost exactly the same thing, and all this after promising job creation heaven on pages 11, 15, 16 and 20 of the now discredited red book.

Did the Prime Minister ever intend to keep this election promise of jobs, jobs, jobs or was it, like the GST, simply another cynical political ploy to get undeserving Liberals elected?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the record of the government on job creation: 636,000 jobs. We have done it while reducing the deficit in relation to GDP from 6.2 per cent to 3 per cent this year.

On Monday in the *Globe and Mail* there was a big article saying people are running to buy Canadian bonds because they think it is the best investment they can make. Only a year and a half ago we had to explain to people abroad that Canada wanted to solve its problems. Now people recognize we are on the right track and they are running to buy new Canadian bonds.

The way the Minister of Finance is doing that, in two or three years from now there will be no more new cash requirements. It is better for them to rush to buy Canadian bonds.

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[Translation]

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development, a government minister, has made a statement that is fraught with consequences for the future. All new Canadians are concerned, and rightly so, about a government minister stating that they must share the government's political views because they chose Canada and because Canada gave them Canadian citizenship.

The Prime Minister said essentially the same thing. My question is very clear: Does the Prime Minister, by refusing to dissociate himself from his minister's statement, support the comments made

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by his Minister of Human Resources Development, yes or no? That is what we want to know.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I repeated what the minister had said. He was referring to a comment about the fact that the hon. member for Bourassa is a new Canadian who came here, I imagine, as a refugee and was then granted Canadian citizenship. He is now exercising his democratic right to try to break up Canada. This did not please either the minister or myself, but he has a right to do so. Those are the rights given to those who become Canadian citizens. They have the right to espouse any cause they want.

I think that such freedoms are allowed in a country like Canada, and I am very happy to see that several other new Canadians from Quebec are sitting in this House, most of whom are on our side.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should be careful with majorities as they may disappear quickly in certain circumstances.

Is the Prime Minister, by sticking to the comments made by the Minister of Human Resources Development, who urged the hon. member for Bourassa to choose another country, implementing plan B as a political expedient aimed at the rest of Canada, and taking members of cultural communities hostage by demanding that they share his political views if they want to become Canadian citizens?

[English]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is always the rhetoric, talking about hostages, talking about prisons.

[Translation]

It is always the same thing. They are trying to frighten people. What happened in this House? What happened is that, like his colleagues, a separatist member of Parliament did not have the courage to say he is a separatist, preferring to call himself a sovereignist.

• (1435)

The Speaker: My dear colleague, again, you are asked not to question the courage of any member. If the Prime Minister has something to add to his answer, he may do so now.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see that the members of the Bloc Québécois now want immigrants to be welcome in Quebec. I am very happy to hear this. I would have preferred that they not attack the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who, during the referendum, wanted them to have the same freedom of speech as that enjoyed by the hon. member for Bourassa.

The people who criticized us for allowing new immigrants to vote in the referendum are now complaining that both sides of the House can now express themselves freely. In the opinion of Acadians, those who, upon becoming citizens of all of Canada, regained the freedom they had lost in their native countries should not try to break up Canada.

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[English]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, CSIS has arrested and charged two agents of the Russian FSB, formerly known as the KGB, for the firebombing of a Toronto home owned by a Russian businessman. Apparently this Canadian resident owed money to a Russian bank. This is a grave and serious matter of internal security and external diplomacy.

If the solicitor general determines, as it is reported, that these were active KGB-FSB agents, will he and the external affairs minister immediately expel some or all Russian diplomats in Canada?

Mr. Nick Discepola (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the House is aware, the Canadian government has undertaken a review of the two individuals alleged to be with the Russian security service operating under false identities.

These people are under investigation by the appropriate authorities. Under the Immigration Act there are proceedings underway that will determine whether they should be deported.

As this case is before the courts, and I believe the hearings will be tomorrow, it would be imprudent for me to make any further comments on the case.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the answer given by the parliamentary secretary is appropriate for this grave and serious situation.

I ask again, if these agents who firebombed a house in Toronto are determined to be active members of the KGB-FSB, will the government expel some or all Russian diplomats today?

Mr. Nick Discepola (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the person who is confused here is the hon. member because the two members he is questioning regarding the firebombing in Toronto are not the two that are related.

In any event, if any person in this country is here acting illegally appropriate actions will be taken.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***FAMILY TRUSTS**

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

It is now official, we have learned this morning that the ruling made by Revenue Canada in 1991, which allowed one of the wealthiest families in Canada to transfer \$2 billion in assets to the United States without paying a cent in taxes, may actually have created a precedent. This morning, the deputy minister of revenue stated that hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars may well have evaded and still be evading taxes.

Is the minister of revenue prepared to admit today that, contrary to what she said two weeks ago, the situation does require urgent attention and that the time to act is not sometime next fall, but right now?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows very well, my department took the report of the auditor general very seriously and responded immediately. He was concerned about documentation of rulings, and we have responded to that. He was concerned about whether rulings were made public, and we have responded to that.

• (1440)

We have also responded by making sure that these very important points of law are reviewed by the finance committee. While this important review is going on, out of respect for the work of the committee, we will suspend any further rulings that have to do with this particular aspect of income tax law.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the situation has evolved over the past two weeks. Two weeks ago, the minister said it was not urgent to act in this matter but, just this morning, her deputy minister indicated that, since December 31, 1991, when an advance ruling was made by officials of her department, there may have been further instances of flights of capital like the \$2 billion that were transferred to the U.S. without a cent being collected in taxes.

The government did not act. The only way to go is to immediately suspend the 1991 advance ruling, preventing it from being extended to other families. That is what the government should do. Will the minister undertake before this House to take this action immediately?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the deputy minister indicated

he had no clear understanding that there were any tax rulings which preceded or came after 1991. I would recognize again, as the hon. member points out, that 1991 was a time previous to our government and we are taking action to deal with this very critical aspect of income tax law right now.

The hon. member has a very good opportunity to listen to the witnesses who come before the finance committee to understand the complexities of this part of the Income Tax Act. It is complex. It does affect all Canadians. I would encourage him to listen closely to the testimony and be part of a good and fulsome recommendation to the Minister of Finance.

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GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister has abused his budget and now the President of the Treasury Board is in a conflict of interest trying to cover it up for him. I have seen the contracts. They are an example of contract splitting at its worst. The minister knows this and is condoning the practice.

Why does the President of the Treasury Board think it is acceptable for the defence minister to engineer contracts rewarding his campaign pals through Treasury Board guidelines?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I said yesterday. Department of National Defence and Treasury Board officials checked the contracts and found them to be in compliance with the guidelines regarding ministerial office budgets. I would add that we have exempt staff budgets which have different rules because there is some advice that is given which is of a partisan nature. There is a difference between these two types of budgets for that reason.

In this case advice was solicited by the Minister of National Defence. It was for advice which he judged to be necessary. Once again, it was done in compliance with Treasury Board guidelines for these budgets.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure the Canadian public will be happy to hear that we now have patronage budgets for ministers.

The President of the Treasury Board keeps saying that he conducted a thorough investigation into these contracts. The investigation was a joke. Whom did he ask? He asked Department of National Defence officials if they followed Treasury Board guidelines and to everyone's surprise, they said yes. It is like asking the fox to mind the chicken coup.

Given these blatant abuses and conflicts of interest, why has the ethics counsellor not been called in to look at this matter?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member should recognize that he too has a political budget. If he looks at his budget as a member of Parliament, the secretary he hires and the people who are hired to give him advice under that budget are usually picked because they are of a certain political colour. Every member of Parliament and every minister has an exempt staff budget.

The member talks about patronage. He is trying to use loaded words. He does not recognize the fact that these budgets are term exempt staff budgets because they usually employ people who give advice of a partisan nature.

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• (1445)

*[Translation]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We just learned about the incredible fate of four Romanian stowaways, three of whom are said to have thrown overboard by the captain of the cargo ship they were aboard.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs provide details on the circumstances surrounding this horrible tragedy?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would explain to the hon. member that because the alleged transgression took place on the international high seas, Canada has no legal standing. The only countries that can take action are those that are party to the dispute, the flagship nation Taiwan, the Romanians or in this case the Philippines because of the crew involved.

We have offered every co-operation we can to those authorities. There have been discussions with the Romanian authorities. My officials met with the Romanian chargé d'affaires to offer our full co-operation. We are prepared to do anything we possibly can.

The Minister of Transport has said that the ship is still being held in the harbour. The Minister of Justice is working on potential extradition questions with the Romanians. Canada will co-operate in any way we possibly can to deal with this very serious misdeed.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the minister said, Romania asked him to take action regarding this incident. Will the minister intercede with international authorities so that such a tragedy can never happen again?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are two levels. First, there are official agreements that we have signed dealing with extradition. The Minister of Justice and his officials are already seized with that aspect of the case. The other is political co-operation where the police, the solicitor general, the Department of Transport and my own department are co-operating fully with the Romanian officials to determine what action might be taken to protect their citizens and to react to this serious case.

We are dealing at the legal level of extradition and at the other level of offering all co-operation to the Romanian authorities.

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FLOOD DAMAGE

Mr. Peter Thalheimer (Timmins—Chapleau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence.

In my riding of Timmins—Chapleau flood damage has affected the communities of Chapleau, Foleyet, White River and Timmins. The price tag is growing and our communities and residents in the wake of this natural disaster now must face the consequences.

What can the federal government do to assist the communities in my riding and others in Canada which have been so negatively affected by flood conditions?

Mr. John Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, may I take this opportunity to express the government's concern for the people who have been affected by the floods this spring in the hon. member's riding and the adjacent region.

The provincial government as the lead government is responding to the disaster and has requested help from the federal government in the evacuation of its citizens. The federal government has assigned two Hercules aircraft to evacuate people from the neighbouring area of the hon. member's riding.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government took extreme measures to seize foreign vessels when turbot were at stake, not to mention votes, but it refuses to act immediately when murder was alleged on the container ship *Dubai*.

If the *Dubai* tries to sail from Halifax without the allegations of high seas murders being fully addressed by the RCMP, will the justice minister commit to detaining the *Dubai* and holding its crew until the investigation is complete?

Oral Questions

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs has said, we are operating at various levels to see that steps are taken in relation to the tragedy that has been alleged on the high seas.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has been in touch with the chargés d'affaires of other governments. I am standing by to exercise whatever authority I might have in terms of extradition. Transport is busy doing what it can to investigate. We have made it clear to the foreign government that we will do whatever we can to co-operate.

• (1450)

I want the hon. member to know that as much as we deplore and are appalled by the allegations, we do have to respect the rule of law. These events, as alleged, took place in international waters. They involve a Romanian ship and a crew from the Philippines. What is important is for us to respond in accordance with the rule of law and we will do that. It does not mean that we are without remedy but it is a little more complicated. However, I assure the hon. member that we will do whatever we can within the law to see that a remedy is provided.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do not feel very reassured when it comes to human rights like this that there is very much concern there.

It has been reported that this ship has been operating out of Taiwan. We hear the minister saying that it is owned in Romania. It is owned in Taiwan. It is operated by Maersk Shipping of Madison, Wisconsin.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs end this kind of charade we see over there and call Maersk Shipping? The phone number is right here and I can table it. Will the minister ask that the ship be voluntarily held here until the investigation is completed? I have already asked them that.

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motor vessel *Dubai* is not going anywhere. Transport Canada has had a look at the ship as a result of comments by the crew. We have determined that there are defects in the main engine exhaust system which causes fume leakage.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transport.

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, the point that the Reform Party seems to forget is that there are legal reasons for detaining this ship and preventing it from leaving. We are exploring every one of those reasons. This ship is not leaving that harbour until we are satisfied.

[Translation]

JUSTICE

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

Independence of the judiciary is a cornerstone of our legal system. However, in a case heard before the federal court, an assistant deputy minister from the Department of Justice, Ted Thompson, tried to influence court proceedings through a personal meeting with Chief Justice Isaac of the federal court.

How can the Minister of Justice accept that a senior official of his department would unduly interfere with the legal proceedings, in an attempt to influence the presiding judge?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right to raise this important matter. It is troubling. We have already told the court in the course of the litigation that the Department of Justice regards the meeting that was held as inappropriate and it ought not to have occurred.

In the period since the meeting came to my attention, I have asked the deputy minister to investigate the matter and recommend a course of action. Tomorrow it is my intention to make a statement in this House with respect to our response to the developments.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, ministers have resigned because of interference in the legal process. There are precedents.

What measures does the minister intend to take to prevent such violations of the law from reoccurring, and does he intend to report to the judicial council the overly conciliatory attitude of Chief Justice Isaac and Mr. Justice Jerome?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be making a statement to the House tomorrow with respect to the department's response to these circumstances.

I can tell the hon. member, as has been made clear to the court, I regard the meeting that was held between the justice official and the chief justice as inappropriate. Where counsels are involved in matters before the courts, those counsels should be notified of such meetings and those meetings should not take place without counsels being informed.

Oral Questions

• (1455)

In terms of the role of the chief justice or others, I withhold comment on that until I have recommendations from the deputy minister. I will have more to say about the entire subject tomorrow when I make a statement in the House.

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TAXATION

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a week ago Friday the minister of agriculture used his cabinet authority and moved immediately to shut down farmers who wanted a fair price for their grain. Yet, when this government was aware that a loophole a mile wide was opened in the Income Tax Act for influential businessmen and family trusts, it intended to hold the barn door open until the last horse had gone through.

The Minister of National Revenue just announced in question period that she has suspended future rulings on the issue, that the deputy minister of finance said it was so simple he did not want to keep notes on it.

Will the minister of revenue appoint a public inquiry today to investigate the circumstances surrounding those two very questionable rulings?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this morning the deputy minister of finance appeared before the finance committee and went through contortions to try to justify a bad ruling that created this tax loophole. In order to justify his position he was giving new tax interpretations off the top of his head, such as all real estate owned by Canadians is now taxable Canadian property.

The Department of Finance and the Department of National Revenue are digging themselves into a bigger hole. What about the Minister of Finance? Will he admit this game has gone too far? Will he plug the leak and call for a public inquiry to investigate the circumstances now?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue has already stated quite clearly that there will be no more advance rulings on this pending the completion of the work of the parliamentary committee.

There is a parliamentary committee. Meetings were held this morning. I am a little surprised the hon. member opposite does not take his responsibilities sufficiently seriously and he does not think that he and his colleagues are able to get at all of the details that are required. We on this side of the House have a great deal of confidence in democracy, the parliamentary system and the finance committee. We think it can do the job.

CANADIAN SECURITIES COMMISSION

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions.

Alberta's government wants fair and efficient capital markets and enhanced harmonization of regulatory requirements between provinces. In the speech from the throne our federal government announced that it will work with interested provinces to develop a Canadian securities commission.

How would a Canadian securities commission accommodate the regional differences in capital markets that exist in Canada?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an important issue that regional differences in capital markets are represented in a Canadian securities commission, if one should come about, and we are working at that.

We must remember that a group of provinces initiated the Canadian securities commission idea. The regional differences would be represented by commissioners from the regions. They would be represented by regional offices.

It is important to stress that Canada is the only major country that does not have a national securities commission. In other countries that have those securities commissions there are very strong regional developments.

* * *

HOLLINGER INC.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The recent purchase by Conrad Black's Hollinger Inc. of all Saskatchewan daily newspapers has resulted in a steady drop in quality, a decline in local and balanced reporting and 25 per cent fewer jobs. Since then, Hollinger has increased its Canadian ownership to 53 per cent of all daily newspapers and 42 per cent of circulation.

Will the Prime Minister freeze these recent acquisitions until a complete review of this concentration of ownership and its effects on Canadians can be undertaken by the government through either a royal commission or through a press ownership review board?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member had included with his question his premise of the legal grounds upon which such an extraordinary measure could be taken. What he does know is that the director of the competition bureau will review the acquisitions with respect to

the impact of the economic concentration of ownership and the transactions will be considered accordingly.

* * *

• (1500)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of Mr. Luis Igacio Gomez Gutierrez, Minister of Education of the Republic of Cuba.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the name of freedom I would like to ask for unanimous consent to move the following motion:

That in the opinion of this House, since global markets are becoming increasingly more open, deregulated, diverse and specialized and since not all—

The Speaker: First we need unanimous consent to put the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

THE LATE CARL GILLIS

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of a young man, a constituent, a colleague and a friend in the person of Carl Gillis. Carl Gillis passed away last evening at the age of 26. His untimely death reminds us all of the fragility of life.

It is appropriate that we honour Carl's memory here in the House of Commons for it was here that he served as a page while he attended Carleton University. He was at home in this Chamber and he has left behind many friends from various political parties.

Carl was born in East Bay, Nova Scotia on March 27, 1970. He came to Ottawa to pursue his post-secondary studies in political science but his education in politics did not only come from books. He was active in student government and served as chair of the Canadian Federation of Students. He was holding that position when this government came to power. I know that some of my colleagues here on the front benches and indeed members of the opposition will remember him in that capacity. I know all of us will remember him fondly.

Carl came to my office from the Canadian Federation of Students in the spring of 1994. He shared the constant pressures

Tributes

and the occasional joys of the Hill with many members of Parliament, their assistants and his many friends.

For those of us who knew him, he was a great student of American presidential politics. Carl was a great admirer of the late John. F. Kennedy and I am sure he was familiar with the following quote:

For of those to whom much is given, much is required. And when at some future date that high court of history sits in judgment on each of us, recording whether in our brief span of service we fulfilled our responsibility to the state, our success or failure in whatever office we hold will be measured by the answers to four questions: First, were we truly men of courage? Second, were we truly men of judgment? Third, were we truly men of integrity? Finally, were we truly men of dedication?

• (1505)

Much was given to Carl Gillis and now much has been taken away. We are left with the answers to those four questions. Yes, he was a young man, but he was a young man of courage. He was a man of judgment, of integrity, of dedication.

The qualities he possessed in abundance are too seldom seen; now they are too soon gone. We must now find comfort in Carl's memory and in the knowledge that he enriched the lives of those who knew him. The generosity and compassion which characterized his life have also defined his death.

Our thoughts and our prayers are with Carl's family at this very sad time, to his mother Peggy and his father and nine brothers, to the extended family and to his many friends, some of whom are here.

Your death, my friend, has come far too early but your memory will never die.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it was with sadness that we learned of the tragic accident that claimed the life of Carl Gillis. I did not have the pleasure of knowing him personally, but I am told that he was a good man, a generous individual who shared his joie de vivre and was loved by all who knew him.

His untimely death forces us to stop and reflect on safety in sports. To the Minister of Health, his parents, his family, and his friends, the Bloc Quebecois and I extend our most heartfelt condolences.

[English]

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my party, I too want to extend sympathies to Carl's family. It is unbelievable that a life so young would be taken from us.

At times like this we realize the tragedy that somebody as young and healthy and who spent so much time in the outdoors doing something he loved can have their life suddenly snapped away so quickly. It is easy to ask why. His family is grieving, along with many people on the Hill.

Supply

My prayer is that all of us today consider our own mortality and realize how important it is to appreciate every special day we have. It is easy to get caught up with how important issues are, yet life itself is such a gift. It is important for all of us to live each day as it is a special gift for all of us.

I extend our sympathy and profound grief at the passing of this young man. May he be an example to all of us that we cherish every day we have.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to join in these few words about my assistant, Carl Gillis, whose death last evening continues to shock us all.

As the Minister of Health mentioned, Carl came to Ottawa to serve as a page in this House where he was exposed to the political virus so many of us have contracted. He went on out of a desire to serve to be the vice-president of the Carleton University Students Association and then later was president of the Canadian Federation of Students.

He was undoubtedly one of Canada's best and brightest. He was a member of our parliamentary family. Carl, like many of the young people who come here to serve as pages, as assistants in ministers' offices or in the offices of members, came with the hope they all bring for Canada's future. Carl cared about the world he lived in. He cared about the people around him and he desperately wanted to make a difference.

• (1510)

I have never met Carl's parents but he must have made them extraordinarily proud. He excelled as a student. He demonstrated qualities of honesty, integrity, perseverance, politeness, good humour, loyalty, kindness. In fact, one wonders how a young man could grow up as ninth in a family of ten boys and turn out so nice.

He first worked with me in 1992 and I quickly learned to respect his ability, his judgment, his qualities of character. When he joined my staff earlier this year he quickly became part of the team in taking up his new duties with enthusiasm and dedication.

I would like to express my sympathy, and I am sure that of this House, to the Gillis family. I also want them to know that we share their pride in Carl as we also share their loss. We will not be able to replace Carl. We will never see his potential fulfilled and we will miss our friend.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the hon. member for Sherbrooke, I would like to give our deepest sympathy to the family of Carl Gillis, one young man who was known not just on the Hill but back in Cape Breton as well.

When I arrived on the Hill today my legislative assistant told me about being at a prayer vigil for Carl last week and that many people were there because they loved this young man. He set an example not just for our pages but for all of us in the House. They tell me that great love came from Carl and if someone was upset about anything and just happened to sit down with him for a few moments they would come away with a smile on their face. He was a very special young man. Why he has been taken away from us so early in life, we have no answer for that.

To his family I want to say it is a great loss to all of us here, a great loss on the Hill, a great loss to Canada and a great loss to his family. Our deepest sympathy goes out to them.

The Speaker: My colleagues, it is an extraordinary thing that we in this House of Commons would pay this type of tribute to this young man. Many of his colleagues are here with us this afternoon, young Canadians, proud Canadians. He served us and he served this Parliament as a page.

I have been here now some 22 years and this is the first of this type of tribute I have heard. I wish I had known that man, but we claim him as part of our family and we grieve with his family now.

I thank you all, those who have participated here with your words and those who hold him dear to your hearts.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—MAIN ESTIMATES AND THE SENATE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will spend a few minutes talking about the motion which is before us. I thank my colleague from Vancouver Island for bringing it forward. This is historic. It is unfortunate that a lot of members on the other side perhaps do not understand how historic this is.

• (1515)

To make sure we all understand, it was 100 years ago that anyone from the Senate was summoned to the House of Commons. Given that we are getting close to the end of this century it is pretty amazing to think that someone from the Senate is being summoned to talk about the spending and the financing of the Senate.

Our colleague from Vancouver Centre this morning asked whether the Senate is the master of its own internal affairs. Then

she answered her own rhetorical question by saying yes. Then she said this was wasting a whole day of debate. Perhaps that one sentence shows the contempt some of the people across the way have for the Senate of Canada.

My friend from Kingston and the Islands said this could be a three hour speech. I would say he had that right. It certainly could be. Unfortunately I will spare him that pain and talk for a few minutes.

Are we wasting a whole day by talking about the legitimacy or the accountability of the Senate? I hardly think so. I would love it if she would come from B.C., her home province, up to my province of Alberta where we have had legislation in place since 1989 which deals with the legitimacy and the importance of an elected Senate. I would love her to come and have a chat with some of the people I spoke with in my town hall meetings last week. They were furious about some of the new Senate appointments.

Parliamentary reform is something which brought me to Parliament several years ago. If we are to look at the legitimacy or the mandate of the Senate, whether it is about its intent, its purpose or the cost involved, it is paramount to look at the history of the Senate and why it was set up.

It originally was set up as the chamber of sober second thought. That is great on paper. If we are actually to live with that and the mandate of regional representation it is a great idea. Dear knows we could all use some sober second thought. If we look at what the Senate is supposed to do, that is a great idea. It should be an institution to where legislation goes from here so senators can look at it to see how it is affected by a regional fairness tests or whatever.

Unfortunately it went off the rails between Confederation when it was set up and the place that it occupies in people's hearts and minds now. We could say it has been reformed. However, reform is supposed to be a positive thing. Maybe I could say it became deformed somewhere along the way. Now, rather than being a chamber of sober second thought for the Canadian public or for the House of Commons, it is accountable only to the dictates of the Prime Minister. That is probably what is more unfortunate than anything else about the whole Senate Chamber. It has become deformed. It is no longer providing the function for which it was originally intended.

As a Reformer I would say now that the thing has been so changed and so marred in so many ways, it is essential to change it. We must reform the Senate now. I favour the triple E Senate model. I am not ashamed of that. I live in a province which has taken great strides in pushing for a triple E Senate, which means its members would be elected, that there would be an equal number of senators from each province and that hopefully it would be an effective Senate.

Supply

In large countries where the population distribution is uneven there is a fundamental need to balance representation by population with representation by region or province. There would be people who disagree with me in this Chamber. I am used to that after all these years. However, the United States, because of its huge disparate population, has an elected Senate with an equal number from each state. Probably even a better example is the Australian model. Tasmania, which is sparsely populated, has the same number of elected senators as New South Wales which has a huge population. It is an excellent example and model for us to use. It is not impossible.

People say abolish the place. Unfortunately that is what we hear across the country. They ask how much is getting accomplished in the Senate. Precious little? Let us then do away with it. After all, we are looking at the spending and the accountability of the Senate. It spends about \$40 million a year, a chunk of change.

● (1520)

The Canadian public is demanding there be some mandate, some legitimacy here for the Senate, and we need to make sure we have regional representation to balance representation by population.

One of my colleagues mentioned that Ontario has 99 members of Parliament because its population is so numerous. I see some of my colleague from Ontario here. There are fewer people in my province and we have only 26 members of Parliament, certainly a lot less. We have representation by population in the House of Commons.

In a country like this where there is such disparity we need that but we need it balanced in the upper House or the second House, which is supposed to be sober second thought. Because regimented party discipline results in block voting, Canada's parliamentary system is a good example of why this balance is needed. We have seen that time and time again in the House.

The Fathers of Confederation intended that the Senate provide this type of balance. Unfortunately it has been completely unable and neutered so that it cannot fulfil this role. An appointed Senate is not democratic.

We could say that any number of different ways and we might like to think there are nice ways of saying it, but there simply are not nice ways. We can say politely but we cannot say kindly that people who are sitting in the Senate right now are in any way democratic or in any way accountable to the people they are supposed to be serving. It is simply not right. It is high time for an elected Senate.

If I look at the number of people in the Senate of Canada since Canada began who have actually been elected to the Senate, I come up with one. It is so simple. One person only has ever been elected to the Senate of the Parliament of Canada, and that is pretty interesting.

Supply

An hon. member: He was appointed.

Miss Grey: An hon. member across the way hollered he was appointed. He was appointed in June 1990 only after he had won a historic election on October 16, 1989. He won that, which was in place by the Alberta Senatorial Selection Act, a piece of provincial legislation which my province brought into place for that Senate election in 1989.

He ran in that and won with hundreds of thousands of votes. He had the largest majority that any elected official in the country has every received because the vote was province-wide. Now Granted, once he won that election our premier put his name forward for appointment by the Prime Minister because that was the legitimate channel he had to go through.

It took nine months, a regular nine month gestation period for Brian Mulroney to put him in. In June 1990 my friend, my colleague, one of my heroes, Stan Waters, was appointed/elected, whatever you want to call it. The only reason he was appointed was we were able to put such incredible pressure on the Prime Minister of the day. He said "those Albertans are causing trouble, I will put this guy in here and hope he keeps quiet".

Stan Waters did not keep quiet. The entire nine months he was waiting to be put into the Senate, no matter who interviewed him, no matter the issue, regularly he said that democracy delayed is democracy denied. He said that for month after month because he was the only democratically elected Senator we have ever seen in Canada. When it was always put to him that maybe he would get appointed to the Senate, maybe he would not, that did not sway him in the least.

I was able to talk about it in the House of Commons. He was able to talk about it in the Senate, outside the Senate, right across the country. He said regularly that democracy delayed is democracy denied.

Fortunately we were able to put him into the Senate because he won that mandate from the people of Alberta. He could go home on a plane whenever he wanted to go home and could get off that plane and know those people were literally his constituents. In other words, because he was elected he knew he had a mandate. Because he was elected he knew also that he could go home and that he was speaking the words of those Albertans to Parliament.

• (1525)

He let the Albertans pick, not the Prime Minister. Alberta people picked him. They voted for him and then because of that incredible mandate he had Brian Mulroney was shamed into appointing him into the Senate because he knew there might be a small uprising out west.

Dear knows we have had enough uprisings out west that they were not keen to have repeated. When he was finally put into the Senate he knew he was representing Albertans.

Let me spend another few minutes on some of the newer day senators who have come from my province, from western Canada, and talk about some of these people who believe passionately with all their heart in an elected Senate. They thought senators should be elected. They thought they would let their names stand for election. They thought every senator should step down from their appointments and be elected to the Senate of Canada.

One was Sharon Carstairs from Manitoba. During the Charlottetown accord she made quite a bit of noise talking about how important an elected Senate is. I remember hearing her on the Charlottetown accord campaign trail. She was quite upset about that.

All of a sudden out of the clear blue sky, not long ago after this government comes into power, boom, Sharon Carstairs appointed to the Senate of Canada.

I was in an elevator with her not that long ago. I said: "I thought you always were in favour of an elected Senate. How could this change so quickly?" She said: "I am trying to do what I can from the inside".

Members know that if someone accepts a paycheque of \$64,000 a year or whatever their salary is and some plane trips back and forth, how does that person go home to Manitoba, get off a plane and say "Yes, I was the one who talked about an elected Senate all the time, I was the one who said I would run for election, I was the one who said how important it was, but times have changed. Here I am now. I am making a fairly healthy salary. I am in the Senate, but I am just doing everything I can do"?

It is not legitimate. It is simply not legitimate. That is the first one in my hat-trick of those people who had a conversion experience along the Damascus road. We could entitle it a funny thing happened on the way to the Senate. They were passionate believers in an elected Senate but as soon as they get the call from the Prime Minister things are different now.

Sharon Carstairs is number one. A good friend of mine and colleague, Nick Taylor, comes from closer to home. I appreciate him. He has been one of the provincial members of the legislative assembly in Alberta, in my federal riding. He was another one in all his years in the political wilderness in Alberta as the Liberal leader.

He did not get a seat. He could not get elected. He had a terrible time. He watched more goings on in the legislative assembly from the gallery than he ever did from his seat because he simply could not get elected.

By some stroke of luck and his good personality, he finally got elected in the Bon Accord area, Redwater, Smoky Lake in 1986. He

has sat as the Liberal leader for several years and talked about an elected Senate. Away we went again.

At the Liberal's federal biennial convention, as was mentioned earlier, in 1992 they said: "Be it resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada commit itself to an elected and effective Senate comprised of but not limited to equal representation from each of the 10 provinces of Canada". That is the Liberal resolution.

What happened to Nick Taylor in the middle of it all? He believed in that resolution. I bet a dollar he was at the convention in 1992. I bet he voted in favour of it. I talked to him lots of times.

What do you know, not too long ago he got the call from the Prime Minister. What do members think that call was about? "Nick, I would like you to run in an election that is already provided for in your province as a senator". Members are smiling. I bet they think that is what the call was about. No, he said: "I am putting you into the Senate". Da-da-da, patronage rules again.

Nick Taylor, who has a tremendous sense of humour and who always has a ready smile and good one-liners, said "of course it is patronage, but I am in, I am going". I was at his swearing in not long ago when he went into the Senate. Everything he ever said about an elected Senate just went kind of over the edge.

• (1530)

Now he is in the Senate. One has to ask: Do you put the pension, do you put the pay, do you put the perks over principles? I would hope not. I wish he would have said: "Mr. Prime Minister I appreciate the call, but I believe so strongly in an elected Senate and my province has the legislation already in place, the Alberta senatorial selection act. I will not take your appointment but I will run. I will let my name stand under the legislation we have in Alberta".

I bet a dollar he would have won that election, but who knows? Think of the legitimacy and the mandate he would have had if he had been elected by the people of Alberta and then went to sit in the Senate. He could have really puffed his chest out because he could have said: "I am here because I deserve to be here, not because I follow the dictates of the Prime Minister".

Unfortunately on May 9 in the hallowed halls of the House of Commons, the Prime Minister said: "Obliged by the Canadian Constitution I will name a senator who I will choose and who will represent my party". Is this sober second thought? This is not sobriety. This is something that says I will tell you exactly what you should do, and he will represent my party. A senator who will respect the will of the House of Commons? How about respecting the will of the people who sent him there? Unfortunately Nick Taylor is not able to do that.

Supply

Mr. Taylor qualifies for his MLA's pension. He has a \$16,000 provincial pension. I was just at a townhall meeting in that provincial constituency the other night. There are a lot of people living in the Red Water-Bon Accord area who would give anything to make \$16,000 a year, not to get a senator's salary as well as 16 grand a year for the pension. There is something awfully unfortunate about that. That is only number two on my list.

Let me talk about number three in the hat trick of senators who believed so strongly in an elected Senate, then all of a sudden something happened when they got the call. This month Jean Forest, a very respected Albertan, someone who has really contributed to society and who also talked about how important it is to have an elected Senate. She was all in favour of an elected Senate. She would have been out there with her name on the list if the Prime Minister had not given her the call.

My colleague mentioned earlier how important it was for attention to be paid to the wishes of Alberta. The premier, Ralph Klein, wanted to send a letter to the Prime Minister after the death of Senator Earl Hastings. He thought that he should at least have the courtesy to wait until the funeral was over. No sooner had the senator died than bang, Jean Forest got the call. Sober second thought? Funerals are sober second thought, but not the call which was so fast it would make one's head spin.

We should have at least conducted the business of what Albertans had to do with the Senator. She should have said: "Mr. Prime Minister, thanks for the call, but just a minute. Let us talk about what is propietous. Let us talk about general courtesy and general respect".

The next thing we knew she is in the Senate. "You have just been summoned to the Senate at age 69," when she should have been retired and at least have bought a motor home to go camping or something. There is a second person from my province who was appointed faster than the eye can see, who has said: "I firmly believed in an elected Senate then, but now that I have received the call I am so sorry, I will be appointed". That is not right. It is very frustrating and it is wrong.

The Canadian public are paying the bills for this. At least they deserve the chance to know the Senate is doing something worthwhile because it is costing several million dollars a year.

I will talk about another person from my province, Bud Olson, who has done the down and back again. He will receive an MP pension. He came in as a Socred, joined the Liberals on the national energy program and was appointed to the Senate. He was here a long time and has now gone back home to be the lieutenant-governor. He is making thousands of dollars. He receives a tremendous wage from the federal government as lieutenant-governor. I wish him well in this position and bear him no personal malice.

Supply

• (1535)

However, when his stint as lieutenant-governor is over he will be able to collect an MP pension, a Senate pension and a lieutenant-governor pension. That is going to be a lot of money. He has excused it by saying: "I would have made much more money in private life". That is not good enough for the people who are slogging and paying taxes and the bills on this. It is not good enough for you and I, Mr. Speaker, to say: "It is nice to be here but we would have done so much better in our private lives". You and I are teachers, Mr. Speaker. Could we have made better? What does it matter? Service is the ultimate.

I am reminded of a phrase from one of my favourite books which states: "Let him who wants to be chief amongst you be servant of all". That is what the Senate and the House of Commons needs to learn to do.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in her remarks the hon. member for Beaver River rewrote a little bit of history. I recall her saying in the course of her speech that she remembers the former Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, being shamed into appointing a Reformer to the Senate.

I know she likes to claim that this particular senator was elected because he happened to win a popularity contest in Alberta that was organized under an Alberta statute which had no validity whatsoever in terms of the election of a senator. However, the Prime Minister of the day, because he had a surfeit of Tory senators in the Senate, was quite prepared to stuff it with a Reformer. He chose a Reformer who had won this popularity contest in Alberta because, according to the member for Beaver River, he was shamed into doing so.

Mr. Speaker, you were in that Parliament. I was in that Parliament. The hon. member for Nunatsiag was in that Parliament. I do not recall any look of shame on the Prime Minister's face when he appointed this particular Reform hack to the Senate.

The hon. member for Beaver River loves to rewrite history. I know she thinks this man was the people's choice because he won a popularity contest in Alberta. She says he received more votes than anybody else. He may have but there were no qualifications for running in this election. It was a fraud run by the Government of Alberta for the purpose of trying to change the Constitution which it did not do.

Mr. Abbott: You are insulting the people of Alberta.

Mr. Milliken: I am not insulting, I am just stating a fact. I am rewriting history in a way the hon. member for Beaver River just did but I am trying to put a fair slant on the facts.

I wonder if the hon. member for Beaver River could tell us what day it was when the former Prime Minister had this look of shame

come over him which, as she says, possessed him to appoint this particular fellow to the Senate. I do not recall it and I do not think any of my colleagues who were here in the House at the time every recall any look of shame on Prime Minister Brian Mulroney ever, at any time, let alone the day he appointed some Reformer to the Senate of Canada.

I wonder if she can tell us when that was because I would like to hear about it. I also wonder if she remembers the look of shame that came over him when he stuffed the Senate with eight extra Tories to get the GST bill through. I think she was here then too.

Miss Grey: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was here when there was that fracas in the Senate over the GST. I well remember these Liberals when they sat on this side of the House and said that they would scrap, kill and abolish the GST. I was the only one here who remembers that little promise and it simply did not happen. They have not been able to do it.

I said that Brian Mulroney was shamed into putting Stan Waters into the Senate. Now to be shamed into something does not necessarily mean that one has to have a look of shame on one's face. Stan Waters certainly remembered the call. He received the call from the Prime Minister saying that he would be putting him into the Senate because he had to honour that election.

My colleague says that Stan Waters won a popularity contest. Let it be known, although I do not have the numbers on top of my head, but I think he received 275,000 votes which is a darn sight more than any one of us have ever received in a single election in this House. It was no popularity contest.

My friend also said that it was a fraud by Alberta. This is a provincial government with some legitimacy in this country. It has provincial rights. It put in provincial legislation called the senatorial selection act. It is as simple as that. For some guy from Ontario to stand up and say: "This is a fraud in Alberta", it is not proper. We do not need to change the Constitution to let this happen. The political will of the government in power is all that is necessary.

• (1540)

A full blown Senate amendment could be passed and this party has that ready to go if the day comes. However, anyone who has the political will to say that this is important, like the Liberals had in 1992, as I thought, at their biennial convention to say that "be it resolved that we are going to go ahead and have an elected Senate", I wonder what happened to the hon. member's memory.

He may follow the Prime Minister in saying: "You voted against the Charlottetown accord. Because the Charlottetown accord was defeated you people gave up an elected Senate". That is not true. There was so much gobbledegook in the Charlottetown accord that an elected Senate was only one part of it. An elected Senate was only one of the six or seven major issues in the accord but it would

Supply

not be an effective Senate because it was going to be counterbalanced by the number of people in the House of Commons.

My friend from Kingston and the Islands knows a lot more about all these technicalities than I do, but I am smart enough to figure out that it was not a true triple E Senate. The Charlottetown accord went down in flames across the country for various reasons but it was not because my party was against Senate reform. We want true, fair Senate reform.

My province of Alberta was the one that started a legitimate process. This was not a fraud. It was not a popularity contest. It was something that was absolutely legitimate and we are demanding that it be legitimized again. We do not have somebody dictate from the House of Commons what is going to happen over there. As the Prime Minister said so clearly not once but twice as I reiterated earlier on May 9: "I will name a senator who I will choose and who will represent my party". There is no shame there and there certainly should be.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, just before I make my comments I would like to invite, if he has the courage—

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Abbott: I am sorry. You are right, Mr. Speaker. We have had difficulty with that word today, haven't we? I understand completely.

I would like to invite my colleague from Kingston and the Islands to stand and state the position of his party. It seems as though there has been a complete vacuum—we are talking about Liberals—of input by the Liberals. They know full well if they stand in this House they are going to be asked again and again: "Do you support the concept that we would permit 40 million taxpayers' dollars to go to the Senate without any accountability?" I would like the hon. member to stand up and make a speech about that.

Miss Grey: Who is being questioned here anyway?

The Speaker: Order. I am sure the hon. member realizes that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is not making a speech. It is the hon. member for Beaver River. Maybe we are going to have a bank shot over here and the member for Beaver River is going to answer that.

Miss Grey: Let me put this in the pocket, if we are talking about bank shots.

Liberals across the way can laugh and talk and there are three or four of them over there who can hoot and howl about it, but at their convention in 1992 they endorsed a resolution which said that they supported an elected Senate.

Perhaps one of them has the nerve to get up and speak in this debate, as I have seen precious few of them here today. I would love it if they would stand up and address this topic so we can ask them questions and then we would be able to put one in the pocket.

The Speaker: With that last shot, I think we will continue with the debate.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate today on the motion presented by our colleague from the Reform Party, the member for Comox—Alberni. This motion reads as follows:

Given that the Senate has failed to respond to a message from this House requesting that a representative of the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration appear before the Standing Committee of Government Operations to account for \$40 million taxpayers' money, this House express its dissatisfaction with the Senate for disregarding modern democratic principles of accountability and, as a consequence, notice is hereby given of opposition to Vote 1 under Parliament in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997.

This is the wording of the motion, and it is not the first time we find ourselves discussing in this House the manner in which the Upper House, the other place, the Senate, operates. This is not the first time we have questioned expenses incurred by the Senate. It is also not the first time we have questioned the reason for the Senate's existence.

When I meet with people in my riding, and this is the case for all of my colleagues, one question comes up regularly. People ask us: "What is the purpose of the Senate? What do the senators do?"

The public had the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the Senate during the reading of the last throne speech, but I do not think they came away with a more positive image. As you will recall, one or two senators were caught snoozing in full view of the entire population. Jean-Luc Mongrain, a very well known and very popular Quebec commentator, had a field day with it, devoting an hour of one of his broadcasts to the Senate.

It is easy to make fun of what goes on in the Senate. There are, of course, senators who do a serious job, who attend regularly, who carry out research and get involved in the political life of our country in order to improve it, to improve the situation of our fellow citizens. We must, however, admit that, for a large number of people at least, the impression is that they contribute absolutely nothing, that they are, to all intents and purposes, more of a liability than an asset for the people of Canada and of Quebec.

Our fellow citizens, the people with whom we have regular contact, who ask us that question, are not the only ones to wonder the same thing. Both the auditor general himself, to whom I shall

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return in a few minutes, and several political commentators, have questioned the strange way the Senate operates year after year.

I would like to quote one in particular, because I feel that the examples he refers to are ones people can relate to, and are based on true facts.

● (1550)

This is an article from *La Presse*, over the byline of Claude Piché who refers to an article by the *Financial Post's* Gord McIntosh.

Referring to the finance minister's speech, Mr. Piché said in his introduction that, at the very time the federal Minister of Finance is cutting back on expenditures—and this applies to all of the provinces—and asking people to tighten their belts, urging workers and governments to do more, telling everybody that there is no more money to throw away recklessly, we have to act prudently, manage the budget carefully, intelligently, make sure that the available money is spent on the right things.

Referring to the Senate, Mr. Piché writes: "Of course, the government's financial statements show us that the Senate costs Canadian taxpayers \$43 million year after year". He also reminds us that a senator earns \$64,000 a year, plus a tax free allowance of \$10,100. We are talking about gross salaries, excluding operating expenses, of approximately \$85,000 to \$90,000, which is hardly at the poverty line or on the brink of social assistance.

Mr. Piché referred to Mr. McIntosh's investigation and said that what he finds totally unacceptable are the expense allowances in addition to this salary, on top of the fact that many senators are absent more often than not.

He said that what he and everyone find unacceptable are the totally inflated expenses. He provided some examples. He asked whether anyone had visited senators' offices. "Last year, a new lobby panelled in mahogany and adorned with green, black, salmon and grey granite," reports journalist McIntosh, "at a cost to taxpayers of \$125,000". He added that "One senator even had the gall to add that it was a bargain".

Mr. Piché also noted that, in 1993, the Senate sat only 47 days. He reports: "The Senate employs 11 people full time at an average salary of \$60,000 simply to immortalize the words of the senators in Hansard, minutes of a sort of Parliamentary proceedings. Obviously, these officials have a lot more free time and can therefore make month end by selling their services to other government agencies".

Another example: "Senators have their own exercise room, set up, of course, at taxpayers' expense. The equipment in this room at the senators' disposal is worth \$29,000". Mr. McIntosh's report on his investigation reveals that only one senator used this room during the year the investigation was conducted.

● (1555)

And it goes on. He says, and I think that is what is the most striking for all our fellow citizens: "From February to May of 1993, the Senate met six days in February, ten in March, five in April and eight in May, for a total of 29 days in four months". Mr. Piché adds: "This furious pace of work appears to have been more than many senators could handle, judging from the mind-boggling rate of absenteeism at the Senate".

These examples show beyond the shadow of a doubt the merit of the motion before us. I could go on reading one example after another for hours and hours. Mr. McIntosh and Mr. Piché are not the only ones to point to such totally unacceptable situations. Earlier in my remarks, I referred to the auditor general's report for 1991. Five years later, there is still no indication that those situations condemned, raised and identified by the auditor general back in 1991 have been addressed in 1996.

Take the budget of the Senate, the Upper House, for example. Expenditures of about \$40 million are mentioned in the motion. In 1991, the budget was \$42.6 million. But the auditor general comments: "Total Senate expenditures are closer to \$54 million, if we add the estimated \$11.4 million in services provided to the Senate by certain government agencies". This "we" does not refer to Bloc members or to yours truly, but to the auditor general himself. This means that it would be more accurate to talk about upwards of \$50 million in the wording of the motion, instead of \$40 million.

The report is about 100 pages long. I will obviously not read it, but I will mention a few examples which reflect the views expressed by Mr. Piché, although in a more detailed fashion, since they are provided by the auditor general, who is accountable to the House, who works at arm's length, who has the necessary resources—even though he may sometimes think otherwise—to enable him to do serious work.

What does this report on Senate spending say? There is a recommendation, recommendation No. 2, on page 13. The auditor general recommends that the Senate should publish a statement on its expenditures and the performance of its administration. Under 3.23, recommendation No. 2 provides that: "The Senate should regularly publish a summary of committee activities and expenditures".

● (1600)

If the auditor general made such a recommendation in 1991 and if, as I said, nothing has changed since, the public will realize, like us, that the activities of the Senate and its members are not subject to any audit. Senators are not accountable to anyone. They can do what they want with the public money at their disposal. Again, the Reform Party motion is fully justified.

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Take travel expenses. We read in the auditor general's report that there is nothing to guarantee that the travel expenses assumed by the Senate are for the Senate's operations. An example is given.

The example describes a senator who is reimbursed for a one-week trip to Vancouver for himself and four members of his family. Moreover, all of them came from different regions of Canada. To top it all, the senator himself was not a native of British Columbia. Would it be permissible to wonder about an expense of this nature? The auditor general thinks so. Those listening today, those who elected us, the public, taxpaying Canadians, think so.

Mr. Speaker, you are indicating that I have only two minutes left. That is, unfortunately, not enough. I will conclude with some remarks about the reason for the Senate's existence.

I will not give a political science lecture on the difference between the Upper House and the House of Commons, but in the opinion of many of our citizens, particularly those in Quebec, the Upper House, the Senate, is completely unnecessary.

All the members from Quebec share this view. What is more, the political option we are legitimately defending, whether we are from Canada, Quebec, or elsewhere, means that we want not just to see the Senate abolished, but as well not to be represented by anyone at the federal level.

But even from a federalist standpoint, and our colleagues in the Reform Party have, I think, very aptly demonstrated this, even from a federalist standpoint, almost everyone agrees on the need to reform the Upper House, to ensure that, if there is truly a desire for institutions that respect British tradition, at least that House will have real powers. It will also have to be accountable, unlike what we are seeing now. These days, and I will conclude on this note, the Senate is more like a Club Med to reward political organizers or to facilitate their party fundraising activities. More often than not, this is the purpose served by the Senate nowadays.

• (1605)

At a time when all Canadians are being asked to tighten their belts, to take another look at how they are doing things, they are entitled to require the same of their elected officials. The first expense that should be cut is not grants to organizations representing the disabled, but Senate spending. Action should be taken so that if our senators, our political organizers, want a paid vacation, they pay for it out of their own pockets.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the comments of my colleague from the Bloc Quebecois.

Perhaps I could read the first two paragraphs of a column by Mike Scandiffio which appeared in the *Hill Times* a few weeks ago. "The Senate is underfunded and needs a minimum of \$4 million more to meet its objectives", said the senator who chairs the committee which sets out the budget for the upper chamber. "The budget leaves the Senate little room for ongoing operations", said Senator Colin Kenny who chairs the internal economy committee. "\$4 million, that is a low ball figure. I would like to see \$7 million".

We get the idea of the seriousness of the motion the Reform Party has brought forward, notwithstanding the fact that we hear all sorts of laughing and chuckling from the peanut gallery over there. They do not realize that the people of Canada are sick and fed up with the notion that the senators, along with their porky pension plan, keep on going to the people of Canada and to the trough. They just do not understand that the people of Canada are fed up with the Liberals and all the old line parties constantly swilling out more and more money.

I have a question for the member. The motion gives notice of opposition to the Senate estimates. Its purpose is to put pressure on the Senate to make it account for the \$40 million of spending. We would need a majority in the House to indicate that we are prepared to vote down the Senate funds if it refuses to appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

I realize that he and I are just members of a caucus. He does not have an official capacity in the Bloc Quebecois, at least none that I am aware of. I would like to ask him, though, what the Bloc position is on this point. Does he agree that in fact the Board of Internal Economy of the Senate should be brought before the standing committee to account for its \$40 million so that the people of Canada have a legitimate say into the expenditures?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc's position has been explained by my colleague who spoke this morning immediately after the mover of the motion. As for me, I am saying, as I have throughout my speech, obviously, that I find that the requirement that the Upper House submit accounts according to the formula set out in the motion is not only acceptable, desirable, but strikes me as a minimum, that the senators provide an accounting of their administration.

I will therefore repeat that I am, of course, in agreement for this motion to be passed, but I am convinced that the government will not be brave enough to follow up on it. This gives me the opportunity to recall another expenditure the auditor general found with respect to telecommunications. I have already referred to the number of sitting days attended by a goodly number of senators. If records are broken over there, it most certainly has nothing to do

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with attendance. There are no marathon sittings, no one dropping down from exhaustion afterward—

An hon. member: Just falling asleep.

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Yes, they nod off, but they do not collapse exhausted from having sat too long.

• (1610)

What does the auditor general have to say about telecommunications? It is important to pay attention, and I am talking to my Liberal colleagues, who should think about this. The auditor general says that about \$10,000 per senator is spent annually on the average on telecommunications, but that the figure varies considerably. He reports that, in a ten month period, starting April 1989, the expenditures of seven senators exceeded \$2,000 a month on 26 different occasions overall.

Two thousand dollars in telephone costs a month. I understand why they do not sit often, they are always on the telephone. It reminds me of my teenagers. I hope they have the call waiting service so people can reach them sometimes. Other senators, however, spent less than \$500 a month.

This sort of example is important. I repeat this is not gossip about politicians people are sharing on street corners. This is what the auditor general, a credible individual recognized by all politicians in Canada, had to say. This kind of example is in his report.

In response to my colleague, I repeat that we in the Bloc want the Senate abolished, purely and simply. The motion by our Reform colleague is the minimum in terms of political decency.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague. Although everyone understood what he just said, not everyone accepts it. It is our colleagues across the way who do not accept it. The auditor general came up with these figures and everyone can see them.

Yet, when I explain to my constituents that the Senate costs \$43 million, while some industries are being cut by 30 per cent because the government does not want to invest in forestry, they find it hard to take. It is indeed very hard to take.

I fully agree with the motion put forward by my colleague from Comox—Alberni, but it does not go far enough. As my colleague from Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead was saying, the Senate must be abolished. We must give some serious thought to this.

I attended the speech from the throne and saw senators sleeping and being filmed by the TV cameras. Is there better evidence of how hard some senators work? Of course not. This scene was shown several times on television. The people in my riding asked me what those people were doing there.

The government is making cuts to forestry, to agriculture, to unemployment insurance, to everything—The people in my riding have a much more appropriate name for unemployment insurance: poverty insurance. Meanwhile, senators travel in first class, quaff champagne and run up extravagant communications bills. When they travel to foreign countries, senators arrive around five o'clock and have a sip of champagne before laying down for a nap; that is about the extent of it. I am not making anything up, as you well know.

To be honest, some senators do a certain amount of work, but 90 per cent of them are a waste of time, energy and money. The people of the great Lower St. Lawrence region, of Matapédia—Matane, will never be able to understand this.

If you do not believe me, you should hold a referendum asking whether we should keep the Senate, whether we should keep feeding senators or get rid of them. I can tell you right now that there would be a strong majority in favour of abolishing the Senate.

• (1615)

[*English*]

Following a further inquiry from the table officers, having just replaced the previous chair occupant, I will look to the government side for a speaker. Then, of course, I will recognize the Reform Party in whose name the opposition day stands.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate this afternoon.

[*Translation*]

I am somewhat shocked by the remarks made by the hon. members of the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party who just spoke. In their speeches, they made remarks to the effect that several members of the other place are not working, which are insulting to the members of Senate. It is not true. Many senators work hours on end at the Senate and the hon. members of both opposition parties know it full well.

They are perfectly aware of the fact that many senators sit on Senate committees, often splitting their time between these committees and the Senate itself for weeks on end, and they work very hard for the residents of their province, whom they represent in the other place.

[*English*]

For hon. members opposite to dump on the Senate in this way may be popular and may be fun, but I suggest that in respect of at least some of the hon. senators, quite a good number of them, it is unfair. Many of them are extremely hard working and do an excellent service for Canada and for the Parliament of Canada.

I know it is a popular sport to criticize the Senate. I will have some remarks of my own in respect of the Senate. I have made them in the past. That is fair game. However, there are many hard working Canadians in the Senate and for hon. members opposite to make those remarks is improper, in my view, and contrary to our rules and practices.

The motion before the House is questionable. It is not surprising when one considers the source. The hon. member for Comox—Alberni put forward the motion which says the Senate failed to respond to a message from the House requesting that a representative of the Senate committee appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations to account for \$40 million of taxpayer money. Talk about crocodile tears.

Mr. Abbott: That is a fact.

Mr. Milliken: If the hon. member for Kootenay East could control himself for a few minutes he will have a chance to ask questions a little later. He says it is a fact. Yes, it is a fact. It is also a fact that this kind of request has never gone to a Senate committee chair before from this House. It is also a fact that it is quite improper for one House to demand the attendance of members of the other House in their capacity as representatives of the House.

I suggest to the hon. member that if a request came from the Senate for members of this House to go down to defend their expenditures before the Senate, the request would be treated with some disdain.

The hon. member for Kootenay East wags his head. Perhaps he would go to the Senate to explain his expenditures, but I do not regard it as my responsibility to go there to explain anything to the Senate about my expenditures.

The hon. member says he is elected and that, of course, makes a difference. It may, but the Senate has certain powers and rights under the Constitution. Senators may not be elected but they are appointed under the Constitution and their powers are derived from the same act, the Constitution Act, from which our powers are derived.

While the hon. member may have a point that there is a difference in the way we are appointed, if I received a request from the Senate to come hither to answer questions, I would say no, I will not, thank you very much. The Senate has exercised that right.

What the hon. member for Comox—Alberni is trying to do by the motion is make it appear that somehow the Senate is being undemocratic because these non-elected people are saying they will not appear before a group of elected people to explain the way they are accounting for their money.

There are procedures for doing this. There are procedures for bringing the Senate to account in respect of its management of the

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funds it has. Members can ask questions with respect to the Senate estimates when they are here in the House. They can move a motion, as they have today. They can ask a minister of the crown to discuss the estimates. They can ask the President of the Treasury Board questions about the Senate estimates. They can also arrange for members of the Senate to ask questions in the Senate.

• (1620)

The hon. member opposite seems to suggest the Senate is one big happy club, but he knows, as I do, the Senate is made up of partisans from at least two parties.

Mr. Abbott: The old line traditional parties.

Mr. Milliken: There we are. We are hearing it, what we have been listening to throughout this debate from the opposition today, the politics of envy. Here we have two opposition parties screaming and ranting about the Senate. Why? They do not have one of their own in the Senate. We did not used to hear these criticisms of the Senate when Stan Waters was there.

Here was the hon. member for Beaver River shedding crocodile tears earlier because Stan Waters won a popularity contest and was appointed to the Senate by Brian Mulroney. He was appointed just like every other senator was. He was as big a hack as Lowell Murray and Lynch-Staunton and all those Tory hacks in the Senate.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member for Kootenay East can protest all he wants. He can say what an awful thing it is but when it comes right down to it, Stan Waters was appointed the same way the others were.

Listen to the protests. There is no provision in the Constitution Act for the election of a senator. The only way one gets to the Senate—I urge my hon. friends to read the Constitution Act—is by a nomination of the governor general on recommendation from the Prime Minister. There is no other route. One can win a popularity contest for Mr. Beauty Queen and that person will not get into the Senate unless the governor general summons them to the Senate on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

Stan Waters managed that feat. He got into the Senate but he got named by the Prime Minister. If he had not been, he would not have been there. I do not care how many election campaigns he ran in Alberta or anywhere else. He could not get there without that little slip of paper signed by His Excellency the Governor General of Canada.

He got it and he loved it. He sat in the Senate and while he was there we had the hon. member for Beaver River here in the House. She did not rant and rave about the evils of the Senate and its expenditures then.

An hon. member: You did not let her speak.

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Mr. Milliken: We were treated to the speeches of the hon. member for Beaver River all the time. She gave us another sterling example this afternoon.

We all listened with bated breath to the member for Beaver River when she got a chance to speak. I remember many times the Liberal Party gave up space in its speaking list in order for the member for Beaver River to get on the record. We wanted to hear her views. We were enthusiastic about hearing her views. We still are.

Here she was today telling us all about the Senate and how her friends had been appointed to the Senate, friends of hers she thought were in favour of a democratically elected Senate.

The position of the Liberal Party on this is very well known. We favour an elected Senate. It will come in the fullness of time. In the meantime, we operate under the existing Constitution. That requires the Prime Minister to fill vacancies in the Senate by making recommendations to His Excellency the Governor General of Canada who then summons persons to sit in the Senate.

I am sure my hon. friends opposite would not want to have the Senate continue to be dominated by the party that formed the government and that was so soundly thrashed in the last election campaign.

They say they are very democratic and that they support democratic principles. I found it passing strange that when I came into the House today I saw that the two Conservative members have been shifted away so that they are not sitting so close to the Reformers any more. We know why that happened. It is that they were treated so rudely by the Reform Party members, being shouted at and screamed at so that they could not hear themselves think where they were sitting. They got moved closer to the Bloc. For a party that is so democratic as the Reform Party, I am rather surprised it would take that approach.

Anyway, there they are moved. It is bad enough to see them mistreated in the election campaign, having been reduced to two seats, but then to have them treated this way in the House by the Reform Party is a shameful thing.

The Conservative Party still controls the Senate; well not quite anymore, but it still has a very large number of members in the Senate. Until recently it exercised effective control of the Senate. I am sure hon. members opposite who are after all professed democrats would not want that to continue.

• (1625)

The government has continued to appoint Liberals to the Senate to redress the imbalance that was the hangover of the Mulroney years in the Senate. It was a hangover that Canadians were tired of. The government took the right approach. It has continued with that

approach by appointing Liberals to the Senate to fill every possible vacancy to make sure we are not confronted with Tory dominance in the Senate any longer.

Some of my colleagues may not be aware of this but hon. members opposite have been in cahoots with their Tory colleagues in the Senate Chamber. I go back to Bill C-69 and that ill fated attempt to amend the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act which was introduced in the House and which members on all sides worked on so hard to come up with a good bill.

That bill was adopted in this House and sent to the other place. I recall going down to a committee meeting to answer questions about the bill as chairman of the procedure and House affairs committee as parliamentary secretary to the government House leader at the time. I went down to the Senate to answer questions with regard to the bill. Who did I see down there but the hon. member for Calgary West. He had run down and climbed into bed with Senator Staunton and Senator Murray. He was in cahoots. He was whispering away at the committee table, saying "ask him this, ask him about that", and giving all kinds of asides to these senators to stir up trouble with respect to a bill that had passed in this House.

This is the Senate that we are hearing about today which is so undemocratic, autocratic, so unfair and full of all these awful people, according to the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois. Yet when Bill C-69 was there, boy, there was the member for Calgary West, who the last time I checked was still in the Reform Party, down there talking those Tory senators and trying to get them to jump on the Reform band wagon and block the bill. They succeeded. He succeeded abundantly. He so convinced the Tory senators that this bill was a bad thing that they blocked the bill. They held it up for months and months. Now the hon. member for Beaver River is losing her seat.

We heard the member for Beaver River today. She was preaching politics of envy. She wants a Senate seat.

Mr. Abbott: Oh, right.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member for Kootenay East says I am right. He knows I am right. Her seat disappears in redistribution. She wants to go to the Senate. Here she was making a speech today, wanting to create vacancies in the Senate by exposing some kind of scandal down there. If she could make it account for this \$40 million and found something had been misspent, maybe there would be a vacancy and she could get appointed to the vacancy.

She listed her three friends who have all gone and she wants to be with them. I can understand her desire. I guess if I had three close friends all go to the Senate maybe I would want a Senate seat too. In the meantime I am quite happy to stay here.

I am not finished yet. I know hon. members opposite want to ask me questions and that is why I made this speech. I want to give

them an opportunity to ask me questions, but they will have to hold their horses until I am finished.

The other thing about the Senate is how is it that the Reform Party, which says it is so much in favour of democracy, can favour a triple E Senate? Why does a triple E Senate make so much sense to the Reform Party and so little sense to almost everybody else?

I will try to explain it. Under its proposal for a triple E Senate, it is to have the senators elected on a province-wide basis in each province and there will be an equal number of senators per province, say 10 per province.

Miss Grey: What is all this I hear?

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member for Beaver River has re-appeared. Like the phoenix from the ashes she has come back. I am so glad she has made it. I hope she has not missed the point of the beginning of my story.

Reformers want this triple E Senate, 10 senators per province, elected on a provincial basis so that they can all get huge numbers of votes.

The hon. member for Beaver River in her remarks spoke eloquently about how her friend, Stan Waters, got a huge number of votes, the biggest number anyone had ever received in an election in Canada, because he ran in the biggest constituency anyone had ever run in, in this popularity contest in Alberta. I can only tell the hon. member that if we had a similar election today across the country in each province, in the province of Prince Edward Island the winner might get as many votes as I did.

• (1630)

An hon. member: Not that many.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member says not that many. I know he is flattering me. We could then go to another place like Ontario where the winner might receive 10 times as many votes as the person in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or some other province, but it would be many times more than Stan Waters received in Alberta.

Let us go on with this case for another second. Then we get these people into the Senate and the Senate becomes effective. It has all the powers the current Senate has, the power to block any bill. We would create a newly elected body of 10 people from every province, representing the people of their provinces, with the power to block the elected will of the House of Commons.

What happens to the democratic principle in this case? The five smallest provinces could get together and effectively block the five largest provinces because there would be a tie vote.

An hon. member: What is the matter with that?

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Mr. Milliken: The hon. member asks what is wrong with that. In a democracy we normally go with the majority, the numbers. We have compromised the majority somewhat by tying the number of seats into the population in provinces with certain floors, certain guarantees, and so on and so forth. Those exist in the country. It is this House which is the basis for government in the country, not the Senate. It has unlimited powers in theory but in practice very limited powers. This House has virtually unlimited powers.

The hon. member knows the way this House works is that the different regions of the country are represented here. However, what is sought in this triple E Senate is a power in the smallest provinces to block the larger provinces.

Hon. members opposite must know that if about one-quarter of the population of the country were able to thwart the wishes of over three-quarters of the country there would be something wrong. If they do not think that, their idea of democracy is pretty weak.

Have I said something in a way that is too complicated for the hon. members opposite to understand?

The country should be governed by a group of people elected to represent their geographic areas based on some system of equality of representation. What hon. members opposite are suggesting is exactly the opposite. They are to turn the Senate Chamber into something that will be able to dominate the Canadian political system big time and in a way that is most undemocratic despite their protests of democracy.

It makes me very suspicious when I combine my hearing of their views on the triple E Senate with the hon. member for Calgary West's sliding into bed with these Tory senators on Bill C-69 and the hon. member for Beaver River in her enthusiasm to get a Senate seat to make up for the loss of her seat in the redistribution. All those things make me very suspicious. I begin to think that maybe I am paranoid or something. However, when I speak with my colleagues they all agree with my views as to what Reform really wants here.

If the hon. member for Calgary Southwest were here, although I am sure he is here in spirit, and if he had to act as Prime Minister I can just imagine what he would have been doing the last few weeks if he had vacancies in the Senate at his beck and call. I could see the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan in the Senate. I could see the hon. member for Athabasca in the Senate. I will bet if she had played her cards right, the hon. member for Calgary Southeast might even have made it to the Senate. I will bet it is a good place for them. It is just as well there as it is at the back of the bus.

The poor hon. member for Calgary Southeast is now sloughed off in the back row over there with the Bloc members. The poor soul, she is off with the Bloc members. The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead is back after his speech and he and the hon. member for Calgary Southeast can commiserate on

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what life would be like in the Senate. I am sure they would share views on the importance of appointment to the Senate and what useful lives they could lead there after the next election.

• (1635)

The hon. member for Calgary Southwest is not the Prime Minister of Canada and that is why we are hearing this politics of envy. If he were the Prime Minister of Canada we would not be hearing all these complaints about the Senate because there would be some Reform members in the Senate and so they would stop complaining.

It would not stop the Bloc, I admit, since it is not running to be the Government of Canada. It is unlikely that we will have any appointments from that party, which would silence it.

I assure my colleague for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead that if the Prime Minister, once there is a Liberal majority in the Senate, chooses to appoint one of his colleagues to the Senate he too will agree the Senate is a great place, that its members work very hard and he will repent all the words he spoke today. He will withdraw those words and apologize to his friends in the Senate for the nasty things he has said.

I hope all hon. members in their remarks and in their questions will be temperate in their criticisms of the other place because I believe it does good service for Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Given the huge interest in the intervention from the member for Kingston and the Islands on questions and comments, I will try to recognize as many members as I can.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have been at this for years and years. I can hardly believe he is ranting and raving right now against an elected Senate. I ask him to agree or disagree with the proposal in the resolution his party came forward with at the 1992 convention that said be it resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada is in favour of an elected Senate.

It would hardly seem he is following his party's policy right now in ranting against it. His friend, the member for Etobicoke—Lake-shore, for whom I have quite a bit of respect, said to me earlier "well, that was then".

Something happens from this side of the House over to that side of the House. In opposition the Liberals could say all kinds of things. Then of course at their assembly in 1992 before they became government they could have all these wonderful documents come forward.

The interesting thing that is different about his party and mine is that when we have an assembly and the delegates at that assembly

vote on party policy, heaven help any MP who thinks they can vote against it because the people have the last word. I could never sit in the House and say that was then but now that I am in government things are so much better. Does he agree or disagree with that resolution?

He spent more time talking about me than he did about the Senate. I could not help but notice he was wondering aloud if I really wanted a seat in the Senate because of the redistribution of the constituency in Beaver River.

Let me put on the record in *Hansard* that if I ever think that I might get a seat in the Senate of Canada it will be because I run as an elected person for a seat in the Senate of Canada. It will be democratic, it will be legitimate and I will have some mandate for being in the Senate, not because some hack threw me in there.

He also says there might be Reformers in the Senate. I dare say there will be someday, but it will be because we are running there. It will not be because some political hack says to me "well done, thou good and faithful hack, go to the Senate". It will not happen, but that is his dream of getting to the Senate.

Perhaps there is a little disappointment because his name did not come up on the list. Several people have been put in the Senate since he was heaved down there by the glass doors. How much farther can you go before you are out of this Chamber?

He did not get a chance to get into the Senate. I wonder if he would agree with me, being that he did not get a seat, how important it is not to just make fun of the whole issue of election and talk about a fraud or whatever in Alberta, but would he stand with me and say he does not believe in some political person throwing him into the Senate, that he will be hanged before he will let some pot licker put him in the Senate without running to be there effectively and legitimately.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the protestations of the hon. member for Beaver River, I have no intention of being hanged before or after any possible chance of going to the Senate.

• (1640)

To answer her question, I support the Liberal Party resolution of 1992. If I had my choice, I would abolish the Senate. I see there will be a debate on Friday on a motion moved by the hon. member for Kamouraska. I hope the hon. member for Beaver River will support the motion so we can get rid of the Senate for now. If we can agree on an elected Senate at another date, I would be to have an elected Senate. It will have to be by some kind of agreement.

I also suggest the proper thing to do is put some restrictions on the power of the Senate, whether it is elected or not. The hon.

member for Beaver River can discuss that with me at a later date. I would be more than happy to have a lengthy debate on the subject.

With respect to the Charlottetown accord, when we had a chance to have an elected Senate, I actively campaigned for the yes side.

Miss Grey: My side won.

Mr. Milliken: I am well aware that the hon. member's no side won. She had a chance then to support an elected Senate and she campaigned against the Charlottetown accord. I put my money where my mouth was. Our party supported an elected Senate despite my preference for abolition. I went along with the thing and supported an elected Senate in an effort to make the accord work. When the hon. member for Beaver River had a chance go for an elected Senate she would not hold her nose and go for it. She said "I am not going for an elected Senate, it is not that important to me".

It was important enough to our party that I was able to support the accord and I did my bit for an elected Senate. Even though we lost the battle, we won the war in Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have in hand a copy of an article from the *Hill Times* by Mike Scandiffio from February 26 this year. I think the member might be interested:

Cash strapped and struggling in the polls, Tories are looking to tap into Senate funds as they try to rebuild the party and take on the Liberals.

A 10-page memo written by Tory Senate staffers and obtained by the *Hill Times* outlines a plan by Tory senators and staffers to set up research working groups as part of a "policy issues network" paid by the research budget, allocated to each of the senators.

However, according to the memo the working groups are to "provide support to the leader—

the member for Sherbrooke

—and the party process by acting as a source for immediate information requests" and "to provide substantive analysis and input into the party policy process".

I wonder if this does not make the case that there must be an accountability that he, all jokes notwithstanding, as a member of Parliament, should be calling for on the part of the Senate if it is proposing to divert funds from the objective that was set out for those funds. It is proposing to divert Senate funds to rebuild the Tory political party, according to this article.

Therefore I must ask the member in all seriousness, does he not agree it is important that this elected, legitimate body by virtue of its election, on behalf of the people of Canada who elected it, hold the Senate accountable? Why is that such a difficult concept to understand? Should the Senate be held accountable to the people of Canada for its expenditure of funds, yes or no?

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Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, of course the Senate should be held accountable for its funds. I am glad the hon. member asked this question. The article seems to be suggesting the Conservative members of the Senate were using the Senate funds available to them for research and other such purposes to do research on behalf of party policy for the Conservative Party of Canada.

Mr. Abbott: For their members in the House of Commons.

Mr. Milliken: Or for the Conservative Party of Canada. These members are given a budget for research purposes, as we are, and they are allowed to use that money for partisan purposes, as we are permitted to do.

I can develop policy statements in my office intended for use by the Liberal Party of Canada should I choose to do so. I can use my House of Commons staff, just as the hon. member can do with his.

I cite a few examples. There is a former Reform candidate now employed in the office of a member of the Reform Party. He was employed there before he ran as a candidate. He was a candidate in cold storage. It is like a frozen steak; pull it out when there is an election and start cooking. Then when the election is lost, it is put back in the freezer. That is what happened with one of theirs.

• (1645)

Then the Reform Party spent \$30,000 on its leader's suits with taxpayers' money raised in donations to the party. Do we think people who contributed money to the Reform Party thought that \$30,000 would be used to buy suits for the hon. member for Calgary Southwest? That is accountability. Let us hear about that.

If the hon. member is so concerned about accountability why does he not tell us about the car the party provides the party leader? When he handed over the keys to the official car given to him by the House of Commons, he took a car from the party and said it was not from the taxpayers. Who got all the receipts for the money with \$75 out of \$100 as a tax credit but the people who paid for that car who were all taxpayers. The rest of us are all taking it in the neck because they got a \$75 tax credit out of the first \$100.

The hon. member says it is a taxable claim. My figures are correct. If a person gives \$100 to a party they get a \$75 tax credit. That comes out of the pockets of taxpayers, as does any other deduction.

I know the hon. member for Kootenay East is thankful he asked me that question. I agree with accountability. I believe people should be accountable. His party should come clean about what it is doing with taxpayers' money, as we do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon.

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member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, terrorism; the hon. member for Labrador, mining.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the intervention from the member for Kingston and the Islands. It was very entertaining. There is a very popular box office hit called "Twister". It is also very entertaining and there is a similarity. We could draw the analogy that after being entertained for a couple of hours people have only spent money and received a lot of wind.

The Reform Party has spoken in the House since it arrived about the need for change in our parliamentary system. We have talked about the need for change in our Senate.

There are many members in the House from the Bloc, some from the Liberal Party and from the NDP who advocate that we abolish the Senate. Canadians from coast to coast recognize the Senate is nothing more than a haven for political patronage and has been for a very long time. Canadians are not satisfied with that. They are not getting a bang for their buck. They recognize that it is nothing more than a patronage pay-off for political hacks and they want it changed.

The simple solution is to say we will abolish it. That sounds good. I can understand why members from Ontario and Quebec would feel that was a proper solution. They do not have the problem of the regional parts of Canada where representation by population means they are left vulnerable by many political decisions. The Senate provides an opportunity to ensure regional balance and regional fairness in the face of representation by population.

Canadians understand that we do not have regional fairness when in the Senate. It does not provide a sober second look. It does not ensure that the legislation which passes through the House meets the test of fairness for all Canadians. It is nothing short of an opportunity for the prime minister in office to appoint his or her political hacks. The Canadian taxpayers are virtually saddled with those people for a lifetime. There is no way out.

We in the Reform Party recognized a long time ago that the Senate was not working. Instead of coming up with the simplistic solution of abolishing it, we said we needed to change it to make it work, just as we need to change the House to make it work.

• (1650)

We have talked about recall. We have talked about referenda. We have talked about opening up Canada's parliamentary process both in this House and in the upper House to be a more democratic system, to have a more democratic method of operation. We have talked about the way Parliament is working now is nothing short of a democratic dictatorship.

We have an outbreak of democracy once every four or five years when Canadians go to the polls to elect a new government. We are only electing our next dictator. Whoever becomes prime minister in a majority government, which we get most of the time, becomes a virtual dictator for the next four or five years.

The Prime Minister exercises power over cabinet by virtue of the fact that he appoints and fires cabinet ministers. Loyalty is driven toward ensuring that the Prime Minister's will is done in that inner circle of high powered cabinet ministers.

The Prime Minister has a vested interest in the Senate's remaining as it is because it offers him the opportunity to reward his political cronies. It also offers him the opportunity to give the people of Canada the perception that there is a place for a sober second look at legislation that passes through this House. In reality it is nothing more than a rubber stamp.

However, the perception is falling away. Canadians are demanding that substantive changes be made to the way the House of Commons and the Senate work. For the benefit of the members opposite I say that anybody who is in politics in Canada today who does not recognize that and who is not prepared to deal with that will not be here for long.

That is the reality of change coming to Canada. It is driven by the grassroots, by the citizens of the country. We hear it right across the nation. I know there will be some members from some parties in this House dragged through that change kicking and screaming, but it is coming.

The member for Kingston and the Islands said with regard to the Senate that one Reform senator was appointed by the Prime Minister. To say it was a political appointment is a slight on the remembrance of Stan Waters, a great Canadian who ran for public office, who ran for the position of senator and who was elected by over a quarter of a million voters in the province of Alberta.

I can tell the member for Kingston and the Islands that if Stan Waters were alive today and if he were to hear this member denigrating his election to the Senate, I am certain that Stan Waters, knowing him and knowing the way he was, would have given the member an education out behind the barn. That was Stan Waters' way.

The members talk about the Charlottetown accord and say "you nasty Reformers talk about a triple E Senate, yet when you had an opportunity to vote for a triple E Senate you turned it down in the Charlottetown accord".

I remind members opposite that Canadians are not stupid. They understood clearly that the Charlottetown accord was not about a triple E Senate. There was no requirement for an election. There was an opportunity for provincial premiers to make appointments

to the Senate as opposed to the Prime Minister but there was no requirement for an election.

There was no real opportunity for an effective Senate because the provisions in the Charlottetown accord did not allow the Senate to oversee many facets of legislation which we on this side of the House feel it should have the right to review.

Canadians and Reformers were asked at the time of the Charlottetown accord to buy a pig in a poke. We were told "if you want your triple E Senate", and it was not a triple E Senate, "you will get it if you vote for the Charlottetown accord".

• (1655)

We were not to get a triple E Senate. We were to get about a one and a half E Senate, which does not mean we were 50 per cent of the way to our goal. It only meant that we had slightly improved on a very bad system.

Canadians were also told the Charlottetown accord meant distinct society status for Quebec. They were told that one of the five key components of the Charlottetown accord was the inherent right to aboriginal self-government. The Charlottetown accord was turned down by people in many areas of Canada for those reasons. The accord was not turned down because of the extremely limited provisions for change to the Senate.

The government is quick to implement those failed aspects of the Charlottetown accord which did not sit well with Canadian people from coast to coast. Within weeks of taking office the government turned around and issued statements like we recognize the inherent right of aboriginal peoples to self-government. That was a key component of the Charlottetown accord which was voted down by Canadians, but Liberals opposite will foist it down our throats anyway, like it or not.

Last year the Liberal government passed distinct society recognition for Quebec, although it was clearly voted down by the people in the rest of Canada in the Charlottetown referendum. If the Liberals can implement these other aspects of the failed Charlottetown referendum against the wishes of the Canadian people, why can they not agree to implement changes to the Senate?

Depending on which riding they are in, 80 per cent to 85 per cent of Canadians from coast to coast want change in the Senate. They expect change in the Senate. They demand change in the Senate. During its election campaign the government indicated it would make changes, that it believed in an elected Senate.

The reality is here now. It was one thing to promise change during an election campaign. That was then, this is now. There will not be an elected Senate. Canadians' hope for change has been dashed by the comments of members opposite today. It has become

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clear the government, this Liberal Party, has absolutely no intention whatsoever of changing the rules with regard to electing senators. It has made that abundantly clear.

There was a book that was popular several years ago. I cannot remember the name of the author but I recall one of the quotes, that power is rarely or never given but almost always taken. The Reform Party came to Ottawa in part because we wanted to see the tremendous power that is centralized in the Prime Minister's office dissipated somewhat and democratized. There would be more power in the hands of ordinary Canadians.

A major component of that goal is ensuring Canadians have the right to accountability by the Senate, which they pay \$40 million for. They should have some measure of accountability. They should have some way of ensuring senators are doing what the voters want and not what the Prime Minister wants.

I will say again that any political party or political representative who does not recognize the need for accountability and who is not prepared to implement that in the future does not recognize that fundamental changes are needed in our system and they are destined for political extinction. It is coming and I do not think voters will accept any less.

We can listen to the Liberal members opposite talk about how much they believe in democracy, about how much they believe in keeping their election promises when they clearly do not. They clearly do not believe in democracy. They twist words around. They twist sentences around. They twist promises around. They will do anything to avoid making the changes required. They will do anything to avoid having a triple E Senate because it does not work in their political party's interest and it does not work in the Prime Minister's interest. It certainly works in the interests of the Canadian people.

• (1700)

As I said earlier, the Canadian people are no longer content to sit back and watch business unfold as usual. There will be an election within the next year or two, possibly this fall. I believe two of the key issues in that election for Canadians will be just how democratic the process is and how good their representation is in Ottawa.

When I go back to Atlantic Canada I talk to the fishermen. As the fisheries critic I end up talking to a lot of fishermen. They tell me that their elected representatives are not in agreement with the minister on a particular policy. The constituents they have been elected to represent are not in agreement with the minister's policy. However, these MPs dare not come back to Ottawa and take a contrary position to the minister for fear of punishment. We have seen that punishment demonstrated graphically by the Prime Minister in the last six or seven weeks.

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We have seen how a Liberal MP, who wanted to stand up for his election promises and for what his constituents wanted, was hustled out of that party quicker than you could blink when he dared do it.

The question of representation on the part of Canadian voters is becoming more serious all the time. They are no longer content to live with the status quo.

In closing, we hear all the eloquent words from the Liberal MPs on the other side. We hear the rhetoric about how the government would like to see a more open and democratic process. We see it in the red book promises. We see it in interviews with various Liberal MPs in the media from time to time. However, for all those people out there who may be watching, the reality is that there is absolutely no commitment to that at all. The government is not committed to having any changes in the status quo. The only way Canadians will have that in the future is to elect a Reform government.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the comments by the member for Kingston and the Islands as they related directly to what my colleague was just saying about the need for institutional reform.

It is particularly interesting that the Prime Minister on September 24, 1991, page 2595 of *Hansard*, said:

The regions of Canada need to be more involved in decision making and policy making at the national level. To meet the hopes and dreams of those who live in the west and the Atlantic, a reformed Senate is essential. It must be a Senate that is elected, effective and equitable.

I know my colleague will agree that the member for Kingston and the Islands does not even know what the Prime Minister used to say.

I just got off the telephone with a gentleman in Calgary, Glen Schey. The Liberals would have us believe that this is a figment of the Reform's imagination. Here is a grassroots petition that this individual is putting out. It reads:

We the people of Alberta request that Jane Forest resign her Senate seat. We also request, in accordance with provincial law, that the Government of Alberta hold an election to fill the vacant Senate seat.

I advised him that unfortunately the wording would not be adequate for a petition to the House of Commons. However, the Liberals should know that the people of Alberta and indeed, after many conversations with some government officials, the people of Ontario, are saying that it is time that this government take charge.

In light of the fact that there seems to be a kind of groundswell movement, whether it is in Alberta, the maritimes or Ontario, to get the Senate under control, particularly in the area of its \$40 million of spending, I wonder if my colleague would like to comment on that.

• (1705)

Mr. Scott (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast are unhappy with the status quo. They want to see substantial change.

They are unhappy with the fact that the Senate has been used as a patronage haven. It is anti-democratic to its core and has a tremendous budget. They know that senators are jetting off all over the world on various junkets without accountability to the voters or to anyone else. We are asking for accountability to the House and the member for Kingston and the Islands says we have no right to demand that accountability.

To whom are senators accountable for their budget? Are they accountable to the Prime Minister? They are not accountable to the electors because they were never elected and they do not have to stand for re-election.

Canadians are very unhappy about that. It is very frustrating for Canadians to hear the Prime Minister make promises and statements about changing the Senate. Then they read the red book and hear statements such as those made by the member for Kingston and the Islands here this afternoon, which are contradictory.

It all goes back to what the Liberal Party has done for generations, which is make promises and then the ground shifts. We must keep moving with the times and promises change as time goes by and reality rears its ugly head.

I suppose like the red queen, the promises in the red book mean whatever the Liberals want them to mean. The Prime Minister can change his position two or three times in a month and seems to get away with it. However, I do not think that is going to happen any more. It certainly did not happen on the GST. The member for Hamilton had to resign over her broken promise. I have talked with Canadians from coast to coast over the last 18 months and they tell me they want serious change in the Senate. They are not content with the status quo.

In answer to my colleague in the Reform Party, Canadians are not going to sit back and watch \$40 million a year be shovelled into that place with no accountability and be used as nothing more than a patronage haven for whatever prime minister happens to be in office at the time.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening all day long, as Reform Party members discussed this very important motion dealing with Senate expenditures and the fact that the Senate refuses to testify before the Standing Committee on Government Operations. This is very serious and Canadians must know about this.

Since this morning, I have been hearing Reformers complain about the lack of control over Senate expenditures and the fact that the Senate refuses to account for the \$40 million budget it was given. Incidentally, according to the auditor general's report for

1991, the actual amount would be closer to \$54 million, when certain other expenditures are added to this \$40 million. The Senate is also described as haven of patronage, and Senate appointments as political rewards.

My question is as follows: If that is the case, why does the Reform Party not recommend that the Senate be plainly and simply abolished, as advocated by the Bloc Québécois? That is what I ask myself.

[English]

Mr. Scott (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member was not here for my entire intervention earlier. For his benefit I will recap once again.

The member comes from a province of approximately seven million people. I come from a province of about three million people. There are provinces in Canada with only several hundred thousand in population. When we have a democratic system that elects members to the House on the basis of population it means that some provinces or regions in Canada are going to be under represented.

• (1710)

Let me offer a graphic example of how a regional interest can be overridden by the powerful political forces in central Canada. During the late 1970s and early 1980s the Liberal government of the day led by Pierre Trudeau was in a bit of a cash crunch. It looked over at Alberta and British Columbia and saw an opportunity to reach into the energy well of those provinces to dig out a whole fistful of dollars. As members may recall, energy prices were rising.

Alberta and northeastern British Columbia have tremendous oil and gas reserves. They were developing and bringing onstream more properties all the time. The federal government adopted a national energy program.

The national energy program was nothing more than a legislated rape of Alberta's and British Columbia's oil and gas reserves. There was no opportunity for a Senate to review that legislation to ensure the regional interests of Alberta and British Columbia were protected from the strong, dominant, centrifugal political forces in Ottawa and in Ontario and Quebec. That is why I fear for the future of Confederation, for the future of Canada, as a country of 10 equal and harmonious provinces if we do not have a Senate.

There will come a time in the future when another such silly idea as the national energy program will be dreamt up by some federal government, maybe even this one. It has come up with some pretty silly ideas. It will be foisted on some region in Canada that is not

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prepared to accept it. That will create a tremendous feeling of unrest and ill will and possibly be a move for separation of other provinces from the federation.

It is important for the sake of national unity to have a Senate.

[Translation]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to advise you that I will share my time with the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm, who will speak a little later.

Bloc members do not often support Reform Party motions. This proposal is a minimum since, as the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm said earlier, we are in favour of abolishing the Senate.

The Reform member who moved the motion is saying that spending must be submitted to the scrutiny of this House, so that these expenditures can be made known to the public as much as possible. This seems to be a minimum, given the large number of recommendations made by the auditor general following a review of this issue. There are 27 recommendations, and all of them make a lot of sense.

In the context of expenditure reduction expected by all Canadians right now, and since the public debt continues to grow and will soon reach \$600 billion, cuts must be made somewhere.

The Senate is not subject to any of the rules that usually apply to departments. This makes its activities somewhat less credible in the public eye. The auditor general's proposals made a lot of sense, and he did submit a whole series of recommendations. What the Reform Party member is proposing, that a report be tabled in this House, so that it can be scrutinized, is also a good idea.

However, we must look at the issue from another angle. Why have a Senate at all? I recently asked some of my constituents what the Senate meant to them. They did not really have an answer.

• (1715)

They also asked who the senator was who represented their area here. I was asked that some time ago and I now know who it is because I made some inquiries. I do not wish to dump on those who do this job, that not being the purpose of the question, but my constituents did not know the name of the senator who represented them here in Parliament.

At one point I was visiting a school class and I asked them what the Senate meant to them. "Oh sure we know the Senators. We see them a lot." I was a bit taken aback by that, so I asked them to name some names. They then started to give me the names of hockey players. Does that ring a bell for you, Mr. Speaker? Children, even young people in secondary school and Cegep, told me "The Senators are the Ottawa hockey team. They are not that

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good yet, but they are up and coming. They will be a good team eventually". Young people know absolutely nothing about the regular activities of the senators here in the other place.

After having the fun of asking that question for some time, and finding so many people giving me the same answer, I asked myself what the purpose of the Senate was. I wondered about its mandate.

Moreover, the first recommendation the auditor general made in his report was the following: the mandates of the Senate and its committees needed tightening up, as they were too vague. So then I became more interested in the question: What is the use of the Senate?

Finally, we became aware that the function of the Senate, although this is not how it is written down, was to block bills, to prevent their being passed. In actual fact, it is to examine bills that have been passed by the House of Commons, but in certain cases they are blocked because that is the only means at the disposal of the Senate. For example, it might be of some use if it were to block Bill C-12 on unemployment insurance reform. The Senate has made use of that means in certain cases.

Why does this occur? Because the senators are appointed by the government, no longer for life, as the age limit now is 75 years, but there are still a certain number of senators over the age of 75, because of their vested rights which date back to the late sixties.

When a new government is elected, the Senate contains a majority from the time of the old government, and it is in the interests of the former government to block the work of the present government. It has become what I see as a pointless game of leapfrog, paralyzing, sterile. We in the Bloc Québécois, as you well know, find the federal system sterile, so imagine another system on top of that one, slowing the legislative process down even more.

Quebec abolished its legislative council in the late 1960s, perhaps 1968. Since then, there have been no complaints in Quebec that the legislation has been less good, less well examined, less well worded. It is, however, less expensive. The figure given is \$42 million, but when you include the expenses of all of the other departments concerned, the cost is \$54 million, and by far the majority of Canadians do not know what that money is used for.

Of course, some of them are hard-working. This is nothing personal, but the fact remains that, when there are a mere 42 or 45 sitting days in some years, when the Senate normally sits three afternoons a week, as compared to our five days in this House, that can hardly be called going flat out.

So, the basic question is: what is the use of the Senate? I submit that, when the public does not even know who the senators are and mistake them for the hockey team, we must ask ourselves very

serious questions. The whole issue has to be reconsidered, especially since the Senate is so expensive to run.

In that sense, the motion put forward by the Reform Party is most interesting and appropriate because, if nothing else, appropriations would at least be scrutinized, which is one step in the right direction. The next step would consist in plainly and simply abolishing the Senate in order to save money, which could contribute to the public debt reduction effort.

I will conclude on this to give the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm a chance to speak.

• (1720)

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the motion before us is extremely important. I think it is worthwhile to look at it a little more closely. This motion put forward by the other opposition party reads as follows:

Given that the Senate has failed to respond to a message from this House requesting that a representative of the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations to account for \$40,000,000 of taxpayers' money—

The motion is longer, but I think we already know the most important part. It is a little strange that the Senate refuses to discuss the budget allocated to it by the House of Commons. This is a very considerable amount of money.

The current system is made up of the House of Commons on one side and the Senate on the other side. Taxpayers elect a government with a platform, a program, an ideology. They know to whom they are giving the mandate to spend their money, to administer a province or the country.

The people's democratically elected representatives are now asking the Senate, an institution that receives \$40 million a year, to account to a committee, but their request has gone unheeded. No senator has come forward to give us the information we want. This in a way is a flaw of our current political system.

I think that, in everyone's mind, it is the House of Commons that holds the decision making authority and that is responsible for using taxpayers' money. If the Senate does not want to be accountable and to answer our questions, it is perhaps because they have things to hide. There may be some things senators do not want taxpayers to know. If they have nothing to hide, they should come forward and justify their expenditures.

I know the system is set up that way, but any system can be improved, especially when the Minister of Finance says that we are going through some very difficult times and that we must all pitch in and tighten our belts. It is time for the Senate to start doing its part.

Let us ask our constituents if the Senate is useful. I can tell you that if, tomorrow, a referendum was held in Quebec on whether or

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not to keep the Senate, the result would be very clear. Quebecers have no use for senators who are there only to spend taxpayers' money, to all intents and purposes.

The motion mentions the figure of \$40 million but, as I said earlier, it should really be closer to \$54 million. The auditor general said, regarding the 1990-91 budget, that total costs for the Senate are closer to \$54 million taking into account the cost of services provided to the Senate by certain government agencies, which are estimated at \$11.4 million. This is a considerable amount and we still wonder whether the Senate is profitable or not, whether to keep it or not. In the current context, the least we could expect is to have a representative of the Senate appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

Earlier, I said that if they do not want to be held accountable, it may be that they have things to hide. Let me tell you about certain things we learned about from newspapers and other sources. It appears that, a few years ago, I believe it was 1992, senators had renovations done in the foyer. It was not nice enough. So, they spent money to decorate it with black, green, salmon and grey granite, with mahogany, etc. The foyer is very grand, but it cost \$125,000.

• (1725)

Perhaps the senators do not want the general public to know about that. Perhaps that is why they do not wish to appear before a committee to explain their spending.

There is also the story about the senator who wanted a better view of the Hill and who decided to have the entire floor of his office raised. That is also perhaps some of the spending that they do not want the general public to know about.

Earlier, my hon. colleague made a very good point. It is apparently true that the average number of sitting days for senators is around 45 to 50 a year. Perhaps if the senators appeared before a committee and were asked questions like: How is it that you sit for only 47, 45, 50 days a year and it costs \$54 million? Do you not think those are some rather expensive days?

An hon. member: A million a day.

Mr. Bellehumeur: A million for every day they sit. Perhaps that is why they do not wish to appear before the committee to explain. There are all sorts of other expenditures: VIA Rail, travel, points to travel anywhere in Canada that are transferable to anyone. These are all the things the senators do not want us to know.

But what is it all for? Why do we have a Senate? There are 295 of us here. Our country has too many levels of government: federal, provincial, municipal, school boards, churches. Where does the Senate fit in? Churches? Mr. Speaker, you laugh. But the government of Newfoundland is now realizing that the churches still have

power over some people. There are elected officials, but where does the Senate fit into the system? I think it is surplus to requirements.

As my hon. colleague said earlier, it is unusual for the Bloc Québécois to support motions presented by the Reform Party. To my knowledge, since 1993, I believe this is the only time, but we can see when something is good. I think this is an extremely important motion. I see that my time is running out and I will end here.

Given the importance of this motion, I believe that, if you were to seek it, there would be unanimous consent to make the motion votable and we could thus make our views known. I therefore propose:

That the motion be made votable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There is no unanimous consent.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, although his request has been defeated, people are entitled to know why my colleague for Berthier—Montcalm proposed that this motion be put to a vote. Because it involved credits, I would like him to explain to me what prompted him to make this request.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, I find that somewhat deplorable. I am surprised that the opposition parties are in agreement for this motion to be votable, but that our government friends, the Liberals across the way, refuse to allow this extremely important motion to be voted on. It is important to know where the \$54 million spent in 1991 have gone. It is important to know why the Senators do not want to come and give the committee an explanation.

I have a hard time understanding the Liberal members' coming out from behind the curtains to vote against this proposal. I think there could have been unanimous consent. We could have had a vote, and that would have given an indication to the Canadian taxpayers that, yes, these are hard times, yes everyone will have to contribute, but those who benefit from tax dollars will at least have to come and explain themselves to the elected representatives, those who represent the people, for the senators are not the ones who represent the people, it is the members elected to the House of Commons. They have a clear mandate. They are the true representatives, not the other place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5:30 p.m., it is my duty to indicate to the House that the deliberations on the motion are over.

Private Members' Business

[English]

It being 5.30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

The House resumed from March 25 consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Motion No. M-116 today. I thank the hon. member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley for bringing this debate before the House. I am also grateful to have this opportunity to share with the House some of the concerns of my constituents on justice issues.

We are debating here one of the more serious of crimes, sexual assault. If crime studies are correct, only 10 per cent of sexual assaults are reported to police. Of course sexual assault is more than just a crime. Sexual assault happens to real people. It affects them, their families and their relationships for as long as they live.

The people of Guelph—Wellington welcome all efforts to reduce crime, punish criminals and support programs which prevent crime. They know that crime prevention means more than prisons. Crime prevention means deterring criminals and it means strengthening individuals, families and communities.

Crime may be fostered by an unsupportive family life, violence in the home, illiteracy, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment and poverty. While the people of Guelph—Wellington want programs which address these issues, they also demand that we as a government get tougher with criminals and strengthen programs that support the victims of crime.

This debate focuses on sexual assault. If this motion is adopted by the House, every convicted sex offender would be sent to a facility for a thorough examination by two psychiatrists. I do have concerns that this may create an inefficient and costly system and may be a poor use of our limited resources.

I do support legislation which I believe would better our justice system. For example, I voted in favour of a private member's bill which would rescind section 745 of the Criminal Code because I believe the vast majority of my constituents support this legislation and I know my police force does.

Earlier this month I voted in favour of Bill C-217, legislation which would protect witnesses in sexual assault cases. I have asked the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice to get tougher with repeat offenders and to allow consecutive sentencing for violent

crimes. The message this government must give is that we will not tolerate criminal behaviour.

Crime prevention involves all of us. In Guelph—Wellington there are organizations like Guelph Block Parents, Hospitality Connection, Tough Talk and Guelph Neighbourhood Watch which promote public awareness, offer peer and family support and remind us that we are responsible for one another. We must care for one another. The organizations work with our police force, the finest police force in Canada, to help make our community safer, address the causes of crime and identify problems which may lead to crime.

Two weeks ago I attended the first police awards dinner to honour local police officers and community leaders in their efforts to make Guelph—Wellington better. We honoured corporations like The Co-Operators, Guelph Hydro; individuals like T. Sher Singh and Jeff Heymans; service clubs like the Kiwanis Club of Guelph and Royal City Optimists; educators like the Wellington County Board of Education; volunteer organizations like Child Find and Senior Peer Advisory Service; and police officers like Constable Paul Crowe and Constable Rick Devine.

The most important message of that night was that we must all work together to build a safe community. Guelph Police Chief Lenna Bradburn cannot do it alone. Constables Tom Gill and Dave Johnson cannot do it alone. State Farm Insurance and Block Parents cannot do it alone. It is our responsibility, each of us working with our families, our co-workers and in our communities to help reduce crime.

● (1735)

The government has promised to introduce legislation on high risk offenders. I welcome and look forward to it. The people of Guelph—Wellington want action on this issue. They support their government when it works for them. We can continue to work for them through legislation that responds to their concerns and begins to alleviate their fears. That is why I supported Bill C-41 and Bill C-37.

We see the effects of crime every day. Yaqub Rahmaty, a member of my Liberal executive, was a victim of two robberies. He manages a convenience store in Guelph. He was scared.

It is estimated that the cost of crime is approximately \$46 billion annually in Canada. These costs include policing, the hospitalization of victims, the cost of administering our correctional institutions, the cost of running our courts and the costs associated with property loss, security services and also insurance fraud. The list goes on.

But those costs are nothing compared to the pain and the suffering associated with the crime itself. How can we put a cost on sexual assault? How can we ever measure the pain of losing a child through a violent act? No dollar figure can ever be placed on a woman suffering through a violent relationship or a child in a violent home. It costs us in lost productivity, in trauma and it lessens life. The effects of crime are more than a stolen car and

some lost jewellery. We can just imagine the potential of a young person living on the street who has been murdered. The effects of crime are real.

This government has done more to respond to the concerns and the fears of Canadians than any other government in history. It has reviewed serial killer cards, initiated the National Crime Prevention Council, toughened the Young Offenders Act, made peace bonds more effective, allowed victim information to be presented in early parole hearings, introduced tough new DNA legislation and initiated a witness protection program. I welcome tougher new anti-stalking legislation, as well as legislation which will give longer sentences to those who benefit from child prostitution.

By the end of our mandate we will have cracked down on joy riders, sex abusers and those who smuggle guns. We will have improved information sharing among professionals, such as teachers and police officers. We will have made people more accountable for violent acts committed while drunk.

As I said earlier, government cannot and should not work alone. As citizens of this great country we are responsible to each other. This responsibility includes working together to prevent crime when we can, punish criminals to the fullest extent of the law and look out for those who are most in need.

Again I thank my hon. colleague for her motion. I believe that she has raised an interesting idea. However, I cannot support it at this time. I ask the Minister of Justice to proceed quickly with his efforts on high risk offenders, efforts that I know will address the concerns and help alleviate the fears of women, men and children in Guelph—Wellington and in every part of this great country of ours, Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the motion before us introduced by the member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley is important. It touches an issue of concern to all Canadians.

• (1740)

This House must weigh carefully the response to be given these issues of sexual offences. The aim of the motion by my distinguished colleague from the Reform Party is to ensure that, in cases of aggravated sexual assault, the offender is examined by two psychiatrists to determine the likelihood of his committing another such offence.

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If they determine there is such a likelihood, this person would be declared a dangerous offender and would not be released so long as they posed any threat to society.

On March 25, 1996, our distinguished colleague from the Reform Party said in this House: "This motion is a response to the demands of Canadians who are fed up with the failure of our justice system to protect women and children". The problem I see is that, despite the good and necessary intention of the Reform member, the effect of her reform would be the opposite to what she intended.

Listen carefully. Psychiatrists are human. They work in an area where things are never black and white. In mathematics, one and one make two. In engineering, the combination of two forces leads to a predictable and measurable result. When humans are involved, rarely do the specialists agree entirely. Should the motion put forward by our distinguished colleague from the Reform Party pass and the Criminal Code be amended accordingly, we would then find ourselves in the situation where the judge would have to make his decision on the basis of the opinions of two psychiatrists. Even then, these opinions would need to be agreement.

Let us imagine for a moment that one of the psychiatrists concludes as follows: "I have every reason to believe that this person will relapse into crime", while the other one comes to a different conclusion: "This person might relapse, but I am not sure. I have a doubt". In such cases, the judge would have no choice but to decide against designating the individual in question a dangerous offender.

In an area as difficult to assess as that of human behaviour, to ask two mental health professionals to agree on an issue with such radical, fundamental and crucial implications on the life of the offender is certainly no small task. The fact of the matter is that, in Canada, we already have the Criminal Code and legislation which, if enforced properly, should provide the required level of public protection. But the key words here are proper enforcement. Passing more laws that would be improperly applied would not solve the problem. Still worse, more legislation that would make enforcement more complex and more delicate could not help but result in the justice being sought being poorly administered.

• (1745)

At this time, the procedure for declaring a person a dangerous offender works well. Section 753 of the Criminal Code allows the courts to declare a person who has committed a serious personal injury offence a dangerous offender. This can, of course, include sexual offences; all of the offences are listed in section 752 of the Criminal Code.

But the one with responsibility is the judge, who must assess the reports from mental health and other specialists. It is not the

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psychiatrists who make the decision, much less do they have to be unanimous in their interpretation of a situation. [English]

Once an offender is found guilty of any of the offences listed in section 752, the court hears the evidence presented by the crown, basing its decision in part on the individual's inability to control himself, his clear indifference to his actions, and of course also on the brutality of the acts in question, for which the normal standards of restriction of freedom would not be sufficient.

Once the court's decision has been handed down, the law ensures that the court declares the person a dangerous offender and imposes indeterminate detention rather than some other sentence. The law is there. The public can be properly protected by this legislation. In fact, this is one of the most severe sentences a court can hand down. Here again, though, the court and the judge make the decision, not the psychiatrists.

Consideration must also be given to what actually goes on. In Quebec in 1994, there was only one dangerous offender, and only now, in 1996, have we declared another. This sort of inmate is found primarily in Ontario and in the western provinces.

Why is there a difference in behaviours between Quebec and the other provinces in Canada? Because—and this is the crux of my argument—Quebec has focused on prevention rather than remedy. In this sort of assault, punishment after the fact in order to protect the rest of society does not resolve or repair the prejudice suffered, the offence against the initial victim. Above all, the number of initial victims must be reduced.

For several years already, Quebec has had an effective medico-legal system to deal with the problem of the clientele under control of the law, including dangerous offenders. The system works well, and those suffering from mental illness receive proper psychiatric care. In short, Quebec's approach is a solution to Canada's problem, one that has already been put into practice and tested.

I would propose that, rather than invest in complex legislative processes whose results, as I have said, are far from guaranteed, we should be investing more in prevention and the treatment of these dangerous offenders where the medical system works with the legal system.

• (1750)

Quebec's experience is successful. It affords Quebecers security because preventive measures are in place.

I will conclude with these words: in this area, as in many others, an ounce of prevention is worth a pile of law books.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on the motion put forth by my colleague from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley. It amends the Criminal Code to deal with those who are convicted of sexual offences, sexual assault, sexual assaults involving a child, and aggravated sexual assault. The motion calls for ensuring that the convicted individual be examined by two psychiatrists to determine whether they should have the designation of dangerous offender.

Why bring this motion forth in the first place? The reason is that the justice system has been unable or unwilling at times to protect innocent civilians against such individuals who pose a threat to society.

The designation is used but perhaps not often enough. The reason is that a bias exists within our justice system. The bias is in favour of the convicted criminal and not in favour of the innocent civilian. This started in the 1980s when the Liberal solicitor general of the day stated that from now on the justice department would focus on the rehabilitation of criminals instead of the protection of society. In our view that is not what the justice department is all about and my colleague's motion is aimed at reversing that in part.

We do not believe that locking up criminals is the answer. We do not believe that throwing away the key is the answer. Prevention certainly is. However there are individuals who have proven by their actions to be fundamentally violent sexual abusers and pose a continuing threat to society.

I have a real life example. When I worked in jails as a physician I was called upon during the weekend from time to time when an individual was about to be released but was violent. I went into a cell where a person went berserk and began beating up the individuals in the cell, including me and a number of guards. I had to commit the person who then had to be sent to a psychiatric institute. If I had not done that, the individual who had a conviction sheet as long as my arm, would have been released on the unsuspecting public only to commit another crime.

We should also look at this motion and apply it to those individuals who are about to be released at the end of their parole or when their warrant date is up. There are individuals who escape through the cracks. If they escape through the cracks and are let out into society, the only people who will be hurt are innocent civilians. We can also apply this designation to having two psychiatrists examine individuals who might pose a threat to society upon release.

It is important to say that the reason my colleague is putting this motion forth is fundamentally to protect innocent civilians. We

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have seen a number of tragic cases such as the recent case of Melanie Carpenter. She was murdered by Fernand Auger, an individual who never ever should have been released from jail to walk the streets.

When this motion passes—which I hope it does and the Liberal members should be embarrassed if they do not support this motion—two other aspects have to be looked at. The first aspect is amending the charter of rights and freedoms so that designations of dangerous offender are not overturned using the charter. The second aspect is the division between criminal responsibilities which fall under the federal government and mental health responsibilities which fall under the provincial government. That is why the Minister of Justice must work with his counterparts, the provincial attorneys general, to try to work this out. It will be important for this motion to come into effect.

• (1755)

There are other strategies to deal with sexual violent offenders. There should be a national flagging system for violent sexual offenders and sexual offenders in general. This is long overdue. Now when sexual offenders move from one province to another, the police have no way of knowing who they are, where they are going and what their prior convictions are. It is important that we have a national flagging system to enable justice and law to take its course.

We need effective and consistent prosecution of sexual offenders. We also need better assessment before sentencing. This applies not only to dangerous sexual offenders but also to violent offenders in general. Right now because of the harried crown counsels and because of a lack of resources, we are unable to do that. We can change the way our spending takes place in order to ensure that this occurs for the protection of individuals. People, such as parole officers, who decide whether or not to deem a person a dangerous offender must be held accountable for their decisions.

Clearly we must also prevent the development of dangerous and sexual offenders from occurring. We are dealing appropriately with those individuals after they raise their heads. Many of these individuals have also been victims of terrible sexual abuse and violence themselves but it does not exonerate them from what they have done. It provides us with a window of opportunity in preventing these individuals from coming before our justice system.

We have to look at children who are at risk of violence, sexual abuse and neglect. We must identify those family units and children so that we can help them early on and prevent these things from occurring. We must identify families at risk and prevent these tragedies from taking place. For those tragic souls who do become victims of violence and sexual abuse, those children must be dealt with sensitively, compassionately and with the appropriate counselling, medical and psychological treatment they need.

We have to look at these individuals who become sexual violent offenders. They do not have the pillars of a normal psyche needless to say. Those pillars were destroyed, malformed or did not occur early on in their development. It is important to identify these individuals so that we bear upon them the appropriate treatment and counselling to ensure that they do have some semblance of normal development. That is the only way we are going to prevent these individuals from being terribly dysfunctional.

This not only needs to be applied to sexual or dangerous offenders but also to a number of other conduct disorders and criminal behaviour that occurs in our society. Many of these individuals also do not have the pillars of a normal psyche.

The parents must be brought into the early education system. Many of the parents of the family units where these children are abused do not know how to be good parents. It is not a federal responsibility but it is important to bring in the provincial ministers of education and the provincial attorneys general and their federal counterparts to deal with the situation nationally.

Unless we deal with the prevention of crime, we are not going to do what we want to do, which is to decrease the overall level of crime in this country.

In closing, much has been mentioned about the cost. The cost is important but the redistribution of the spending is important. First and fundamentally, to uphold the essence of the motion which is the protection of innocence in society, our justice department must move from protecting the convicted criminal to having as its primary focus the protection of innocent individuals. It is also important to focus on prevention. I remind the House that it is not only women who are victims of sexual abuse, but also men and young boys.

• (1800)

In closing, I hope the House is going to pass Motion No. 116 of my colleague for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley so that Canada will be a safer place.

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the motion as it affords me the chance to reflect on the many ways in which this government has managed to tighten up law enforcement in Canada.

As mentioned in the red book, the government is working to ensure both safe homes and safe streets.

Bill C-41, an act to amend the Criminal Code, received royal assent on July 13, 1995. It provides, for the first time, a statement of the principles and purposes of sentencing in the Canadian criminal law, a first in Canadian legal history.

The act provides a balanced approach that takes into account both the public's need for safety and the needs of the victim. It is

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also in line with the principle that serious offenders should be treated differently than minor first time offenders.

In order to deal with the rising tide of hate crime, the act also provides that those who commit crimes motivated by hatred will receive a greater sentence.

The act also includes provisions to assist victims of crime by strengthening the process for awarding and enforcing restitution to victims.

As well, it provides the courts with more options to distinguish between violent, serious crimes that require jail and non-violent, less serious crimes that can be dealt with better by the local community.

With regard to the issue of youth justice, the House will recall that amendments to the Young Offenders Act contained in Bill C-37, came into force on December 1, 1995.

The amendments, which include provisions to deal more effectively with violent young offenders, complete the first part of a two-part strategy by the government to reform the youth justice system. The amended act includes improved measures for sharing information among school officials, police and selected members of the public where there is a concern about the safety of other persons. As well, police will now be able to keep, indefinitely, the records of young offenders convicted of the most serious crimes.

In addition, the amended act deals more strictly with the most serious violent offences by creating longer maximum sentences for those convicted of murder in youth court.

It also means that 16 and 17-year-olds charged with the most serious personal injury offences will be processed in adult court unless they are able to demonstrate that public protection and rehabilitation can be achieved by remaining in youth court.

I strongly believe that young people should be held accountable under the Young Offenders Act in a manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. For that reason, I am pleased that the act provides for the consideration of victim impact statements in deciding on the correct response to offending behaviour. The chief goal must always be to discourage future re-offending by a young person.

By the way, a few weeks ago a group of law enforcement officers from my riding, representing various police departments, asked for my support for the establishment of a national DNA data bank. It is, therefore, my pleasure to mention that later in 1996, the Solicitor General of Canada plans to table in Parliament legislation providing for a national DNA data bank and the accreditation of laboratories conducting DNA analysis.

• (1805)

Also members will recall that Bill C-104 was adopted by Parliament in June 1995 and received royal assent on July 13, 1995. It provides for the first time in Canadian criminal law a clear and express basis on which police can seek warrants to take bodily samples from suspects for DNA testing. The changes help bring Canada in line with other industrialized countries and provide a reliable scientific basis for criminal proof or establishing innocence.

I know that the police in my riding of Bramalea—Gore—Malton have joined law enforcement officers across the country in welcoming this powerful investigative tool which has already resulted in convictions.

I am also pleased to note that the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General of Canada are developing a comprehensive strategy for dealing with those convicted individuals who pose a high risk to society of committing serious personal injury offences when released. These proposals are expected to be before the House within the next few weeks.

The government is also examining the creation of a new category of serious offender, called a long term offender, which would permit courts to add periods of supervision of up to 10 years to the sentence of this category of offender.

As well, the government will be changing existing dangerous offender provisions to permit the court to designate an offender as a dangerous offender up to six months after sentencing. At present it is necessary for such a designation to be made at the time of sentencing.

I understand that the Ministry of Justice intends to extend existing peace bond provisions in the Criminal Code to permit a court to restrict the activities of those who may pose a risk of violent behaviour.

In addition, existing dangerous offender provisions in the Criminal Code, when applied, can result in an offender being incarcerated for the rest of his or her life. This is much stricter than the three strikes and you are out system in use in the United States.

In short, as all the examples I have cited demonstrate, no government in Canadian history has done more to crack down on crime and criminals than the present one.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley for the opportunity to speak in support of her Motion 116.

The motion calls for amending the section of the Criminal Code dealing with dangerous offenders. The motion asks that once an individual has been convicted of a serious offence or sexual assault against an adult or any sexual offence where the victim is a child,

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then they must be examined by two psychiatrists to determine their propensity to offend again.

If the two psychiatrists conclude that the convicted offender is likely to reoffend, the attorney general must direct that a dangerous offender application be initiated. The convicted offender would then proceed to a dangerous offender hearing where the crown would have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the offender was likely to reoffend.

Ideally, this motion addresses the concerns I have heard from Canadians across the nation. They are fed up with the judicial system and its failure to protect women and children against sexual predators.

• (1810)

Our system has failed these people time and time again, as can be seen from the list of the following names: Clifford Olson, Paul Bernardo, Fernand Auger, Mitchell Owen, Joseph Fredricks, Melvin Stanton, Daniel Gingras, Bobby Gordon Oatway. The list is growing every day and so is the fear on our streets.

One only has to pick up the latest newspaper. For example, last Friday, May 24, the headline in the Vancouver *Sun* read: "Child molester due for unescorted leave". It reported that one of B.C.'s most notorious sex offenders, ex-B.C. teacher Robert Noyes, is due to start a 15-month program of unescorted absences from prison to attend a sex therapy program in the Montreal area.

Noyes was declared a dangerous offender in 1986 after pleading guilty in the B.C. Supreme Court on 19 counts of sexual assault and sexual abuse of children. He also confessed at a parole board hearing that there were at least 60 victims and hundreds of incidents of abuse of children in various B.C. cities.

The National Parole Board feels that he is now considered an acceptable risk under the new structured prison release plan. However, it also states that his ex-wife opposes his release as does the city council of Ashcroft where Noyes taught before he was arrested in 1985. They have requested the dangerous offender be kept in prison.

The parole board has decided against granting day parole to Noyes who has been diagnosed as an incurable bisexual pedophile. It feels he is one of the most treated sex offenders in the Canadian prison system, but doctors who have treated him have found him to be manipulative and deceptive. This is another case of a known sex offender who has not been assessed properly and who will be released into society knowing he has not been adequately rehabilitated.

Ultimately we will need assurances from those who work outside of the judicial system, namely psychiatrists, to adequately evaluate these sexual offenders. This has been proven by the auditor

general's report which clearly stated that Correctional Services Canada is not adequately rehabilitating these individuals.

The auditor general reports that sex perverts are receiving millions of dollars in treatment programs but that the government has no idea if they are working. He also found that Correctional Services Canada was supposed to rehabilitate the 14,000 offenders in its care, although there were serious weaknesses in some of its rehabilitation programs.

For example, it was reported that about \$10 million was spent in 1994-95 to treat approximately 1,800 sex offenders. However, the auditor general found that a disproportionate amount of money was spent on a few offenders without any assurance that the program was achieving any positive results.

In addition, about \$1.7 million of the correctional services total sex offender program budget was used in the Quebec region on a contract to treat a mere 20 sex offenders per year, which works out to about \$85,000 per person. The remaining \$8.3 million was used to treat the 1,800 sex offenders across the country which in comparison is only about \$4,611 per person.

It is obvious that people are coming out of jail who will reoffend time and time again because of inadequate rehabilitation. This is once again confirmed by the auditor general. He found that 35 per cent of sex offenders who have been released from the federal prison system were not receiving relapse prevention treatment, although such an initiative is viewed as critical to reducing recidivism. He found this shortfall occurred more in the prairie and Quebec regions, the two regions with the largest proportion of sex offenders.

With these failures occurring throughout our justice system it is easy to see how this motion would offer people some hope, knowing that a convicted offender is being reviewed by trained psychiatrists and thereby giving the court system more information for determining whether an offender will reoffend in the future. This would provide not only a second opinion, but also a second chance in protecting Canadians against these convicted sexual predators. Most important, it would recognize the rights of women and children and the protection they deserve from our system of justice.

• (1815)

In the last couple of years Canadians have started to take justice into their own hands when they found out that these offenders were being released back into their communities without being rehabilitated. People from Val d'Or, Quebec, Prince George, B.C., and Toronto, Ontario, to name just a few, have mounted campaigns by plastering posters and pamphlets warning against such people as Joe Cannon and Bobby Gordon Oatway. They know that the only way to protect themselves is to take action themselves.

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They can no longer trust the prison system to ensure the rehabilitation of these offenders. They are calling for the names and the pictures to be published to protect their children from these animals.

It is no wonder Canadians have lost hope, knowing that the Liberals would argue against this motion. The Liberals feel that legal experts, not medical experts, know best. They feel that only the crown should consider all the evidence available in order to estimate whether an application will be strong enough to meet the legal standard of who should be deemed a dangerous offender. They feel that passing this motion into law would increase the probability of locking people up and throwing away the key.

As well, this motion is considered dangerous because of those individuals who may have a genuine sense of wrongdoing or remorse. We run the risk of giving them no hope.

It is obvious that the government has no intention of making the interests and safety of Canadians a priority with such pathetic excuses for not supporting this motion.

We are no further ahead with the opposition party. The member for Saint-Hubert sees this motion as nothing more than reactionary mentality when there are no more than isolated cases. She claims we are making political hay at the expense and suffering of victims of crime.

One thing is very obvious when we hear the arguments from both the Liberals and the Bloc: they are both arguing in favour of the rights of sexual predators and the infallibility of the criminal justice system.

In my opinion they are way off the mark. The criminal justice system is fallible. This is proven by the Reform Party who listens to what the people want and, in turn, proposes the legislation which is obviously needed. This motion will protect our society, our families and our children from the animals who are set free on a daily basis. At no time would the Liberals or the Bloc ever consider the victims who have suffered at the hands of these sexual predators.

Therefore, now is the time to support this motion. We must move immediately to amend the Criminal Code and allow the psychiatric experts to ensure the public is protected from potential repeat sex offenders who are a danger to our children, women, families, society and our nation.

The most elementary of our duties in the House of Commons is to provide legislation to protect the lives and the properties of Canadians. This motion, when accepted, will help to accomplish that. I applaud my colleague for having brought it to our attention. It will fulfil the most elementary of our duties.

I have to shake my head when I listen to a Liberal giving a speech, as I did a few moments ago. He talked about all the

wonderful Liberal accomplishments of the last three years: Bill C-37, Bill C-41, Bill C-42, Bill C-68, Bill C-45 and it goes on. Three years later things are not better, they are worse.

The Liberals have once again failed to meet a commitment of the red book which said they would make the streets safer, communities safer and all the rest of the baloney. Once again they might as well chuck the red book on the floor. They have failed. They are failing dismally in this area. This is their opportunity to look sensibly at legislation which will prevent violent sexual predators from returning to our communities. It is an extra measure of safety on behalf of the victims of this land.

Surely these people are not so silly that they would push it aside and say: "No, we are not interested in an extra measure. The legal system knows best".

• (1820)

I know that Canadians are fed up with the inability of the government to come up with any reasonable legislation that definitely says it is going to be better. It has done nothing whatsoever. What little bit that has been accomplished has been covered up by all the rotten legislation it has attempted to bring in.

Let us accept some sensible solutions. Let us look for some sensible solutions, something that is right for once.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Wild Rose has used wild and whirling words to support this motion. I intend to use a little common sense and balance. That is what we are here for, to look at things with a sensible and critical eye.

No one on this side of the House believes for one moment that some of these sexual animals, as my colleague characterizes them, should be granted all kinds of rights. What we are arguing is that the Christianity which most of us profess should probably underline our legal system and the laws that we pass in the House. That includes such ideas as let he who is without sin cast the first stone and that everyone may be redeemed and everyone may be rehabilitated. That is what I would like to concentrate on.

My friend from Wild Rose says things are not better but he presents no evidence or facts to support this claim. Quite the reverse. The evidence and facts indicate that the rate of recidivism is down, that the number of repeat offenders is down. In fact, except for some fairly specific communities, crime is down.

My colleague does make a statement that is correct. The human condition is not perfect. Our system of government is not perfect. Our system of laws is not perfect. However, they will not be perfected by jumping at easy solutions, at autocratic, mandated, non-balanced ideas about how to correct people's behaviour.

We may get somewhere, as my colleague from Guelph—Wellington said, if we work together in our communities to solve the problems of crime. We may get there if we support community groups that are already working on programs to integrate the alienated, trying to improve education and care of children and helping young people have self-confidence and a confident look at the future, so they are not looking, as we say, at the devil that has work for idle hands to do.

That is the way the problem of crime will be solved, by getting rid of poverty, getting rid of unemployment and getting rid of people's malaise and fear about the future.

Let us be clear on what this amendment to the Criminal Code would require. First of all, every criminal who is convicted of a serious sexual offence, namely sexual assault under sections 271, 272 and 273 of the Criminal Code, would have to be examined by two psychiatrists in order to determine the risk of reoffending. If the psychiatrists conclude that the risk is high, then a dangerous offender application must be launched.

There would be no discretion on the part of the judge and certainly not on the part of the crown prosecutor. Under the present system the judge considers relevant information about the offender's criminal history, his or her mental state, usually as a formal pre-sentence report. Of course the perspective of the victim of the crime is considered. In other words, in a normal case a range of information is taken into account in order to establish the appropriate sentence.

What would happen if it was compulsory to remand every convicted sex offender to a psychiatric facility for a thorough examination by two expert psychiatrists so that these psychiatrists could give a precise prediction of the risk presented by every criminal?

• (1825)

Under the current law the crown attorney and the judge are the authorities who decide whether or not to seek the opinion of psychiatrists on the danger posed by a convicted person. It is not the other way around. The psychiatrists do not tell the officers of the court whether to proceed with a dangerous offender application.

There is a good reason for giving the crown and the judge the discretion to seek a detailed psychiatric examination of the offender and to initiate a dangerous offender application. It is because the dangerous offender process is essentially and primarily a legal one, not just a question of psychiatric prediction.

The crown attorney has to decide whether or not the dangerous offender application will meet the legal standards set out in part XXIV of the Criminal Code. For example, section 753 of the code requires the crown to show that the offender, by his conduct in any sexual matter including that involved in the commission of the

Private Members' Business

offence for which he has been convicted has shown a failure to control his sexual impulses and a likelihood of causing serious injury in the future. This is a legal test, as our courts have repeatedly pointed out. There is no point in making an application under part XXIV if it has no chance of succeeding.

Indeed, the dangerous offender rules require that psychiatric evidence be presented for both sides at the dangerous offender hearing. There may be a difference of opinion among qualified psychiatrists just as there may be among qualified lawyers or qualified prosecutors or, I would suggest, even qualified judges.

I also note that the ability of psychiatrists and psychologists to assess the nature and degree of risk of offenders has certainly improved in the last decade. I have heard Canada described as a leader in this field. I further note that the Correctional Service of Canada employs a wide range of clinical and actuarial testing in its intake and case management programs for federal inmates.

This proposed amendment to the Criminal Code gets the balance wrong. It would compel the crown to bring a dangerous offender application every time a pair of psychiatrists reached a medical conclusion about risk. Life is full of risks. We surely do not have to illustrate that beyond a reasonable doubt.

Perhaps if the motion called for discretion it might receive support. However, the motion advocates a sweeping measure that would diminish the role of judges and prosecutors and indiscriminately force every case of sexual offending to proceed through a lengthy, expensive examination by psychiatrists, even when there is little chance of those psychiatrists labelling the offender as high risk.

The Canadian Psychiatric Association has stated that there is already a shortage of qualified forensic psychiatrists in Canada. The Correctional Service of Canada and the provincial departments of justice are already hard pressed to find enough psychiatric advice for priority cases.

It is interesting that the Reform Party will spare no expense in this area, even if the chances of winning a dangerous offender case are thin. To put this in context, I refer members to some figures released very recently by Statistics Canada. In 1994-95 the federal government spent \$913 million on adult corrections. The provinces and territories spent \$980 million. The capital costs of building federal penitentiaries increased 70 per cent between 1990-91 and 1994-95. It costs about \$44,000 per year to keep a person in a federal penitentiary. The per capita cost to operate the adult corrections system in Canada represents \$65 for each person in Canada.

There is a way to be selective and strategic in the way we employ our limited resources. The speech from the throne from February 27 of this year contains the following statement:

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The government will focus corrections resources on high risk offenders while increasing efforts to lower the number of young people who come into contact with the justice system. The government will develop innovative alternatives to incarceration for low risk offenders.

• (1830)

Motion No. 116 is typical of measures. I said at the beginning of my remarks that I selectively demand indeterminate detention for crimes which should be targeted more carefully.

I believe that prosecutors, courts and juries with the help of psychiatrists will in most cases pass appropriate judgments on sex offenders. I will not support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

MINING

Mr. Lawrence D. O'Brien (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of points with regard to a question I raised with the Minister of Transport on May 17 which dealt with the safety of the Nain airport in northern Labrador.

Nain is a small community of 1,100 people and is 20 miles from the world class nickel find at Voisey's Bay. It has come to the fore in terms of the necessity for the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador to do something about overall safety.

Before I talk about the safety issue in Nain I will give some background as to what this entails. Nain is 200 miles north of Goose Bay, the central community in Labrador. It is a community comprised totally of aboriginal people, Inuit people. They resettled in Nain from far northern communities along the north coast of Labrador all the way up to Iqaluit in the Northwest Territories. They came to Nain during the middle of the century for different reasons, not the least of which was to have better services.

One such service was an airstrip which was built in the 1970s to meet the needs of those people. The airport is 2,000 feet long. It is on the side of a major hill with downdraft winds. There is overcapacity because of the mining find, the exploration and the mining development in Voisey's Bay.

There are as many as 100 to 300 movements per day of helicopters and fixed wing planes. This has caused grave

concerns not only to the people of Nain but to people all over Labrador, and to people all over Canada. It affects people in Toronto and in Vancouver who work in the mining industry. It affects anybody and everybody who travels to and from the community of Nain.

There are basically no firefighting services, a deficiency we have to contend with. The weather station is due to be automated. I plead with the Government of Canada to ensure there is a person remaining in that weather station because of the difference in variations of automation. If a plane is coming in and there is freezing rain close to the ground or at different altitudes, those instruments may not pick it up. I plead with the government to reconsider its views on that.

There is the question of air traffic control. Air movement determines the control of a plane when it takes off or lands. It is according to the wishes of somebody from Transport Canada. It is extremely important to ensure it is similar to air traffic control. I know the minister is considering that. He is dealing with it. I want to make sure the department continues to deal with that and recognizes nothing but the utmost safety is first and foremost at hand there.

I will make a couple of points about the economy of the area relative to this issue. The people of Nain certainly want the airport to be upgraded and would like a new one down the road, but safety is first and foremost. They are not about to say no to the mining industry. They are supportive of developments but not at any cost. Environment, safety and so on are important.

One of the mining companies in the small community of Nain, NDT Ventures, wanted to mine next to the water reservoir. On May 23 the community held a plebiscite to show the importance of this. Of the people who voted, 64 per cent were in support of doing that exploration and 36 per cent were against it.

The point I am making is that there is room for exploration. There is room for mining. There is room in that community to do things. The people are supportive. They need to work but not without proper safety and control.

With that being said, I will close by saying I welcome input from the government. The minister has been very helpful. He responded very positively to my question. I welcome his further comments.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Labrador for the opportunity to make further comments on the situation at Nain airport.

Since taking his seat in this House of Commons on April 15, we cannot help but notice that the member for Labrador is a real digger. He is a man of action, a solid worker and a strong voice for his constituents.

Adjournment Debate

The issue of Nain airport is a priority on his agenda. Nain airport is provincially owned. As the minister reported earlier, Transport Canada aviation staff have been monitoring the increased aviation activity in the vicinity of the Nain airport since the beginning of the Voisey's Bay mineral exploration. I am certain my hon. friend will be glad to hear that a number of safety measures to facilitate the increased traffic levels have already been implemented.

An aviation safety review team visited Goose Bay and Nain at the end of April. While the team did not identify any violations of aviation regulations, a number of safety deficiencies were identified. The safety review team is now in the process of finalizing its report and recommendations.

I am pleased to report to the hon. member that departmental officials will be meeting with provincial officials next week to finalize an action plan to address all the issues identified. Atlantic

region officials have planned a series of visits to Nain this year as part of their monitoring program. Safety is Transport Canada's top priority, and we are confident that by working together with the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, all the safety issues reported will be resolved.

The minister is eagerly anticipating his visit with the hon. member in Labrador this summer to see firsthand the developments in Voisey's Bay. He is looking forward to working together with the hon. member on the issues of concern to his constituents in Labrador.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 6.38 p.m.)

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