



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 139 • NUMBER 020 • 3rd SESSION • 37th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, February 27, 2004

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 27, 2004

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT

Hon. Judy Sgro (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-18, an act respecting equalization and authorizing the Minister of Finance to make certain payments related to health, be read the third time and passed.

• (1005)

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to enter into this debate.

I would like to start by thanking my colleagues on the finance committee for their cooperation on the bill. As hon. members know, the bill is of great significance to the provinces and to those of us in the House who want to see that the legislative timelines are met. I want to particularly acknowledge the help of the committee chair, the member for Etobicoke North, and all members on the committee from both sides of the House who dealt with this in an expeditious fashion.

The measures in the bill pertain to two of the four federal transfer programs, equalization and the Canada health and social transfer, the CHST as it is commonly known.

[*Translation*]

Through these programs, the territorial formula financing and the new health reform transfer, the federal government, in partnership with the provinces and territories, plays a key role in supporting the Canadian health system and other social programs.

[*English*]

As the largest federal transfer, the CHST provides the provinces and territories with cash payments and tax transfers in support of health care, post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, including early childhood development and early learning and child care.

Equalization, as hon. members know, is the federal government's most important program for reducing fiscal disparities among provinces. It ensures that the less prosperous provinces have the capacity to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation.

This is not about the level of equalization. This is about the payment of equalization and extending legislative authority to carry on with payments of equalization.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-18 supports these two important programs and makes it possible to reach two goals.

[*English*]

First, it provides the Minister of Finance with the authority to continue to make equalization payments according to the current formula for up to a year in the event that the renewal legislation is not in place by April 1, 2004.

Second, it provides the federal government with the authority to pay an additional \$2 billion from the consolidated revenue fund to the provinces and territories for health.

Bill C-18 lays out the steps the government is taking to ensure that the provinces and territories receive the payments to which they are entitled, payments supporting the public services provided to Canadians.

The bill before us today enables the continuation of equalization payments while renewal legislation is finalized.

[*Translation*]

The current version of the legislation authorizing the federal government to make equalization payments to the provinces will expire on March 31, 2004.

While discussions on the five year renewal are underway with the provinces, Bill C-18 represents a preventive measure to authorize the federal government to continue making payments for up to a year, if necessary.

[*English*]

This will assure equalization receiving provinces that they will continue to receive payments if renewal legislation is not in place by the end of March. This is the critical point of the bill. If this legislation does not pass, then those payments cannot be made.

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Without Bill C-18, the Government of Canada does not have the authority to make equalization payments, which would result in serious negative impacts for receiving provinces as payments would cease.

Let me briefly review how the program works.

To begin, payments are unconditional, meaning that provinces can spend their funds as they see fit on public services for their residents. Next, payments are calculated according to a formula which responds to the changing economic fortunes and circumstances of all of the provinces.

The formula measures the performances of provincial economies to the average fiscal capacities of the five middle income provinces, which forms a threshold or standard. As the relative fiscal performance of provinces go up and down, equalization entitlements go up and down. These increases or decreases in entitlements are the result of the formula working as it should, not the result of decisions by the Government of Canada to increase or decrease entitlements.

Provinces with revenue raising ability—or fiscal capacity as it is known in the jargon—below the threshold or standard amount receive equalization payments to bring their revenues up to the standard. At present, eight provinces are below the standard and qualify for federal support under the program. Only Ontario and Alberta are not recipients.

The third element of the program involves a floor, which provides provincial governments with protections against unexpected, large and sudden decreases in equalization payments that would otherwise be warranted by the straightforward application of the formula. The floor limits the amount by which the provinces' entitlements can decline from one year to the next.

Two built-in mechanisms ensure that the program remains current. The first is an ongoing review of the program by federal and provincial officials, which makes sure that the differences in fiscal capacity are measured as accurately as possible.

The second mechanism, and the one central to today's debate, is that renewal legislation must be introduced every five years following federal-provincial consultations. The last renewal was in 1999. The current legislation is set to expire on March 31 of this year, as I indicated earlier. The renewal legislation will guarantee that the program remains up to date and that the best possible calculations and data are used to determine equalization payments.

The renewal legislation will also guarantee that the integrity and fundamental objectives of the program are preserved. The government must be able to assure provinces that they will continue to receive equalization payments even if the renewal legislation is not passed by the end of the fiscal year.

Bill C-18 addresses this problem by enabling the continuation of payments for up to a year while the renewal legislation is being finalized. Passage of the bill would ensure that the public services which provinces fund through the equalization program will continue to be protected for the benefit of their citizens. When passed, the renewal legislation will both supersede the extension and be retroactive to April 1, 2004.

In considering Bill C-18, I urge hon. colleagues to keep in mind that the impact on equalization receiving provinces and their residents could be very significant if the bill is not passed. It is therefore imperative that this legislation be passed quickly.

Now, if I may, I will turn to the health part of the bill. As my hon. colleagues know, federal support for the Canadian health system is provided primarily through the CHST and the new health reform transfer.

● (1010)

Bill C-18 would amend the existing CHST to authorize payment of \$2 billion as a supplement to the CHST. This fulfills the commitment made by the Prime Minister following the January 2004 first ministers meeting. It is also in keeping with commitments made in the 2003 first ministers accord on health renewal, the 2003 budget and the 2003 economic update.

I would like to point out that this funding is in addition to the increased federal investment of \$34.8 billion over five years for health that was confirmed in the 2003 budget. As a result, this funding will bring the federal government's total commitment in support of the 2003 health accord to \$37 billion over five years.

I would like to point out that this funding can be provided without the government going into deficit. I want to point out, as I accompanied the minister across the country, that one of the things we heard repeatedly is that the government should not go into deficit under any circumstances.

Passage of the bill will provide the provinces and territories with the flexibility to begin drawing down these funds as they require, which would help them better plan for the future and provide health care services to their residents.

I encourage my hon. colleagues to pass Bill C-18 without delay. The measures in the bill affect the provinces and territories and thus their residents who depend upon them for public services. Not only is additional funding for health part of the federal government's ongoing commitment to health care, it is being provided within a framework of balanced budgets which will ensure its sustainability over the long run.

As hon. members know, the Prime Minister intends to meet with his counterparts in the summer to discuss long term sustainability of our publicly funded health care system. In the meantime, the bill would ensure that our health care system continues to be a proud example of our national values at work, as recently described by the Prime Minister.

Further, the equalization provisions in the bill underscore the priority that the government places on this federal transfer and ensure uninterrupted funding to the provinces until the renewed legislation can be finalized.

Through our federal system of transfer payments, all Canadians are guaranteed equal access to health care, a safety net to support those most in need, freedom to move throughout the country to seek work, higher education and training available to all who qualify, and reasonably comparable services in whichever province they choose to live.

Government Orders

The measures in Bill C-18 are designed to ensure that those goals continue to be met.

• (1015)

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague opposite explain the bill and talk about the need to pass it so that the provinces can continue to receive the equalization payments beyond April 1. He also referred to the special payment for health care.

Let me put a couple of things in perspective. First, the \$2 billion commitment announced just recently for health care, which will be put in following the passage of the legislation, is a help to the provinces. Is it what they need? It certainly is not what they need and is not what they asked for.

The money is a commitment that was made a number of years ago. We have heard over the last three years at least that the government would put more money into health care. A couple of years ago it was determined that it would be \$2 billion. Last year we were promised the money but that it would depend on next year's budget and the surplus. We waited and waited. Now, in the days preceding the election of course, the \$2 billion will be delivered.

The ironic thing is that the person who gets the credit for the money is not the person who committed it. It is not the finance minister who has pledged it in his next budget. It is the former finance minister and the present Prime Minister who will get the credit for giving the provinces \$2 billion.

This same Prime Minister, when he was the finance minister, was the one who, in regulating his budgets, actually cut over \$16 billion, which in today's dollars would be \$25 billion.

If I were given the opportunity to give out \$2 billion to people, people might be quite shocked. However, if at the same time they were going to return \$25 billion to me, it would not be a bad deal. This is exactly what we see with the federal government. During the term of the former finance minister the government cut \$25 billion in today's dollars from the health care budget to the provinces and now it offers, on the eve of an election, a paltry \$2 billion. Nobody is buying it.

Let me talk about equalization. The parliamentary secretary is a fine fellow but he understands very little about equalization. He comes from the great province of Ontario which is one of the have, question mark, provinces, the other being Alberta. All the other provinces are considered have not.

If people in the other eight provinces are watching at this time of the morning they are probably wondering what the definition is of a have and have not province. My definition of have not provinces is that those are the provinces that have been shafted by Ottawa over the last x number of years, certainly in relation to the development of resources and the clawback which has left a number of our provinces in a position where they are classified as have not. Others might be farming provinces, that again have been totally and utterly ignored by the government to the point where their economy is regressing rather than moving forward.

Have and have not should not be terms that we use in this country. We should all be have provinces. We should not have to be lining up

with our hands out to uncle Ottawa looking to get back some of our money.

• (1020)

I want to give a couple of figures. Over the last four years \$14 billion has come out of the offshore development of Newfoundland. People might wonder why Newfoundland is not a have province. It is simply because of the mismanagement of the central government. The share that Newfoundland gets has amounted to about \$300 million over four years; less than \$100 million a year from a \$14 billion industry. Anyone with any kind of a brain will know that there is something drastically wrong here.

Some people say that we cannot have our cake and eat it too. It is like the way we treat people who are receiving social assistance. Government sends them a cheque because, through no fault of their own, they cannot get into the workplace for whatever reason: sickness, lack of opportunities, lack of education, whatever. Then we encourage them to become productive members of society. We provide them with a job opportunity so they take the job even though it is only a part time job paying about \$100. What happens at the end of the week? The government takes back an equal amount from what they are paid, and at the end of the period they are no better off than they were before. They then ask themselves why they even bothered.

Government has to realize that in order to move the economy ahead we have to invest. We cannot cycle our money through the central government. That is not investing. That is investing in scandals. That is investing in giveaways. That is investing in putting money into the pockets of one's friends. We have to invest in the infrastructure of the provinces so that they can keep building the economy and develop the resources that they hold.

The member opposite mentioned that the formula is a fair one, that they take the five middle provinces. The only entity that says it is fair is the central government. Everyone else, all the premiers and all the provinces, say that it is not fair and that it should be based on a 10 province formula. When we argue that, the now Minister of Finance, the former minister of natural resources, who was one who retarded the development of our natural resources, says that the gap is narrowing. The only reason the gap is narrowing is that the economy of the two have provinces, Alberta and Ontario, dictates the amount of equalization the other provinces get. If one or the other of these provinces has a downturn, it affects the amount of equalization everyone gets and it narrows the gap.

Thanks to the Liberal government, the present government in Ontario, Ontario is seeing a dip in the economy which greatly affects the equalization formula. Alberta is doing well because of the development of its natural resources. When it first began to develop its oil industry in particular, it was allowed to hold on to its revenues for about a 10 year period. That gave Alberta the opportunity to invest in its infrastructure, to grow and to develop into a have province.

Government Orders

The same thing could happen in Nova Scotia, in Newfoundland and in Quebec. These provinces have rich natural resources but they must be allowed to develop them in co-operation with the federal government and on a sliding scale, undoubtedly. We do not want to be taking out and giving nothing but we must be fair. We have to give people the chance to get on their feet, and it can be done. A 10 year formula would certainly make a major difference to our provinces.

Let us look at fairness in the CHST funding. Instead of cutting \$25 billion, let us make sure we pay the equal amount. When we constantly download on the provinces then the provinces, in many cases, have to pass it along to the municipalities.

• (1025)

Throughout the country, infrastructure is completely and utterly falling apart simply because of exactly what we are talking about this morning, the inappropriateness of the funding that is delivered to the provinces by the federal government, the people's own money.

Some people might say we have a surplus. Years ago when we had a Conservative government, we did not. Let us analyze it. During the early 1990s before the Liberals came into power, they talked about the deficit that they were handed. Forget the debt; they were talking about the deficit. The deficit was built up for two reasons, the need to continue social programs when times were tough and extremely high interest rates. If we had the same interest rates today, imagine the amount of debt payments we would have to make. How much of a surplus would we have?

The debt was passed on from a previous Liberal government which admittedly was added to somewhat, but a plan was put in place to address it. This is where the Liberal government is wrong. Where is the plan? It is 20 days today since the House resumed sitting and we have yet to see one piece of new legislation, as anybody who listens to the assessment of what is happening in this country would know.

We talk about elections. When is the election going to be? People say it has to be in the spring. Why? Because the government has no legislation. The Liberals have no plans. They have nothing to offer the people of the country, except to go on their knees to Canadians asking to please be voted back for another few years so they can continue to do nothing and crucify everyone at the provincial level. Where is the plan?

Remember free trade? Remember the GST? We did not like it and members over there fought against it. The Liberals won an election because of these two issues, but did they cancel free trade? Did they eliminate the GST as the Prime Minister when he was minister of finance promised to do? No, because these were necessities at the time in order to address the deficit while maintaining social programs.

The present government, because it is the same old government, came in, continued the GST and built an economy based on free trade which greatly enhanced the economy of this country, but the Liberals also made their own contribution to the surplus which we now have. They cut social programs. They cut \$25 billion in equalization payments in CHST transfers to the provinces, \$25 billion.

The Liberals overcharged on employment insurance, money taken directly out of the pockets of every working person in this country, to the tune of \$40 billion. Imagine what \$40 billion could do if the workers themselves had that kind of money to put into the economy. People who work make money and spend money. They spend money on goods and services, which creates more wealth, generates more taxes and builds the economy. What we see here is regression. They cut, take away and download on the provinces and municipalities. Everybody suffers all the way down.

With regard to natural resources, they ignored our fishery. There is a former fisheries minister here looking at me in admiration. He was one of the great fellows who had the will to do something, but those above him said, "Sorry, you cannot do it. We do not want to disrupt our friendship with other countries. If they want to be our friends, we will give them our fish". If that is the way we are going to treat our resources, how are we going to grow the economy? How are we going to grow the country? The answer is, it ain't going to happen. That is what we see right now.

• (1030)

What is the best thing to do? Perhaps the government could start by coming up with a proper equalization program.

How popular is the bill? How popular is this offer to the provinces? Every single solitary province rejected it. They asked why after five years they had to extend the agreement for another year in order to finalize it. Surely, we knew five years ago that it was going to run out. We knew four years ago that we had better start working on it. Three years ago, we should have been into it. At least a year ago, we should have been into the final stages working on new formulas, assessing the present economy, et cetera.

What happened? The Prime Minister was running around the country trying to become Prime Minister. The former prime minister was running around the world taking advantage of his last year in office. The ministers in the government, the ones responsible, were running around to see if they could get some money for their friends.

The business of the country was not getting done. That is why today we see the provinces still waiting for an equalization program. What are we doing? We are supporting the bill. Why are we supporting it? Simply because if the bill is defeated, the provinces' funding will be cut off completely. They will get nothing.

I always think of poor Oliver Twist. Please sir, could we have some more? It is becoming that way for the provinces. They come to Ottawa with their little bowls in their hands begging, please sir, could we have more?

Perhaps it is not the provinces that should worry. Perhaps it is not the municipalities. Perhaps it is not the people across the country, the workers, who have been ripped off. Perhaps they should not be sitting back asking, "What can we do? It is Ottawa's fault". No, it is our fault collectively because we were the ones who put them there.

There is one thing that we can always remember. We put them there, but in light of everything that is happening, we have time to assess what we have done. As the old saying goes, the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. The people give power to the government and very soon the people will take it away.

Government Orders

•(1035)

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for the first half of his speech at least, which I thought was on topic and raised some very interesting points. The second half burned a lot of time, obviously for the folks at home.

On the question of the 10 province formula, I agree with this. I think there are good things to consider in that which would have a positive effect for some of the provinces that have less. We should not use the term have not. I think it is better to say have less, they have potential that is yet to be developed.

The problem is that we have agreements from all provinces, it seems, if there is no cost to all provinces. If it is going to be true equalization then there probably has to be redistribution of wealth from provinces that have a lot to those which have less. If it was a cost sharing formula between the federal and the provincial governments, that everyone puts in, and the provinces agreed on the redistribution formula, I think it would take care of all that.

Does the member think there would still be agreement among all the provinces and would those with wealth participate?

The other question is the famous clawback provision on the provinces as they develop their resource sector and receive less equalization using the general formula. The Atlantic accord in the case of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, which is favourable as opposed to all on land industries, I think does help the Atlantic provinces.

I do not know if all the provinces agree with that. I watched the premier of New Brunswick, my province, and he did not agree with it. When he spoke to Klein in Alberta, Klein said, "Of course I agree with you. Get a constitutional amendment", which I thought was like saying, "Go fly a kite". It did not seem to me to be a true agreement on the proposal. Constitutional amendments are not that easy to get.

I wonder why those provinces that raise that do it bilaterally with the federal government. They talk about it but do not bring it to the table when the provinces are there, as they are now. They have had over 40 meetings negotiating the equalization formula. Why is it not part of the repertoire? Is it that they do not find the same amount of cooperation from the 10 provinces?

Finally, my last question is on EI. I do not think the federal government should make any apologies for having a surplus in the EI account. We all know that there is no EI fund. It should be noted that the rates paid by business and individuals to that fund have been steadily decreasing. A surplus happens because jobs have been created. Less people are drawing from it. More people are contributing to it. That creates wealth. That creates investment.

That is what the member was speaking about earlier. I wonder if he would recognize that.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Mr. Speaker, those were some very serious solid questions.

I mentioned before that I had the opportunity to work with that individual in his former position as the minister of fisheries. We had a very good relationship. Some accomplishments were made because

of the atmosphere he created in which we could work together. I believe that almost answers the question.

With respect to the EI surplus, let me remind the member that the EI surplus is three times what is recommended by the people who handle the funds. We do not need that much of a surplus in the event of any kind of a downturn. One-third of the surplus would be enough.

Why has it been increasing? Is it because of the great economy in this country? The answer is no. The answer is it is a lot harder to get on the EI program these days. Workers have to work longer and they obtain fewer benefits over a shorter period of time. There are all kinds of cuts to EI and to HRDC in particular, internally and externally. There are all kinds of reasons that the EI fund is growing and the people of Canada are paying the price.

Talking about the 10 province formula, about clawbacks, et cetera, let us lump them into one answer to save time. I mentioned in the introductory remarks to my answer that atmosphere has a lot to do with it. A tremendous amount of this depends on two words: leadership and trust. These are words that a lot of people think do not jibe with politics. We do not see any leadership any more in this country and we certainly do not see any trust. Nobody trusts anybody else.

The premiers and the provincial finance ministers around the negotiating table are human. There is always concern for their own area, that they have to look after their people. That is natural, but we have to remember we are part of a Confederation. Joining Confederation is like getting married; it is for better or for worse. We have to give and take.

I always remind my Albertan friends that in the 1930s when times were tough, it was fish from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland that helped keep them alive. Today they are contributing to both our provinces through the have and have not formula, or have and have less, whatever way we want to put it. Five or 10 years down the road as their oil fields dry up and ours come on stream, the reverse could happen. That is the way it should be.

In order to reach that, first of all we have to talk openly, we have to be honest and we have to put the figures on the table. However, there has to be trust. There has to be a belief that today is my day and tomorrow could be someone else's because everything turns around, as I said earlier when I talked about government. Things turn around. We have to remember that as partners in Confederation, we should be there in the good times but we should also be there in the bad times to help those who need help.

If we have that little bit of trust and some leadership to consolidate the proper formulas, we may not get what we want ideally, but we will get something that will satisfy most of us.

Government Orders

•(1040)

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, does my colleague agree that in 1986 when the Brian Mulroney government took the money from the employment insurance fund and threw it into the general fund, that started to create the real problem that we have today?

We hoped that the Liberals would not follow the track of Brian Mulroney, that they would not cut the EI, but it surely did start in 1986 when Brian Mulroney's government put the employment insurance account into the general fund. Then it became a free for all. They would take that money and put it in the budget and then have a zero deficit and so on. That is where it started. I would like to hear my colleague's view on that issue.

I would also like his view on what the new leader of the Conservative Party thinks about Atlantic Canada and employment insurance.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Mr. Speaker, to answer the first question, I have no argument with the member. Regarding the EI fund, usually most government revenues that are taken in go into the general account for the needs of all the people across the country.

However, the minute we identify specific accounts, such as the EI account, the money that goes into that should be used for that purpose, whether it be for benefits during layoffs, retraining or getting more people back into the workplace. We are doing an abysmal job. If we find we are collecting more from the worker than we need to do these things, that money should go back into the pockets of the worker.

I would remind him that back in the late eighties and early nineties, the economy was in rough shape. The deficit was huge and interest rates were astronomical, so consequently, governments were looking for every way to balance budgets. Desperate times called for desperate measures.

In relation to the leader of the Conservative Party, we do not know who the leader is going to be at this stage. We have absolutely no idea. It is a three way fight; three excellent people.

However, in the party to which I will belong, the interest in Atlantic Canada will not change. In fact, one of the things we are seeing, certainly within our leadership—I do not think it is true opposite—is a concern about learning more about the country. This is a big country. We have different economies throughout the country and different needs.

We must understand the country and the people of the country if we are going to be able to offer the proper services these people need. It is a matter of leadership. I think we will have it, and I am sure he would be glad to come with us.

•(1045)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to take part in this debate on this stunt known as Bill C-18, an act respecting equalization and authorizing the Minister of Finance to make certain payments related to health. This is typical of the federal government, the Liberals and the Prime Minister. The sole purpose of this bill is to get votes, nothing more.

First, contrary to the bill introduced in the previous session, this bill combines two things that have nothing to do with one another.

On the one hand, there is the one-year extension of the current equalization program and, on the other hand, there is the \$2 billion transfer first promised by Jean Chrétien, then by the hon. member for Ottawa South and, finally, promised and delivered by the current Prime Minister.

Obviously, the Bloc Québécois is not only in favour of this \$2 billion transfer, it has been demanding it for a very long time. In fact, we demanded it back when the federal government and the finance minister, both old and new, were telling us that the federal coffers were empty and that the government was scraping the bottom of the barrel to find this money for Quebec and the provinces.

We are therefore in complete agreement. Not only are we in agreement, but I wanted to make an amendment in the Standing Committee on Finance to ensure that this \$2 billion was a recurring item, to rectify the fiscal imbalance and help the provinces and Quebec fulfill their health care commitments.

Consequently, we have no real problem with this aspect of the bill. However, with regard to the one-year extension—I want this to be clear, because the bill clearly indicates an extension until March 31, 2005—the current equalization program is not acceptable to those defending Quebec's interests. The loss to the provinces is several billion dollars; the loss to Quebec is about \$1.4 billion.

It is out of the question to ask those with Quebecers' interests at heart, such as the Bloc Québécois, to approve of such extensive cuts. This would totally contradict the mandate that Quebecers have given us.

Obviously, the Liberals knew the Bloc Québécois were opposed to the extension of this equalization formula. As I said, we had made that clear from the time the previous bill on the same subject was introduced. So they thought that, by putting the transfer of \$2 billion into the same bill, they would probably manage to trick us, trick the people of Quebec and make us feel obliged to support such a bill.

We are, however, capable of walking and chewing gum at the same time. We are capable—as Quebecers are clear on that—of explaining that, while being in agreement with the transfer of \$2 billion for health, we can be opposed to extending the equalization formula for the coming year, because we will be penalized in the long run, both in Quebec and in the Atlantic provinces.

We asked the committee to split the bill, so that we might vote separately on extension of the equalization formula on the one hand and on the \$2 billion transfer for health on the other. The committee refused. The Liberals refused.

As I said, the result of this is that they are making us speak out against the whole bill although—I repeat—we agree with the \$2 billion transfer. I even tried to propose that this be a recurring amount, but for procedural reasons, unfortunately, that was not possible.

Government Orders

So, the first stunt was to combine two things that have nothing to do with each other, except that they both have to do with money. The Bloc's position on the two are diametrically opposite.

The people of Quebec are intelligent people and were not taken in by such a stunt. We will not play the government's, the Liberals, and the Prime Minister's game.

Then, there is the second stunt. By combining the two, the Liberals, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, are suggesting to the provinces, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces in particular, that in the end the equalization formula is really not very advantageous. "But, with the \$2 billion we are going to transfer to you, you will stand to gain", they say.

This is false. No matter how one looks at it, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces in particular, stand to lose with Bill C-18.

Let me give an example. There are several ways to evaluate this loss. Let us look at what is happening with the equalization estimates made by the federal government, by the Department of Finance.

• (1050)

In reality, what the federal government, the Liberals and the Prime Minister are doing is this: on the one hand, they are giving \$2 billion for health but, on the other hand, they are taking back that money through the equalization program. As I said, we are not fooled by this scheme.

Here are the October 2003 equalization estimates for Quebec. For 2002-03, it was estimated that Quebec would receive \$4.662 billion. In February 2004, according to the most recent estimates released on Monday, the amount is down to \$3.985 billion for 2002-03. This is a loss of \$677 million to Quebec, based on estimates made by the federal government itself.

For the year 2003-04, the estimate made in October 2003 was for a payment of \$4.525 billion to Quebec. In fact, it was on that basis that the Quebec finance minister Séguin prepared his budget. Now, based on the February 2004 estimate, under the equalization formula that the federal government wants to extend for a year, we are finding out that the amount of \$4.525 billion is down to \$3.802 billion. This is a loss of \$723 million to Quebec. And the government would want us to approve that?

For next year we have an initial estimate, therefore we cannot compare it to a previous estimate, but there is talk of equalization for Quebec of \$3.691 billion. That means that in addition to the cut in equalization for 2003-04, in 2004-05 an estimated \$111 million more will be cut. In total, based on its own estimates, the federal government is telling us that this year it is giving Quebec \$1.4 billion less. That is the current estimate.

Of course the Minister of Finance says he is going to spread this out over time. Nonetheless, this is a loss. In the coming years, the Government of Quebec will have to make do with a lot less money in transfers from the federal government.

I remind this House that the February 2003 agreement is expiring soon. This year Quebec will receive only \$365 million under that agreement. It is clear that the money situation in Quebec—and in the

Atlantic provinces—is going to be especially difficult, if not disastrous this year and in the years to follow.

This is all because of the federal government's own estimate. Now, as for Quebec's expectations, what was in Mr. Séguin's budget? For 2001-02, we expected to receive \$5.336 billion from the federal government. Just imagine. I am talking about the 2001-02 budget. That money was spent. Ottawa turned around and said it would not be \$5.336 billion, but \$4.690 billion. That is a net loss of \$646 million in terms of what Quebec was expecting and what Quebec spent based on estimates.

For 2002-03, we expected to receive \$5.315 billion from the federal government in equalization. On Monday, we were told it would be \$3.985 billion. That is a loss for Quebec of \$1.330 billion. That money has already been spent.

For the coming year, we are being told we will be given a little more. Quebec had anticipated a cut in equalization. In his September study, Mr. Séguin had reduced his equalization expectations to \$3.290 billion, given the problem with this formula. We were told that there would be a little more money, \$3.802 billion. Note that this is less than we expect to spend this year.

In total, with respect to Quebec's expectations, with respect to the money that has often been spent on health, in accordance with Quebecers' priorities, it amounts to \$1.464 billion less.

With the exception of Alberta, this is taking place in an extremely fragile financial situation. That is true for Quebec and for all the provinces. There is a risk that some provinces, particularly the Atlantic provinces, will find themselves with a deficit. And they want us to approve that? Whether we look at it from one angle or another, Quebec will be losing about \$1.5 billion with this equalization formula. That is the money that was lost in the past; imagine what it will be in the future.

All provinces that receive equalization payments will be affected. If we look at all the provinces, in October 2003, the forecast equalization payment for 2002-03 was \$9.709 billion. On Monday, we were told that it would be \$8.73 billion, or a decrease of \$976 million; the provinces will receive nearly \$1 billion less.

• (1055)

For 2003-04, the current fiscal year, the payment forecast last October was \$10.097 billion. Now we hear that it will be only \$8.779 billion, or a loss to all provinces of \$1.318 billion. In total, with the forecasts and the estimates that were published on Monday, this amounts to \$2.2 billion less that the provinces will receive in transfer payments because of this equalization formula.

And they want us to agree to extend this for a year, because an election is coming up? No, Mr. Speaker. It is particularly hard on Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. I shall explain it to you, and since you are an extremely intelligent person, Mr. Speaker, you will understand right away.

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There are two major transfer payments in the Canadian system. There is the Canadian health and social transfer, which is calculated on the basis of a percentage of the population, and there is equalization, which is based on the goal of reducing the gaps between the provinces' fiscal capacities. In this context, consideration is given not only to population figures, but also to the socio-economic status of the provinces.

Thus, they take \$2.2 billion out of the equalization system that helps the poorest provinces, and, they put \$2 billion back in, through the Canadian health and social transfer. But the CHST funds are divided proportionally among the provinces, based on population, not taking into account the socio-economic situation in the various provinces.

I see you are signalling me to stop, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, precisely, the hon. member for Joliette will have nine minutes when we resume debate.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: That is not a lot of time to denounce the Liberals.

The Speaker: It is not a lot, but it will do. For a twenty minute speech, nine minutes is not bad. The hon. member for Joliette will have nine minutes to conclude his speech after oral question period.

The hon. member for Simcoe North.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Hon. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sport and physical activity are important to our country and offer significant ways for Canadians to participate in their communities and society.

Sport and physical activity are effective vehicles for social change, and participation in sport and physical activity can improve the health of Canadians and reduce health care costs.

Sport and physical activity transcends party lines. That is why this week, at the request of the Minister of State for Sport and at the instigation of the group, Sport Matters, the All Party Sport and Physical Activity Caucus was formed. One of the goals of this caucus is to raise the profile of sport and physical activity.

[*Translation*]

I was appointed chair of this informal all party caucus on sport and physical activity and, at our next meeting, I intend to ask the caucus to confirm the member for Longueuil as our deputy chair.

I invite all members of the House and the Senate to participate in this important caucus to ensure the well-being of Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the coming election is about quality accountable

representation in the House of Commons. Can the taxpayer trust that public business will be administered wisely?

The culture of corruption of the Liberals is descriptive of waste and ingrained behaviour that finds ways to cheat the system. It is called pay-off: get public tax dollars paid to Liberal friends.

Liberals think that politically unconnected average Canadians do not care about what goes on. Liberals calculate that the voter will be forgiving with just a cover of excuses.

It is not an inflated observation to say that Liberals cannot manage the people's business. They have no desire to be accountable at the ballot box in between elections or stay within the democratic bounds of ongoing public consent.

In contrast, the new Conservative Party is inherently democratic. High quality accountable representation that respects the taxpayer is a modest, honest, achievable vision that Canadians can fully support.

* * *

• (1100)

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to celebrate Black History Month, every year the Government of Canada holds the Mathieu Da Costa Challenge. I am pleased to congratulate all of those to whom the Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Status of Women had the pleasure of presenting certificates of achievement yesterday morning.

The nine winners, aged 11 to 17 years, received awards for their achievements in five categories: Best Essays in English; Best Essays in French; Best Artistic Representations; Special Award for Best Essay in English that celebrates the contribution of a black Canadian; and Special Award for Best Essay in French that celebrates the contribution of a black Canadian.

Once again, congratulations to all the winners.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN FILM INDUSTRY

Hon. Serge Marcil (Beauharnois—Salaberry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues in the House and the public to congratulate those Canadians nominated this year for an Oscar.

We are extremely proud of our distinguished Canadians who have been nominated for six Oscars. Denys Arcand is up for best screenplay and best foreign language film for *The Barbarian Invasions*. Chris Hinton has been nominated for best animated short for *Nibbles*. Composer Howard Shore has been nominated for two Academy awards for *The Lord of the Rings*: best musical score and best song. Benoit Charest is also up for best song for *The Triplets of Belleville*.

As these prestigious nominations demonstrate, last year was a great year for the Canadian film industry. Canada is full of world-class artists. We wish them every success on Oscar night.

* * *

BILINGUALISM

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our country sets great store in its policy on bilingualism.

Yesterday, a poll commissioned by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada confirmed the appropriateness of our policy on bilingualism.

This poll indicates that 77% of anglophones outside Quebec consider it important that their children learn to speak another language; 74% of this group believe that French should be the second language they should learn; and 98% of Quebecers consider it important to learn to speak a second language. Finally, 93% of them believe that English should be the language they learn.

This poll confirms that the government's efforts to promote bilingualism are on the right track.

* * *

[English]

CONSUMERS' CHOICE AWARD

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on February 23 of this, year I had the pleasure of being part of the Consumers' Choice Awards presentation to Calgary businesses chosen by Calgarians for their outstanding ethics and dedication. This prestigious award is given to businesses that not only have surpassed in excellence, but also in innovation, entrepreneurship and grassroots success stories.

The award recipients in Calgary Northeast are: Aardvark Pest Control Services; Alberta Permit Pro; Associated Cabs; Caldek Sundeck Systems.; Chesney Home Hardware; Classic Kitchens & Cabinets; Crestview Floors; Deltech Productions; Diamond Fireplaces; Discount Car Rentals; Greenwood Inn; PDL Mobility; Prestige Railings and Stairs; RGO Office Products; RUSCO Home Improvements; Save-On Telecom; Serv-Pro; Stealth Alarm Systems; T & T Honda; Techtronics Computers; Two Small Men With Big Hearts Moving; Western Windows.

Congratulations again to all the award nominees and recipients of this year's Consumers' Choice Awards.

* * *

OTTAWA TALENT INITIATIVE

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week 300 unemployed or underemployed high tech workers met in Ottawa at a forum organized by the Ottawa Talent Initiative.

The people in the room represented a talent pool that is essential to the recovery of the high tech sector and the future prosperity of this region and our country. We must not lose this brain power if we are to be leading participants in the new economy.

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The purpose of the forum was to develop an action plan to work with all levels of government and a network of community organizations toward keeping these valuable people working here.

Government has its work to do to fulfill commitments made in the Speech from the Throne, to invest in key sections of the high technology sector and ensure the jobs are there, to continue investing in lifelong learning and to work with this group of people to fulfill their action plan and achieve their objectives.

My congratulations to the Ottawa Talent Initiative for this event.

* * *

• (1105)

[Translation]

FIRST NATIONS

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the daily life of our first nations is a nightmare. A number of them face an unemployment rate that often exceeds 50%. This is not to mention the problems relating to drug addiction, delinquency and chronic socio-economic underdevelopment.

Day after day, the federal government keeps telling us that it is doing its utmost to improve the situation. However, except for the convoluted rhetoric of the throne speeches, there is little concrete action.

There is one measure though that the government must urgently take and that is to invest in social housing for aboriginal people, because their housing stock is crumbling and is plagued by chronic mould. While 8,700 dwelling units are needed this year in Quebec and Labrador, only 414 will be built.

It is the federal government's responsibility to help first nations get out of poverty and take charge of their lives. This means that it must speed up the negotiation process on self-government.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to inform the House that former Montreal Expo star Andre Dawson was inducted yesterday into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame.

In 1977 Dawson was named National League rookie of the year for hitting .282 with 19 home runs and 65 RBIs. He remained with the Expos for the next nine years, leaving at the end of 1986.

Known affectionately as the Hawk, Dawson is one of four players—Willie Mays, Barry Bonds and Bobby Bonds—to hit 300 home runs and steal 300 bases during his career. He also won eight Gold Gloves while playing centre field for the Expos and right field for the Chicago Cubs.

This is a well deserved honour and I ask my parliamentary colleagues to join me in congratulating Andre Dawson on this outstanding achievement.

S. O. 31

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two years ago Transport Canada rejected a draft regulation to reduce the number of flight attendants required on aircraft with more than 50 seats. Today, Transport Canada is less than two weeks away from approving the same regulation that it rejected in 2002.

The initial proposed regulation on the ratio was deemed an unacceptable downgrade of passenger safety. What threatened public safety two years ago, still threatens the public today, arguably more so.

Adding insult to injury, Transport Canada is drafting its new regulations behind a veil of secrecy and withholding evidence that reveals the danger of these safety regulations.

Flight attendants are the first line of defence when things go wrong in the air. They are trained to respond to any emergencies in the air. We look to them as providers of safety and security. Reducing their numbers, reduces the safety of all passengers on Canadian aircraft.

A cavalier attitude toward the safety of passengers is a blatant disregard for common sense. Sadly, it is another example of the government's inconsistency and self-serving nature.

What is the purpose of a Department of Public Safety and Emergency Measures when other federal departments like Transport ignore these recommendations?

* * *

[Translation]

CBC LITERARY AWARDS

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation presented its literary awards at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, in Gatineau.

The novels that received an award include *La librairie de la place*, by Nicole Filion, and *Un homme ordinaire*, by Catherine Desgagnés.

Those who like poetry should read *Comment voir le poisson rouge dans l'eau rouge du bocal*, by Kim Doré, and *Le pain quotidien*, by Annie Perreault.

Finally, those who like travels will enjoy *La délicieuse odeur de miel des jeunes éléphants mâles*, by Isabelle Giasson, and *Retour de Sarajevo, à la première personne*, by Denis McCready.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada must never waiver in the defence of the rule of international law or the role of multilateral institutions in advancing peace. However, a shift has occurred since the new Prime Minister assumed office.

In October 2003 Canada adopted a clear position at the United Nations based on international law, condemning the Israeli security wall erected on occupied Palestinian land.

In December Canada abstained from a UN resolution seeking an International Court of Justice opinion on the legality of the wall. Canada then urged the ICJ to refuse the UN's request to render an opinion.

Had the Sharon administration built that wall along the green line, protection of vulnerable Israeli citizens living in fear might or might not have been enhanced. Israel has the indisputable right to protect and defend its citizens against horrific suicide bombings.

However, Sharon chose to erect portions of the wall on occupied land, denying desperate Palestinian families access to their agricultural land and aquifers, and intensifying their hardship and humiliation.

Peace will only come through building bridges.

* * *

● (1110)

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the rural community needs the support of everyone in order to redefine its role and direct its economic and social development.

A few years ago, the Government of Quebec realized the situation, and this led to the creation and signature of the Pacte rural, which requires the government to systematically analyze the impact of its decisions and policies on the rural community.

As well, Quebec departments are required to factor in some flexibility to their programs, the eligibility criteria in particular, to adapt them to the rural reality.

There is no federal component to this new social contract, however. It is high time that this federal government woke up to this new reality and followed the Government of Quebec's lead by signing this pact with the rural community.

* * *

[English]

TERRY SEECHARAN

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the loss of OPP police officer and Brampton resident Terry Seecharan, who was killed early yesterday morning on his way to the OPP Port Credit detachment.

Mr. Seecharan, who was only 32 years of age, was involved in a serious car accident involving a flatbed truck. He was rushed to the Brampton-Peel Memorial Hospital where he died of his injuries.

Fellow OPP Constable Brian Hackett said "He was a good kid, well spoken, treated everybody nicely...and had a great future in front of him".

Terry Seecharan will be sadly missed by his wife, two small children, family, friends, colleagues, and the community at large. I would like to offer my condolences to all those touched by his life.

MARIJUANA

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, young people who do not want to use drugs have come to me expressing grave concerns about what is happening in their communities, all because the Liberal government is sending the wrong message across Canada about drugs.

By decriminalizing marijuana, our government is forcing our youth to live in a world where drug use is making life more difficult. Psychological pressure to use marijuana is increasing. Drug induced crime creates more tension and problems. A good education is more difficult to obtain because of the negative behaviour and attitudes of their classmates using pot.

Drug offences in Saskatchewan have increased by 97% in the last 10 years. Our youth deserve better. Being free to grow and develop should be their right. Instead, the damaging influence of drug use pollutes their environment.

Protecting Canada's youth should be our number one priority. Why does the Liberal government care so little about our young people?

* * *

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one in government claims to know anything about the sponsorship scam, yet the President of the Privy Council obviously knew when he was Secretary of State for Sport.

On March 17, 2000, the director of the national sport policy task force sent an e-mail to the contract officer at Canadian Heritage stating that "The firm the secretary of state wants to hire is Everest. They have a standing offer with Public Works Canada. I have no other details..." The \$500,000 contract would be to organize the secretary of state's tour on sports.

On May 19, 2000, Everest created a website through the website of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

On May 25, 2000, Canadian Heritage bureaucrats exchanged e-mails again, asking that a clause be added to the Everest contract, suggesting that Canadian Heritage, not Public Works, was negotiating the contract with Everest.

On May 29, 2000, Public Works received a requisition for the tour contract from Canadian Heritage.

On May 30, 2000, the contract was awarded to Group Everest.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker,

In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean west,
Like the former leader of the Alliance Party, he tried his best.
They both missed their mark,
What a lark.
And now they claim it was a mistake,
But give us a break.
I would suggest they look at a map,
Before they fall into yet another trap.

Oral Questions

And stop blaming their office staff,
For yet another oblivious gaffe.

What is more unfortunate is that this is not an isolated incident. The former leader of the Alliance and his party have a long history of inappropriate behaviour.

First he wanted to build a firewall around Alberta, then he accused Atlantic Canadians of being lazy, then his party offended thousands of Canadians of Caribbean background with their latest attack ad, and now they have offended aboriginal Canadians.

Perhaps it is time for him and his regressive Conservative caucus to attend a sensibilities training program. Aboriginal Friendship Centres across Canada offer Canadians of all races programs and courses to help build dialogue between communities. I would suggest that the Conservative caucus and the leader of that party book a session right away.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1115)

[English]

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sadly we read in today's newspaper that Olympic gold medallist Myriam Bédard is the latest victim of the sponsorship scandal. Madam Bédard was fired from her job at VIA Rail for denouncing the shady business dealings going on between VIA Rail and Groupaction.

According to Madam Bédard, simple jobs that should have cost between \$200 and \$300 were inflated to \$4,000. When she proposed doing the job herself, VIA said she should mind her own business and Groupaction would take care of business and it certainly did.

She was fired from her job by the chairman of VIA Rail. This is outrageous behaviour. How can the government permit the reputation of an Olympic gold medallist to be sullied by this sponsorship scandal?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Prime Minister received a letter from Ms. Bédard directly. He referred this letter to the Minister of Transport and the President of the Treasury Board. We shall give serious consideration to all the facts stated by Ms. Bédard and appropriate action will be taken.

[English]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of those serious looks going on. The CEO of VIA Rail, Marc LeFrançois, and Chairman Jean Pelletier said that Madam Bédard blew the whistle because she was motivated by personal profit.

Oral Questions

Imagine. The chairman called this Canadian hero a liar. He said that he found her pitiful because this poor little girl did not have a husband. This is absolutely scandalous language coming from the head of a crown corporation and employed by the Canadian government.

Mr. LeFrançois refuses to say why Madam Bédard was fired. Perhaps the minister could enlighten us. Why did the chairman fire a Canadian hero?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the comments of the Chairman of the Board of VIA Rail have been accurately reported in *La Presse*—without commenting on the employer-employee labour relations at the heart of the matter, I want to say to the members of this House that if these comments were made, they were and are completely inappropriate.

[English]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

An internal audit highlighted corruption since 1996. Yesterday the President of the Treasury Board seemed to agree that politicians and bureaucrats with something to hide could have been swept under the rug.

In fact, he admitted that there was the involvement of a minister's office and a communications group, if there was, in hiding the problems, then, and I quote: "it's doubly possible there was a cover-up".

What ministers were involved in the cover up? What was the minister referring to? What did he rely on when he spoke of a cover up?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could retable the Auditor General's report for the member if he would like. I suspect if he reads it, he will find the remarks I was making.

However, I would like to correct his allegation about the 1996 Ernst & Young audit. I have it here. It has been posted. It says:

We found no instances where non-compliance might have led to a situations of personal gain or benefit.

That is what the audit, that he is so scandalized by, says about the department.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, government members have made it quite clear that there was a cover up involving the 1996 audit. They talk about fraud and mismanagement.

Besides taking the word of Alfonso Gagliano that there was nothing wrong, what did the government do to clean up that mess?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the very first thing the government did was identify that it happened. It then called in the Auditor General, who went in and did

a thorough review. It found that there were problems with some files, called in the RCMP, and charged people.

The Auditor General then went back to do a detailed audit of all the other files. As soon as she made it public, the government set up a public inquiry, created a special investigator to recover money, started a review of the FAA, investigated and disciplined crown heads, started a review of crown governments and is reviewing the whole question of the politician-bureaucratic interface. All of it directly—

• (1120)

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's West.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we now know the government knew eight years ago that there was a problem and it covered it up.

We heard the Prime Minister say he knew there was a problem two years ago, before he even knew about the program. Now we have cabinet ministers wanting to spend millions based on nothing more than a federal agreement.

We hear the words money laundering. Where does that come from? Why is the government playing Canadians for fools? Has this culture of corruption gone so deep that it has permeated every level of the Liberal government?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the document from eight years ago that the member refers to, from Ernst & Young, says:

We found no instances where non-compliance might have led to situations of personal gain or benefit.

What the government has done is acted on facts and put in place processes that would get to the bottom of this and that are reliable. We have judges involved. We have the RCMP involved.

What the opposition is doing is continuing to come forward with one more piece of hearsay, unsubstantiated allegations blackening the reputations of innocent people.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in November 1996, external auditors concluded that Chuck Guité and his group had broken all the rules for awarding advertising agency contracts and that, consequently, they should be discharged from their duties.

The government knew this in 1996; can it give any reason—other than a desire to maintain the existing system— why Chuck Guité and his team, instead of being punished, were rewarded with responsibility for the sponsorship program, which was also so beneficial to friends of the government and of the Liberal Party of Canada?

[English]

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The quote she uses comes from the Auditor General's report in 2002. The 1996 audit that she is referencing is the one that I have been reading from.

This is the advice that was given to the government. It said, “Our audit of the research contracting process determined that APORS”, which is the department involved, “was in compliance with prescribed policies and procedures”. It states:

We found no instances where non-compliance might have led to situations of personal gain or benefit.

That is the 1996 document. I am more than willing to share a copy, although I believe it was tabled with the committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would invite the President of the Treasury Board to continue her reading. I am sure something else will turn up.

What is clear is that the government knew in 1996 and it chose to encourage the shady practices of Chuck Guité and his team rather than condemning them.

Is the government finally going to admit that—far from being a mistake caused by a handful of public servants—the abuses noted by Ernst & Young back in 1996 were able to continue until 2002, because they had approval from the political level?

[English]

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer the question of the hon. member because I know her to be concerned and serious about these issues, but there is confusion here.

The simple question is that there was a concern raised by an individual about inappropriate practices in the contracting in 1996. The department called in Ernst & Young to do a review of it. Ernst & Young did a review of it. It said there were some contracting practices that needed to be tightened up, but it said, “The audit of the advertising contracting process determined that APORS”, which is the department involved, “contracting activities generally follow—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Reg Alcock: This is what it says.

[Translation]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, despite what the President of the Treasury Board would have us believe, the government had received as early as 1996 a report from the accounting firm Ernst & Young—audits are not done unless there is a problem. This report referred to various problems within the communications and public opinion research branch headed by Chuck Guité.

How can the government continue to claim that the sponsorship scandal was the work of only a small group of public servants, when Jean Chrétien and the then Minister of Public Works and Government Services asked for an additional \$17 million in federal funds for Chuck Guité’s team even though the government was aware of the abuses?

[English]

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the sponsorship program, which has been the subject of the

Oral Questions

Auditor General's most recent report, began on November 20, 1997. In 1996 an individual raised concerns about contracting practices relative to some advertising contracts. The government was concerned and called in Ernst & Young. It did a thorough review and reported. Members have a copy of this. The media have a copy of this. Members can read what it says. I do not need to keep reading it here. It states:

We found no instances where non-compliance might have led to situations of personal gain or benefit.

That is what the government knew.

• (1125)

[Translation]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is quite strange nonetheless. The government can pretend otherwise all it wants, but will it deny that this was the same group operating in the same way, with the same objectives, and that Chuck Guité was acting with the support of the government?

[English]

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the sponsorship program, which the auditor audited, did not begin until or after November 20, 1997, so no, it was not the same group.

* * *

HAITI

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the crisis in Haiti escalates. A significant portion of the country has been captured by armed insurgents. The democratically elected president appears powerless to defend against their march to the capital. The Caribbean community's peace efforts have been hampered by scarce resources. Rumours swirl about American backing of armed insurgents.

What is Canada doing to ensure a UN supported effort to intervene in this crisis before more innocents are killed? Will Canada support a UN rapid deployment force to Haiti?

Hon. Aileen Carroll (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has been very active, both from the aid dimension and from foreign affairs as well. We have been emphasizing greatly that Mr. Aristide must take control of the situation and must deal with the realities. He must do what the international community has asked him to do: deal with the opposition and assign or bring in a prime minister.

We are being very cognizant of the situation, working very well with Washington and the UN, and cognizant as well of what Caricom and the OAS are trying to accomplish. Canada is very much a partner in the solution to this situation.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 80% of Haitians live in grinding poverty. Economic strangulation imposed by the U.S. and by World Bank and IMF structural adjustments has made a desperate situation even worse. If President Aristide is removed unconstitutionally, that would amount to Haiti's 33rd coup d'état. Canada cannot turn a blind eye to an impending bloodbath in that impoverished country.

Oral Questions

I ask again, will Canada support a UN based rapid deployment of forces to Haiti, in cooperation with Caribbean nations?

Hon. Aileen Carroll (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has done nothing in the way of turning a blind eye. Canada has been the second largest donor of aid to Haiti for many years. We just recently freed up \$5 million in a response to the OAS and what it is trying to accomplish.

We are working very closely with the United Nations. We will work in concert with the United Nations should the desire be there to have an international response, but first and foremost, there has to be a political situation accomplished, a political stability, before moving in, in a military way, would be an efficacious response.

* * *

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in reference to the sponsorship scandal, the Prime Minister has recently been quoted as saying, "I did not particularly like the way the government did it at the time". He was the finance minister. He was the vice-chair of the Treasury Board and the senior minister from Quebec in Jean Chrétien's cabinet. He had the power to blow the whistle.

Why did the Prime Minister not speak up before millions of dollars of taxpayers' money was wasted?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, continually members on the other side keep trying to identify the Prime Minister as the actor in this piece. They have not put out a single fact that substantiates that.

What the current Prime Minister did the day he became Prime Minister was demand that we move the government to a basis of accountability, transparency and financial responsibility.

He gave me, as the president of the Treasury Board, an extremely tight mandate to establish comptrollership, to build a financial information management system and to put right the management of the federal government. That is what this Prime Minister did.

• (1130)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that the government is now trying to muzzle the Prime Minister. Every time he opens his mouth about the sponsorship scandal he changes his story. First he said that he had no clue about what went on. Then he blamed federal bureaucrats. Then he blamed Jean Chrétien. Then he said Jean Chrétien was a man of integrity. Then he said he only found out two years ago.

Now he admits he knew the sponsorship program was not operating properly in 1996. Why did he not speak up then?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that the opposition party no longer knows what to say about our Prime Minister, because he did exactly what was called for under the circumstances.

He has explained exactly what he knew when he was finance minister. Now that he is Prime Minister, he has taken courageous steps to encourage the greatest possible transparency regarding this matter and that is what we will continue to do.

[English]

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no transparency in the government's account of this whole affair. We have documentation from the Treasury Board's assessment to cabinet that refers to this whole sponsorship program as "money laundering".

Will the government admit that this was in fact nothing more than a money laundering scheme that has cost Canadians \$100 million?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says there is no transparency in the government. We have a wide open public inquiry headed by a judge, which will go wherever he chooses to go to get the information.

We have an unprecedented release of confidential cabinet documents, Treasury Board documents and departmental documents. We have three separate legislative reviews and we have the public accounts committee, which we are sending everybody to.

What is not transparent about that?

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this whole mess just stinks. We know that even while the money laundering scheme was being shut down, cabinet ministers were still working the program, lining up at the trough.

Now we hear that the current president of the Privy Council wanted the government to continue to give him sponsorship money based on "verbal agreements". How much sponsorship money was doled out on what cabinet ministers refer to as verbal agreements?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member alleges that certain people knew that the program was still operating and they were still applying to it. Opposition members were applying to the program at the same time. It was a program that sponsored good events in local communities.

There was a problem with the management of certain companies that it appears were acting inappropriately, which is why charges have been laid and which is why we have a public inquiry. The problem is, this Prime Minister, when he was finance minister, had a tough job to do when we had a big deficit. He now has a tough job to do and he will get it done.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after seeing inflated invoices, Myriam Bédard, an Olympic medallist, was forced to quit her job at VIA Rail because she refused a transfer to Groupaction. Worse yet, to justify himself, Jean Pelletier, Jean Chrétien's former chief of staff, made inappropriate and disgraceful comments about Ms. Bédard.

Instead of publicly discrediting her, would the senior managers at VIA Rail not have been wiser to look into Ms. Bédard's claims?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ms. Bédard has personally written to the Prime Minister of Canada. This letter is being considered as we speak by my colleague, the Minister of Transport, and by the President of the Treasury Board.

If the chairman of the board of directors said exactly what has been reported in the newspapers, we consider this to be completely inappropriate.

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when athletes come back with medals, every effort is made to roll out the red carpet but, when these same athletes denounce wrongdoing in crown corporations, they are completely discredited.

Will the minister who has the authority invite the guilty parties to make a public apology immediately?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the comments reported in the newspapers are accurate, the government finds them completely inappropriate, especially considering that private details of this person's life have been revealed.

I would hope that the board of directors at VIA Rail will take appropriate action.

* * *

PARENTAL LEAVE

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has indicated its intention of appealing the ruling by the Court of Appeal of Quebec confirming Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction over parental leave. There is no disputing that parental leave must be broadened and integrated.

Will the Minister of Human Resources admit that he is more interested in gaining a high profile for the federal government than in the welfare of young families and that, in the end, that is the main motivation behind the decision to go to the Supreme Court?

• (1135)

Hon. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Social Economy), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this provides me with an opportunity to remind hon. members of what the minister said in the House. There have already been discussions with his counterpart in Quebec and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, to ensure that a collaborative approach to finding a solution is adopted. At the same time, it is true that we are going to pursue the appeal process, because there are constitutional issues involved that really must be clarified.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary said that the two ministers, that is the federal and the Quebec ministers, have met.

Instead of wasting time on pseudo-negotiations with Quebec, how can the parliamentary secretary justify the federal government's

decision to appeal an issue as clear as the one presented by the Morin decision?

Hon. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Social Economy), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, and I would like the Bloc to listen carefully, there are certain constitutional issues that need to be clarified through appeal.

At the same time, with a new government in Quebec there is a new openness. That government is prepared to negotiate and discuss an existing problem with us in order to find a solution.

We will continue to discuss the matter in good faith.

* * *

[English]

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote what the President of the Treasury Board said yesterday. He said "It is doubly possible there was a cover-up".

Cover-up, cover-up, cover-up. The culture of corruption has to stop. Canadians are demanding it.

We want to know why he said that there was a possibility of a cover-up?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if you read the Auditor General's report about some of the activities of a group that were not being very forthcoming you might come to that conclusion.

However, let me share with the member a conclusion that was reached by a newspaper in Vancouver when the Prime Minister was speaking to a group at a school. The reporter stated:

Let me assure all that these gym-floor Grade 8-to-12ers served up far superior queries to those heard in the drooling farce known as question period.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, talk about Liberal arrogance.

A series of audits since 1996 have revealed that there were many managerial and ethical breaches in the sponsorship program. Words like incompetency, arrogance and disregard for taxpayer money can be used to describe the management of this program.

Why is there a conspiracy of silence on the front benches?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have here a copy of the audit that the hon. member is talking about. I am prepared to send it over to him and if he can identify the words, which he just used, in this document, then I will respond to his question.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's promise of openness has become a useless and unenforceable promise. Its approach sounds like more of the same.

Oral Questions

When the Prime Minister took office it only took him days to start awarding and paying off his friends at Earncliffe.

In the interest of openness, which the President of the Treasury Board has let out a lot of hot air about today, will the government table all contracts it has given the Earncliffe group since 1993?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very clearly, every time a contract is awarded by this government, it must comply with Treasury Board rules and policies. This was the case with respect to the company referred to by the hon. member of the opposition.

• (1140)

[English]

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board got a lot shorter.

So much for Liberal openness. Why is this very old and tired Liberal government hiding the Earncliffe contracts from Canadians? What is it trying to hide? All we are asking for are copies of those contracts.

I will ask this question very slowly for the President of the Treasury Board. He seems to have trouble with fast questions. When will the government table the Earncliffe contracts?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have worked with some of the analysts at Earncliffe and they are among the best in the country. They deliver first class services and very high quality work.

I think it is a bit much for people to come into the House and start one more time making slurs or innuendoes by association. They compete for those contracts and they follow all the guidelines. In fact, they are extra careful about it because of the concerns that are raised. However they are among some of the best in the country, which is what the government wants.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given the importance of retaining our excellent public servants, their priceless corporate memory and their dedication to their given responsibilities, it is my opinion that any attempt by the government to contract out will have a profoundly negative impact on the quality of service the government provides to all Canadians.

Could the President of the Treasury Board reassure Canadians that the government has no plans to privatize services?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had more questions from this one member than I have had from the entire opposition on our public service. I have offered over and over again and I have been saying over and over again that the government has no intentions to privatize services.

What we are attempting to do is modernize public management. There is a statement that I use all the time: There are no bad people; we have bad systems and we are going to fix them.

* * *

[Translation]

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Myriam Bédard, one of our Olympic stars, is said to have been forced to resign from her job at VIA Rail, because she refused to work for Groupaction.

[English]

To add insult to injury, Jean Pelletier, the former chief of staff of the prime minister, said:

[Translation]

“The poor girl is a sad case”.

[English]

Is this how we treat our star female athletes in this country?

I ask the government whether it will ensure that Myriam Bédard is immediately reinstated in her job with VIA Rail with all the appropriate apologies.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, Ms. Bédard personally wrote to the Prime Minister of Canada. The Minister of Transport and the President of the Treasury Board are currently looking at the actions that must be taken.

As for the comments of the chairman of the board, if such remarks were actually made, we feel that they are completely inappropriate. We remind the chairman of the board that it is a privilege to serve in a crown corporation.

We hope that appropriate action will be taken.

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CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, more than 22,000 members of the Union of Taxation Employees and the Public Service Alliance have been engaged in arduous negotiations with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency since last August.

The union members are not convinced that the employer wants to bargain in good faith. They believe the employer wishes to delay the process until after the election in order to do the Prime Minister's bidding, that is, make cuts.

Is the Minister of Revenue going to give a clear and precise mandate to the employer to remain at the bargaining table until the parties reach a collective agreement? Yes or no?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to say that we are in bargaining with our employees. I am not going to discuss those issues here in the House. They are issues that are to be discussed at the tables. There is a process for that.

I am sure the very competent leadership in our unions and in the department will conduct this in a professional manner rather than in the way it is conducted on the floor of the House. This is not where we bargain.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House leader promised to deliver details on the video made for the former minister of national resources during his trip to China. What was the cost of the video and was the contract tendered?

Hon. Bob Speller (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know this was asked yesterday of the minister and I had an opportunity to look into the issue. In fact, there was no videographer. In fact, there was no video. In fact, there was no cost.

* * *

• (1145)

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, membership in cabinet and on the communications committee does have its privileges.

While a backbencher in the foreign affairs ministry, he received \$564,000, but when the minister was made the foreign affairs minister, his money to his riding went up to \$2.5 million.

Will the Prime Minister now admit that the sponsorship program was nothing more than a slush fund for Liberal ministers?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a slush fund for Liberal ministers that opposition members were writing to and arguing for and receiving grants on behalf of organizations in their ridings. Some secret slush fund.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I woke up this morning and read that the government child protection bill has been given a two thumbs up by none other than John Robin Sharpe, that real bad person. This pervert thinks the cross-examination of sexually abused victims in court would be both entertaining and educational, that the legislation offers new opportunities for the defence by going into the sordid examination of the abuser's relationship with his child victim.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Obviously the legislation is open-ended and ill-defined, so will the justice minister please advise the House how this bill will in fact aid in swiftly prosecuting child—

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Hon. Sue Barnes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to answer this question because I too, and all members, read that article. There is nothing that is entertaining or educational about the sexual exploitation of children, which is why the government has a bill currently before the House and one on which we hope the opposition members will support. The bill would strengthen what can be done in our courtrooms. Our judges are there to protect the children in the performance of what happens in that courtroom. They will do their jobs and we will give them the tools.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this child protection bill is another Liberal nightmare. Our laws pertaining to the protection of children need to be certain, not ambiguous, not mushy like Bill C-12. If the government were truly interested in protecting children, it would remove the loopholes that allow the likes of John Robin Sharpe to tie up our courts with frivolous and degrading arguments.

Why does the minister not go back to the drawing board, scrap the public good loophole and raise the age of sexual consent to end it all?

Hon. Sue Barnes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to reply to this because this has nothing to do with what the opposite member is putting on the floor here. In fact, we have allowed, through our Bill C-12, the former Bill C-20, to go and add more power to the defence and the prosecution of these very damaging assaults on children through exploitation.

I hope the members opposite join the government in adding to the protection so cases like this can be properly judged in our courtrooms to protect children.

* * *

[Translation]

HAITI

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the French foreign minister is encouraging President Aristide to step down, given his responsibility in this crisis, and allow a government of national unity to be established in Haiti. While stopping short of asking President Aristide to resign, the United States and Canada say they support France's idea to avoid the crisis in Haiti from becoming a blood bath.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell the House if he supports France's initiative?

Hon. Aileen Carroll (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is not correct. France has not asked for Mr. Aristide to step down. Yesterday, the Department of Foreign Affairs discussed the situation with Mr. de Villepin, who was clear. He said:

“Obviously, it is up to Mr. Aristide to consider every option.”

Oral Questions

Mr. Aristide could very well decide to leave, in the best interests of his country. The Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs told Mr. de Villepin that if this happens, Canada will be there to act with the international community in such an eventuality—

• (1150)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Mercier.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but in a news wire this morning from Agence France-Presse, a spokesman for the French Department of Foreign Affairs stated that Mr. de Villepin remarked that President Aristide carried a heavy responsibility for the current situation, and it is up to him to accept the consequences of the impasse and resign.

Yesterday, the Canadian Prime Minister said that Canada had a responsibility and that it intended to assume this responsibility. Will Canada stop hesitating and say it is prepared to take part in a UN-led intervention?

Hon. Aileen Carroll (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I already explained this. Canada is prepared. France is also prepared. I explained that the best solution is probably a political agreement.

However, we are prepared to act alongside the international community, as a member of the United Nations, and along with our colleague from France, Mr. de Villepin.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian farm families are facing unnecessary hardship. They are struggling because the Liberal government's programs actually made matters worse down on the farm.

The minister is musing he is almost ready to make some sort of announcement. Here are a couple of things he could actually do today that would help. He could get out some real cash advances that are not mired down in bureaucratic red tape. He could do some loan guarantees to producers and of course he could remove, not delay, the cash deposit requirement for the CAIS program.

What is stopping him?

Hon. Bob Speller (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to read the hon. member's release that he put out yesterday, obviously after hearing that the Government of Canada was working hard in terms of bringing forward a program to bridge Canadian farmers and farm families from today until the fall, when the CAIS program really kicks in.

I want to tell the hon. member that I have had an opportunity to talk to Canadian farmers and farm families. The Government of Canada is working very hard with these groups to work through what is really necessary so that the Government of Canada can help them.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great that the minister is listening, but time is of the essence here.

Agriculture, the primary production of food in the country, is going down for the count. Our safe, secure food supply is being put in jeopardy due to the Liberal government's inaction and bureaucratic programs that totally miss the mark.

We released our farm friendly program yesterday, and the minister finally got around to reading it. That is great. I would like to see him put it in play. We would be happy. That is the sincerest form of flattery to see one's project put into play.

Would he at least release the outline of his program so farmers could finally start making some plans?

Hon. Bob Speller (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I had an opportunity to review with my officials the plan put forward by the opposition.

I might note that after the opposition heard that the Government of Canada was in the process of bringing forward a program itself, I looked at it, and in a lot of ways it mimics what is already being done by the Government of Canada.

If we look at the numbers within it, I think they are quite off in a number of the different areas. However, I would be pleased to have officials at committee, at some time, go through it with the hon. member as to what the real numbers are.

* * *

[Translation]

RWANDA

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Earlier this week, the House unanimously adopted a motion that I put forward declaring April 7 each year a day of remembrance of the victims of the Rwandan genocide. I would like to thank all the hon. members for supporting this motion.

I would now like to ask the minister what tangible action the government intends to take so that Canadians will remember this momentous day, this infamous day in the history of Rwanda and humanity?

Hon. Hélène Scherrer (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for his question and also congratulate him on his excellent work in this matter, which is so important for the Rwandan community.

I can assure this House that the Minister of State for Multiculturalism is working closely with her colleagues to find the best strategy to acknowledge this tragedy in Canada. I invite all Canadians to help us mark this sad event in the history of humanity on April 7.

Oral Questions

• (1155)
[English]

ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. Rex Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's track record in its treatment of Atlantic Canada is very poor. The government has made drastic cuts to transfer payments to the provinces, and this has adversely affected the quality of health care and education for Atlantic Canadians.

Also, Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province without a fixed link to the rest of Canada, yet the government has squandered taxpayer dollars through the HRDC fiasco, ineffective gun registry and now the sponsorship program scandal.

When will the government treat Atlantic Canadians properly?

Hon. Joe McGuire (Minister of Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada along with the Government of Newfoundland are supporting the pre-study of the fixed link between Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is something that has been discussed for many years in Newfoundland, and we will put the issue to rest one way or the other.

Mr. Rex Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government now has an opportunity to put things right for Atlantic Canadians.

The government could change the equalization formula and eliminate the clawback on revenue from natural resources. This would give the provinces more revenues to improve health care, education and create much needed employment.

Is the government willing to change the equalization formula and eliminate the clawback on revenue from resources for provinces like Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was actually discussing a previous question at the time.

The equalization formula, contrary to the allegations of the hon. member, is not a discretionary decision making document of the government. It is an agreement that is put into legislation based on an agreement with all provinces. The amounts go up and down depending on the level of activity. Every province agrees to that.

We are now at a stage of renegotiating that and looking at more ways to improve it. We are constantly looking at ways to improve those agreements. That is what the finance minister is doing and that is what the premiers are doing. I am sure they will reach a good conclusion.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the United States would be prepared to impose an export tax on raw materials, in order to avoid having countries like China, India and South Korea take away their scrap metal stocks at more than \$300 per tonne, thus paralyzing a part of their industrial production.

Will the government tell us if it, too, plans to employ this kind of solution—which has the advantage of not contravening international trade regulations—as a means to protect us against the price explosion that threatens our industrial production?

[English]

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked a very good question on which I do not have a brief. I will take that question under advisement and report to him shortly.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Human Resources announced that an investigation had been carried out in southeastern New Brunswick concerning workers not having to reimburse employment insurance.

My question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development: Are others in Canada, for instance the other 11 people in northeastern New Brunswick who were also investigated, going to be included in the same group as those in southeastern New Brunswick?

And does the minister also agree that it is time the EI system was changed, since it does not suit the workers and employers in Canada?

Hon. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Social Economy), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister answered this question from one of our colleagues, indicating that negotiations had taken place precisely in order to seek a solution.

As for the problem of seasonal workers, I know that the hon. member has raised this question frequently, but it must be stated that the purpose of employment insurance is to provide temporary support to workers.

We have made improvements to the system over the years and will continue to find overall solutions to this problem in conjunction with our partners—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-10, pertaining to marine conservation areas, calls for a mineral exploration review assessment prior to establishment of any new areas. This process must be adhered to, otherwise west coast oil and gas development potential will be seriously jeopardized.

Will the environment minister meet this legal obligation as it pertains to his hurry up, Scott Island marine wildlife area proposal?

Routine Proceedings

●(1200)

[Translation]

Hon. Serge Marcell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. Naturally, when we speak of marine areas, marine parks, protected areas, wildlife preserves and the like, these are all very sensitive issues of which the minister is keenly aware. Our objective is to protect these areas and to allow the public to make use of them as well, while respecting the marine environment.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, almost one year ago, the federal government was made aware of the situation of Quebec's flue-cured tobacco producers, who have seen the tobacco multinationals significantly reduce their orders, which has caused production to decline abruptly. The tobacco farmers are still waiting for financial assistance for alternate crop strategies.

Can the Minister of Agriculture tell us what there is in the agricultural policy framework, besides the salary of one adviser, to help Quebec tobacco producers financially, directly and soon?

[English]

Hon. Bob Speller (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the situation being faced by tobacco producers in Quebec. In fact it is a result of companies deciding not to purchase tobacco from them next year.

I have set up, as part of my department, a roundtable where members of both Ontario and Quebec tobacco producers can sit down with the companies and the federal and provincial governments to work through solutions to their problems.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of a Canadian parliamentary delegation to Algeria and Tunisia, from January 18 to 23, 2004.

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POINTS OF ORDER

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on February 24 in response to a question from the member for Edmonton—Strathcona, the Prime Minister quoted from a list of sponsorship program projects for the fiscal period , and I quote *Hansard*, "2003-04". We must assume that the Prime Minister quoted the years for the purpose of accuracy.

On a subsequent point of order raised by the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, the member requested the Prime Minister to table the document from which he was reading. In response, the President of Treasury Board told the House that the list which the Prime Minister had been reading from had been tabled in the House twice. In fact, the list that was tabled with the House was for the years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03. The document the Prime Minister was reading from was not the same document that

was tabled by the President of Treasury Board on February of this year.

Will the President of Treasury Board immediately table the actual document from which the Prime Minister was reading, which includes the sponsorship projects from the fiscal year 2003-04, which includes all projects up to the date the program was cancelled?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take the comments of the hon. member under advisement and report to the House in due course.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association. The first report is from the official delegation that represented Canada at the Transatlantic Parliamentary Forum held in the United States on December 8 and 9, 2003, and the second concerns the visit of the Defence and Security Commission of the NATO Parliamentary Association to the United States, from January 26 to 30, 2004.

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[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

The committee has studied the supplementary estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004 and has agreed to report them without amendment.

●(1205)

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the designation of Bill C-450 as a non-votable item.

[English]

The Speaker: Members will recall that provisional Standing Order 92(4) allows the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt to appeal the decision of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs within five sitting days of the presentation of the report we have just received.

Since Bill C-450 will come up for debate in the House prior to the end of that appeal period, I am directing the table officers to drop this item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence. The member for Saskatoon—Humboldt has been so advised.

[Translation]

On Monday, March 8, 2004, private members' hour will thus be cancelled and consideration of government orders will start at 11 a.m.

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

MARRIAGE

Hon. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the pleasure to present a petition from constituents of the riding of Simcoe North.

The petitioners urge Parliament to pass legislation to recognize the institution of marriage in federal law as being a lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present a petition from constituents and others. They point out that pursuing embryonic stem cell research is critical in the fight against juvenile diabetes. They call upon the House of Commons to ensure that research proceeds on all types of stem cells, including embryonic stem cells, because it is impossible to predict which will provide the most medical benefits.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from constituents and other citizens calling for the release of five Cubans who have been held in detention in the United States since September 1998 and were sentenced in 2001 to lengthy prison terms ranging from 15 years to a double life sentence. Their trials and the conditions under which they are being detained violate the American Constitution and international law. Also, more than a hundred committees around the world have been set up to demand the release of these five Cubans and a new trial.

[English]

MARRIAGE

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present.

The central theme of the petitioners' request is that Parliament take whatever action is required to maintain the current definition of marriage in law in perpetuity and to prevent any court from overturning and amending the definition.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition on a separate topic. The petitioners pray that Parliament take all necessary measures to

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protect the rights of Canadians to freely share their religious and moral beliefs without fear of prosecution.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Sue Barnes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

An hon. member: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, an act respecting equalization and authorizing the Minister of Finance to make certain payments related to health, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Before question period, the hon. member for Joliette had nine minutes left to conclude his remarks. He has the floor.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a mere nine minutes is not much to criticize this bill, although I have to admit I had a chance to begin my remarks before question period.

I was telling members that Bill C-18 is a vote-getting ploy. Their first stunt was to combine two separate items in this bill. The only common denominator is money. The first item deals with extending the current equalization program. We oppose that because it penalizes Quebec and Atlantic Canada in particular. The second item is the \$2 billion for health that has been promised repeatedly.

Obviously, we agree with the second item. There is a great deal of confusion because both items are included in the same bill. But like I said, nobody will be fooled.

The second stunt is that combining two items, they give the public the impression that, even if they lose a little in equalization, they will have a net gain, with the \$2 billion. That is wrong. I explained how, with reference to both the federal government's estimates as well as Quebec's expectations. This applies to all provinces that receive equalization payments. However the figures are compared, Quebec must pay back the sum of \$1.4 billion. Thus, it loses, in terms of being able to pay for its needs, particularly in health care.

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In fact, the federal government is seeking to recover that \$2 billion by lowering equalization payments. The problem is that each transfer formula has different objectives. The CHST is based on population percentage. Thus, out of this \$2 billion, Quebec will receive about 25% or \$472 million. But if this \$2 billion had been paid out in equalization, more than 50% of the money would have come to Quebec. Therefore, we lose in this process and we cannot agree to it.

Once again, it does not matter much which angle we look at these things from, the sum of \$1.4 billion that we lose in equalization is not offset by the \$472 million we receive out of the \$2 billion. Thus, for Quebec, Bill C-18 represents a net loss of about \$1 billion. In fact, the amount of \$2 billion for health covers only one third of Quebec's losses suffered because of the extension of this equalization formula.

Those were the first two stunts I referred to. There are a few more. The third has to do with Ottawa's claim that there is no money. The finance ministers—past and present—have always used the same non-transparent tactics to cover up the real state of Canadian public finances in the federal government. They told us for months that they were going to have to dig deep to come up with \$2 billion and that they were not sure they would be able to.

This is untrue. We realize it now, when everyone agrees that the federal surpluses for this year will not be \$2.3 billion, as the Minister of Finance said, but \$7 billion to \$8 billion.

We can see also that federal operating expenditures have increased by 40% in recent years. These are not transfers to individuals or provinces; it is the federal bureaucracy that has gotten bigger. If the government seriously wanted to reduce operating expenditures, it could easily find \$3 billion or \$4 billion.

There is the money for foundations, and the Auditor General mentioned this in 2002. There is \$7 billion to \$8 billion sitting in foundations, whether it is the millennium scholarships, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation or the other foundations. All this money would provide enough leeway to quickly solve the fiscal imbalance problem, in particular through reviewing the equalization formula.

I would add another element that proves to us that the federal government has the means to solve the problem in the short term, and that is that, this year, it announced a \$10 billion increase in spending. This is a substantial amount. This is another 6% increase.

So the money is there, the means are there, but there is no political will. The fact that there is no political will has meant that the Liberal government, whether under Mr. Chrétien or the new Prime Minister, does not want to quickly solve this issue.

● (1210)

They have been dragging their feet. This is the first time we have seen a bill like C-18, which proposes to extend by one year the equalization Bill with all the problems this entails for public finances in the provinces, Quebec in particular, as I explained earlier.

The federal government has been dragging its feet and wants to continue doing so because there is nothing in this bill that would allow us to pressure the federal government to move forward in negotiations. We therefore cannot support it.

As I just said, this is the first time we have been required to have a bill to extend the equalization formula by one year. In the past there has always been agreement with the provinces by the March 31 deadline.

This time, the government has been dragging its feet, and is still dragging its feet, and will continue to drag its feet because by extending the formula by a year, there is no pressure on the federal government to resolve this in the short term, especially—and this is the fourth stunt—since there is no guarantee of retroactivity.

Why would the federal government be in any hurry to negotiate if, in any case, it can wait a year until the March 31, 2005 deadline to find a solution with the provinces?

The Minister of Finance has twice said, “Yes, I promise there will be retroactivity”. I want to believe him, but then why, at the Standing Committee on Finance when I introduced an amendment asking for retroactivity to April 1, 2004, did the Liberals turn it down? There is no real guarantee. We have no guarantee that the agreement will be retroactive to April 1 of this year.

They may say, “Yes, but the Minister of Finance gave his word”. What good is the word of the finance minister when it is so difficult to get answers from the government about the sponsorship scandal?

There is a fifth stunt. All this is a strategy to put off serious discussions with the provinces about the equalization formula until after the election. What this government and this Prime Minister want is a blank cheque to decide unilaterally what amount they will transfer to the provinces.

We will not be part of it. We will not support this election-oriented strategy that will deprive Quebec of \$1.4 billion this year, because there is no guarantee of retroactivity if an agreement is reached during the year.

However, what the provinces are asking for is not all that complicated, and I will leave it at that. The provinces are asking that the formula be changed to take into account the fiscal capacity of all ten provinces and not only five. They are asking that the payments be more predictable. There have been wide variations between the October and the February equalization estimates. They also ask for more transparency. When some 3,000 variables must be taken into account to calculate the size of the equalization payment, that causes problems.

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For Quebec in particular, we ask that property value be based on the real value of lands and properties and not on the revenues received by owners. This deprived Quebec of \$400 million last year.

We do not need the government to push through Bill C-18 but rather to give clear indications with respect to the equalization program. As I said before, we agree on the \$2 billion. However, the government has to give clear indications on what it intends to do in the upcoming budget. What are the expectations?

The finance minister has said already that there was no question of all 10 provinces being taken into account. The government should make it clear, before the election, so that Quebec voters in particular will know what they are voting on.

We would also need to know if the budget will acknowledge the fiscal imbalance between the federal government and the provinces, the fact that the federal government has far too much money compared to its responsibilities, that the provinces are short of money, and if there is a political will to solve this fiscal imbalance.

There was no sign of openness on the government's part in the debate on Bill C-18. This is not acceptable. We are no fools and we will not support Bill C-18.

• (1215)

[English]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period the question put to the government by the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke was answered by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, who confirmed that no one accompanied the Minister of Finance during a trip to China to promote trade. For the purposes of total and absolute clarity and transparency, there should be a complement to that answer.

I would like to inform the House that there was a video prepared in three languages, in Mandarin, English and French. However, it was prepared in advance of the mission in support of the mission's objective to promote Canadian leadership and innovation and especially that of the natural resource sectors. The research and production for the video were carried out by an agency selected through an established bidding process.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I know that some members have already decided that this is not a point of order. Technically, of course, the Chair allows this clarification. This is because it can happen during question period, in my opinion, that certain things must be clarified in a unbiased way. In so doing, the Chair prefers giving the opportunity to both sides to take corrective action.

• (1220)

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I believe you are establishing a precedent. Question period is there for us to ask questions and get answers.

If, after question period, members of the opposition or of the government did not get answers and wish to obtain a clarification, they can, in my opinion, ask for that during the next oral question period. Liberal members can also ask questions, and that would be the time to do it.

However, if we allow a point of order on this, we will end up with points of order after every question period to clarify questions that were asked. It is the government that has to give answers during question period.

With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is a mistake to do this, and I wish you would take my remarks into account.

The Deputy Speaker: As usual, I take very seriously the intervention made by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst in the House of Commons on this issue. However, everyone knows that, when a point of order is raised, we have to wait a while before we know exactly what the remarks are about.

If some members think that the Chair has been too generous, I plead guilty. However, I hope that in the long run, I will show the same generosity toward members on both sides of the House, especially when the remarks deal with issues that were raised during question period. That being said, I respectfully accept the criticism.

We will now proceed to questions and comments with regard to the ongoing debate. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

[English]

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech, which I thought was quite a good speech. He was wrong, but it was a good speech.

He indicated that he was mystified by this bill. Then he went on to demonstrate that he was far from mystified by this bill. He thought it was for election purposes.

I put it to the hon. member that March 31 will come regardless of whether there is an election in this country or not. If the Government of Canada is to have legislative authority to pass this bill by March 31, then it will have to move through the House. I am puzzled by his opposition.

He seems to wish to put the bill at risk. He seems to wish to deny all the provinces the \$2 billion that has been promised by the Government of Canada to the provinces as a supplement to the normal requirements of the CHST. He seems to wish to put at risk the equalization formula.

He then goes on and says how his province will be deprived. It seems to me that his understanding of equalization is seriously flawed. He seems to think that equalization should only go one way, which is up. He does not seem to understand that equalization can equally go down.

Mr. Speaker, you and I are from the Province of Ontario. Who would have thought this time last year that we would experience something such as SARS? Similarly, who would have thought that we would experience the blackout in August, which basically shut the province down for a day and a half or two days? Who would have thought that in January or February of 2003 the Canadian dollar would appreciate something in the order of 22%?

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All of those have significant economic and fiscal impacts on the Province of Ontario, and probably determine whether it is a 5 province formula or a 10 province formula.

Ontario's fiscal capacity was reduced. When Ontario's fiscal capacity is reduced, those provinces that receive equalization have a much narrower gap. The consequence of which is that he is right. The Province of Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, would receive less money in equalization.

However, the underlying theory of his speech is that equalization should only go up, regardless of how the economy performs and how fiscal capacities are calculated.

I would ask him in all seriousness, does he believe that equalization should operate in an independent bubble, independent of all the fiscal capacities of the provinces, including those provinces such as Alberta and Ontario that are the primary sources of the equalization payments?

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we just had a nice illustration of the fact that this government is not prepared to face the reality. There is a fiscal imbalance. Everyone in Quebec agrees on that. Federal Liberals are the only ones who do not agree. Because of this fiscal imbalance, the provinces, which have responsibilities in areas where costs pose very significant problems, including in health and education, no longer have the means to deliver the services that the public is entitled to.

On the other side, there is the federal government, which generates surplus after surplus and which is wasting our money. It is not just the sponsorship scandal. There is the 40% increase in operating costs, which is double the increase in Ontario and Quebec over the past five years. There is also the \$10 billion in additional spending, including \$1 billion for defence, when we do not even know what the Canadian army is used for. This is evidence of the fiscal balance.

So, we must find ways to correct this fiscal imbalance. Of course, one of the simplest solutions would be for Quebec to withdraw from the Canadian federation, to take its marbles and to go it alone. Let us not forget that Quebecers send 60% of their income taxes to Ottawa. As far as we are concerned, this is the preferred option in the longer term.

In the meantime, we will try through every possible means, including the Canada social transfer and the transfer of tax points to Quebec, to correct this fiscal imbalance. We cannot give our support to the federal government for dragging its feet regarding the equalization issue.

At the end of October or in early November, the government already had a bill to extend the equalization program for one year. Back then, there was plenty of time to negotiate with the provinces and quickly reach an agreement. Are we going to support the fact that Quebec will lose \$1.4 million, an amount which is not at all compensated with the \$2 billion? We are talking about \$472 million. We cannot do that.

If the government could give us some guarantees, maybe we could look at things differently, for example, on retroactivity, which is a minimum. Presently, since there is no retroactivity guarantee in Bill C-18, the federal government is under no pressure to solve the issue. Consequently, it will drag the issue until 31 March 2005. In 2005, maybe they will come back with a bill to extend the equalization formula for one more year.

If we were guaranteed that the agreement would be retroactive, that would put pressure on the federal government which, if it played for time, would not be able to unduly penalize the provinces. However, it penalizes them anyway because, when the finance minister will prepare the budget, the provinces will not know how much their equalization payments will be the following year. But they will realize that they will be getting less money than what they got for the current year and less than the year before. Consequently, they will find it very hard to deliver the same services in health care and education.

I have already explained this to you, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure you remember. When we look at Quebec's budget as a whole, if we take out health care and education, there is a mere \$9 billion left.

Consequently, it is impossible for a government like Quebec's to balance its books without touching to health care and education, if there is no increase in the federal government's transfer payments through equalization, the CHST or otherwise.

It is in this context that equalization payments must be increased. We must get guarantees that the money will be given to the provinces, particularly Quebec and the Atlantic provinces, which will be facing serious difficulties.

It is clear that the reality of fiscal unbalance has not been recognized. The government is trying to buy time before the election. It wants to get a blank cheque to do whatever it wants after the election. We will denounce that throughout the election campaign.

[*English*]

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, it is hard to know how to deal with the underlying thesis of the hon. member's speech. It seems to indicate that fiscal imbalance should be redressed, regardless of economic circumstances, and that it does not matter what formula is used, the federal government should only pay out one way on a formula .

A few years ago there was a happy little surprise in equalization because primarily the Province of Ontario, along with some of the other provinces as well, did very well and so there was a \$2.2 billion unexpected surplus in the way in which equalization moneys were calculated.

Does the hon. member think that when that happens, for example, one province enjoys a particular level of prosperity and is prepared through the formula to share with the rest of the provinces, that it should not happen?

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I do not understand the hon. member's basic thrust here. He seems to only think that equalization should go up rather than being what it is, truly a formula which has been redressing the fiscal imbalances in this country for 20 years and actually narrowing the fiscal balances over the past 20 years.

Regarding the point that the government is dragging its feet, as was said, there were 47 meetings. Sometimes we end up just talking to the wall.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Mr. Speaker, I think that the parliamentary secretary just proved that the equalization formula is not working. It is not only a matter of amounts. It is great that we could enjoy \$2 billion more in equalization payments because the economy was doing well at that point. However, when \$1.4 billion or more is subtracted the following year, it makes it difficult for provinces, and particularly for Quebec, to plan.

Not only should the amount be higher, but it should also be more predictable. If the equalization system cannot ensure a proper degree of predictability and appropriate federal transfer payments, a new system will have to be devised. Let us not forget that there is money at the federal level. There is a surplus. There is waste in the bureaucracy. There is an additional \$10 billion in spending and \$7 or \$8 billion are sitting in foundations. There is enough money to increase the transfers. If this cannot be done through equalization payments, let us turn to another system.

The amounts should be sufficient to cover health care and education spending in Quebec. Moreover, the amounts should be predictable and government interventions should not be on an ad hoc basis as is too often the case. A modest \$2 billion is given out, but there is no guarantee that we will have it again next year.

[*English*]

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be sharing my time with the member for Acadie—Bathurst. Together we are going to be talking about the impact that the equalization program has on Atlantic Canada.

I wanted to start by saying it is a pleasure to speak to this bill but I find that any optimism I once had that the Liberal government was willing to be fair in its dealings on equalization has been sorely shaken by the latest figures on equalization released by Treasury Board. Unfortunately, since November 2003, when I last spoke in the House on equalization and the effects on the Atlantic provinces, the situation has become much worse. I will outline what I mean by that.

Between 2000-01 and 2004-05 total major transfers to the provinces, and that includes the Canada health and social transfer, equalization and tax points, increased by almost 18%. That is up from 15% in October 2003. That is the good news and that sounds not bad. However, in Atlantic Canada, total major transfers dropped by almost 4% during the same period, so the news only gets worse for the poorest provinces.

When I spoke to this issue in November 2003, the Treasury Board estimates indicated that of the \$6.4 billion increase in major federal transfers, the Atlantic provinces received minus \$200 million. The

latest estimates show that out of a \$7.6 billion increase in total major federal transfers, the Atlantic provinces received minus \$240 million. What a difference four months makes. The have less provinces continue to get even less.

Since Bill C-18 seeks to maintain the status quo on equalization from one year to another, I have to wonder how the government believes it is helping the have less provinces. Apologists for the government will say that the Atlantic provinces should not complain, that we have offshore oil and gas and that our ship has come in. There may be those who say that we should be proud because we are less dependent on federal transfers.

First of all, there is no oil and gas off the shores of New Brunswick and P.E.I. Why have they seen increases in federal transfers that are just one-quarter and one-sixth, respectively, of the national increase? I will tell members why. It has nothing to do with oil and gas. It is that the system of federal transfers is defective. The system is based on population and our region is losing population.

Federal policies are driving people out of our region so our provincial governments are losing hundreds of millions, even billions, in federal transfer money. That is a great system, is it not? Federal economic policies, or lack thereof, drive people out of those have less regions and the government responsible pockets a windfall.

Take equalization payments to Nova Scotia as an example. Last February the Department of Finance estimated that between 2001-02 and 2003-04 Nova Scotia would get \$3.72 billion in equalization payments. This February we found that Nova Scotia would only get \$3.55 billion. This is a shortfall for Nova Scotia of \$170 million, but a windfall of \$179 million for the Liberals, almost enough to pay for another Groupaction fiasco.

With an unexpected shortfall of \$170 million, there is not enough revenue left to meet the needs of the remaining population in Nova Scotia, let alone to bring forward the economic and social policies we need so that our people will not have to go down the road. It might not be so bad if the Liberals put the money they are clawing back from the Atlantic provinces into the policies we need in order to turn around our outmigration, but they are not doing that. If they are not wasting it on some boondoggle, they are recycling it and claiming it is new.

Over the last two years the government has saved over \$3 billion in equalization payments to the provinces. That is roughly half of the “new money” that has gone into health care over that period.

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•(1235)

More money for health care, even though it is nowhere near enough, is a good thing, but when half of it is clawed back in equalization, it is like robbing a bunch of Peters, Johns and Garys to pay Paul. When we consider that most of the new health money will go to the provinces with the larger populations, the have provinces, then we have something worse. It is Robin Hood in reverse, taking from the have less to give to the have mores.

The Minister of Natural Resources talked this week about changes to the offshore energy agreement with Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Please let me emphasize that P.E.I. and New Brunswick do not benefit from offshore energy agreements at all. I am pleased to hear that the Liberals are finally ready to consider that the offshore agreements were not fair to begin with. I recognize that it was the Mulroney Tories who came up with the original deal.

The news about this offshore industry has not been good and many doubt that we will ever have a production boom such as Alberta had. The fact is that getting oil or gas from below the ocean floor is more expensive, more dangerous for workers and the environment, and more uncertain in its values than any land based operation.

People in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland should not be penalized through an equalization program that expects a payoff in the future. Until the offshore industry is guaranteed and long term, instead of a series of underproducing operations, potential offshore royalties should not affect the equalization formula at all.

I want to echo something my colleague, the member for Halifax, said in a previous debate on equalization. The provinces have asked for a 10 province plan, one that considers all the provinces, not the middle five that the federal government uses now.

That would make the payments more equitable and would better reflect the economic situation of the majority of provinces. It would also prevent a huge loss in equalization when one province has a bad year, as was the case last year with Ontario.

The status quo simply is not adequate when it comes to the equalization plan. I fear that giving the federal government another year's grace to renegotiate equalization will result in an even less equitable program as provinces get more desperate for funds. In the end it is not the provinces that suffer, it is Canadians.

I will now turn to the second part of the bill, the payment of an extra \$2 billion to the provinces for health care. The intent of the equalization program is to allow every province to offer reasonably comparable services to other provinces and to their citizens.

I was horrified to hear Lorne Calvert, the premier of Saskatchewan, quoted in the papers this week as saying that without immediate aid from the federal government, we can expect to see the Canadian health care system as we know it disappear within 10 years. What is going on for one of our premiers to be saying that?

When I look around, I see how the wealth of Canada has increased many times since medicare was first proposed and implemented. We have more money now than at any other time in our history, but the government chooses not to spend that money where Canadians want to see it spent. Canadians want a health care system that they can

depend on. We want the money to be there and we know the money is there with the federal surplus, \$7 billion to \$8 billion this year.

Why are the Liberals letting the health care system fail when there is money available to sustain and improve it? It is like a homeowner who decides never to repair the leaks or pay for upkeep so that the mortgage can be paid down sooner, but when the mortgage is finally paid off, there is only a pile of wood and tar that can never be put back together.

A payment of \$2 billion is a small start in helping the provinces improve health care. However, the way the Liberal government agreed to provide the money was stingy in the first place. It put debt management ahead of sustaining our health care system. Then it did not offer more money when it became clear that there would be a much larger surplus than was expected. This does not give much hope that the Liberal government takes Canadians' concerns seriously.

In conclusion, the NDP will support this bill to ensure the provinces continue to receive their money, but the system itself is flawed. There needs to be a more equitable equalization formula. The NDP will continue to push the government to work with the provinces for a formula that benefits Canadians in all provinces.

•(1240)

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question to my colleague from Dartmouth is about the problems we do have. We talk about equalization and how it went up, but in one place, the Atlantic region, we have seen it go down. We see our youth leaving the region, not only in Halifax but in my riding too and all across the Atlantic provinces. They leave for other areas of the country.

Maybe she could explain for us and for Canadians the big effect this is having on the region where she is from in Nova Scotia. In a great country like ours, are we not supposed to look after each other? Right now are we not doing the wrong thing by not looking after each other?

Ms. Wendy Lill: Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to address that. I am astounded to hear the depopulation figures for Nova Scotia. Recently I heard that for Cape Breton the number of people leaving is astounding. It is losing 10% of its population even in one year. They are seeing young people leave.

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For New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, we are not seeing the infrastructure, the health care system and the post-secondary education system that we need. We are seeing young people who have to leave their province. The cost of our infrastructure is so high that our tuition fees are higher than they are anywhere else in the country. We are being penalized to live in the region. We are not seeing the same level of health care or post-secondary education and education available for our people as might be available in Ontario or Alberta.

That goes against the idea of our Constitution, the idea that we live in a Confederation where there is a reasonably equal access to all services that we deem acceptable for Canadians.

To base an equalization formula on population and at the same time not safeguard that the population can remain more or less stable in a region by sensitive economic policies for that region, regions where people want to live, we are setting them up for failure and we are setting up our families for the inability to maintain their lives and children in the communities that they love.

It is a tragedy that we are able to sit in this chamber and talk so clinically about this situation when in fact we are talking about Canadian families that want to build their lives in certain regions and are finding it impossible to do so.

• (1245)

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I noted the member's comment quoting Lorne Calvert, the premier of Saskatchewan, about the serious problems in Saskatchewan. I can concur with that. I can see a health care system in that province dying before my eyes. Doctors are leaving en masse. It is taking 22 weeks on average to get an MRI scan done.

As well, the roads are in very serious shape. Everything I look at in that province is virtually crumbling before my eyes. I know that equalization is not the cause of all of these problems; a lot of them are internally imposed because of bad policy decisions in that province.

I would like to ask the member a specific question on equalization. As a Saskatchewanian, I think the formula really punishes severely provinces that have developed their natural resources. Saskatchewan's income level is very comparable to those of Manitoba and the Atlantic Canada provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but it receives on a per capita basis only roughly one-quarter of what those provinces receive in terms of equalization payments because Saskatchewan developed its natural resources back in the 1950s and 1960s. Saskatchewan basically gets hammered over the head for having developed its natural resources.

I wonder if the hon. member and her party are in favour of removing natural resources as a component in the equalization formula.

Ms. Wendy Lill: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying about Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, at this time the federal government is saying that it is going to cut some kind of a deal with those provinces to try to give them some fairer return on their offshore. I can only speak for that situation at the present time.

I feel that in fact until we have a sustainable industry, one that can withstand the vagaries of this exploration that is going on right now,

it is impossible to start changing our equalization situation based on possible pie in the sky later. I think we need to be cautious about that. We have to make sure we are not making changes that are going to have a negative effect down the road.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak about Bill C-18 on equalization and about the effect it may have on our regions.

The agreement was supposed to be signed at the end of March. Now we have to pass a bill to extend it for another year. That is too bad, but our party will vote in favour of this bill anyway for the simple reason that transfers must be made to the provinces.

We must think about people in the provinces and this is why we will vote in favour of the bill, because the Liberal government has put us in this position. However, is this right? I do not think so. Does the equalization system work? I do not think so.

Today, the equalization system has increased by 18% in Canada. However, if we look at transfers to the Atlantic provinces, it has decreased by 4%. This is not right. As I said earlier to my colleague when I asked her a question, should we not help each other? If we cannot help each other, what are we doing in a country? We live in a country where there are more opportunities, more chances of succeeding. We must be able to share with others. This is what a federation is all about. This is what I think it should be.

The cuts will be drastic for us. The provinces and New Brunswick will not have the means to do things the way they should be done. We always come back to health.

As I said in the past, the federal government will provide transfers to the provinces. It will make the announcement in the next few days. With the left hand, it provides \$2 billion in transfers to the provinces for health care and, with the right hand, the hand that always likes to take from the poor—the right side, the side of big business—it takes \$2.2 billion from the provinces, from the most vulnerable people. This is unacceptable.

In our area, the government is currently looking at the possibility of closing down emergency departments in communities where they are so needed. One need only look at the whole matter of planned emergency department closures on the Acadian peninsula. This is why it is important for the federal transfer payments to go to the right place, for the good of all the provinces of Canada.

We are beginning to feel the affects in our area. As I said, on the one hand the government says it is going to give \$2 billion for health, while on the other it is going to take \$2.2 billion away from transfer payments to Canadians. At the same time, they are talking about a \$4.4 billion cut to corporate taxes for big business. Imagine what a difference that could have made to the provinces to help them survive what they are going through at present.

Government Orders

The Atlantic provinces are not having an easy time of it. People have had to manage with seasonal work for several years, and still do. I have raised this matter often in the House of Commons. The industries with these seasonal jobs produce things Canadians want and like to have, for instance fish and 2x4s. Yet these industries are being hit so hard that they can no longer survive.

According to the Conservatives, the solution is cut and dried. They will close down Atlantic Canada and that will be the end of it. The former leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and now leadership hopeful, made that clear. If he comes out on top, it will be a matter of "It's not needed any more. If you folks can't survive on your own, just move somewhere else."

I have a surprise for him. Not everyone in the Atlantic region wants to move somewhere else. Some have had to, but they do not all want to. There is a surplus of \$7 billion; the EI fund has a \$3.3 billion surplus, and the major corporations have had a tax cut of \$4.4 billion. So I can say that the federal government is not managing our money properly. It could be put to other uses.

● (1250)

The Liberal government prefers handing out money to the big banks to make sure managers and chairmen will be glad that some money is being used to pay down the debt. Of course, we should use some money to pay down the debt, but not all our money. We must look after the communities in regions where health services are inadequate. In the throne speech, the Liberal government avoided mentioning the Romanow report.

In 1969, the federal government was paying up to 50% of health costs in Canada. In recent years and especially in 1994, when this Prime Minister was the finance minister, we had drastic cuts in health transfers to the provinces. The transfers were as low as 14%, and they have now inched up to 16%.

Our health care system is sick. In this day and age and with our technology, when we can send rockets to Mars and the Moon, we are not even capable of maintaining a viable health care system

The other day, I read a story in *Le Devoir*, if I am not mistaken, about a lady or a gentleman taking their small dog to the veterinarian. A little later, the veterinarian called to say the animal would be operated on. During the operation, the owners of the dog received another phone call telling them the operation was under way and that everything was fine. After the operation, there was another phone call to tell them everything had gone well.

In a hospital, people are being parked in hallways. Elderly people have to live in hospital hallways. This is degrading. It is degrading when men and women have to share a hospital room. Were are we heading?

When we see all the scandals that have plagued the Liberal government in recent months, it is a disgrace to our country. It is unfortunate for the institution of parliamentary. That is what is going on at this time.

Where education is concerned, by the time students graduate from college or university, they owe \$40,000 in debt. Let us take a look at the daycare system. In 1940, around 5% of Canadian women were on the labour market. These days, as many women as men are

working. Our society needs to adjust. We have to meet the needs of the people but not only by throwing billions of dollars at big companies.

We are heading toward a society where people will be either very rich or very poor. That is not what Canadians want. They want roads. They want health care. They want their children to be able to afford to go to college or university. They want a better education system based on modern technology. They want infrastructures to try and keep people close to home.

Transfers will not do it. My hon. colleague said earlier that the government wanted to extend equalization for another year because of the upcoming election. I am not so sure. It could be, but I think it would be wrong because we have never granted a one-year extension before.

I really do hope the government will review its equalization formula in order to help the provinces stimulate their economic growth and development. I also hope we will find some way to support regional development so that Canadians feel comfortable where they are and do not feel the need to see what the rest of the country has to offer.

● (1255)

To conclude, I would urge the federal government to reconsider Bill C-18, because, as all Canadian provinces have pointed out, transfers are not the answers.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with mixed feelings that I take part in this debate. In fact, I am outraged because the government is putting in the same bill a promise made by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in February 2003, more than a year ago, to invest \$2 billion in health care. That was supposed to be part of what the federal government was going to do for health care. So, in this bill, we have, lumped together, the \$2 billion that was promised more than a year ago, and an extended equalization formula that the provinces do not want.

The government has taken a promise, something owed us and made it conditional on the extension of the equalization formula, which will do Quebec out of \$723 million this year.

In other words, with respect to the \$2 billion, of which Quebec's share is \$472 million, members are forced to say "yes", but if they say yes to the first measure, they have to say yes to the second. Yes, we want \$472 million more for health care, but we also agree to get \$723 million less in equalization.

This bill is a sham. My colleague from Joliette called it a stunt. We could have a contest to find which synonym best describes the kind of deceit practised by this government.

Government Orders

At first, the Bloc Québécois wanted to have this bill split so that we could say yes to the proposed health transfer. It is not enough, but it was promised a year ago, so let us have this money before the election. But we are not even sure that it will happen before the election; it could also happen after the election. They will talk about it some more. They have been talking about it for a year, and they will talk about it some more.

Should we say yes to that? The problem is that, if we do, we will have to say yes to the second part of the bill, with which we totally disagree. That is why my colleague asked that the bill be split. And, amazingly enough, our Liberal colleagues, who form the majority and do whatever they want, decided to vote against splitting the bill. They voted in favour of this sham, to try to pull a fast one on us.

We think that Quebeckers will understand the fact that we are opposed to this bill. We will not try to filibuster this legislation, or to take any other action. We are not stupid. We want the money allocated for health to be paid to Quebec and the other provinces as quickly as possible: an amount of \$472 million is better than nothing.

However, we want to stress the fact that, by allocating this money, the government is not giving what was anticipated for 2003-04 alone, which is \$723 million. For that reason, we will oppose this legislation.

Moreover, we are rather upset at this supposedly new, supposedly transparent and supposedly democratic government. This is some democracy.

The equalization formula must absolutely be changed. Under the act that was passed, the current equalization formula was to end in March 2004. That formula was adopted for a period of five years, from 1999 to 2004. Normally—and this was done, since negotiations were undertaken—the provinces want major changes, so that things are more predictable, because right now the amounts are not predictable, and so that the process is more fair and also more transparent, because there are 3,000 different elements that come into play, thus making it difficult to anticipate the results and to verify them. So, a major reform is in order.

● (1300)

Some work was done. However, instead of using its energy to quickly negotiate and reach an agreement with the provinces before the deadline, this so-called new government came up with a bill that extends the program for an additional year. The former government did that, but the new government maintained it and made it worse. The Liberals want us to agree to extend the old equalization formula for one year.

I will just mention two figures. If we extend it for a year, we can be sure that there will be a difference of \$1.4 billion between the forecasts made by Quebec and those made by the federal government. The numbers are there. An amount of \$1.4 billion is indicated in the estimates for Quebec. The equalization formula must be changed and it could be changed quickly.

Unfortunately, this new old government has not followed up on the provinces' desire for change, at a time when there is a surplus. We must not forget that when the new Minister of Finance was sworn in, he immediately copied his predecessor, now Prime

Minister, in saying, "There will not be a surplus this year; things are tight. If we want to allocate \$2 billion to health, there must be changes and cuts". However, the federal government, in large part, has spent twice as much as Quebec and Ontario. We will not get into that.

How much is the current surplus? It is \$7 billion, and we know that another \$7 billion of surplus money from previous years has already been put into various foundations. The government would have us believe that it is not able to negotiate a new equalization agreement at this time. This makes no sense.

For these reasons, we will vote against this bill. We cannot help saying that what they are doing is unacceptable. No one knows what will happen to the \$7 billion surplus. Will it once again be used to pay down the debt without anyone deciding? What will be done with this \$7 billion is not decided democratically. Half of that money comes from the surplus in the employment insurance fund, once again, paid by businesses and workers. Will it go into foundations and then come back in the form of presents come election time? No one knows.

The Bloc Québécois will vote against Bill C-18.

In conclusion, I will read a paragraph that struck a chord with me from an article by Michel David in yesterday's *Le Devoir*. It reads:

Someone should perhaps have suggested that federal finance minister Ralph Goodale might wait a few days before announcing the downward revision to the equalization figures. If he wanted to put the provinces' backs up right before the Vancouver meeting, he could not have found a better way. What we heard from the first ministers was a carbon copy of how each of these meetings ended during the Chrétien era.

So here we have this independent writer's corroboration of our own conclusion: this new government is just a rehash of the old one, with faults that are becoming more and more visible with each passing day.

We are opposed to this bill. We want the money for health, but we want to make it clear that the refusal to negotiate equalization, when the government has the money, is an outrage. It has a serious impact on the future, not only for the people of Quebec, but also for those in the Atlantic provinces.

● (1305)

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Private Members' Business

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I think you would find consent to defer the division on this issue until after government orders on Tuesday, March 9.

The Deputy Speaker: It has already been agreed that the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, March 8. Now, the Deputy leader of the Government is requesting that this division be deferred until Tuesday.

Does the House give its consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1310)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it you would find the unanimous consent of the House to call it 1:30 p.m., so that we may proceed to the consideration of private members' business.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 1:30 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]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC) moved that Bill C-393, an act to amend the Criminal Code (breaking and entering), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to my private member's bill.

This is the fourth time I have introduced this bill in the House and I will continue to introduce it until it is passed because that is what Canadians want.

I will briefly tell the House what the bill is all about. The bill is about breaking and entering and it calls for a minimum two year sentence for repeat break and enter offenders.

How did the bill originate? Some time in 1998 the provincial justice ministers met. They identified break and enter as being one of the major problems in rising crime going on in Canada from coast to coast. They are the ones who looked at the possibility and came up with the idea that there would be a two year minimum sentence for repeat break and enter offenders. Based on that I introduced the bill at that time.

However, because of the undemocratic process in the House where a private member's bill must go before a committee, the

government members, who were opposed to the bill, kept stalling it and making it non-votable.

I did not give up, which is why I am pleased to say that today the members on both sides of the House will vote on the bill. I hope Canadians from coast to coast will write to their members of Parliament and tell them what they and the chiefs of police have been telling me, which is that break and enter has become a serious crime that they want addressed. I hope that when the bill comes to a vote it will be sent to a committee.

Break and enter is not a property offence. It is a crime against a person. Break and enter is a violation of a person's home and property, often the only place of private ownership and privacy left for Canadians to enjoy. It is a psychologically damaging crime that leaves victims feeling personally violated and scared. It has the potential to be a violent crime because every break and enter is potentially a home invasion.

According to a Statistics Canada survey, 68% of Canadians favour a prison sentence for adults convicted of repeat break and enter. Bill C-393 would do what the majority of Canadians want, which is to impose real punishment on criminals who choose to violate our premises by breaking into our homes.

Currently there is no penalty for a break and enter offence but there is a maximum penalty: life imprisonment. While the maximum calls for life imprisonment, police statistics indicate that when repeat offenders are caught for break and enter they get away with a light sentence, which makes this a profitable business. The sentences that are being given out by the courts generally range from three months to eight months. When the offenders are caught and go before the court, the court hands out three to six month sentences. They are then back on the streets and back into their profitable business.

I have seen statistics, as recently as three or four days ago, for Regina. The statistics show that break and enter has been increasing in Regina as well. When I was on a talk show in Regina a couple of days ago I spoke with residents who all expressed serious concern. They thought I was asking for a very lenient sentence. Some of them wanted flogging and some wanted real punishment for these people.

• (1315)

The bottom line is that people are frustrated because they do not see the government doing anything on the issue. They want to know why there are not more police officers. They want to know whether people are being caught.

Yes, our streets could be safer if we had more police officers. We have been saying that for a long time. Instead of \$100 million wasted on the sponsorship scandal, we could have more police officers on the streets arresting those who break and enter.

However, just having more police officers will not solve the problem. We do not need more police officers arresting criminals and then the courts letting the criminals off. In the whole context of fighting this crime, we do need more police officers but we also need more stringent sentences and better rehabilitation programs.

Private Members' Business

Why do I mention rehabilitation programs? I mention rehabilitation because, aside from the professional thieves, some people who commit break and enter crimes are on drugs at the time and find it is easy to break into somebody's house, pick up a television and sell it at the pawn shop for a couple of dollars to get their fix.

We have talked about the need for rehabilitation programs for people in those situations instead of just putting them into jail for two or three months and then letting them out.

I know what arguments the government and the bureaucrats in the justice department will put forward on this bill. The government does not believe in minimum sentences. It has bought into the argument that a minimum sentence, for some reason, is not reflective of a proper justice system, which is nonsense.

When we talk about punishment, we are talking about punishment that fits the crime. However when the government says that we cannot have minimum sentences, that we can only have maximum sentence, this gives leeway to the judges and allows them to make the decisions.

The degree of frustration in Canadians is increasing as they find that their streets and their homes are no longer safe.

What do we do about this whole situation? We as elected officials must listen to the people and we need to give direction to the court. Does anyone think that something is wrong with the justice system if it were to put somebody away for a minimum of two years for a repeat break and enter offence? Would it really be cruel to do that? No. We are talking about repeat break and enter offences.

When are we going to listen to the people? I have received many letters from the chiefs of police in Saskatoon, Toronto and other cities all supporting this minimum two year sentence. These are the people on the front lines fighting the crime who want this. The Canadian public wants it.

What is wrong with the government? It cannot have a problem with this minimum sentence. It needs to change its thinking. Minimum sentencing is also part and parcel of the tools our justice system has to ensure that our streets are safe.

● (1320)

What will happen now? The government will stand and say that a minimum sentence is not a good thing. However, because it is a free vote, I hope members of Parliament on all sides will conduct a survey and listen to what their constituents are saying. Canadians are asking us to make their streets safe.

I have already told the House that this proposal came from the provincial ministers. They want this be put into place. They have been listening to Canadians and Canadians are concerned about break and enter.

My house was broken into once. I know we all have a responsibility to ensure our homes are protected and our doors are locked so that criminals cannot walk in and steal our things. In all contexts, homeowners have a responsibility, but the police need the tools to do their job, the justice system has to show that repeat break and enter offenders are punished for what they do, and we need rehabilitation programs in order to make our streets safe.

I am sure all members of Parliament on both sides of the House have heard that we need to do something about break and enter. All statistics indicate that break and enter is on the rise. The police officers I have spoken to are very frustrated. Not only do they need the tools to do their job, they are frustrated when these people go to court and get off with light minimum sentences.

The only argument the government is putting forward is that it does not believe in this minimum sentence. Well we have to tell the government that this is one of the tools for justice so that we can address this issue of break and enter.

When I first introduced this bill and held a press conference in Calgary, I had people lined up whose houses were broken into. Members should hear their stories of how scared they were, the details of what happened and the violation they felt. These were private citizens who were asking that we make it safe. Seniors were telling me that they were scared because of the possibility of violence during break and enters. Violence often occurs during a break and enter if the criminals encounter somebody at home.

As a matter of fact, I was speaking to a person from Regina who was very fortunate. When he arrived home one day he thought his house was being broken into because the door was open but it was his children who had arrived home.

If we do not address this rising problem, which everybody is asking for, then what are we doing? What is our purpose?

I again appeal to members of Parliament on both sides to acknowledge that break and enter is on the rise and that we should provide the police with the tools they need, which is what the provincial ministers want. We should work for this and put it in the Criminal Code so we can address this rising problem that is taking place. I have the statistics on this.

I want to read a letter from a constituent who says:

I believe home break-and-enters to be one of the greatest invasions a family or person endures. I'm sure my family and I would be deeply traumatized by that experience. I believe this is a huge problem and always in the minds of all Canadians.

● (1325)

Once again, I am appealing to members of Parliament on both sides to please look at this bill. This is one of the tools that is needed to make our streets safe.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that my Conservative colleague has brought this matter to the House. We know that breaking and entering a dwelling house is supposed to bring a maximum of life in jail and breaking and entering a business 14 years in jail. That is what we in Parliament have said should be the law of the land, but we know that out in the community there is a great dissonance or discordance between what the law claims to be and then the outfall of the consequence.

Private Members' Business

To respond to that larger picture, we have often proposed a sentencing grid. It would satisfy all these many circumstances where we find a disproportionate view by the public of the results versus the seriousness of the offence.

In other words, what I am talking about is how it is very easy for the justice system to produce the hierarchy of offences and its list of seriousness and then balance by a lateral grid of the history of the offender: that brings sentencing options to a grid point box. Within that box, it describes the somewhat narrower range of the prescription of what the judge must do.

This is related to the community problem that my colleague is referring to. We want to have personal deterrence, general deterrence and denunciation of the offence, but also some personal rehabilitation. I think the public is outraged about what they observe in the community, which appears to be an inappropriate consequence to the offences specifically related to breaking and entering a dwelling house, which is supposed to bring life in jail.

Perhaps the member could talk a little more about what Canadians want rather than system needs and justice needs: not an academic exercise but what the concerns are. I would like to hear more about the public meeting he had and the sense of anger, frustration and disconnection that he found in his constituents with what the government seems to be able to deliver.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Conservative Party, who highlighted a point about the seriousness of this issue. Let us discuss what people have said, as my colleague requested. When we went out to listen, people expressed from the bottom of their hearts a fear, a fear of invasion, a fear that their privacy was being invaded. No matter what has happened, when one stands and talks to them, those who have experienced break and enter, specifically those who have had an encounter with these break and enter criminals, have been traumatized for life.

My wife, who once ran a dry cleaning business, was at the dry cleaning store just before closing time when a break and enter criminal came in and put a knife to her throat so he could take the money and go to get his drug fix. He was subsequently caught, but my wife can never forget having a knife put to her throat.

These are serious questions. This is not simple and straightforward like it is when someone comes into our house, picks up the television and walks away. We go to the insurance company, put in the claim and get the money back. No, these are not those kinds of crimes. These crimes leave a lasting psychological impact.

This was the message I received every time I talked to Canadians. On a talk show I was on in Regina, it was amazing the people who were coming in. They said, "A two year minimum sentence? What are you talking about?" They thought this was a very light sentence. Canadians think this is very light because Canadians think that break and enter is a very serious crime. Those who are out there and face this problem take it seriously.

Yet members in the House and those bureaucrats in the justice department think this is not a serious crime, so there is no need for a minimum sentence. So why do we have maximum sentences? Let me quote what a police officer from Calgary said. He said that the best sentence he has ever seen for break and enter for a repeat

offender was "no more than three years". That is the hardest sentence he has seen.

From all walks of life, from police officers, from Canadians, from everybody, there is a plea to please address this problem. A minimum two year sentence is what we propose.

• (1330)

Hon. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on this private member's bill, Bill C-393, an act to amend the Criminal Code in relation to the offence of break and enter.

The government could not be more serious about its role in ensuring the protection of the public and providing for a fair and effective criminal justice system. In recognition of this fundamental and essential responsibility, all aspects of the system are under constant and rigorous review by the government.

However, careful consideration of the bill before us reveals that although well intended, the proposal would not render the criminal justice system any more effective, nor would it serve to further the protection of the public.

The stated purpose of the bill is to amend the Criminal Code to provide for the imposition of a mandatory minimum period of imprisonment of two years upon a second or subsequent conviction for the offence of breaking and entering, where the offence was committed in relation to a dwelling house.

I am certain that all members of the House share the concerns of the hon. member for Calgary East, which motivated him to introduce Bill C-393, and sincerely empathize with the victims of the offence of breaking and entering. Even those who have not been personally affected by an offence of this nature are capable of imagining the feelings of loss, violation and fear that victims suffer as the result of what is technically categorized as a property offence. This is a crime that can severely affect a victim's basic sense of security.

The existing provisions of the Criminal Code already clearly reflect the government's view of the gravity of the crime of breaking and entering and its effect on victims. Indeed, the view is significantly reflected by the fact that subsection 348(1)(d) of the Criminal Code provides for a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. It can hardly be said that the penalty for this offence is insufficient when it is the most severe sentence available under criminal law.

The hon. member for Calgary East now proposes to impose a mandatory minimum period of imprisonment of two years for those convicted of a second or subsequent conviction for the offence of breaking and entering where the offence was committed in relation to a dwelling house.

Private Members' Business

However, mandatory minimum sentences have not been shown to have a positive impact on crime rates in the great majority of cases. In fact, mandatory minimums are completely contrary to the notion of effective corrections, which relies on individualized assessment of risk and needs and to the basic statutory principles of sentencing. The unintended side effect of mandatory minimum sentences includes increased federal incarceration rates, associated increases in costs, system dysfunction and reduced safety and increased disparity.

Limiting judicial discretion by providing for the imposition of the mandatory minimum sentence for an offence can be seen as inconsistent with section 718.1 of the Criminal Code. This important section provides that every "sentence must be proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the degree of responsibility of the offender". In other words, justice is best served when the judiciary has the necessary discretion to determine which sentence best fits the particular crime and offender.

As well, paragraph 718.2(d) of the code states that "an offender should not be deprived of liberty, if less restrictive sanctions may be appropriate in the circumstances". A key element of effective sentencing and corrections is distinguishing between offenders who need to be separated from society and those who can be safely and better managed in the community. Reducing or removing discretion makes the criminal justice system more arbitrary and expends resources unnecessarily on incarceration when other measures can be less expensive and more effective.

In the United States, there is now a movement away from strict sentencing guidelines and mandatory minimum sentences. This movement includes Justice Kennedy of the U.S. Supreme Court and has even led several noted jurists to resign from the bench.

• (1335)

Justice Kennedy has stated:

I can accept neither the necessity nor the wisdom of federal mandatory minimum sentences. In all too many cases, mandatory minimum sentences are unjust.

As the mandatory minimum penalty proposed by the bill before the House today is two years, this would result in virtually all individuals convicted of breaking and entering in relation to a dwelling house being incarcerated in federal penitentiaries as opposed to provincial facilities, where the majority is now incarcerated. This could result in offenders being placed in correctional facilities that are not suited to their needs and the risk they pose to society.

The proposal submitted by the hon. member for Calgary East is apparently motivated in part by his concern about criminal acts known as home invasions, a concern shared by all members of the House. Home invasion crimes have been the subject of much analysis and consultation by the Department of Justice. This matter was addressed as part of Bill C-15A, which received royal assent on June 4, 2002.

As a result of that legislation, the Criminal Code now provides that home invasion is an aggravating factor in sentencing for certain offences. A court sentencing a person for unlawful confinement, robbery, extortion or break and enter would have to consider it an aggravating circumstance that the offence was committed in an

occupied dwelling where the offender was either aware that it was occupied or was reckless in this regard, and where he or she used violence or threats of violence against a person or property. In other words, the presence of any of these factors would justify the imposition of a harsher sentence.

Recent court judgments indicate that the judiciary is taking heed of this important amendment to the Criminal Code and is indeed imposing more serious sentences in home invasion cases. For example, soon after this amendment came into force, the British Columbia Court of Appeal upheld a ten year sentence in a home invasion case. The hon. member read a letter from someone saying that the most severe penalty they had heard of was three years, but here is one for ten years.

Honourable Mr. Justice Hall, speaking for the court, said it must be made clear that those who engage in planned home invasions will, upon conviction, face significant penalties. Justice Hall suggested that a sentence in the range of eight to twelve years should be generally considered appropriate in this class of case.

Similarly, in June 2003, the New Brunswick Provincial Court sentenced an offender to seven years' imprisonment in relation to a home invasion. The trial judge stated that a lengthy sentence was necessary in light of the severity of the offence.

The application of the fundamental principles of sentencing and the taking into account of mitigating and aggravating factors allow the courts to arrive at fit sentences such as these. This is the way sentence determination should be carried out, not through the mechanical process proposed in Bill C-393.

Although the hon. member is well intentioned, the proposal in the bill would make the justice system more arbitrary, fetter judicial discretion, and increase federal incarceration costs. Equally important, it would not improve the protection of society.

The government is fully committed to improving public protection. This will continue to be a key priority of the government. However, Bill C-393 falls short of this important objective and therefore, in our opinion, should not be supported.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak this afternoon on Bill C-393, a private member's bill introduced by my Conservative colleague.

I will not go into technical details, as the Liberal member before me did. Why? Because I do not want to make people feel as I did when I was taking criminal law at the Université de Montréal. I do not want to teach law this afternoon; nonetheless, we are here to pass legislation. We are here as legislators, and I understand that my Conservative Party colleague wants, in his own way, to right certain wrongs he sees in society.

However, I want to try to address the social impact of this bill. I want to read the bill's summary, which nicely summarizes the bill the member has put before this House.

Private Members' Business

The purpose of this enactment is to provide for the imposition of a minimum mandatory period of imprisonment of two years upon a second or subsequent conviction for the offence of breaking and entering where the offence was committed in relation to a dwelling-house.

We all agree that breaking and entering is a serious violation of our rights. We always feel violated when our homes are broken into. I think the legislator addressed this. For the benefit of those listening, I want to indicate what the current penalty is. Paragraph 348(1)(d) of the Criminal Code states:

—if the offence is committed in relation to a dwelling-house, of an indictable offence and liable

(i) in the case of a first offence, to imprisonment for life.

Obviously, the objective here is the sentence and imprisonment for life. This is such a serious crime that the legislator has already indicated that the offender could receive the maximum sentence of life in prison.

I think that the citizens listening to us can understand that. Nevertheless, before we arrive at the maximum penalty, it is up to the discretion of judges. That is why we have courts and judges who hand down sentences proportional to the gravity of the offence. Our criminal law is based on what jurists and others who know something about the law call precedent. According to precedent, judges in a particular kind of situation have taken a particular kind of position. I think that this is healthy.

In his introduction, my colleague said that this was the fourth time he had introduced this bill, that he would not stop introducing it and that he had the support of Canadians. I would just like to say to him that the Bloc Québécois will not support his bill. It is not because breaking into a dwelling is not a serious offence. It is so serious that one of the most severe penalties, life imprisonment, may be applied.

Still, the punishment must fit the crime. That is the point where we place our trust in the courts to make the right decision, depending on the type of offence.

I will continue by telling my colleague we have to be careful of the message we are sending as members, especially to young people who are listening to us. It is not up to us in this House to hand down sentences in the place of the courts. We are here to try to adopt new rules and new legislation to promote the work of those who are enforcing the law. That is our job, not to replace the judges.

That is what worries me in the bill tabled by my colleague. If ever we adopt the two year sentence and this does not suit him because, again, he is told the rulings are not harsh enough, he will come back in a few years—I wish him many years in this House—with another amendment to change the minimal sentence from two years to four, five or ten years.

That is the problem. We cannot stand in for those whose job this is. The judges in Quebec and Canada have this responsibility. They are the ones who have to impose a sentence proportionate to the seriousness of the offence.

● (1345)

This is what people have to understand about the way our law works. Of course, as legislators, we are here to make the laws and we leave it to others, to legal specialists, to determine sentencing. In our

cases, it is up to the judges to determine the sentences according to the rules of the courts.

I am ready at any time to support my colleague who is asking for a vast awareness campaign to make people understand that break-ins are serious offences.

We have to make them understand that the action that they might be contemplating in order to make money, by breaking into residences, is a very serious offence and that they could receive a maximum penalty for it, namely a sentence of life imprisonment. They have to realize this. Some of our fellow citizens may not fully understand the gravity of their actions.

However, if we are always trying to take the place of the courts and to decide what the sentences should be, in my opinion, we are taking on a responsibility that we do not have. We are here to try and clarify the situation. We are here to act as legislators, to try to come up with standards that society will respect, but we are not here to take the place of judges.

This is what I see in the bill that was introduced by my colleague. By saying that there must be minimal penalties for a subsequent conviction, it is as if we wanted to replace the courts and tell judges, “You did not do your job right”. I do not think this is our role as members of Parliament. We are not here to replace judges; we are here to pass legislation to clarify the law.

In this case, if there was a legal tangle, if we did not understand the text, I repeat, the current legislation already provides, at paragraph 348(1)(d):

—if the offence is committed in relation to a dwelling-house, of an indictable offence and liable

(i) to imprisonment for life—

Thus, in the current paragraph 348(1)(d) of the Criminal Code, the maximum penalty that may be imposed by a judge is imprisonment for life. So, this is a serious offence. This is why this penalty was decided on. Legislators who were here before us, members who were in this House before us decided to allow the courts to impose the maximum penalty, which is imprisonment for life.

That tells us how serious this offence is. What has our hon. colleague concerned are the lenient sentences handed down by the courts. This is where we have to be careful, because penalties are proportional to the severity of the crime.

If young Canadians or young families are watching this debate, I want them to know that members of Parliament are not always able to bring people or the justice system back on the right track when sentences are too lenient. We are here to support them.

Not voting in support of this bill does not mean that we think that breaking and entering a dwelling-house is not a serious offence. The maximal penalty for such an offence is imprisonment for life, and we agree with that.

Private Members' Business

On the other hand, I do not believe that we should tell a judge that there will be minimum sentences. In my view, we should let the judiciary determine the sentence according to the seriousness of the offence. Up to now, we have been confident in the courts, in the manner in which they have handled sentencing. We know full well that there will always be circumstances where citizens—even ourselves sometimes—will find that judges do not give tough enough sentences.

However, we should always bear in mind that we did not attend the trial and follow all its stages, and that we were not informed of all circumstances of the case. This is why we have the judiciary. It would be too easy to play the Monday morning quarterback, to use a popular term, and claim that we would not have made such a decision.

What our constituents, our fellow citizens, the Quebeckers listening to us must understand is that when a judge renders a decision it is after hearing a case and after hearing witnesses. Often, trials last for hours, even days, and, in order to arrive at a sentence, one has to have all the evidence.

The Bloc Québécois will vote against this proposal, and will continue to support the current judiciary.

● (1350)

[English]

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to first commend the member from the Conservative Party for introducing the motion before the House today. He is one of my favourite Conservative members of Parliament. I am not sure if that is a compliment or not. He is a very funny and gregarious fellow, likeable and liked. That will probably doom his re-election in Calgary, but so be it. However, I mean what I am saying. He has brought before the House today a very important issue, the issue of break and enter.

I come from Regina. I represent, along with the Minister of Finance, the inner city of Regina. I probably have about 80% of the inner city in my riding and the Minister of Finance probably has about 20% in his riding. We have had major problems with crime in the city of Regina, as in Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton.

We have crime that is really ghettoized in certain areas, much more than in other areas. Unfortunately, Regina was the capital for auto thefts in North America. A couple of years ago a program was brought in by the city and the provincial government, and it has greatly reduced auto thefts in Regina.

We have also one of the highest murder rates and one of the highest rates of violent assault. Just recently it has been break and enter. There have been a lot of B and Es, and they have gone up. I saw the figures the other day in the *Leader Post*. They have gone up by a very astronomical figure in the last while. A lot of these people are young and young aboriginals. It is a problem we will have to resolve.

At the outset, we have to be tough on crime. I have always taken that stand. If people commit crimes, they have to be punished for those crimes in the appropriate manner. At the same time we have to

also be tough on the causes of crime. We not only have crime in the inner city of Regina, it across the land.

Just today there is some controversy regarding Conrad Black in a courtroom in the United States. The judge is suggesting that he cannot sell his holding company. We have crime at all different levels. I am not saying that is a crime, but we have things that look inappropriate, according to what the judge has said.

Break and enter is a major problem in my province and in many communities in the city of Regina, Saskatoon and other places. A lot of the people who commit these crimes are young. One reason they do it is because they find themselves in total despair. These people do not have an education, a job, the training or skills, and they learn crime on the streets. Somehow we have to get the younger people off the streets and give them the training and skills. We have to give them some hope and inspiration that there is a better life.

As I walk the streets, I can see the despair and poverty of some of these younger people. I see houses that are not properly insulated. I see the alcoholism and prostitution. Many kids are born into these circumstances. This is what I mean by the cause of crime.

The member for Calgary East is suggesting something that is a novel idea for B and E. It is not a novel idea in terms of other crimes. He is suggesting a minimum sentence of two years when there is a second offence on a domestic dwelling. I certainly support his intentions, but I do not support the idea of a minimum sentence for break and enter for a few reasons. I just want to lay them on the record.

In principle, we have very few crimes where we have a minimum sentence. It is important that I put some of these on the record.

Under the Criminal Code, we have a minimum sentence now for 29 different criminal offences. Of those 29, 19 became effective in 1995 with the firearms registration. Before that we only had 10 offences where there was a minimum sentence. I want to go over them.

They are: drinking while impaired with a blood alcohol level of over .08; failure or refusal to provide a breath sample; betting pools; selling, bookmaking and placing bets on behalf of others. These five different offences have a minimum sentence of 14 days and a maximum sentence of anywhere between 2 and 5 years, depending on the offence.

● (1355)

In Canada there are three different offences where the minimum sentence is life. For high treason, first degree murder and second degree murder, the minimum sentence is life. Then there is the offence of living off the avails of child prostitution which has a minimum sentence of five years.

Those are the original 10 offences that had a minimum sentence in the country. Then came 1995 with the gun legislation. Parliament, in its wisdom or lack thereof, decided to add another 19 offences that had a minimum sentence.

Private Members' Business

Those 19 offences are: using a firearm during the commission of an offence; using an imitation firearm during an offence; criminal negligence causing death by a firearm; manslaughter by use of a firearm; attempted murder by use of a firearm; causing bodily harm with intent with a firearm; sexual assault with a firearm; aggravated sexual assault with a firearm; kidnapping by firearm; hostage taking by firearm; robbery with a firearm; extortion with a firearm; possession of firearm knowing it is unauthorized; possession of a weapon device or ammunition knowing its possession is unauthorized; possession of prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition; possession of a weapon obtained by commission of an offence; weapons trafficking; possession for purpose of weapons trafficking; making weapon into automatic firearm; importing or exporting firearm or prohibited weapon, or restricted weapon or prohibited device, or prohibited ammunition.

For many of those offences there is a one year minimum sentence. For about 10 others there is a minimum four year sentence. For manslaughter, attempted murder with a firearm, the offender gets the minimum sentence.

I would be more inclined to support the member's motion if it were worded that we look at whether offences and other violations of the Criminal Code should have a minimum sentence. Break and enter is very serious but manslaughter with a knife is serious also. Manslaughter with an axe is serious. Attempted murder with a bow and arrow, knife or an axe is very serious. Yet for those offences there is no minimum sentence in Canada.

There is no reference here to sexual assault or to rape of many women in terms of a minimum sentence. As I said, for theft with anything else but a firearm, there is no minimum sentence. We are dealing with fraud allegations in the House of Commons and the sponsorship program scandal. Again, for fraud there is no minimum sentence. Also for assault, mugging, et cetera, unless it is with a firearm there is no minimum sentence in the country.

Rather than just cherry pick, we need a motion before the House that we review the Criminal Code and see whether or not there is anything else that we should add to the list of minimum sentences. Indeed, maybe there are some of these sentences that should not have a minimum.

I want to make two points why I would like to keep the list of minimum sentences relatively short.

I am concerned about flexibility. Minimum sentences may sound really appealing to a lot of people and serious crimes are bad and should be punished, but sometimes I think minimum sentences are wrong because they are not flexible.

An effective justice system must necessarily be an individualized justice system. Obviously not all cases are the same. The justice system must be flexible enough to respond to a specific need and the nature of each case. Our system must be fair and humane if it is going to be effective and mandatory sentences often simply strip away the fairness and humanity from our legal system. Because they are completely rigid and predetermined, minimum sentences can result in the gross miscarriage of justice.

I want to refer to a case on which I think most members would agree with me, and that is the Robert Latimer case. What he did, and

I do not want to pass judgment, may have been very, very wrong. I happen to think personally that what he did was wrong. It may have been very wrong, but to have Robert Latimer and Karla Homolka, or someone like her, in the same situation for a minimum sentence I also think is wrong. One of the things the judge said was that he did not have flexibility in the case of Robert Latimer. That is why we need some flexibility in terms of our system.

● (1400)

There have been many studies indicating that minimum sentences often do not work as a detriment to serious crime or any kind of crime in this country or in other jurisdictions around the world.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to add some thoughts to the debate on my colleague's private member's Bill C-393, an act to amend the Criminal Code dealing with breaking and entering.

I wish to congratulate my colleague from Calgary East for bringing this bill forward, not once, but on a number of occasions in the past, as is the case for so many of us in this chamber on both sides of the House. He should be given some marks for persistence if nothing else.

We continue to utilize the private members' business avenue to bring forward concerns that we continuously hear from our constituents on a wide variety of issues. So often government prorogues Parliament or there is a break in parliamentary procedures and bills die. They have to be resurrected and reintroduced, and go through the process all over again. It is incredibly frustrating.

I am saying this not just on behalf of the Conservative Party or the official opposition, but all opposition members and indeed government backbenchers who take advantage of private members' business to highlight issues and bring them to the chamber on behalf of their constituents.

I am very supportive of my colleague's initiative to apply a minimum sentence of two years. Obviously, there could be more than two years, but two years would be the minimum for people who are committing a break and entry.

The Liberal member for Simcoe North, if I understood him and I was in the chamber for the duration of the debate on this subject today, said that justice was best served when the judiciary had the greatest amount of discretion in handing down sentences. That seemed to be the major thrust of his opposition to my colleague's private member's bill.

Private Members' Business

One of the problems that we have in Canada, and the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle from the NDP referred to this in his remarks, is that judges have far too much discretion in our sentencing provisions. All too often, because there are no minimums, judges let criminals off with the proverbial slap on the wrist. What my colleague is endeavouring to do is to highlight this problem in one particular crime, breaking and entering.

The member for Simcoe North tried to get the whole argument off onto one facet of breaking and entering which is home invasion. He rightly described it as being much more serious of course than a simple break and enter.

I do not think that we can disguise the seriousness of this and how people that have been subjected to a break and enter feel about it. They feel that it is an invasion of their person; it is not just their home that has been invaded. They feel that they themselves have been violated.

When they go to court and see the criminal convicted, and all too often it is a conditional sentence where not a day in jail is served, or a fine, it does not do justice to the feelings that they as victims have. That is why my colleague felt the necessity to bring this forward and instill some minimum sentence.

I noted as well that my colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle said that he wanted to make it very plain that he believed we had to be tough on crime.

• (1405)

Yet, anyone who has watched the proceedings in the House of Commons over the last number of years, and I have been here 10 years now, and would like to check the record would see that time and time again my colleagues and I from the old Reform Party of Canada or the Canadian Alliance brought forward private members' bills or opposition motions on our supply days that did exactly that, get tough on crime. The record would show that the NDP and very often the Bloc voted against those motions. I would take it with a grain of salt when I hear an NDP member say that he wants to get tough on crime.

He went on to talk about things that had nothing to do with this piece of legislation. He talked about the despair that people feel when they are raised in poverty and the hopelessness they face when they have no opportunities. Those are valid points, but that has nothing to do with this bill. This bill deals with a specific crime and the wish of the member to see a minimum sentence introduced into the Criminal Code to deal with that specific crime.

The Bloc Quebecois member, in addressing this particular bill, said at one point in his intervention that he thought it might be a good idea to have an awareness campaign to ensure that those who

commit break and enters are aware of the seriousness of the crime. He thought that it was appropriate to put our trust in the way that courts administer the system.

He said several times that it is not the role of Parliament nor parliamentarians to replace judges and that we should not be here to do the work of judges. I agree with that. However, we are seeing all too often, and what I hear in Prince George—Peace River, too much leeway given to judges. All too often we see sentences that do not fit the crime, certainly not in the opinions of the victims and not in the opinion of the broad spectrum of Canadian society. Canadians feel that we do not have an appropriate justice system anymore.

I have remarked many times in the chamber that people are increasingly frustrated with our legal system, especially once they become victims and are thrust into the system. They go to court to hopefully get their day in court, see justice done, see the guilty held accountable, and the criminal held responsible for his or her crime. They see criminals basically laugh at the justice system, thumb their noses at it and walk out of the court scot-free. The victims are left feeling violated and victimized again.

It was not bad enough in this particular case that the victims had to be subjected to a break and enter, a violation of their home, but when the criminal gets off basically scot-free, they are left with the sense that they have been violated once more.

We must send a strong message and we are not going to do that, with all due respect to my Bloc colleague, with an awareness campaign. We are not going to do it by having someone conduct an educational campaign or put advertisements on television saying people should not do that because it is not very nice to break into somebody's home.

How we are going to do it is by providing real deterrents. We are going to do it by passing legislation like Bill C-393 introduced by my colleague from Calgary East. It gets tough on crime by providing real deterrents, a minimum sentence where individuals who make a conscious decision to break into somebody's home would know that they would do two years in jail minimum, maybe more depending on the nature of the crime, but that would be the minimum.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: 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.

It being 2.11 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, March 8, 2004, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24 (1).

(The House adjourned at 2.11 p.m.)

APPENDIX

**ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS WITH THEIR
CONSTITUENCIES, PROVINCE OF CONSTITUENCY
AND POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS;
COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE,
THE MINISTRY AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY**

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BOB KILGER

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. RÉGINALD BÉLAIR

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MRS. BETTY HINTON

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

MS. MARLENE CATTERALL

MR. BOB KILGER

MR. DALE JOHNSTON

MR. LOYOLA HEARN

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. MAURIL BÉLANGER

HON. JACQUES SAADA

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Third Session—Thirty Seventh Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Adams, Peter	Peterborough	Ontario	Lib.
Alcock, Hon. Reg, President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	Lib.
Allard, Carole-Marie	Laval East	Quebec	Lib.
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
Anderson, Hon. David, Minister of the Environment	Victoria	British Columbia	Lib.
Assad, Mark	Gatineau	Quebec	Lib.
Assadourian, Sarkis	Brampton Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Asselin, Gérard	Charlevoix	Quebec	BQ
Augustine, Hon. Jean, Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Status of Women)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Bachand, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Quebec	Ind.
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	Quebec	BQ
Bagnell, Hon. Larry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Yukon	Yukon	Lib.
Bailey, Roy	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Bakopanos, Hon. Eleni, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Social Economy)	Ahuntsic	Quebec	Lib.
Barnes, Rex	Gander—Grand Falls	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Barnes, Hon. Sue, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	London West	Ontario	Lib.
Barrette, Gilbert	Témiscamingue	Quebec	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West—Mississauga	Ontario	Lib.
Bélair, Réginald, Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	Lib.
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril, Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellemare, Eugène	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn, Minister of State (Public Health)	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Lakeland	Alberta	CPC
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères—Les-Patriotes	Quebec	BQ
Bertrand, Robert	Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle	Quebec	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan—King—Aurora	Ontario	Lib.
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—Petite-Patrie	Quebec	BQ
Binet, Gérard	Frontenac—Mégantic	Quebec	Lib.
Blaikie, Hon. Bill	Winnipeg—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Blondin-Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Minister of State (Children and Youth)	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Ontario	Lib.
Bonwick, Hon. Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Student Loans)	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	Lib.
Borotsik, Rick	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Boudria, Hon. Don	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	Lib.
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Quebec	BQ
Bradshaw, Hon. Claudette, Minister of Labour and Minister responsible for Homelessness	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Canada-U.S.)	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.
Bryden, John	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Aldershot	Ontario	CPC
Bulte, Sarmite	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	Lib.
Burton, Andy	Skeena	British Columbia	CPC
Byrne, Hon. Gerry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Caccia, Hon. Charles	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Cadman, Chuck	Surrey North	British Columbia	CPC
Calder, Murray	Dufferin—Peel—Wellington— Grey	Ontario	Lib.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Caplan, Hon. Elinor	Thornhill	Ontario	Lib.
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Quebec	BQ
Carignan, Jean-Guy	Québec Est	Quebec	Ind.
Carroll, Hon. Aileen, Minister for International Cooperation	Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford	Ontario	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester	Nova Scotia	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Castonguay, Jeannot	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.
Catterall, Marlene	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	Lib.
Cauchon, Hon. Martin	Outremont	Quebec	Lib.
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Guelph—Wellington	Ontario	Lib.
Charbonneau, Hon. Yvon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (Emergency Preparedness)	Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies	Quebec	Lib.
Chatters, David	Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Clark, Right Hon. Joe	Calgary Centre	Alberta	PC
Coderre, Hon. Denis, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Minister responsible for the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution	Bourassa	Quebec	Lib.
Collenette, Hon. David	Don Valley East	Ontario	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—St. Clair	Ontario	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe, Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	Lib.
Copps, Hon. Sheila	Hamilton East	Ontario	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Mount Royal	Quebec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup —Témiscouata—Les Basques	Quebec	BQ
Cullen, Roy	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Cummins, John	Delta—South Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Bras d'Or—Cape Breton	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Dalphond-Guiral, Madeleine	Laval Centre	Quebec	BQ
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Stockwell	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
Desjarlais, Bev	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Desrochers, Odina	Lotbinière—L'Érable	Quebec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
DeVillers, Hon. Paul	Simcoe North	Ontario	Lib.
Dhaliwal, Hon. Herb	Vancouver South—Burnaby	British Columbia	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Quebec	Lib.
Discepolo, Nick	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Quebec	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Dromisky, Stan	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Ontario	Lib.
Drouin, Hon. Claude	Beauce	Quebec	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Quebec	BQ
Duncan, John	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Duplain, Claude	Portneuf	Quebec	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Efford, Hon. R. John, Minister of Natural Resources	Bonavista—Trinity—Conception	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Eggleton, Hon. Art	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Elley, Reed	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	CPC
Epp, Ken	Elk Island	Alberta	CPC
Eyking, Hon. Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Agri-Food)	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Farrah, Hon. Georges, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Rural Development)	Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok	Quebec	Lib.
Finlay, John	Oxford	Ontario	Lib.
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Folco, Raymonde	Laval West	Quebec	Lib.
Fontana, Hon. Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Science and Small Business)	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby	British Columbia	CPC
Fournier, Ghislain	Manicouagan	Quebec	BQ
Frulla, Hon. Liza, Minister of Social Development	Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles	Quebec	Lib.
Fry, Hon. Hedy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Quebec	BQ
Gagnon, Marcel	Champlain	Quebec	BQ
Gagnon, Sébastien	Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay	Quebec	BQ
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Galloway, Hon. Roger, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	Lib.
Gaudet, Roger	Berthier—Montcalm	Quebec	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval	Quebec	BQ
Girard-Bujold, Jocelyne	Jonquière	Quebec	BQ
Godfrey, Hon. John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Cities)	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton Centre-East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Minister of Finance	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Gouk, Jim	Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan	British Columbia	CPC
Graham, Hon. Bill, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Toronto Centre—Rosedale	Ontario	Lib.
Grewal, Gurmant	Surrey Central	British Columbia	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Grey, Deborah	Edmonton North	Alberta	CPC
Grose, Ivan	Oshawa	Ontario	Lib.
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina, Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Civil Preparedness)	Mississauga East	Ontario	Lib.
Guay, Monique	Laurentides	Quebec	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Beauport—Montmorency— Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans	Quebec	BQ
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Harper, Stephen	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Richard	Prince George—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	CPC
Harvard, Hon. John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	Charleswood St. James— Assiniboia	Manitoba	Lib.
Harvey, Hon. André, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Quebec	Lib.
Hearn, Loyola	St. John's West	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Herron, John	Fundy—Royal	New Brunswick	PC
Hill, Hon. Grant, Leader of the Opposition	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Hill, Jay	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
Hilstrom, Howard	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys	British Columbia	CPC
Hubbard, Charles	Miramichi	New Brunswick	Lib.
Ianno, Tony	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	Lib.
Jackson, Ovid	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	Lib.
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	CPC
Jennings, Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce— Lachine	Quebec	Lib.
Jobin, Christian	Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la- Chaudière	Quebec	Lib.
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Jordan, Hon. Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	Lib.
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Nunavut	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kenney, Jason	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Keyes, Hon. Stan, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Sport)	Hamilton West	Ontario	Lib.
Kilger, Bob, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole	Stormont—Dundas— Charlottenburgh	Ontario	Lib.
Kilgour, Hon. David	Edmonton Southeast	Alberta	Lib.
Knutson, Hon. Gar, Minister of State (New and Emerging Markets)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	Lib.
Kraft Sloan, Karen	York North	Ontario	Lib.
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau— Mirabel	Quebec	BQ
Laliberte, Rick	Churchill River	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Lalonde, Francine	Mercier	Quebec	BQ
Lanctôt, Robert	Châteauguay	Quebec	Lib.
Lastewka, Hon. Walt, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	St. Catharines	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lebel, Ghislain	Chambly	Quebec	Ind.
LeBlanc, Dominic	Beauséjour—Petitcodiac	New Brunswick	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.
Leung, Sophia	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	Lib.
Lill, Wendy	Dartmouth	Nova Scotia	NDP
Lincoln, Clifford	Lac-Saint-Louis	Quebec	Lib.
Longfield, Judi	Whitby—Ajax	Ontario	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Quebec	BQ
Lunn, Gary	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Peter	Pictou—Antigonish— Guysborough	Nova Scotia	CPC
Macklin, Paul Harold	Northumberland	Ontario	Lib.
Mahoney, Hon. Steve	Mississauga West	Ontario	Lib.
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Bramalea—Gore—Malton— Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Maloney, John	Erie—Lincoln	Ontario	Lib.
Manley, Hon. John	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
Marceau, Richard	Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier	Quebec	BQ
Marcil, Hon. Serge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Quebec	Lib.
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River	Manitoba	CPC
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Ontario	Lib.
Martin, Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	Ind.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Right Hon. Paul, Prime Minister	LaSalle—Émard	Quebec	Lib.
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Matthews, Bill	Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Mayfield, Philip	Cariboo—Chilcotin	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Markham	Ontario	Lib.
McCormick, Larry	Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	Lib.
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
McGuire, Hon. Joe, Minister of Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Edmonton West	Alberta	Lib.
McNally, Grant	Dewdney—Alouette	British Columbia	CPC
McTeague, Hon. Dan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga—Maisonnette	Quebec	BQ
Meredith, Val	South Surrey—White Rock— Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Mills, Dennis	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Minna, Hon. Maria, Beaches—East York	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.
Mitchell, Hon. Andy, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	Lib.
Moore, James	Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Murphy, Hon. Shawn, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Hillsborough	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Myers, Lynn	Waterloo—Wellington	Ontario	Lib.
Nault, Hon. Robert	Kenora—Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.
Neville, Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Normand, Hon. Gilbert	Bellechasse—Etchemins—Montmagny—L'Islet	Quebec	Lib.
Nystrom, Hon. Lorne	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	NDP
O'Brien, Lawrence	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	Lib.
O'Reilly, John	Haliburton—Victoria—Brock	Ontario	Lib.
Obhrai, Deepak	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
Owen, Hon. Stephen, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Quebec	Lib.
Pagtakhan, Hon. Rey, Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Winnipeg North—St. Paul	Manitoba	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Pankiw, Jim	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	Ind.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	Quebec	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Denis, Minister of State (Financial Institutions)	Brome—Missisquoi	Quebec	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Quebec	Lib.
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Peric, Janko	Cambridge	Ontario	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Quebec	BQ
Peschisolido, Joe	Richmond	British Columbia	Lib.
Peterson, Hon. Jim, Minister of International Trade	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Pettigrew, Hon. Pierre, Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages	Papineau—Saint-Denis	Quebec	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	Quebec	BQ
Pickard, Hon. Jerry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (Border Transit)	Chatham—Kent Essex	Ontario	Lib.
Pillitteri, Gary	Niagara Falls	Ontario	Lib.
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Quebec	BQ
Pratt, Hon. David, Minister of National Defence	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	Lib.
Price, Hon. David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Compton—Stanstead	Quebec	Lib.
Proctor, Dick	Palliser	Saskatchewan	NDP
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Quebec	Lib.
Provenzano, Carmen	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	Lib.
Rajotte, James	Edmonton Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Redman, Karen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Reed, Julian	Halton	Ontario	Lib.
Regan, Hon. Geoff, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Reynolds, John, West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	British Columbia	CPC
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Quebec	Lib.
Robinson, Svend	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Rocheleau, Yves	Trois-Rivières	Quebec	BQ
Roy, Jean-Yves	Matapédia—Matane	Quebec	BQ
Saada, Hon. Jacques, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform	Brossard—La Prairie	Quebec	Lib.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	Quebec	BQ
Savoy, Andy	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	Lib.
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Scherrer, Hon. Hélène, Minister of Canadian Heritage	Louis-Hébert	Quebec	Lib.
Schmidt, Werner	Kelowna	British Columbia	CPC
Scott, Hon. Andy, Minister of State (Infrastructure)	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Serré, Benoît	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Ontario	Lib.
Sgro, Hon. Judy, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shepherd, Alex	Durham	Ontario	Lib.
Simard, Raymond	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	Lib.
Skelton, Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
Speller, Hon. Bob, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant	Ontario	Lib.
Spencer, Larry	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	Ind.
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil	Quebec	BQ
St-Jacques, Diane	Shefford	Quebec	Lib.
St-Julien, Guy	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik	Quebec	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin	Ontario	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stewart, Hon. Jane	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Strahl, Chuck	Fraser Valley	British Columbia	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Aboriginal Affairs)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Thibeault, Yolande	Saint-Lambert	Quebec	Lib.
Thompson, Greg	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Tirabassi, Tony	Niagara Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Toews, Vic	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Torsney, Paddy	Burlington	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tremblay, Suzanne	Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis..	Quebec	BQ
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex...	Ontario	Lib.
Valeri, Hon. Tony, Minister of Transport	Stoney Creek	Ontario	Lib.
Vancief, Hon. Lyle	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	Lib.
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Venne, Pierrette	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert....	Quebec	Ind. BQ
Volpe, Hon. Joseph, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Lib.
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Wayne, Elsie	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Whelan, Hon. Susan	Essex	Ontario	Lib.
White, Randy	Langley—Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
White, Ted	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CPC
Wilfert, Bryon	Oak Ridges	Ontario	Lib.
Williams, John	St. Albert	Alberta	CPC
Wood, Bob	Nipissing	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Lynne	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
VACANCY	Ottawa-Centre	Ontario	
VACANCY	Etobicoke	Ontario	
VACANCY	Saint-Maurice	Quebec	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Third Session—Thirty Seventh Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (26)		
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Lakeland	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CPC
Chatters, David	Athabasca	CPC
Clark, Right Hon. Joe	Calgary Centre	PC
Epp, Ken	Elk Island	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton Centre-East	CPC
Grey, Deborah	Edmonton North	CPC
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Harper, Stephen	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hill, Hon. Grant, Leader of the Opposition	Macleod	CPC
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	CPC
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Kenney, Jason	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Kilgour, Hon. David	Edmonton Southeast	Lib.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Edmonton West	Lib.
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak	Calgary East	CPC
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton Southwest	CPC
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	CPC
Williams, John	St. Albert	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (34)		
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Anderson, Hon. David, Minister of the Environment	Victoria	Lib.
Burton, Andy	Skeena	CPC
Cadman, Chuck	Surrey North	CPC
Cummins, John	Delta—South Richmond	CPC
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Stockwell	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Dhaliwal, Hon. Herb	Vancouver South—Burnaby	Lib.
Duncan, John	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Elley, Reed	Nanaimo—Cowichan	CPC
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Gouk, Jim	Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan	CPC
Grewal, Gurmant	Surrey Central	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Harris, Richard	Prince George—Bulkley Valley	CPC
Hill, Jay	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys	CPC
Leung, Sophia	Vancouver Kingsway	Lib.
Lunn, Gary	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
Martin, Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	Ind.
Mayfield, Philip	Cariboo—Chilcotin	CPC
McNally, Grant	Dewdney—Alouette	CPC
Meredith, Val	South Surrey—White Rock—Langley	CPC
Moore, James	Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Owen, Hon. Stephen, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Peschisolido, Joe	Richmond	Lib.
Reynolds, John, West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	CPC
Robinson, Svend	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Schmidt, Werner	Kelowna	CPC
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
Strahl, Chuck	Fraser Valley	CPC
White, Randy	Langley—Abbotsford	CPC
White, Ted	North Vancouver	CPC

MANITOBA (14)

Alcock, Hon. Reg, President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board	Winnipeg South	Lib.
Blaikie, Hon. Bill	Winnipeg—Transcona	NDP
Borotsik, Rick	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Desjarlais, Bev	Churchill	NDP
Harvard, Hon. John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia	Lib.
Hilstrom, Howard	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Pagtakhan, Hon. Rey, Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Winnipeg North—St. Paul	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Simard, Raymond	Saint Boniface	Lib.
Toews, Vic	Provencher	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North Centre	NDP

NEW BRUNSWICK (10)

Bradshaw, Hon. Claudette, Minister of Labour and Minister responsible for Homelessness	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
Castonguay, Jeannot	Madawaska—Restigouche	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Herron, John	Fundy—Royal	PC
Hubbard, Charles	Miramichi	Lib.
LeBlanc, Dominic	Beauséjour—Petitcodiac	Lib.
Savoy, Andy	Tobique—Mactaquac	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy, Minister of State (Infrastructure)	Fredericton	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Thompson, Greg	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
Wayne, Elsie	Saint John	CPC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Barnes, Rex	Gander—Grand Falls	CPC
Byrne, Hon. Gerry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	CPC
Efford, Hon. R. John, Minister of Natural Resources	Bonavista—Trinity—Conception	Lib.
Hearn, Loyola	St. John's West	CPC
Matthews, Bill	Burin—St. George's	Lib.
O'Brien, Lawrence	Labrador	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Blondin-Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Minister of State (Children and Youth)	Western Arctic	Lib.
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Hon. Scott, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Canada-U.S.)	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Bras d'Or—Cape Breton	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Agri-Food)	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore	CPC
Lill, Wendy	Dartmouth	NDP
MacKay, Peter	Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough	CPC
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley— Eastern Shore	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Lib.
NUNAVUT (1)		
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Lib.
ONTARIO (103)		
Adams, Peter	Peterborough	Lib.
Assadourian, Sarkis	Brampton Centre	Lib.
Augustine, Hon. Jean, Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Status of Women)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Barnes, Hon. Sue, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	London West	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West—Mississauga	Lib.
Bélair, Réginald, Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Timmins—James Bay	Lib.
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril, Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bellemare, Eugène	Ottawa—Orléans	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn, Minister of State (Public Health)	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan—King—Aurora	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Bonwick, Hon. Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Student Loans)	Simcoe—Grey	Lib.
Boudria, Hon. Don	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Lib.
Bryden, John	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot	CPC
Bulte, Sarmite	Parkdale—High Park	Lib.
Caccia, Hon. Charles	Davenport	Lib.
Calder, Murray	Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey	Lib.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Caplan, Hon. Elinor	Thornhill	Lib.
Carroll, Hon. Aileen, Minister for International Cooperation	Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford	Lib.
Catterall, Marlene	Ottawa West—Nepean	Lib.
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Guelph—Wellington	Lib.
Collenette, Hon. David	Don Valley East	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—St. Clair	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe, Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Lib.
Copps, Hon. Sheila	Hamilton East	Lib.
Cullen, Roy	Etobicoke North	Lib.
DeVillers, Hon. Paul	Simcoe North	Lib.
Dromisky, Stan	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Lib.
Eggleton, Hon. Art	York Centre	Lib.
Finlay, John	Oxford	Lib.
Fontana, Hon. Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Science and Small Business)	London North Centre	Lib.
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Galloway, Hon. Roger, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Sarnia—Lambton	Lib.
Godfrey, Hon. John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Cities)	Don Valley West	Lib.
Graham, Hon. Bill, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Toronto Centre—Rosedale	Lib.
Grose, Ivan	Oshawa	Lib.
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina, Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Civil Preparedness)	Mississauga East	Lib.
Ianno, Tony	Trinity—Spadina	Lib.
Jackson, Ovid	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Lib.
Jordan, Hon. Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Leeds—Grenville	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Keyes, Hon. Stan, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Sport)	Hamilton West	Lib.
Kilger, Bob, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole	Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh	Lib.
Knutson, Hon. Gar, Minister of State (New and Emerging Markets)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Lib.
Kraft Sloan, Karen	York North	Lib.
Lastewka, Hon. Walt, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	St. Catharines	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Longfield, Judi	Whitby—Ajax	Lib.
Macklin, Paul Harold	Northumberland	Lib.
Mahoney, Hon. Steve	Mississauga West	Lib.
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale	Lib.
Maloney, John	Erie—Lincoln	Lib.
Manley, Hon. John	Ottawa South	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Lib.
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
McCallum, Hon. John, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Markham	Lib.
McCormick, Larry	Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Scarborough East	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge	Lib.
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Mills, Dennis	Toronto—Danforth	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria, Beaches—East York	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Mitchell, Hon. Andy, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Lib.
Myers, Lynn	Waterloo—Wellington	Lib.
Nault, Hon. Robert	Kenora—Rainy River	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat	London—Fanshawe	Lib.
O'Reilly, John	Haliburton—Victoria—Brock	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga Centre	Lib.
Peric, Janko	Cambridge	Lib.
Peterson, Hon. Jim, Minister of International Trade	Willowdale	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Lib.
Pickard, Hon. Jerry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (Border Transit)	Chatham—Kent Essex	Lib.
Pillitteri, Gary	Niagara Falls	Lib.
Pratt, Hon. David, Minister of National Defence	Nepean—Carleton	Lib.
Provenzano, Carmen	Sault Ste. Marie	Lib.
Redman, Karen	Kitchener Centre	Lib.
Reed, Julian	Halton	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Carleton	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Middlesex	CPC
Serré, Benoît	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Lib.
Sgro, Hon. Judy, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	York West	Lib.
Shepherd, Alex	Durham	Lib.
Speller, Hon. Bob, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stewart, Hon. Jane	Brant	Lib.
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Aboriginal Affairs)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.
Tirabassi, Tony	Niagara Centre	Lib.
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Torsney, Paddy	Burlington	Lib.
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Lib.
Valeri, Hon. Tony, Minister of Transport	Stoney Creek	Lib.
Vanclief, Hon. Lyle	Prince Edward—Hastings	Lib.
Volpe, Hon. Joseph, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Eglinton—Lawrence	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.
Whelan, Hon. Susan	Essex	Lib.
Wilfert, Bryon	Oak Ridges	Lib.
Wood, Bob	Nipissing	Lib.
VACANCY	Ottawa-CentreOntario	
VACANCY	EtobicokeOntario	

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence.....	Cardigan	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe, Minister of Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.....	Egmont	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.....	Hillsborough.....	Lib.
QUEBEC (75)		
Allard, Carole-Marie	Laval East	Lib.
Assad, Mark	Gatineau	Lib.
Asselin, Gérard	Charlevoix	BQ
Bachand, André.....	Richmond—Arthabaska	Ind.
Bachand, Claude.....	Saint-Jean.....	BQ
Bakopanos, Hon. Eleni, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Social Economy)	Ahuntsic	Lib.
Barrette, Gilbert.....	Témiscamingue.....	Lib.
Bergeron, Stéphane.....	Verchères—Les-Patriotes	BQ
Bertrand, Robert	Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle	Lib.
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—Petite-Patrie.....	BQ
Binet, Gérard.....	Frontenac—Mégantic	Lib.
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	BQ
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	BQ
Carignan, Jean-Guy.....	Québec Est	Ind.
Cauchon, Hon. Martin.....	Outremont	Lib.
Charbonneau, Hon. Yvon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (Emergency Preparedness)	Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies.....	Lib.
Coderre, Hon. Denis, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Minister responsible for the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution	Bourassa	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Mount Royal	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup— Témiscouata—Les Basques	BQ
Dalphond-Guiral, Madeleine.....	Laval Centre.....	BQ
Desrochers, Odina	Lotbinière—L'Érable.....	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.....	Lib.
Discepola, Nick	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Lib.
Drouin, Hon. Claude	Beauce	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles.....	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	BQ
Duplain, Claude	Portneuf.....	Lib.
Farrah, Hon. Georges, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Rural Development).....	Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok	Lib.
Folco, Raymonde	Laval West	Lib.
Fournier, Ghislain	Manicouagan	BQ
Frulla, Hon. Liza, Minister of Social Development.....	Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul— Pointe Saint-Charles	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec.....	BQ
Gagnon, Marcel.....	Champlain	BQ
Gagnon, Sébastien	Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay	BQ
Gaudet, Roger	Berthier—Montcalm	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval	BQ
Girard-Bujold, Jocelyne	Jonquière	BQ
Guay, Monique	Laurentides	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans	BQ
Harvey, Hon. André, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Lib.
Jennings, Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Jobin, Christian	Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Lib.
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	Mercier	BQ
Lancôt, Robert	Châteauguay	Lib.
Lebel, Ghislain	Chambly	Ind.
Lincoln, Clifford	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Marceau, Richard	Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier	BQ
Marcil, Hon. Serge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Lib.
Martin, Right Hon. Paul, Prime Minister	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga—Maisonneuve	BQ
Normand, Hon. Gilbert	Bellechasse—Etchemins—Montmagny—L'Islet	Lib.
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Denis, Minister of State (Financial Institutions)	Brome—Missisquoi	Lib.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Pettigrew, Hon. Pierre, Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages	Papineau—Saint-Denis	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Price, Hon. David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Compton—Stanstead	Lib.
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Rocheleau, Yves	Trois-Rivières	BQ
Roy, Jean-Yves	Matapédia—Matane	BQ
Saada, Hon. Jacques, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform	Brossard—La Prairie	Lib.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	BQ
Scherrer, Hon. Hélène, Minister of Canadian Heritage	Louis-Hébert	Lib.
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil	BQ
St-Jacques, Diane	Shefford	Lib.
St-Julien, Guy	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik	Lib.
Thibeault, Yolande	Saint-Lambert	Lib.
Tremblay, Suzanne	Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis	BQ
Venne, Pierrette	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Ind. BQ
VACANCY	Saint-MauriceQuebec	

SASKATCHEWAN (14)

Anderson, David	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Bailey, Roy	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Minister of Finance	Wascana	Lib.
Laliberte, Rick	Churchill River.....	Lib.
Nystrom, Hon. Lorne.....	Regina—Qu'Appelle	NDP
Pankiw, Jim	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Ind.
Proctor, Dick	Palliser	NDP
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Skelton, Carol.....	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar.....	CPC
Spencer, Larry	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre.....	Ind.
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.....	CPC
Yelich, Lynne	Blackstrap	CPC

YUKON (1)

Bagnell, Hon. Larry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Yukon.....	Lib.
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LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of February 27, 2004 — 3rd Session, 37th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Brenda Chamberlain	André Harvey	Pat Martin	Andrew Telegdi	
David Chatters				

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Claude Bachand	Paul Forseth	James Lunney	Jean-Yves Roy
Roy Bailey	Ghislain Fournier	Peter MacKay	Gary Schellenberger
Rex Barnes	Cheryl Gallant	Richard Marceau	Werner Schmidt
Leon Benoit	Yvon Godin	Inky Mark	Carol Skelton
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Garry Breitkreuz	Deborah Grey	Rob Merrifield	Greg Thompson
Andy Burton	Art Hanger	Bob Mills	Myron Thompson
Chuck Cadman	Stephen Harper	James Moore	Vic Toews
Bill Casey	Richard Harris	Anita Neville	Elsie Wayne
Rick Casson	Loyola Hearn	Lorne Nystrom	Randy White
Joe Comartin	Grant Hill	Deepak Obhrai	Ted White
Paul Crête	Jay Hill	Brian Pallister	John Williams
John Cummins	Howard Hilstrom	Charlie Penson	Lynne Yelich
Stockwell Day	Betty Hinton	Gilles-A. Perron	

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David Kilgour
Larry McCormickJohn O'Reilly
Louis Plamondon
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Rick Borotsik	Jim Gouk	Val Meredith	Chuck Strahl
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Rick Casson	Jay Hill	Charlie Penson	Elsie Wayne
David Chatters	Howard Hilstrom	Pauline Picard	Randy White
Joe Comartin	Betty Hinton	Dick Proctor	Ted White
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Libby Davies	Dale Johnston	Scott Reid	Lynne Yelich
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Pat Martin
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Andrew Telegdi
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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair: Charles Caccia

Vice-Chairs: Bob Mills
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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

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Reed Elley
Georges Farrah

Ghislain Fournier
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Chair:	Bernard Patry	Vice-Chairs:	Stockwell Day Diane Marleau	
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Roy Bailey	Paul Forseth	John Maloney	Gary Schellenberger
Eleni Bakopanos	Cheryl Gallant	Inky Mark	Werner Schmidt
Rex Barnes	Peter Goldring	Keith Martin	Carol Skelton
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Bill Blaikie	Art Hanger	Grant McNally	Chuck Strahl
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE, TRADE DISPUTES AND INVESTMENT

Chair:		Vice-Chair:		
Bill Casey	Charlie Penson			(2)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chair:		Vice-Chair:	
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Brenda Chamberlain
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Gilles-A. Perron
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Tony Tirabassi
Ted White
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Bonnie Brown

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HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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Hon. Pierre Pettigrew	Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages
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Hon. Andy Mitchell	Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Hon. Claudette Bradshaw	Minister of Labour and Minister responsible for Homelessness
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Hon. André Harvey	to the Minister of Natural Resources

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