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Friday, April 4, 2008

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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 4, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2008

The House resumed from April 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-50, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 26, 2008 and to enact provisions to preserve the fiscal plan set out in that budget, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed nice to be the first one up on this Friday morning.

It is with a heavy heart that I am participating in this debate on Bill C-50. For years the Department of Citizenship and Immigration has been struggling to keep up with the number of applications submitted from people who want to come to Canada. However, it would be worthwhile to take a historical look at this department over the last two decades. It has always had its difficulties; however, in the last two years it has been totally dysfunctional. Conservative minister after Conservative minister has tried to resolve the problems they are facing, yet they are finding themselves in more trouble.

I am not going to say that under the Liberals the department was perfect. It had its challenges. However, in the last two years, the department has become the challenge.

When the Liberals took office in 1993, we inherited a country that was in total chaos and almost bankrupt. The inflation rate was running amok. The deficit was \$42 billion and we had a debt to the tune of \$600 billion-plus dollars.

We had such a bad credit rating at that time that it drove international investors and creditors away in hordes. Not only did it drive creditors and investors away, it also deterred prospective immigrants from wanting to apply to come to Canada. In 1993, we had an inventory of almost 50,000 applications from people waiting to come to Canada.

However, over the years the situation in Canada changed and times became better. The annual deficit was no longer around. We started paying down the debt. For the first time in a few decades, Canada started having surpluses and the good times were here again under the Liberals. Our credit rating went up and investors started investing in Canada again.

As Canada started attracting investors and money from overseas, we also started attracting new immigrants and more applications, applications by the thousands. Canada became a destination of choice for most immigrants. Many immigrants could have chosen to emigrate to the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany or Australia, just to name a few. However, many of these people chose Canada.

The rest is history. Our inventory application levels increased. Waiting times started to become longer. People had to wait a few years in order to come to Canada and start their new lives. However, people waited patiently, and even to this day people are willing to wait a little longer in order to come to their first choice of destination.

Just recently, a few weeks ago, I travelled to India and met with many people: university students, professionals and business people. They expressed to me that their first choice of place to emigrate was Canada. Although it would still take a few years before they could emigrate to Canada, they told me it was still worth the wait.

Let us fast-forward to today and examine the department under the Conservatives, especially under their two ministers. Under the previous minister, we had a department that came under a lot of strain when the crisis in Lebanon occurred. The then minister of citizenship and immigration and his counterpart, the then minister of foreign affairs, totally botched the evacuation of Canadian citizens from Lebanon.

Then the Conservatives started fearmongering that we were evacuating people who had no business to be evacuated, and that these people, although claiming to have residency in Canada, returned to Lebanon as soon as things were good again. Reports were slipped to the media about thousands of people who returned to Lebanon, people, they said, who should not have been evacuated.

The real truth, however, was the fact that the protocols developed in the departments, under the Liberals, to look after Canadians and their loved ones abroad when a natural or a man-made disaster occurs were completely ignored and misplaced. The Conservative ministers were running around like a bunch of chickens with their heads cut off and did not know what to do.

Government Orders

During the Liberal regime, there were protocols in place such that should there be a natural or a man-made disaster, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was ready to respond. Let us look at some examples. Under the Liberals, when the tsunami struck in South and Southeast Asia, family class applications were expedited and placed at the front of the line. Similarly, when the earthquake struck in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, these protocols were put in place, and again family class applications were expedited.

However, when the man-made disaster occurred in Lebanon, the Conservative ministers were slow to react and the tested protocols were shelved and ignored. The Prime Minister even went to Cyprus to pick up a few stranded Canadians. If someone were to ask me, this was an expensive photo op.

●(1005)

Then we had the disaster of the lost Canadians. The minister and her department's officials mismanaged that particular file.

They even went so far as to mislead the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. When the minister and the deputy minister came in front of the committee, I asked them if they had advertised about Canadians who might have lost their citizenship. Both the minister and the deputy minister went on to mislead and outright distort the truth by saying that they had advertised in different media outlets on this matter. When a few days later they were pushed to reveal facts and figures, the minister and her deputy sent a letter of explanation to the committee admitting that they had given us false information about advertising.

The mockery of this department under the Conservatives continues even today. A few months ago, I asked under the access to information about the real figures in inventories and waiting times since the Conservatives took power. The real nightmare was then exposed. The question posed was:

With regard to Immigration Applications for each Canadian High Commission, Embassy and Consulate around the world, present and for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006, in actual numbers:

- (a) How many Spousal Sponsorships, Parental Sponsorships and Independent Applicant cases are or were in inventory;
- (b) What is or was the length of time required to process these applications—Spousal Sponsorships, Parental Sponsorships and Independent Applicants?

The Conservative government had assured parliamentarians that processing times would decrease. Instead of seeing an overall decrease in processing timelines, what I discovered was an overall increase.

I was able to determine a decrease in processing times and the number of cases in the regions of Europe and South America, but a dramatic increase in processing times and the number of cases in the regions of the world such as the Middle East, East Asia and South Asia.

Close to 50% of our total inventory of applications comes from seven countries. To be exact, Beijing contributes 6.45% of our total applications; Colombo, 1.29%; Damascus, 5.27%; Hong Kong, 6.66%; Islamabad, 6.16%; New Delhi, 18.87%; and Manila 1.7%. Exactly, that is 46.51%.

During the last two years of the Conservative regime, the number of cases decreased by 1.93% and the time processing has increased by 20.79%.

Here are some of these nightmares. For Colombo, skilled workers' processing timelines increased by 53.65%, and parents' and grandparents' processing timelines increased by 36.36%. While the processing timelines in Colombo have gone up overall by 20.83%, the amount of processed cases has dropped by 1.74%.

Beijing is the real nightmare. Skilled workers' processing timelines increased by 36.17%, spouses' and partners' processing timelines increased by 25%, and dependent children's timelines increased by 33.33%, while the amount of cases processed dropped by 4.07%. Parents' and grandparents' processing timelines increased by 54.54%, while the amount of cases processed dropped by 29.68%. Overall, in Beijing the processing timelines increased by 40.78%, while the amount of cases processed dropped by 48.05%.

For Damascus, skilled workers' processing timelines have increased by 20%, and parents' and grandparents' processing timelines increased by 11.76%.

For Hong Kong, skilled workers' processing timelines increased by 25.45%, while applications dropped by 6%. Parents' and grandparents' processing timelines increased by 28.57%. In Hong Kong, while the processing timelines went up by 10.28%, the processed cases dropped by 28%.

For Islamabad, skilled workers' processing timelines increased by 43.18%, and parents' and grandparents' processing timelines increased by 8.1%.

For New Delhi, skilled workers' processing times increased by 38%, and spouses and partners' processing timelines increased by 66.66%, while the amount of cases processed has dropped by 10%. For dependent children, processing timelines increased by 66.67%, while parents' and grandparents' processing timelines increased by 21.62%. Overall in New Delhi, processing timelines increased by 11.45%.

●(1010)

In Manila, parent's and grandparents' processing timelines increased by 51.85%. Overall, processing timelines increased by 5.88%.

Finally, the minister finally had a revelation. She noticed that the train had run away and that she needed to do something. What to do? What to do? Let us ask the bureaucrats, it was decided, and here comes the nightmare: some bright individual wanting to have a quick passage of the legislation placed it in the budget and called it a motion of confidence.

Let us examine what this piece of legislation, Bill C-50, will do specifically. I will be very brief, because other people before me have examined what is in store for us under this legislation.

This legislation has amendments that would give the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration unilateral authority to determine priorities for processing immigration applications and requests.

Government Orders

Bill C-50 puts too much power in the hands of the minister to cherry-pick the kinds of immigrants that the Conservative Party would find acceptable. It eliminates the right of every application to be given fair review and consideration, regardless of background, country of origin or skill set. The amendments put no limit on the minister's new discretionary powers to make them consistent with existing federal-provincial immigration regulations.

The minister would have wide-ranging new powers allowing him or her to give the following instructions with respect to the processing of application requests: establish categories of applications or requests; establish an order by category or otherwise for processing; set the number of applications or requests by category or otherwise to be processed in any year; and provide for the disposition of applications or requests, including those made subsequent to the first application or request.

In addition, immigration and refugee officers shall comply with ministerial instructions before processing or when processing applications or requests. Applications not processed may be returned, retained or disposed of in accordance with the instructions by the minister. This does not constitute a decision not to issue a visa or other document, or grant the status or exemption in relation to which the application or request is made. Instructions shall be published in the *Canada Gazette*. Nothing in this section limits in any way the power of the minister to otherwise determine the most efficient manner in which to administer this act.

These amendments essentially give the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration carte blanche to decide which applications to process, which to hold, and which to return without even processing. Particular immigration categories will be adversely affected, such as the family class and permanent resident status made on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, H and C grounds.

The amendments will reduce the incentive for the government to do what it should do: dedicate the necessary resources to increase departmental and human resource capacity to process the number of applications received each year.

However, the bright individual on the government side decided to go a little further. The bright individual decided that the government would take this piece of legislation out of its regular place and refer it to the finance committee.

The place that this bill should be debated is specifically the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, where both the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the minister responsible for CBSA can be invited. Also, community groups, stakeholders, lawyers, immigration practitioners and others would have an opportunity to testify and give evidence on whether they would be in favour and/or against this ill thought out piece of legislation.

However, that will not be the case this time. The Conservatives have decided to circumvent all of this, put the bill in front of the House, declare it a motion of confidence, and get it passed in order for the minister to look after the backlog of immigration cases, so she says.

I have news for the minister. Whether she will open her ears and listen, however, is another story. This piece of legislation will be

challenged in court and struck down. This piece of legislation is not charter compliant, although she claims it is.

I would like at this time to refer to a few famous Conservative quotes on citizenship and immigration. Maybe my colleagues across the way will open their ears and listen.

The first quote is as follows:

You have to remember that west of Winnipeg the ridings the Liberals hold are dominated by people who are either recent Asian immigrants or recent migrants from eastern Canada; people who live in ghettos and who are not integrated into Western Canadian society.

Who said that? The present Prime Minister.

The second quote is as follows:

Well, I've always believed that we have to be a lot tougher with undocumented refugee claimants. Whether the best thing is to send them right out of the country or simply detain them until we get more information, we can look at either, this is a problem that does need to be fixed. Particularly post 9/11, we can't take these kinds of security risks.

Who said that? The current Prime Minister.

• (1015)

If members were to take a look at www.oneconservativevoice.ca, they would see another quote, "Another potential threat to domestic security is Canada's refugee determination".

When the Prime Minister was the chief policy officer of the Reform Party, his party platform stated that "immigration should be essentially economic in nature" and should not "be explicitly designed to radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada". This was stated in the Platform and Statement of Principles of the Reform Party of Canada dated August 14, 1988.

I have another quote: "Multiculturalism policy has been an abject failure...immigration continues to change the country's face more extensively than at any time since the turn of the century". Who said that? The member for Kootenay—Columbia as reported in the *Calgary Herald*.

The Canadian people simply do not trust the Conservatives to deliver on immigration and, frankly, neither do I, so I will be voting against this misguided legislation.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the member loses himself in statistics. I wonder how he explains that last year we had the highest number of newcomers in our history, 429,649. We actually did have that number.

I can say that with the two ministers we have had we have passed legislation that will get thousands of lost Canadians back into the fold. With the new minister, we are amending the act to ensure we can bring more people in quicker and faster. I would encourage him to support that legislation.

One of his own people, the member for Etobicoke Centre, said:

I'm almost reaching the point where I believe that our whole immigration system has become dysfunctional. That in fact it's at the point of being broken.

That was said in September 2004, after 13 years of a Liberal government, six ministers, four terms in office, some of them with majorities, and absolutely nothing to reform the act.

Government Orders

An editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press* stated:

What the Conservatives propose is common sense—cut back on accepting new applications until progress is made in cleaning out the backlog.

This is good policy...For the Liberals to exploit this, however, not only ignores the national need for the party's own political advantage, but also ignores the ugly truth that it was the Liberals who created this problem. In the years 1993-2006, the immigration backlog grew from 50,000 to 800,000. Canadians, new and old, have been offered a clear choice: Conservative policy that will benefit Canada, or politics that will benefit Liberals.

Will the member do the honourable thing and stand up, in accordance with the instructions of his leader, to vote in favour of this legislation when it comes up for a vote?

• (1020)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, it is with great interest that I listened to the parliamentary secretary. Half the time he seems to know what he is talking about and the other half he is out in left field.

This time the parliamentary secretary he is out in left field. He knows very well that the number he has quoted about people coming into Canada is fudged. He knows very well that the number that he has quoted is blown up and includes foreign workers, people on TRVs and I could go on. The real figure is that this year the government will let in less immigrants than in any other years.

The parliamentary secretary knows very well that the only place to discuss this is in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. It is the only place where we can have a fair discussion and call the minister there. She has not shown up time after time when the committee has invited her. The only place where we can have a fair discussion with stakeholders, community groups, refugee associations and even us as members of Parliament is in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

Will the parliamentary secretary do the honourable thing and ask his minister to send this bill to that committee or are the Conservatives going to hide behind everything and send it to the finance committee? I would ask them to have the guts to do the right thing.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the issue of an immigration policy in Canada stirs much energy from my hon. colleague and from others around this place.

I think the question is about what the government is actually proposing and how it is that it is proposing to make these drastic changes. Some have called them the biggest changes in Canadian immigration law ever, if not in the last 40 years.

It seems to me that in previous administrations the rule and policy was “Who you know in the PMO”. This had great effect as to which groups and which particular cases were given attention. We saw incident after incident under the Liberals where connections were more important than the quality of the actual immigration application.

We are now switching over to a system in which, by fiat, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration under the current Conservative government, which is obviously at the Prime Minister's discretion, will pick the winners and losers. I think there is some interest for Canadians that the bill is being promoted by the finance

minister and will go to the finance committee where suddenly immigration has become a purely financial and economic matter and nothing else. It is ironic in a country that prides itself on being a refuge and a place built on the energy and enthusiasm of the immigrants who have come here.

I think the reason we have so much passion in this place for this issue is that so many of us are, like myself, the sons or daughters of immigrants or immigrants ourselves. It brings forward great passion to think that families, like my own who came to this country, would no longer be accepted because they would not fit through this narrow financial consideration, which the Minister of Finance is somehow now in charge of immigration policy, an immigration policy that is made through budget measures. How ridiculous is that?

I am interested to know if my hon. colleague can give us some proper accounting. He indicated today that he would vote against this measure. I wonder if he actually will show up to vote and express his lack of confidence in the government as New Democrats have? Does he have any assessment or understanding of any other Liberals in this place who may also rise on their feet and express non-confidence in this immigration policy and in the government? Where does the Liberal Party stand?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, I want to go back about a year ago today when the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration was discussing at the time undocumented workers.

We were looking at the plight of individuals who have been here for a number of years, some for five, six or ten years, and were working underground and being exploited. They were trying to get themselves normalized in Canada. A motion that was in front of the committee was brought to the House. The motion stated that the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration study the motion and that undocumented workers should not be deported from Canada until the committee had an opportunity to finally look at it.

I came to the House and asked for unanimous consent to move that motion. The Conservatives did not stand up and oppose it, nor did the Liberals and the Bloc. The only person who ran in huffing and puffing and said that she would not give unanimous consent to the motion was a member of the NDP. The NDP found faith by siding with the Conservatives in wanting to throw undocumented workers out of this country. The hon. member should take that up with his colleague from Trinity—Spadina because she was the only one who ran in here and opposed it.

How does the member and the NDP dare to stand up and give this side of the House lessons? They should look at themselves in the mirror and maybe when they get up in the morning it will crack.

• (1025)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is an issue on which the member may be able to assist us, as he is a member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. It concerns the question as to whether the real issue is the backlog or the number of landed Canadians in a year. It would appear that there can be external forces which affect the backlog or the number of applicants. However, when it really gets down to it, what is the real record of landing Canadians since 2005?

Government Orders

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, as I was making my speech I stated that in the years under the Conservatives the application records have gone down, especially out of mainland China where we used to get tons of people applying to come to Canada. In my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, a great number of people are applying from mainland China to come to Scarborough. Their applications dropped by about 50%. The real issue is, indeed, the backlog and we need to deal with that.

It is very simple. We should allocate resources where they are needed. We should expedite cases where we should. For example, a spousal case out of Colombo is taking two years, where in other places it takes six months. Although the issue is the backlog, it is also a matter of taking resources from different posts and putting them to posts where we need them to deal with the processing of applications.

Maybe the minister will do something about reallocating the resources instead of having SWAT teams. She has SWAT teams of retired immigration officers who are going from country to country to deal with the backlog. These people are not getting paid normal wages. These people get paid exorbitant wages and are put in fancy hotels, which costs the department an arm and a leg.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my committee chair for his encouragement, especially since we are from different parties.

I am very pleased to rise today to speak about implementing the budget. By implementing the budget, we will skirt several major issues for all Quebecers. The Bloc Québécois has been expressing specific demands since January. Those demands have been very clear, and we will see that not one of them has been met in this budget.

The budget implementation bill aims to put in place various measures that were announced when the federal budget was presented on February 26. This bill has 10 different sections that amend various Canadian laws. Part 1 amends the Income Tax Act in order to create tax-free savings accounts, increase the number of years an individual can contribute to a registered education savings plan, increase tax deductions for northern residents, increase the tax credit for medical expenses, modify the eligibility requirements for the registered disability savings plan (RDSP), extend the mineral exploration tax credit by one year, modify the rules surrounding tax credits for charitable donations, readjust the tax threshold for corporate dividends and put in place various legislative provisions to prevent implementation of the Liberal Bill C-253, which would allow RDSP contributions to be tax-free.

Parts 2 and 3 of the bill amend the excise tax legislation to adjust the tax on various tobacco products and make certain medical services GST-exempt. Part 4 dissolves the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. Part 5 amends the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act and the Canada Student Loans Act to modify the system and increase the number of students who are eligible for assistance. Part 6 amends the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to authorize the minister to give priority to certain applications and refuse others without having to provide justification to the applicants.

Part 7 creates the Canada Employment Insurance Financing Board. The board's mandate is to set the premium rate and manage a financial reserve. In other words, employment insurance will be managed independently and any surpluses will no longer be paid into the government's consolidated revenue account. Parts 8 and 9 authorize payments to be made out of the 2007-08 surplus to various organizations and programs. This part of the budget implementation bill includes the payments for carbon capture in Saskatchewan and the \$400 million fund to recruit new police officers. Part 10 amends various acts.

I want to reiterate the Bloc's position. This may seem like a good budget, but it has next to nothing for Quebec and Quebecers. Clearly, the Conservative members from Quebec have done nothing to defend Quebec's interests. Obviously, a member of a party that defends Alberta, cannot defend Quebec's interests at the same time. Members will see this as I go along, and I will come back to this point at the end.

Budget 2008 may seem like a good budget, but it does not comply with the demands the Bloc Québécois made public on January 23, 2008. First, it does not provide any direct, immediate assistance for the manufacturing and forestry industries, which are in crisis. Tens of thousands of jobs have now been lost in Quebec, and this government has done nothing and does not intend to do anything in this budget.

The budget does nothing to help the workers and communities hit by the crisis. It contains no measures to reimburse seniors who have been shortchanged by the guaranteed income supplement program. It continues to take a polluter-paid approach to the Alberta oil companies, rather than a polluter-pay approach, and it refuses to make a 180-degree turn on the environment. The budget makes no major investment in culture and does not undo the ideological cuts made by the Conservative government. It reiterates the government's intention of creating a single securities commission.

For all these reasons, the Bloc Québécois is against this bill and will vote against it.

● (1030)

Let us talk about the problem with immigration. The minister is giving herself discretionary power. Bill C-50 offers far too much discretionary power to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in determining who can and cannot enter Canada. The minister is arguing that we have to be able to clear the backlog as quickly as possible in order to give priority to those who could alleviate the labour shortage in Canada and Quebec. She will be able to determine which persons will have priority to enter Canada based on the individual's training or occupation. The Conservatives are saying that training and occupation can negatively affect a person's chance at entering Canada. If persons applying to enter Canada have the misfortune of not having the training or occupations in demand in Canada, they may have to wait much longer than other immigrants to obtain a visa to enter the country.

Government Orders

Although the Bloc Québécois supports the idea of reducing the backlog, it is opposed to replacing the existing transparent and objective immigration system. The government might say that we have to be fair. The goal of any good legislation is to prevent things from getting out of control. Bill C-50 gives far too much power to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. This can open the door to abuse because there is nothing to counterbalance the minister's discretionary powers.

The Bloc Québécois prefers an immigration system based on a system that is fair, transparent and equitable for everyone. By comparison, in order to accelerate the contract awarding process, would it be acceptable for a minister to have discretionary power to offer contracts and circumvent the call for tenders system for the simple reason that waiting times need to be shortened? The answer is self-evident.

The Bloc Québécois is also deeply concerned about the fact that the federal government would no longer be required to review applications for permanent residency, on humanitarian grounds, from foreign nationals applying from outside Canada. In the absence of a real refugee appeal division, the option of entering Canada on humanitarian grounds is often the only alternative available to refugees. This is proof that the Conservatives are insensitive to the suffering endured by some people in the world. We have a humanitarian obligation to at least consider their requests.

Rather than completely overhauling the system and getting rid of a transparent system, there are other ways for the government to speed up case processing. It could increase staffing in foreign countries, and it could speed up the appointment of commissioners to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. Since coming to power, the Conservatives have slowed the commissioner appointment process down considerably. Delays in case processing in Canada are due primarily to staff shortages, to a shortage of commissioners. The Conservatives are partly to blame for this problem.

With Bill C-50, the Conservatives are trying to fix a problem that they themselves created. Since the Conservatives have formed the government, the selection committee has recommended some 60 qualified individuals to fill the vacant commissioner positions. When the Conservatives came to power, there were five vacancies at the IRB. Currently, there are just under 50 vacant commissioner positions out of 156.

There are two reasons for that gap. First, the Conservative government has been making fewer new appointments. Since coming to power in February 2006, the Conservatives have appointed just 27 commissioners. Moreover, they have renewed very few of the commissioners whose terms have expired. Since February 2006, only seven commissioners' appointments have been renewed.

I should explain that a commissioner's term lasts three years. What usually happens is that one-third of the commissioners are appointed every year to compensate for terms that expire that year. The problem is not a shortage of candidates. When the former chairperson of the commission, Jean-Guy Fleury, appeared before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, he said that the minister had a list of 80 candidates when Mr. Fleury left his

job on March 16, 2007. The government is taking its own sweet time appointing commissioners.

Because there are so many vacancies at the IRB, case processing is slowing down again. The waiting list is starting to get longer. At the end of 2006, there were 23,495 applications pending, an increase of 3,000 applications over the previous year at that time. In the past year, the average application processing time has increased from 11.7 months to 14.3 months. These delays have resulted in three major problems. The Government of Quebec has to pay for social services until refugee claimants get an answer.

• (1035)

Thus, the longer it takes to complete the process, the more it costs the Quebec government.

In the case of family reunification, it is the families that must pay while awaiting the decision. The family must meet the needs of its family members who are applying to stay in Canada. Thus, the longer it takes to complete the process, the more it costs the families.

Some refugee claimants are denied status based on a criminal record or shady past. Thus, the longer it takes to complete the process, the greater the risk of security problems.

Experts are accusing Stephen Harper's government of delaying the appointments because the candidates proposed so far do not share the Conservative Party ideology.

An hon. member: She named the Prime Minister.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I meant to say the Conservative government. I am sorry.

In the agriculture file, the Bloc Québécois called for the implementation of an action plan to address the crisis in the livestock industry—pork and beef, in particular—as well as improvements to the income support programs. In this Conservative budget, farmers will have to make do with an additional \$72 million over two years for agricultural programs, while forestry workers will not see any new money at all.

The government says it intends to change how emergency advances are given through the advance payments program, by allocating \$22.1 million to that adjustment in 2008-09. That measure was introduced in Bill C-44.

The government says it will create a cull breeding swine program. The federal government will invest \$50 million in 2007-08 in this program, which will be administered by the Canadian Pork Council. Ottawa thereby hopes to reduce the Canadian breeding swine inventory by 10%. The government hopes this will facilitate the transition for any producers who wish to get out of the pork industry. Payments would be based on the number of animals and on reimbursement costs for humane slaughter and carcass disposal.

As we can see, the Harper government has ignored the appeals—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: The Conservative government, I mean, has ignored the appeals for assistance from farmers and forestry workers who have been the victims of an unprecedented income crisis.

Government Orders

Another one of the Bloc's demands that comes up often has to do with employment insurance. The Bloc Québécois was calling for the creation of an independent employment insurance fund and for significant improvements to the plan. In particular, we were calling on the government to implement a minimum eligibility threshold of 360 hours for all regions and all claimants. Under this minimum eligibility threshold, however, claimants would be eligible for a varying number of weeks of benefits, based on the unemployment rate in their region. We also called on the government to lengthen the benefit period by five weeks for all regions, regardless of the number of hours required to qualify. The maximum number of weeks of benefits would go from 45 to 50 weeks. Furthermore, we wanted the rate of benefits to be increased from 55% to 60%.

What do we have in the Conservative budget? The budget provides for a new crown corporation, the Canada Employment Insurance Financing Board, which will report to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

This board will be responsible for managing a separate bank account. Each year, any employment insurance fund surplus will be saved and invested until it is needed to cover the program costs.

Moreover, as of 2009, a new rate-setting mechanism will be put in place. It will take into account any surpluses or deficits so that income and expenses balance out over the years. The rates set by the board cannot fluctuate more than 15% in a given year, in order to ensure a stable rate.

In addition, the government plans on maintaining a balance of \$2 billion in the bank account of the Canada Employment Insurance Financing Board.

As we can see, the Conservatives have finally bowed to one Bloc demand and will stop pillaging the employment insurance fund. The Bloc Québécois believes that instead of creating a new crown corporation, the mandate of the employment insurance commission could have been amended. The Bloc Québécois believes that creating an independent fund should improve the plan and not just reduce contributions.

In addition, the Conservative government is ignoring the \$54 billion debt to those who contributed to the plan and to all Quebecers. It is paradoxical that the Conservatives say they hope to "ensure that EI premiums are dedicated exclusively to the EI program" but that in a few weeks time they will take the 2007-08 surplus and pay down the debt.

● (1040)

They seem to be going against their own philosophy. The Bloc Québécois asked that a \$1.5 billion fund be established to ensure that this year's surplus be used strictly for the employment insurance fund. The Conservative budget fails to enhance in any way the employment insurance fund and, once again, there is a lack of consideration by this government for the unemployed. Nevertheless, we must consider the creation of this fund to be an immense victory for the Bloc Québécois.

With regard to aboriginal peoples, the Bloc Québécois had demanded that the federal government respect the agreements between the former government and aboriginal peoples and make provision for the required funding. The Bloc Québécois also expects

the federal government to meet the urgent need for housing on reserves.

The 2008 budget sets aside an additional \$660 million over two years for economic development and the improvement of academic performance, health, and the well-being of children and families, as well as the improvement of water quality and management. Unfortunately, although the \$660 million investment may seem to be a large amount at first glance, the funds come primarily from monies set aside in the 2006 budget.

The budget does not meet the needs of aboriginal Canadians, since the money should have been announced in 2006. This funding comes too late and is just a drop in the bucket when compared to the defunct Kelowna accord. Expectations were high when the Kelowna accord was signed, and now there is major disappointment. No significant money was provided for social housing on reserves. Despite the need for more than 10,000 homes in Quebec alone, there is not enough allocated to improving the socio-economic conditions in first nations communities. Although there was a surplus in the last fiscal year, no money was set aside to fight poverty among aboriginals.

I would now like to talk about the Bloc's demand concerning the status of women. The Bloc Québécois wanted a series of measures to foster equality between men and women, in particular, the reinstatement of the court challenges program, the reinstatement of funding for Status of Women Canada and the improvement of the employment insurance plan, which is currently not advantageous for women. The Conservative budget does nothing for women. In fact, the word appears only six times in the budget, including the note in the French text regarding the use of the masculine gender to cover both men and women.

The budget includes the following paragraph entitled, "Advancing Equality of Women". It reads, "Budget 2007 increased the women's program budget to \$20 million. Over the next year, the government will build on this achievement through the development of an action plan that will advance the equality of women across Canada through the improvement of their economic and social conditions and their participation in democratic life."

Members will recall that women's rights groups saw their funding disappear, since they were excluded from the new women's program, and will also recall that the women's program was funded through cuts to Status of Women.

The Conservative budget ignores women's concerns such as pay equity and the fight for equality. The Bloc Québécois is eagerly awaiting the Conservative action plan, but is expecting the same reactionary and backward-looking vision we are used to on this issue. And I will not even begin to speak about Bill C-484, introduced by a Conservative member, which is an embarrassment to all women.

Government Orders

The Bloc Québécois had even more expectations in terms of international cooperation, including achieving the goal of 0.7% of the GDP by 2015, as set out by the UN. We could reach that by increasing ODA budgets by 12% per year over the next three years and then by 15% per year until 2015.

In the 2008 budget, the government is committing to double international aid based on 2001-02 numbers, to bring it up to \$5 billion by 2010-11. The budget also includes an additional \$100 million for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, which would bring the projected value of Canada's aid program in Afghanistan up to \$280 million in 2008-09. As well, aid to Africa would be doubled by 2008-09.

• (1045)

There is \$450 million, for the next three years, for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. As well there is \$50 million over two years for an innovation fund. However, the federal budget still does not present a credible plan for achieving the goal of 0.7% of the GDP by 2015 so that Canada can reach the UN's millennium goals.

All of the Bloc's demands were ignored. There is nothing for workers. There is no POWA, no regional development, no reinvestment in culture and nothing for social housing. It is equally bleak for women. For these reasons, the Bloc Québécois will vote against this bill.

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to state to the member that of course the minister's instructions would be only those that would support the attainment of the immigration goals established by the Government of Canada. They will not be individual or case to case decisions.

Those instructions will be open and transparent. They will be published in the *Canada Gazette*, reported in the annual report to Parliament, and published on the CIC website.

Obviously, they will need to be charter compliant. The instructions will be debated in this House. They will be debated in committee. They will come back to this House for further debate. The opportunity will be there for members to stand up and vote for or against this.

I would like to ask for the member's comments on what the state of immigration is now after 13 years of the Liberal Party in office. The backlog of 50,000 cases has now increased to 800,000. I wonder if the member can comment on what the acceptability of that might be to her and her party, and whether or not the immigration system is in need of some drastic reform and change.

• (1050)

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the parliamentary secretary, I must say, first of all, since this government has been in power for over two years now, it is time he stop talking about the 13 years of Liberal government and blaming everything on the Liberals.

That being said, Bill C-50 poses a problem: it gives far too much discretionary power to the minister. It is a bad solution to a real problem. This real problem is the backlog of applications. The secretary said that 850 applications were delayed. According to the information I have, 24,000 applications have not yet been processed.

The problem is not that the minister does not make decisions quickly because she lacks sufficient power to make them. The problem is that there is a shortage of commissioners at the Immigration and Refugee Board.

This government has not appointed the necessary commissioners. As I said earlier, there are 156 vacant positions. More correctly, there are currently a little less than 50 vacant commissioner positions out of 156.

Two reasons account for this gap. First, the government has slowed the pace of appointments. Since coming to power, it has appointed only 27 commissioners. Furthermore, it has renewed almost none of the terms of commissioners whose terms have expired. Since February 2006, the mandates of only seven commissioners have been renewed. That is the real problem.

The government should perhaps begin by appointing all the commissioners that should be appointed. Then, if that solution does not work, it could perhaps give greater discretionary power to the minister or come up with other solutions—because giving greater discretionary power is not necessarily a solution.

Some people believe that the Conservative government does not want to appoint new commissioners because it cannot find enough people who share the Conservative ideology on immigration.

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the presentation by my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert. I was glad she mentioned how badly women have been neglected in this budget.

I would like her to give me her opinion about the fact that, in its platform, the Conservative government says that it will come up with a plan to help women achieve equality, yet all the plans it has put forward to date lack vision. As a result, we have quite frequently voted against these plans.

Could she also comment on the fact that, in its budget, the Conservative government has allocated only \$20 million for the status of women, which represents \$1.21 per woman for the whole year? What does she think of this position?

In addition, what does she think about the fact that defence spending has risen by 69% in the past 10 years, whereas social spending has increased by only 0.6%, as the lack of social housing will attest?

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I am unhappy with this question. In fact, the status of women has always been of great importance to me.

I had the pleasure of contributing to the founding of the *Fédération des femmes du Québec* a few years ago. I hardly dare say that it was 35 years ago, but I was quite young; I was very precocious.

On a more serious note, this government's attitude towards women and gender equality is quite disturbing. It is very worrisome for all manner of reasons, including the cuts to Status of Women Canada. Its core funding was slashed. It was an organization that performed very well and promoted gender equality. The reasons given by the government are ridiculous pretexts.

I am somewhat concerned about the plan that the Conservatives wish to present. I speak for myself but I also know, from speaking to many other women, that there is a great deal of concern about the actions of this government.

We know that it pays a great deal of attention and is more responsive to the lobbying group, REAL Women, which promotes the interests of women who stay at home. That is not a choice for me. We all have the choice of working or staying at home. But when a government implements measures that are of greater benefit to women at home under the pretext of supporting families, that is worrisome.

It is also troubling when this government supports one of its members who promotes in this House a bill which, under the pretext of protecting pregnant women, represents a first attack against the right to abortion. It is very disturbing. Hence, not—

● (1055)

The Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons wishes to rise on a point of order.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REMARKS BY MEMBER FOR REGINA—LUMSDEN—LAKE CENTRE

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege and I thank you for recognizing me.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer through you and to you and to every member in the House my deepest apologies for some profoundly unacceptable and offensive remarks that I have made in the past which have recently come to the public forum, particularly in the last 24 hours.

Despite the fact that I made these comments just about 17 years ago does not lessen the shame that I feel for making those comments in the first place, nor does it diminish the hurtful aspect of those comments that were contained in my remarks of 1991. Therefore, I feel absolutely compelled that I must stand here today and publicly apologize to a number of people.

First and foremost, I want to apologize to all of my friends and colleagues who are gay or lesbian. I have no idea what they must think of me now. I have no idea what they were thinking when they first heard or read about my comments. To say that I am ashamed is not putting it in context and certainly not putting it in strong enough terms.

Their friendship and support for me during my entire career and my personal life has been extremely important to me, and today I ask

Privilege

their forgiveness. Just being in the public sphere means little to me compared to the opinion that I value of their opinion toward me, and to them I say I am truly sorry.

To the entire gay and lesbian community, I also want to extend my deepest and most abject apologies.

The comments I made should not be tolerated in any society. They should not be tolerated today. They should not have been tolerated in 1991. They should not have been tolerated in years previous to that. The words I used were more than just hurtful. They are words that should not be allowed to be spoken today, either publicly or privately.

I know there is an awful lot of anger directed toward me from members of the gay and lesbian community. That anger is certainly understandable and, I would say, it is justified. All I can say is that I hope that over the passage of time, my apologies will be accepted.

There are many other people to whom I need to apologize because of their relationship to me. Because of that relationship the criticisms that will be made directed toward me will end up affecting these people. They will in effect probably bear the brunt of much of that criticism, when in fact they had absolutely nothing to do with this incident.

To my family, to my friends, to my colleagues, to my staff, to my Prime Minister, to the people of Saskatchewan and, most particularly, to the people of Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, I offer not only my apologies for my remarks, but I apologize for the embarrassment and the hurt that I have surely caused them.

I also want to make a comment to the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas who raised this issue in question period yesterday. I simply want to thank the hon. member for allowing me to personally apologize to him. He accepted my phone call with that in mind. I will never forget the member's generosity and kindness.

There are times when people say things they do not mean, and this is one of those times with respect to my comments. While it is very, very true I made those hurtful comments, they do not reflect my personal beliefs. They did not reflect my personal beliefs in 1991. They do not reflect my personal beliefs now, which lends itself to the obvious question, if I did not mean what I said, why did I say those things to begin with?

● (1100)

The only explanation that I can give to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of this House is that I was stupid, thoughtless and insensitive. I am not using that as a defence. I am merely stating the way that I felt and the actions that I took.

Let me conclude by saying that there is absolutely nothing I could say inside or outside of this assembly that would be an adequate apology to those people whom I have hurt. I deeply regret and I have deep remorse for my words of 17 years ago. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, and all of my colleagues in this House that I will spend the rest of my career and my life trying to make up for those shameful comments.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his difficult remarks.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***BRANDON'S BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR**

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to salute and offer congratulations to Mr. Paul Crane of Brandon, Manitoba, who was recently named Brandon's Business Person of the Year. Mr. Crane joins a very distinguished group of Brandon business people in being the 27th recipient of this prestigious award.

Paul and his wife, Gail, established Crane Steel Structures in 1981. Expanding it to Winnipeg in 1985, their business has developed into one of the largest design build contractors specializing in pre-engineered steel buildings.

Chamber President Lee Bass summed it up best by stating, "Paul's honesty and integrity in business dealings and in community dealings are beyond reproach".

Paul Crane is quick to credit his family and his staff, whose support and hard work have made Crane Steel what it is today.

On behalf of the people of Brandon—Souris, I want to congratulate Paul Crane, Brandon's Business Person of the Year.

* * *

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Ontario budget offered a balanced approach to fiscal management with these elements of responsible leadership: investments in manufacturing, funding for job creation, targeted poverty reduction, and competitive taxes.

In his speech before the legislature, Ontario's finance minister addressed these areas where partnerships would serve Ontarians and Canadians better: strategic investment in transit, addressing congestion and climate change; a federal initiative to increase transfers for settlement services to match other provinces; and creation of a new border crossing at Windsor, the busiest international trade link in the world.

Ontario is moving forward with health care, infrastructure, manufacturing initiatives and appears to be in tune with mainstream thinking on what drives long term economic growth.

Historically, Ontarians in good times and bad have contributed through equalization to maintain a strong and fair union, and truly in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, have been an honest and reliable friend.

I am certain this House agrees that it is in the national interest to nurture that friendship through partnerships that inspire a new legacy of hope for Ontarians and all Canadians.

● (1105)

*[Translation]***MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Martin Luther King was assassinated 40 years ago today in Memphis. We all recall his famous speech, which is forever etched in our memories, entitled "I have a dream", condemning the segregation of blacks in the United States. His action resulted in the adoption of legislation guaranteeing blacks the same rights as whites in public places and polling stations.

Dr. King fought for equality between whites and blacks and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He was a hero of the black civil rights movement and advocated a fairer distribution of wealth and social justice. The night before he died, Reverend Martin Luther King said he wanted to live a long time. The next day he was assassinated at the age of 39.

Forty years later, his spirit lives on in those who believe in justice, equality and freedom. Let us pay tribute to this great man today and keep in mind the principle of equality among people in our actions as legislators in this House.

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*[English]***ANIMAL CRUELTY**

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tragically, animal abuse and cruelty are alive and well in this country. A quick glance at recent news headlines makes the case: a man threw five puppies down an outhouse pit; a cat was cooked to death in a microwave by a group of teens; a cat was strangled and hung for public display; 27 horses were found dead from starvation.

Canadians have been trying to strengthen Canada's 115-year-old animal cruelty laws, but Canada's federal governments have shamefully refused to pass tougher animal cruelty sentences.

Of Canadians polled, 93% support tough anti-animal cruelty legislation, including law enforcement officers, researchers, farmers, hunters and animal welfare organizations.

We need to crack down on animal abusers with long overdue tough legislation in the country. We will not achieve this through Bill S-203.

I stand with my NDP colleagues to demand that the government end the neglect and cruelty by bringing forward genuine animal protection laws immediately.

* * *

HOCKEYVILLE CONTEST

Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians love the sport of hockey. I am proud to stand and offer a show of support to the town of Port-aux-Basque on its selection as one of the top five entries in the Hockeyville contest.

Mr. Andrew Parsons has led the charge for the gateway town to be named Hockeyville, the Canadian community that best embodies the spirit of hockey and hometown pride.

The town has been awarded \$20,000 for arena upgrades for making it to the top five and now hopes to be selected number one. The winner of the competition will receive \$100,000 for its local arena and will host an NHL exhibition game next September.

The town's contest entry has focused on the economic difficulty faced by small rural towns, yet hockey bonds the communities together and remains strong in spite of all the other challenges.

The town has had its challenges with its rink burning down one September, but it was able to have a new multi-million dollar facility constructed and people skating in November in the following year.

The community is thrilled with making it to the top five and hockey fever is high. We applaud the community's spirit, team effort and success to date and are rooting for them to take home the big prize.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one year ago the town of Leaf Rapids in the Churchill riding banned single-use plastic bags. This ambitious move was the first of its kind in North America. Now it is a regular part of life in this northern town that people utilize reusable bags.

Today, cities big and small are catching on, including a recent ban in San Francisco, California.

The results are clear. It is a policy that works and it is an example of how we can all contribute to a cleaner environment in Canada. Prior to the ban, plastic bags could be found on the sides of roads, stuck in trees and made up a sizeable and unnecessary portion of local landfill. Since the ban was implemented, it has been greatly reduced.

I would like to commend the environmental stewardship of the community of Leaf Rapids and encourage others to look to the north for an inspirational and progressive model toward a greener future.

* * *

CANCER

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April is the Canadian Cancer Society's Daffodil Month, in recognition of the millions of Canadians touched by cancer.

In November 2006, the Prime Minister announced the creation of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. This organization is responsible for the implementation of the Canadian strategy for cancer control, a \$260 million investment in support of a pan-Canadian cancer control across the country.

CPAC will work with governments and non-governmental partners to support the goals of the Canadian strategy for cancer control, which are to reduce the number of new cancer cases and the number of deaths, as well as to enhance the quality of life of those living with the disease. These efforts will result in state of the art

Statements by Members

information about preventing, diagnosing and treating cancer, as well as encouraging new research across the cancer control spectrum being shared across the country.

I encourage all Canadians to join in the fight against cancer.

* * *

●(1110)

[Translation]

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ADVOCACY GROUP

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Impératif français has awarded its Lyse-Daniels, Gaston-Lallement and Impératif français prizes.

Lyse-Daniels prizes are awarded to individuals and organizations that have excelled in their contribution to promoting and protecting the French language and French culture.

The Gaston-Lallement next generation prize is awarded to students at secondary schools and CEGEPs who participate in *Des mots pour le dire*, a poetry contest.

The Impératif français prize salutes an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the vitality of French culture. The prize was awarded to Louise Beaudoin, a former Parti Québécois minister, for her remarkable contribution to promoting la Francophonie and cultural diversity.

Congratulations to the winners, and to Impératif français, who care so deeply about our language, the French language.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL MINE ACTION DAY

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate our Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence for a job well done at the NATO summit this week.

Canadians are also very proud of our government's international leadership in helping to clear landmines.

Today is International Mine Action Day. More than 80 countries around the world are still affected by landmines killing and injuring innocent children at play and farmers as they work daily.

Afghanistan continues to be one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Canada is the world's leader in deactivating and destroying landmines in Afghanistan. Working alongside the Afghan government and the United Nations Mine Action Service, Canada is making a big difference in the lives of the people of Afghanistan. This is yet another example of how Canadians are helping to rebuild Afghanistan.

With our nation's ongoing commitment to the international community, we will continue to see positive change. Our Conservative government is getting things done for Canadians and the international community.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, April is Cancer Awareness Month, a time to reflect on the devastating effect this disease has year after year.

Who unfortunately does not know someone, perhaps a loved one, who has suffered from this terrible disease?

The statistics are distressing. Nearly 159,000 people suffered from cancer in 2007 and 72,000 died of the disease. Men, women, children, seniors are all affected and, despite our efforts and scientific advancements, the disease is still with us.

However, we must not give up the fight against this terrible affliction. That is why we must take the opportunity presented by Cancer Awareness Month to appeal to the government to increase efforts to find a cure for cancer.

I therefore ask all my colleagues to join me in sending a message of hope to all those who suffer from this disease. One day, we will find a cure.

* * *

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, as we commemorate the death of Martin Luther King Jr., we remember. "I have a dream", he said.

At a time when many people prefer to focus on what sets us apart instead of what brings us together, at a time when many people are being left out in the cold not because they lack qualifications, but because they are the wrong colour or have the wrong name, we need to keep Martin Luther King's dream alive for the good of our country.

Access to work commensurate with a person's qualifications is vital to the development of our society and our country. We all have a personal responsibility to help make this happen.

Mr. Speaker, I too have a dream.

* * *

●(1115)

[English]

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. As a political leader, he formed a lesson for us all, of what it is to have a dream and to sacrifice on behalf of that dream.

During the course of his political life, Dr. King was firebombed, stabbed, threatened, harassed by his own government and eventually tragically assassinated. We must all learn to act against injustice wherever we see it. We must, as political leaders, have the courage of our convictions and fight on behalf of others, not ourselves.

King's legacy was that we all must bring our nation together and not separate it along lines of region, race or religion. To quote Dr. King:

If physical death is the price I must pay to free my white brothers and sisters from the permanent death of the spirit, then nothing could be more redemptive.

We all owe Dr. King a great honour.

* * *

ISRAEL

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today a Canadian delegation, including constituents of mine, was the target of deliberate sniper fire while visiting Sderot, an Israeli town that I recently visited, which has endured seven years of relentless rocket attacks, targeting schools, synagogues, playgrounds and day care centres, with the objective of killing Jews because they are Jews.

Indeed, more than 1,000 rockets have been launched in the first three months of this year alone, a double war crime whereby Palestinian terrorists deliberately target Israeli civilians while shielding themselves behind Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

Sderot is the only community in the world today that is a standing target of relentless terrorist attacks. As a mother told me, a child learns "red alert", the alarm notice, before even the words "mommy" or "daddy". Why should anybody anywhere have to live under this terrorism and trauma?

Tragically, the international community remains indifferent and silent. Why has there not been one single condemnation by any international UN agency of these daily war crimes?

We know the surest way to ensure that evil will triumph in the world is for enough good people to do nothing. Let Parliament speak, the international community act and let this culture of impunity end.

* * *

[Translation]

2009 MEMORIAL CUP

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleague, the Bloc Québécois candidate in the riding of Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Claude Guimond, and all my fellow MPs in congratulating the City of Rimouski on being selected to host the 2009 Memorial Cup tournament.

Hockey is recognized the world over as Quebec's national sport. Men and women, boys and girls of all ages are involved in it and passionate about it.

We also want to congratulate the Quebec cities of Shawinigan and Saguenay for being selected as candidates to host the prestigious Memorial Cup tournament.

The Bloc Québécois wishes the City of Rimouski and all the organizers and participants good luck.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS**

[English]

PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, April is Parkinson's Awareness Month, a time to join together to raise awareness and funds to help fight this debilitating disease.

[Translation]

Parkinson's disease affects more than 100,000 Canadians and, by association, another half million, their loved ones.

[English]

Over the next 20 years, it is projected that the number of people diagnosed with Parkinson's will increase twofold.

[Translation]

We must do everything in our power to better understand this terrible disease by supporting research efforts and helping those who are suffering, and those who are taking care of them, through support services and awareness campaigns.

[English]

We must also acknowledge the tireless efforts of researchers who are working so hard to determine the cause of Parkinson's and who are working toward a cure.

I encourage all members of the House and all Canadians to support their local awareness campaigns not only this month, but whenever possible, in the hopes of finding a cure for this devastating disease.

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SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will not easily forget the biggest scandal in Canada's history, the Liberal sponsorship scandal. They will not forget the money that was taken from them. Canadians elect public officials with the understanding that they will manage taxpayer money with the utmost care.

As much as the Liberals hope that this will just quietly go away, this affair is not over. This issue will not go away until those who took advantage of their position of power for their personal and partisan benefit have been held accountable for their shameful actions.

Today, the media reports that Canadian taxpayers will be getting some of their money back. Eric Lafleur, son of Jean Lafleur and a former ad man whose company received \$10 million in sponsorship subcontracts, is being forced to pay back \$150,000. That is good news, but this is just a small portion.

When will Canadians see the rest of the money that was taken from them? Why has the Liberal leader not encouraged those who received sponsorship money to pay it back to the taxpayers? When will we find out what happened to the \$40 million.

• (1120)

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hateful, offensive words of the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre demonstrate a prejudice that is unacceptable for an officer of the House of Commons.

Will the Prime Minister show leadership and relieve the member of his responsibility as parliamentary secretary to the government House leader?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the comments that were made on the tape 17 years ago, which came to light yesterday, were unacceptable and inappropriate. We had from the parliamentary secretary involved a very genuine, heartfelt and sincere apology yesterday and a further one just before we began members' statements today in the House.

We accept that the apology is genuine and it is sincere. It is clear that the member does not hold those views, and we believe the matter at this point is closed.

[Translation]

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hateful and offensive comments were unacceptable for an officer of this House.

Will the Prime Minister show some leadership and relieve the member of his responsibilities as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no room in our country for intolerant comments of the type that were reflected in the statement as seen on the tape. This is certainly the view of this government, that such comments are unacceptable. This is also the view of the parliamentary secretary in a very forthcoming, full and genuine apology that he has offered to the House, to members of the gay and lesbian community and to all Canadians.

We believe that the apology is sincere and genuine. We are satisfied that the member does not hold those views. As a result, we believe this matter is closed.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member was 40 years old when he made these hateful remarks. Allowing the member to remain an officer of the House of Commons debases this institution.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his tepid response to these hateful remarks against gays and Canadians suffering from AIDS tells Canadians that hate, bigotry and prejudice are just fine in his Canada?

Oral Questions

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, quite clearly those kinds of comments are inappropriate and unacceptable, even in the social context where they occurred. Even 17 years ago they were unacceptable. That is something the parliamentary secretary himself spoke to today in his apology and indicated that this would be no justification or excuse whatsoever.

We believe they are inappropriate, and I think all members of the House share those sentiments.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when Reform whip Bob Ringma said that he believed employers should be able to fire gays and visible minorities, he was kicked out.

When Reform MP David Chatters said that gays should not be allowed to teach in schools, he was shown the door.

When Alliance MP Larry Spencer wished for a bill making homosexuality illegal, out he went.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his new party's standards are now lower than both the Reform Party and the Canadian Alliance?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary in question made a quick, complete, unequivocal apology for his remarks. He has recognized that they are unacceptable and inappropriate.

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the comments by the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre are not more acceptable because they were made years ago. When the Prime Minister wanted to get rid of Alan Riddell, he brought out a photo of Mr. Riddell dressed up as a Nazi officer. The photo had been taken 25 years earlier.

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that he and his party will always be influenced by intolerance?

• (1125)

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the conduct of the parliamentary secretary in taking responsibility for his comments, offering a full and forthcoming apology, and demonstrating clearly that his comments were inappropriate and that he does not hold those views are a good model of behaviour. I think we should be satisfied with his genuine sincerity in that regard.

* * *

[Translation]

LANGUAGE OF WORK

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Labour claimed that French could not be designated the language of work for workers governed by the Canada Labour Code because the code does not cover language of work. That is the problem: it creates a legal void at the expense of the French language.

Will the Minister of Labour stop making excuses and do something to give Quebec workers governed by the Canada Labour Code the right to work in French like all other workers in Quebec?

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc and its leader have obviously run out of issues to justify their existence here in Ottawa. They have been in the House of Commons for over 18 years now, and they have never raised these issues. Why did they raise these issues this week, and why are they still talking about them today? It is most odd.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has been standing up for Quebec for 18 years, while the Conservatives have been standing up for Canada at Quebec's expense for 141 years. We saw that happen yet again yesterday when the Minister of Labour tried to make us believe that it was not feasible because big corporations that fall under federal jurisdiction have head offices in various Canadian provinces.

The minister is well aware—as are the Conservatives from Quebec—that the Charter of the French Language applies to all companies in Quebec with 50 or more employees, including several multinationals with head offices throughout the world.

That is just another excuse that proves the Conservatives were not serious when they voted to recognize the Quebec nation. All they were doing was electioneering—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Labour Code covers labour standards issues. Language is not a labour standards issue, although language use does seem to be referred to occasionally.

Companies that fall under federal jurisdiction are aware of the importance of French in Quebec, and they do business in French in Quebec. They work hard to use the French language.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a bus driver who works for a transit company anywhere in Quebec is covered by the Charter of the French Language, unless that person works for the Société de transport de l'Outaouais. Why? Because the STO provides interprovincial transportation and is therefore governed by the Canada Labour Code. This is unfair.

Does the minister realize that every time the Conservative government imposes bilingualism, it sets French back and goes against the interests of the Quebec nation?

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is most odd. Quebecers told us they wanted open federalism based on respect and cooperation, and that is exactly what we are giving them here in Ottawa, with a Conservative government.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are two types of workers in Quebec: those who are governed by the Quebec Labour Code and whose language of work is French alone, and those who are governed by the Canada Labour Code and whose language of work is not French alone.

Instead of floating trial balloons about making constitutional changes to recognize Quebec, would the minister not do better to give workers in Quebec real rights by complying with and enforcing Bill 101?

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc can go on all they want about non-issues, but our government is getting real results for Quebeckers.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is about to endorse the building of an American missile defence shield in eastern Europe. What was scheduled to be only a discussion on a potentiality turned into a green light for George Bush's plan for the system's placement in eastern Europe.

Is this the real reason opposition MPs were barred from the delegation?

The government's decision is a change in Canada's position on U.S. ballistic missile defence and must be debated in the House. Will the approval of missile defence be brought to a vote in the House of Commons?

• (1130)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has made it clear that major foreign policy questions will be brought to votes in the House of Commons. We saw that with the question of the Afghanistan mission with two major extensions.

As for questions about the kind of defences the Europeans have in place, I hardly think that the member would argue that we should be putting those questions to a vote in this House.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a bit more. Alliant Techsystems produces space weapons systems and is missing one component, a highly specialized radar imaging satellite. The missing link is a Canadian RADARSAT-2. It could become a template for all ATK satellites. ATK is heavily invested in missile defence systems.

If the government claims to have not changed Canada's position on the weaponization of space, it must immediately stop the sale of this Canadian satellite technology. Will the government do this, yes or no?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, the proposed sale is something for which the Minister of Industry has to exercise a power of decision. He will be doing that on the basis of the test that applies

and that is determining what is in Canada's best interest. He will be applying that test when he makes that decision.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre said:

The As are guys like me. The Bs are homosexual faggots with dirt under their fingernails who transmit diseases.

This is not an isolated incident. The Minister of Public Safety claimed that AIDS was God's warning to gays. The Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, in talking about gays, said, “—equality doesn't mean treating everybody exactly the same...there are forms of just discrimination”.

Is treating gays as B class citizens the kind of just discrimination that the Conservative Party tolerates?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the kinds of comments that were seen on that tape are not tolerated by this government. I do not believe they would be tolerated by anybody within this House.

Respect for people, regardless of their race, their religion, their sexual orientation is a basic value we share in this country.

I believe that the parliamentary secretary has stated well that he shares exactly that perspective and has taken full responsibility for his remarks.

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to allow these comments to stand with no consequences to the member in question is to condone them.

The division between A class and B class citizens permeates that party's thinking in everything from immigration to gay rights. Those members can rebrand the Reform Party, but they still stand for the same things.

Is the Prime Minister refusing to fire the member because he knows he would also have to kick out other members of his caucus who also demonstrate such intolerance?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not the case. In terms of consequences, I think the parliamentary secretary spoke quite strongly to the consequences he is facing in terms of the shame that he feels, in terms of the damaged relationships that he has, and in terms of a perception that he will have to work years to correct. I think those were heartfelt, sincere and genuine comments.

Those kinds of comments that were made and captured on the tape are not appropriate and not acceptable. I think everyone in this House shares that view.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government may not grasp the gravity of its problem.

It says no discipline is appropriate for these most recently revealed anti-gay slurs. That changes the nature of the issue. It is no longer about a single MP or a parliamentary secretary. It is now about the Prime Minister and his standards.

Oral Questions

Does the Prime Minister not realize that if he does not act on this matter, if he does nothing, then he owns it?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that comments of this nature are not appropriate and not acceptable. This government has spoken clearly on that. In fact, so has the parliamentary secretary in question.

The fact that the comments might have been made 17 years ago in a social context provides no justification. They were inappropriate in that context as well. The parliamentary secretary has taken responsibility and apologized in a sincere, genuine and full fashion.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of government measures before this House right now which seek to confer on Conservative ministers extreme new powers: powers to be exercised in secret behind closed doors, powers to discriminate among new immigrants, powers of censorship, and powers to override democratic rights.

How can Canadians possibly trust the government to make crucial decisions behind closed doors when they have seen what these Conservatives are like behind closed doors and it goes unpunished?

• (1135)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the smear that the opposition House leader is attempting to paint here is inappropriate.

The measures with regard to the film industry were ones that were initiated under a Liberal government in legislation originally by Sheila Copps and John Manley. They are measures that were voted for by everyone in the Liberal Party over there earlier in this Parliament.

For the Liberals, at this point, to cast the kinds of aspersions they are casting right now demonstrates that there is a campaign of fear on the other side that simply has no basis in reality.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AFGHANISTAN

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is falsely trying to convince Quebeckers and Canadians that he will withdraw our soldiers from Afghanistan in 2011. Yesterday, at the NATO summit, he said: "... we will leave Afghanistan after accomplishing our objective, which is training the Afghan army to handle security on its own".

The Prime Minister must be clear. Is the Prime Minister laying the groundwork for extending the mission in Kandahar beyond 2011?

[*English*]

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear in this House. Our military mission ends in 2011.

The Prime Minister said yesterday that we went through a great deal of effort to get that resolution through the House. Anything else beyond that is strictly hypothetical and we are just not going to engage in that. It is purely hypothetical.

I want to point out that this UN-mandated, NATO-led mission is making progress in rebuilding Afghanistan. It is essential we continue this work to ensure the Afghans and their country are stable in a functioning democracy and not a haven for terrorists in the future.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is trying to leave the door open by saying that we will leave once the Afghan army is trained. But if Canada stays in southern Afghanistan to train the Afghan army, it will be impossible to avoid combat with the Taliban, as General Hillier has pointed out.

Will the Prime Minister admit that he is leaving the door open to allow troops to stay in Afghanistan past 2011, under the pretext of training the Afghan army?

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly and firmly, the answer is no.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Jean Pierre Lefebvre, president of the Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec, finds the proposal by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages to have the industry provide guidelines and define the concept of "public policy" are ridiculous. No one in this field has been fooled. Everyone knows very well that the minister is making the offer simply to get out of a tight spot.

Instead of looking for lame solutions, why does the minister not simply remove the reference to public policy that could lead to censorship?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would really love to answer the member's question, but I do not have a clue what he is talking about. He said "these measures" without defining what he is talking about. If he could give me the topic, I will be very happy to respond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will put it another way for the parliamentary secretary. The Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages continues to ignore the Quebec industry, which is asking that she eliminate the reference to public policy.

By giving the industry the responsibility for providing guidelines, is the minister not attempting to shift the Conservatives' desire for censorship to industry stakeholders? Why ask them to manage a problem that does not exist, if not to make them censor themselves?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the member that the bill passed with his party's support. What is he saying? Is he regretting the fact that he passed it?

Oral Questions

The bill is now before the Senate. The minister appeared before the Senate banking and trade committee on April 2. The minister has said that we are reaching out to the industry to work with us on this issue. We are trying to work cooperatively with the industry. That member is attempting to sow the seeds of discord.

* * *

• (1140)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration claims that her proposed reforms will eliminate the over 900,000 case backlog. Her website states, however, that:

Once passed, the new measures will apply to applications received on or after February 27, 2008. Those who applied prior to February 27, 2008, will not be subject to the new measures—

How are these new rules going to help eliminate the backlog?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, previously, the Liberal Party was suggesting that we just throw more money at it, which it failed to do.

We are putting additional resources toward tackling the backlog and toward processing new applications but we are also trying to do things smarter and better. We are introducing new administrative procedures that will allow us to process things faster and more efficiently because, if we can reduce the time it takes to process each application, we can process more applications in the same period of time.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, try as it may to hide its Reform roots, the Conservative government's immigration policies have not changed in 20 years. When the Conservatives were the Reform they wanted to scale down immigration by 100,000 people.

Since forming government, the Conservatives have actually admitted 36,000 fewer landed immigrants. When will they admit that their real strategy is to shut the door on immigrants?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us face it. It was the Liberals who shut the door on immigration when they allowed the backlog to balloon so that it takes up to six years for people to get here. I would call that slamming the door pretty hard on immigrants.

Because of what they did, we have had to expand the temporary foreign worker program to allow business to get the talent it needs from overseas. That is why we were able to welcome 430,000 new Canadians last year to this country, the highest in over 100 years.

The Liberals are doing nothing but spreading fear. They should be ashamed of themselves.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Conservative Party wants to cherry-pick which immigrants come to this country.

Canadians are wondering what criteria the minister will use to put some on the A list and others on the B list, and simply veto other applications altogether.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a wonderful country and that is why

the number of applications for people to come here each year exceeds the capacity we have to process and welcome them.

We know that the previous prime minister from the other side had 54 top priorities. We will narrow that list down so that we can actually tackle the backlog mess, which the Liberals created, by identifying categories that best meet the needs of Canadians and the Canadian industry.

I do not know why the Liberal Party wants to keep people waiting 10 years to come to this country.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that it has nothing to do with a backlog. The sweeping changes the government wants to make to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act essentially mean that the minister will have the sole power to hand pick which applications will be considered. There will be no accountability and no transparency.

Why is the government going back to its Reform Party roots for its immigration policy?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how very typical, and we have seen so many examples of this lately. When the Liberals cannot stand on their own record they go to the fear and smear tactics that they use so often.

We are trying to get more people here and we are trying to get them here faster. We are trying to get families reunited faster and skilled workers here sooner.

If we were to listen to the Liberals, we would think that the proposals to get people here faster are at the end of the world. They are so against this that they are supporting it.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last fall, in anticipation of global economic turmoil, Canada took pre-emptive action to bolster our economy with \$60 billion in broad based tax cuts, including business tax reductions and keeping our promise to reduce the GST to 5%.

While the Liberals would run massive deficits, the NDP would send personal and business taxes soaring, and while the Bloc cannot do anything but complain, this Conservative government is taking prudent and responsible action to ensure Canada's economic fundamentals remain solid.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance please update the House on our government's record on job creation?

Oral Questions

●(1145)

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we did see some good news this morning in the March job figures: 15,000 new jobs were created in March, which means that the number of Canadians working is at a record high.

Since the Conservative government took office, 813,000 new jobs have been created. We have provided that environment. Of those jobs, 80% are full time jobs. Those are the advances by this government.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Assembly of First Nations has created a framework for appointing a first nations auditor general and ombudsman.

However, yet again we see Conservatives casting a negative light on aboriginal leaders in Canada. For years and years, the AFN has brought the minister accountability proposals to move forward with financial certification, improve reporting and build management capacity. None have been acted upon.

When will the minister act on the very real and concrete proposals made by the Assembly of First Nations?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we expect to perceive accountable governance in our communities.

I know that first nations citizens across Canada in the communities throughout our great land also expect accountability. Our government will be working with first nations governments to ensure that accountability will be in place.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is proving yet again it cannot be trusted.

The aboriginal audit announcement plays on false impressions and myths created by Conservatives about first nations funding and accountability. In fact, the audit clause proposed creates no new powers or process.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has always had the audit option under existing contribution agreements.

When will the government stop the shell game and implement the AFN proposals on accountability?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member suggesting more accountability needs to be in place in certain areas of our government, including in the agreements that we have with first nations communities. Unfortunately, when we attempted to bring about this measure within the accountability act, the hon. member voted against that.

I believe first nations leaders throughout Canada are looking forward to continuing a transparent relationship with our government and we will continue to do that.

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AIRBUS

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Brian Mulroney refused to return to the ethics committee and he refused to provide documentation to back up his claim.

He refused to explain why no one at Thyssen knew he was lobbying for them, as he claimed. He refused to explain his bizarre plan to sell tanks to the Communist Chinese right after the Tiananmen Square massacre, as he claimed.

Given Mr. Mulroney's refusal to cooperate, will the government stop protecting him and ensure the public inquiry, which it can no longer delay, has a broad enough mandate to finally get to the bottom of this sordid affair?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the House well knows, the government asked Professor David Johnston to develop terms of reference for an inquiry. He provided a preliminary report earlier in January and today is actually the date for him to provide his final recommendations for a public inquiry. The government will be reviewing those and then we will be moving forward.

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can delegate any authority he wants, but the responsibility remains with him to name the terms of reference of this inquiry.

[*Translation*]

Canadians want answers even if the Conservatives do not want to provide any. Canadians want to know why a Conservative Prime Minister accepted envelopes of cash and they want to have a public inquiry to get to the bottom of this.

If there is no public inquiry, then Canadians want to know why the current Conservative Prime Minister is covering for Brian Mulroney. Why is he protecting a Conservative Prime Minister?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will take note of David Johnston's recommendations regarding a public inquiry. Upon receiving the recommendations, we will begin the inquiry.

*Oral Questions***MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment stated that he met his cabinet colleagues in Ottawa on October 10, 2006, to discuss the contribution agreement for Ottawa's light rail project. But, according to proactive disclosure and the media, the ministers that he claimed to have met were not even in town that day.

Are these government records and the media reports false, or was the minister simply trying to mislead the committee? Can the current President of the Treasury Board confirm the date when this meeting may have been held?

• (1150)

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will answer the first question about media reports that are false. Surprisingly, it is true that occasionally some media reports are false.

However, in terms of the actual issue in question, I think it has been established quite clearly that there was no wrongdoing on the part of the minister. The opposition Liberals continue to try to cook up something, notwithstanding the OPP having said that he has been fully cleared.

That being said, it is a clear indication of how the Liberal Party operates. It is not interested in policies. It will not stand up to vote on issues in the government. It is only interested in finding some way to get back to the power it covets.

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of the Environment could not come up with a single example in Canadian history where Treasury Board interfered in a municipal contract as he did, leaving Ottawa on the hook with a quarter of a billion dollar liability. He claimed that officials advised him that the closing date of the LRT contract could be extended without cost and yet he offered no names and could produce no briefing note.

The government has had three days. Will it table the briefing note with the names of the officials who advised the minister?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite clear that the decision on whether or not to proceed with that rail project was made by members of Ottawa city council, including, I think, five of whom have sat as Liberal candidates in the past or Liberal members, and they were on the side voting to cancel it.

Therefore, that was not a decision made by this government or by that minister but rather by the local council.

The futile efforts of the Liberal Party to continue to look for scandals where they do not exist is an illustration of the fact that that is a party that has no policy, has no positions and will not take a stand on any issue in the House but to look for any way it can find to get back into power.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Papineau asked a question yesterday, but the parliamentary secretary did not understand and provided an answer on another subject. I will therefore ask the question again.

Mohamed Kohail, the young Quebecker sentenced to death by decapitation in Saudi Arabia, was not able to appeal because his lawyer was thrown out of the court. Kohail and his brother, aged 23 and 17, were placed in detention in January.

What is the government waiting for to call in the Saudi Arabian Ambassador and demand that these two young Quebeckers be returned to Canada?

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, our ambassador will be meeting with officials from the Saudi ministry of justice to seek assurances that due process will be observed in the appeal process. As I have mentioned and as the Prime Minister has mentioned, we are requesting an appeal of the Saudi authorities to address this issue.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we also learned that China has sentenced a citizen, Hu Jia, who dared to speak out against the regime, to over three years in prison. This is a violation of fundamental human rights and freedom of expression.

Does the Minister of Foreign Affairs intend to increase pressure on China to respect human rights, and how does he plan to do so?

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada learned with deep regret of Mr. Hu Jia's sentencing.

Freedom of expression and religion are universal human rights and we note that China's constitution guarantees human rights for all its citizens.

Canada will continue to call on China to release Mr. Hu Jia, as we have persistently done since his detention in December.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 17, six members of the KI First Nation, known as Big Trout Lake, were jailed for protesting mining activity in their traditional land. This includes Cecilia Begg, a great grandmother, who is now being held in a facility in Kenora.

Now, members of the community have started a hunger strike. Chief Donnie Morris, Grand Chief Stan Beardy and all Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities want to know what the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will do to resolve this dispute.

Oral Questions

What will the minister do to support and protect the community of Big Trout Lake now left without leadership? Will the Conservative government help them or will it forget them?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member who obviously advocates on a continuous basis for the first nations people in his region.

We continue to have a relationship with this community. However, this case is something that has been initiated by the provincial authorities and it is in their jurisdiction.

• (1155)

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government continues to get things done, especially for Canada's aboriginal communities. Just recently we announced that we are moving forward on matrimonial real property rights to help protect families and vulnerable aboriginal women and children.

We are cleaning up the disastrous Liberal legacy of a shocking 193 high risk water systems and our northern strategy is receiving praise from northerners.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tell the House how we are living up to our commitment of delivering accountability to aboriginal peoples and Canadians?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member who has taken a great interest in these issues as he sits on the aboriginal affairs committee with me.

We continue to promote greater accountability, transparency and oversight in government operations. That was one of the top priorities outlined in our Federal Accountability Act of 2006.

Just this week, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, following in the footsteps of many other departments, announced new audit clauses to be brought about in our government's commitment to bring accountability to all Canadians. They will show that first nations and tribal councils are accountable to their constituencies also.

I am very proud to be a part of this government that continues to work for all Canadians.

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CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many believe the government interfered in the U.S. primary elections by a deliberate disinformation campaign. NAFTA-gate continues to have serious consequences for Canada's relations with U.S. Democrats.

Now the trade minister adds insult to injury by accusing those who criticize NAFTA, such as Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, of

being irrational. What a way to strain relations with candidates, one of whom could become the next U.S. president.

Will the government apologize to Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton for the minister's insulting comment?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the substantive policy question of free trade and NAFTA, we are not going to make any apology for standing up for Canada's interests. One of those aspects of standing up is recognizing that NAFTA has been very positive for Canadians. It has been positive for Americans too.

Our standard of living is higher than ever before. As a result of that, there are more Canadians working than ever before, partly as a consequence of that free trade agreement. We believe it is very much in Canada's interests and we will continue to stand tall and advance that agenda and we will always fight for Canada's best interests on trade issues.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of Canadian families are actually earning less now than when the agreement was signed, so that simply does not hold water. It must be deliberate policy to undermine relations with U.S. Democrats.

Weeks ago NAFTA-gate broke and the alleged disinformation campaign of the government to interfere with the U.S. primary elections was revealed. The Conservatives are sweeping under the carpet the biggest scandal we have had with the U.S. by privatizing the investigation. When is the government going to release the mandate and results of the inquiry and when are we going to know the truth about NAFTA-gate?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question of determining where the unfortunate leak occurred of the foreign affairs document out of the consulate in Chicago is ongoing. That is being led by the Clerk of the Privy Council.

It is a matter of great concern to us because our relations with the United States are important and the subject matter, the North American Free Trade Agreement, is particularly important for Canadians.

That agreement has been, contrary to what the hon. member said, very, very productive for Canadians. We had a massive increase in job growth as a result of increased trade with the United States. Canadians have been successful. We have been able to compete. We have been able to do well. More Canadians got jobs at higher incomes because we can compete.

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie River Delta's 45,000 lakes are the lifeline and lifeblood of many northern and aboriginal communities. Coastal communities in the north are experiencing more flooding sooner than anticipated. Widespread environmental changes could occur in the delta because of the climate change crisis. Yet the government is ignoring the warning signs. Its narrow agenda for the delta is focused only on development and the oil and gas industry.

In light of all the warnings, how can the government justify the ongoing failure to get serious about the climate change crisis?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike that member and her party, in fact, our government is getting very serious on this important issue of environmental change. That is why we brought about an important new measure to bring down greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by the year 2020. This is a remarkable initiative brought about by our environment minister. I am very proud to be assisting him on that front.

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● (1200)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the previous Liberal government, we saw systematic and continued reduction to our fisheries and oceans enforcement resources.

Fishermen and the fishing industry were neglected by the previous Liberal government and suffered directly from these cuts. The fine individuals who do the job of monitoring and surveillance of Canadian waterways were stretched to the max due to lack of resources.

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans please update the House on the progress our government has made in this area?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that one of the first actions of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans was to immediately reverse the irresponsible Liberal cuts to enforcement and conservation.

We continue to add officers. Very recently 21 new officers celebrated their graduation from the DFO training program in Regina. These men and women will be posted across the country in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and, of course, British Columbia. This brings the number of new hires to 105 since our government was elected in 2006. More will be added in the near future.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, during the first federal-provincial meeting on housing since the Conservatives came to power over two years ago, the minister

responsible refused to commit to reinvesting in affordable social housing.

What is the minister waiting for to reinvest in affordable social housing, as he is being asked to do by Quebec and the provinces, as well as the municipalities and the agencies involved? What is he waiting for to transfer to Quebec and the provinces an additional \$1 billion from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation surplus?

[English]

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has made substantial investments in housing, with \$1 billion in affordable housing, \$270 million in a homelessness partnering strategy, and \$1.4 billion in new housing trusts.

This government cares a lot about vulnerable Canadians who find themselves in the position of needing affordable housing. That is why we made a big investment. We would like to thank the Liberal Party for its help by supporting our budget.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the sinking of the *Queen of the North* off B.C.'s north coast was an avoidable tragedy. B.C. Ferry Services asked for and received safety exemptions from the federal government.

Other single compartment vessels had sunk prior to the sinking of the *Queen of the North*.

Has the government taken any responsibility for this disaster, or even attempted to apologize to the families who were devastated by this tragedy?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government takes very seriously the safety of Canadians, particularly when it comes to transportation matters. I am sure the Minister of Transport will be happy to sit down and take up the matter with the member.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nearly a month ago the government supported a House motion that it would stand consistently against the death penalty as a matter of principle both in Canada and around the world. Yet the government still will not seek clemency for Ronald Allen Smith, the only Canadian on death row in the United States.

Today, we learned that ACLU is intervening on Mr. Smith's behalf to stop this cruel and unusual punishment.

How can the government affirm it is against the death penalty around the world and yet not seek clemency for Mr. Smith's death sentence?

Why does it affirm one principle in the House and oppose that principle outside the House?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Rob Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has stood steadfast on the issue of human rights and on this issue, not only in Canada but around the world.

Mr. Smith has availed himself of some rights, in the country in which he is, to an appeal and it would be inappropriate to comment on that appeal at this time.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives believe that a 14-year-old who breaks the law should be punished as an adult, but the Conservatives also believe that a 40-year-old should be able to utter hate and prejudice and escape all punishment.

Why the double standard? Why are the Conservatives soft on hate?

• (1205)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the type of comments he is referring to are unacceptable to this government, unacceptable in this country.

The parliamentary secretary has apologized for the comments on the 17-year-old tape. The comparison, I think, between the two issues really does not apply.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS[*English*]**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to three petitions.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, under Standing Order 32(2) to table, in both official languages, a treaty entitled, "Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America on Pacific Hake/Whiting". An explanatory memorandum is enclosed with the treaty.

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[*Translation*]**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House

Affairs regarding the list of members of the committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in this report later this day.

[*English*]

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

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

* * *

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL TRADE TRIBUNAL ACT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-533, An Act to amend the Canadian International Trade Tribunal Act (appointment of permanent members).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a private member's bill. It is an act to amend the Canadian International Trade Tribunal Act. This bill would essentially allow a representative of working men and women from across the country, as selected through consultation with the Canadian Labour Congress, to have one member on the Canadian International Trade Tribunal who actually represents working families from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will agree there have been trying times over the last 20 years since the free trade agenda started. Essentially two-thirds of Canadian working families have seen their real incomes decline. One way we could help to address that problem of a decline in real income would be to make sure working families are represented on the Canadian International Trade Tribunal. I hope that members of the House will support my private member's bill.

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

* * *

• (1210)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

UNBORN VICTIMS OF CRIME

Hon. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have two petitions from constituents in Miramichi.

All petitioners are very much concerned with assaults on pregnant women. They ask the House to give speedy passage to Bill C-484.

INCOME TRUSTS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present, yet again, another income trust broken promise petition on behalf of a number of residents from Calgary, Alberta.

The petitioners remind the Prime Minister that he boasted about his apparent commitment of accountability when he said “the greatest fraud is a promise not kept”. They remind him that he promised never to tax income trusts, but he broke that promise by imposing a 31.5% punitive tax, which permanently wiped out over \$25 billion of the hard-earned retirement savings of over two million Canadians, particularly seniors.

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

UNBORN VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured today to present yet another handful of signatures that are in support of Bill C-484, my private member's bill, which would provide for criminal sanctions against someone who would attack a pregnant woman and thereby injure or cause the death of her unborn child. This petition has a total of almost 2,500 signatures.

The petitioners urge that this bill be passed.

That brings a total number of names now presented to 17,547 in the House.

* * *

•(1215)

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 204 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 204—**Ms. Jean Crowder:**

With regards to the First Nations Infrastructure Fund (FNIF): (a) how has the government advertised and solicited applications for First Nations infrastructure projects; (b) how many applications have been received; (c) how many applications were found to be eligible; (d) what type of infrastructure requests were in the applications; (e) what is the total amount of funds dispersed under the FNIF; and (f) which applications have been accepted?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during question period, in response to a question from the member for Vaughan, I said that we had welcomed 430,000 Canadians last year. I would like to correct the record on that. We actually welcomed 430,000 newcomers.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2008

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-50, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 26, 2008 and to enact provisions to preserve the fiscal plan set out in that budget, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to participating in this debate. It is a debate that is extremely important for many reasons.

I would like to give the debate a bit of context as it relates to the immigration component of Bill C-50.

As Canadians know quite well, Canada today has an aging population and a declining birth rate. We are also faced with a skills shortage, of which people on both sides of the House, I am sure, are quite aware. We also live in a world that is extremely competitive when it comes to globalization and competing for economic well-being and raising the standard of living and quality of life of the people we represent.

Given that context, we have to wonder why the Conservative government, during an era when Canada needs people from all over the world, would reduce the number of landed immigrants allowed to come to Canada. In the first two years the Conservatives have reduced the number by 36,000. From an economic, social and cultural perspective, that type of measure simply does not make any sense.

Government Orders

When I heard the government would introduce a section on immigration through Bill C-50, which is a budget implementation bill, I thought perhaps it would come up with something that would speak to great financial commitments to immigration.

I was really surprised to find out that the budget bill only has a 1% increase in overall departmental funding. What is really odd about this is the fact that we are faced with a backlog of 900,000 cases, yet there is such a meagre increase in departmental investment when it comes to immigration. That is of concern to me as an individual who appreciates the great contribution newcomers have made to Canada.

It is quite puzzling to see the government trying to sneak this through a budget implementation bill. It is also puzzling that it will be reducing the number of landed immigrants in Canada by 36,000 and is not seeing immigration as an important pillar to Canada's future success.

There is a history here. We can go back to Diefenbaker, who attempted something very similar to what the present Minister of Immigration has attempted to do to deal with the present backlog. This attempt by Diefenbaker's government was pushed back by communities and members of the House of Commons, who felt that it simply was not fair.

The government's response to the global challenges we face and all the issues we have to deal with is found basically in three things that I will highlight, and I draw this from the budget bill.

The first change to consider is that of clause 11. Currently, the act requires that an immigration officer shall issue a visa to any person who meets the requirements set out in the act. If passed, these amendments would grant the minister the power to arbitrarily decide that a person no longer meets the requirements they once did. That person's application may no longer be processed and a visa may no longer be granted.

Individuals who fulfill all the requirements and who have been waiting patiently for years to have their applications reviewed may all of a sudden be advised that their applications category is now being denied. That can be done in a very arbitrary way, just because. That is unfair.

● (1220)

It is simply not justice that, at any point in time, one individual's whose application category may have in fact been accepted is now not accepted any longer because the minister decides that is what she wants to do today. Tomorrow she can change her mind and change categories and requirements and do as she pleases without really debating the issue. Everything becomes effective immediately when she wants it to become effective. That is unfair. It is not following due process.

The claim is that all this is to deal with a backlog. When we do a bit of research, what happens? We discover that does not make sense either. When we go to the departmental website, we find this quote:

Once passed, the new measures will apply to applications received on or after February 27, 2008.

Those who applied prior to February 27, 2008, will not be subject to the new measures and will be dealt with fairly under the existing rules.

If these rules are not applied to the backlog, then how will they help the backlog? Exactly what does "will be dealt with fairly under the existing rules" mean? Am I being told that the new rules are unfair? Is that what the minister is telling Canadians? Is she saying that anybody prior to February 27, 2008 will be dealt with fairly, but after that they will not be dealt with fairly?

These are quotes that concern me a great deal. I am sure these quotes concern the hon. member for Beaches—East York, with whom I am sharing my time, and she will also elaborate on all of these points.

This is unfair legislation. It speaks to a total disregard by the Conservative government to the immigration community, to immigrants who have helped build our country. It is time the Conservatives come clean with their agenda. They need to explain to Canadians why, in their first two years in government, they have reduced landed immigrant landings by 36,000. There have been 36,000 fewer immigrants allowed into Canada. Why is this happening? Why is the Conservative government shutting its doors on immigrants?

The Conservatives can fudge the numbers. The government can talk about over 400,000 people who have been allowed into Canada. They are not talking about landed immigrants. They are talking about student visas and other permits that are given.

Then we look at clause 87. There is a new concept called "Instructions" that does not exist in current legislation. This allows the minister to cap immigration applications, set categories of applications to be considered, deny the processing of certain application categories. The danger is that these instructions can be issued at any time and take effect immediately. They will not be required to be pre-published or debated. This process, if passed, would lack fundamental transparency and ensure accountability.

In this day and age, when Canada requires the help of immigrants from across the globe, the people who have helped build this country, we cannot stand still in the House of Commons and accept from the Conservative government an agenda that shuts the door on immigrants in a very arbitrary way simply because the government feels like it.

The government also tries to fool Canadians by saying that it is serious about reducing the backlog of 900,000 applicants. What did the government do? It increased the departmental budget by a mere 1%. The parliamentary secretary knows the job will not be done with \$22 million.

When the minister says she is going to eliminate the backlog, she knows she is misleading Canadians. She knows she will be unable to deliver. She knows she will not get her job done.

● (1225)

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment.

Government Orders

I think this member should, first, stand and apologize for what the Liberal Party did to the immigration system over 13 years. Six ministers and four terms in office, most of them majorities, and they did not do anything. Shamefully, they increased the backlog from 50,000 to 800,000. This member should stand and say, "I'm sorry. We're ashamed for what we've done to immigration." That is what he should do. He should not fearmonger.

I will just quote what Susan Riley said in the *Ottawa Citizen*:

But while some concerns about the changes are valid, some amount to fear-mongering—which isn't limited to the Liberals.

Let me further quote from an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. It stated:

What the Conservatives propose is common sense...For the Liberals to exploit this, however, not only ignores the national need for the party's own political advantage, but also ignores the ugly truth that it was the Liberals who created this problem. In the years 1993-2006, the immigration backlog grew from 50,000 to 800,000.

The 429,000 newcomers admitted include those who were skilled workers and temporary foreign workers and those students who needed work to meet our economy and the demands of our economy. They are in those numbers. Those are true and correct. The trend is upward, more newcomers, more immigrants, faster and more efficiently. That is what we are proposing to do.

He should stand and apologize for the past record.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must be kidding that I have to apologize. Come on.

The Conservative government stated that you would eliminate the backlog. Since you have been in office, the backlog has actually increased. Now, you can fudge your numbers. You can talk about 400,000—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Vaughan is an experienced member of this House. He is a privy councillor. He knows not to address other members in the second person but in the third person.

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

The reality is that, as the hon. member well knows, I know that he knows these facts because I speak to him regularly, the Conservative government, in its first two years, has actually reduced the number of landed immigrants coming into Canada by 36,000.

Now, the Conservatives claim of course that they understand the demographic pressures that Canada is facing. They claim that they understand that with emerging markets like China and India there is greater competition for skilled labour. They claim to understand all these, but their actions speak to a different reality.

When they shut the door on 36,000 people, when I look at their history leading back to the years of Diefenbaker, and when I look at their roots as the Reform Party when they actually called for the reduction of landed immigrants by 100,000, these are in documents that are part and parcel of your genetic makeup in understanding—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Questions and comments. The hon. chief government whip.

Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I could go on for quite some time about this, but I know time is short, so I will limit my comments.

I would ask the hon. member to think about a prospective immigrant, a person who would apply, and certainly I have met those people. I have had the great privilege of travelling quite extensively in my role as a parliamentarian over the past almost 15 years that I have been honoured to be the representative for Prince George—Peace River in this House.

When we are in foreign countries, we can see the enthusiasm of especially young people who want to immigrate to Canada. Let us put ourselves in the position of some young people, for example, say, in China. They are 19 or 20 years of age. They are finishing their university education and they apply to come to Canada. They want to immigrate to our great country. Then they are told, over a series of interviews, that the backlog is six to seven years. Imagine the disappointment of those young people and imagine how much could change.

I ask the member to reflect back on his life. Between the ages of 19 and, say, 25 or 26 a lot can happen. People meet future spouses, they fall in love, sometimes they start families, they start a career, and six or seven years later the Canadian authorities get a hold of these individuals after putting their applications for immigration through the process and they say, "Okay, we've accepted you". Their whole situation has changed.

That is what we are trying to do. We are trying to change this backlog that was created by the previous government.

I ask the hon. member, in all sincerity, to reflect upon that and to say, is there not some way that we can bring forward change as we are trying to do, so that we do not have to disappoint thousands upon thousands of prospective immigrations whose situation changes dramatically?

● (1230)

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua: Mr. Speaker, I really do not have to put myself in the shoes of an immigrant because I am an immigrant myself to this country. I appreciate all the experiences I have had to deal with the changes that occur to the life of an immigrant, so the member can rest assured I am very sensitive to those concerns.

The reality is, even if we were to apply those changes, the changes the hon. member is advocating, which I do not support, they do not apply to the backlog. That is something the hon. member, I am sure, understands quite well. That is one of the reasons why this piece of legislation is deeply flawed.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we all know, and government members know, that there is nothing in the current legislation that limits the power of the minister to otherwise determine the most efficient manner in which to administer the act. She has that kind of power. There is all the power that the minister could possibly have, except that it is transparent.

Government Orders

Maybe we need to have a little definition about what we mean by immigrant. I was one. I came here in 1957 as a child. I was very much involved with immigrant communities in the city of Toronto as a volunteer. Let us see, these are people who apply to come to Canada as permanent residents. Once they are approved, they arrive here. They have a residency card. After three years they are eligible to apply for citizenship. Then they become full participants in our social, economic, cultural and political life, and the infrastructure of Canada. They become an inherent part of our nation and participate in the future building of our country.

That is pretty clear, I would think. Nonetheless, the government insists on saying, or as the minister just corrected a few minutes ago, that we have allowed in the country 429,649 new Canadians. In my view, in all of my 30 years of volunteerism in the community, new immigrants means new Canadians. They are still immigrants who come to settle here.

However, that figure is not really true because in 2007, only 236,689 were actually given landed status visas, and the previous year it was 262,000, so actually 36,000 less came.

The number is being inflated we know now by foreign students, foreign workers and all kinds of visitors visas, et cetera. Some of these people are coming here to assist with work and some are coming here to study. They are not immigrants, people who are fighting to come to this country. The government is purposely misleading Canadians, purposely fudging the numbers, intentionally to confuse and complicate the whole thing.

I am quite insulted by all of that. Having worked with immigrant communities for decades in the city of Toronto, I find this totally offensive and so will many people.

Let me tell the hon. members opposite how reform of immigration is actually done. When the former minister of immigration, the hon. Lucienne Robillard, decided that we needed to upgrade the Canada Immigration Act and the Refugee Act, she actually commissioned a study. Then the minister, the bureaucrats and other members of the House travelled across this country of ours and consulted with Canadians to determine what kind of Canada they wanted to see, the kinds of rules they thought were needed, and the kinds of changes that should be made to the Immigration Act.

Open and transparent legislation was placed in the House of Commons. It was debated at committee. The rules and regulations were gazetted for a period of, I believe, 90 days, so that again we could have feedback from Canadians as to whether those rules would have unintended consequences or cause problems. It was a transparent and open process administered by a minister who was open and worked with Canadians. That is how we change the situation.

The present government, unfortunately, is doing something altogether different. First, it has not tabled a proper bill in the House. It has tacked it after the fact to the budget bill, which is totally insulting to not only the House but Canadians of different backgrounds and all citizens in this country.

The government is trying to excuse itself by saying that we have 900,000 people backlogged in the system and that is why we have to do this.

First of all, the powers for the minister to decide at the last minute to change categories, changing which category comes in, more or less, whether it is the family class or not, the minister may decide to reduce these numbers and nobody would know.

• (1235)

To do all of these changes, none of those things will affect the backlog. She can cherry-pick a few people or change the categories, but it will not change the backlog. What would change that is if the government had followed through on \$700 million of monies that had been allocated to address the problem of human resources at the immigration department.

I have said for many years that one of the problems of the immigration department was that it did not have enough human resources to deal with the applicants and deal with the work that it had.

But no, the government chose to cut that back and now it is trying to say it is dealing with a backlog to which it has been a partner in increasing for the last while and that is supposed to resolve the problem. The minister in private quarters, somewhere invisible, unobserved and unchecked by anyone, is going to change things and decide when, where and who gets to come to this country.

There is right now, for instance, a point system. If the minister really and truly decides that we need to have more skilled labour, that is fewer university graduates and more skilled labour because that is where the shortage is, she is free to change the point system.

She is free to publish that in the *Canada Gazette* openly and for people to comment. The minister has all the powers under the current legislation to act and adjust if she needs to. She does not have to totally eliminate that part and have the government give her the kinds of powers where she can do as she pleases behind closed doors.

I remember a time, which was before my time, but I do remember history, when southern Europeans were not allowed into this country. There were very few Italian Canadians or southern Europeans who came and only worked on the railway in the northern part of the country. They were not necessarily allowed to bring their spouses.

We know what happened to the members of the Chinese community with the Chinese head tax. We also know what happened to Italian Canadians during the last world war when they were put in military camps and declared enemies of the state. We know what happens when there is too much power and it is not transparent.

We live in a modern democracy. We are not a backward third world country and Canada's history is not unblemished. Obviously, in the past, with the kind of policy that existed, my family and I would never have been able to come here because we are from the Mediterranean part of Europe.

Therefore, these changes scare me. I find them offensive. I think they are extremely destructive and anti-democratic. I believe that the government needs to review its reasons for doing what it wants to do. The numbers are clear. I think it is time that the government stop purposely misinforming the public and the House with its numbers.

Government Orders

When the minister proudly stands up and says 429,000 new Canadians, they are not new Canadians. They are not here to stay. A student is here to study and will most likely leave unless in a year he or she applies. Some individuals with work permits come here on a temporary basis unless they apply.

Immigrants are people who have decided to make their life in this country on a permanent basis, to commit for the rest of their life to this country. That is a new Canadian and they are not visitors either.

This is highly unacceptable, highly insulting, and I would hope that the government members will review their conscience and get out of the gutter that they have been in with respect to their former Reform situation because that is where they were.

When I listened to some of the members from the Reform Party when I was in the House and the racial slurs that they used to throw across the floor at that time, it made me worry about the kinds of policies that they would bring forward.

I think today I have seen it. I have seen what they can do and this is exactly what it is: secrecy, behind closed doors policy, no transparency, no democracy.

● (1240)

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member runs out of facts, she tries to fearmonger and throw out various innuendoes, but the fact of the matter is that the process is open. The member is allowed to speak in this House. All members are allowed to speak to the bill. It will go to committee. There will be an opportunity for witnesses to be called, for this issue to be directed, and it will be brought back to this House for further debate. It is an open process. The instructions will be published in the *Canada Gazette*. It will be in the annual report to Parliament. It will be charter compliant.

The member remarked that we should take some lessons from the past government in terms of how to reform the system, but the past government actually caused the backlog to balloon from 50,000 to 800,000 so it is not something I would say we should take into account.

The hon. member's party has voted against \$1.3 billion in new settlement funding for newcomers to Canada. The Liberals voted against a foreign credential referral office to help newcomers. They voted against our cutting the \$975 immigrant head tax.

I am asking the member, will she support this particular reform that will actually allow more people to come in faster and become landed Canadian immigrants, or will she oppose it? Will she follow her leader's orders or not?

Hon. Maria Minna: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the hon. member's contention that this is a transparent process is a joke. If the Conservatives wanted to have a debate on immigration in this country, which I think we ought to have, then this should never have been attached to the budget after the fact. This suggests to me that they have no intention of making it a real discussion.

Further, if they wanted it to be a transparent situation, they would not have put forward a bill that gives extensive powers to the minister. It is obvious those kinds of powers are not transparent.

Quite frankly, the hon. member when he is talking about backlogs yet again, the powers the minister is being given have nothing whatever to do with eliminating the backlogs. They could do that in many other ways. I ask the hon. member to do the right thing.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's concerns. I believe this bill is riddled with all sorts of poison pills. They go against the spirit of progressive legislation and progressive direction. They are contrary to what I think are solid Canadian values, values which most Canadians support, to have a fair and transparent system.

It is indicative of the government to play a bit of a shell game when it comes to policy, as the member mentioned, by tacking this on to the budget bill and the Minister of Finance becoming proprietary of it because of that.

I was heartened to hear one of her colleagues in his speech today say that he would be voting against the bill. We on this side of the House have been clear that we will stand together and vote against the bill, unless the whole thing can be changed, and I do not see that happening. However, we will fight the good fight on it.

At the end of the day I accept the member's analysis. I think the bill is the wrong way to go. I am wondering if she will join her colleague and vote against this bill.

● (1245)

Hon. Maria Minna: Mr. Speaker, I will make that decision when I see whether or not the government decides to separate the bill. This issue needs to be debated across this country. It needs to be separated from the budget bill because it has nothing to do with budget per se at this point.

If the government chooses at some point to show some respect for immigrants in our country and for all Canadians and for the development of public policy, this belongs at the immigration committee where the expertise lies for a proper debate on this issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I am about to recognize the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan on resuming debate, but I would like to advise the House that I have given her notice that on Bill C-50 we have now had five hours of debate, so from now on, speeches rather than being 20 minutes will be 10 minutes. She has the floor.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand to speak in opposition to the budget implementation act, Bill C-50. New Democrats have been very clear that we feel the Conservative agenda fails working and middle class families, that this budget is taking Canada in the wrong direction and, in fact, will actually cause some grief for many Canadian working and middle class families.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, in its alternative federal budget, clearly outlined some of the concerns. I want to quote briefly from its paper. It says that budgets are all about making choices. That is certainly true of this budget and previous budgets. It indicates:

Government Orders

The legacy of this minority government is one of neglect: the Conservative government has failed to address some of the most pressing issues of our time. Climate change is the most pressing planetary issue in terms of its potentially catastrophic environmental, human and economic consequences, yet the [Conservative] government's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has been widely condemned as ineffectual.

It went on to say:

Canadians are working harder but are struggling to afford the basics: housing, child care, post-secondary education. There has been nothing in the previous two Conservative budgets to address these issues. Canadians have not been able to count on the government to get them through shaky financial times.

That is a very good summary of why New Democrats have been so strong in opposing implementation of the budget. I want to thank the member for Trinity—Spadina for introducing an amendment that would allow us to put a halt to this absolutely wrong-headed initiative.

My own riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan has been working very hard over the last several years to diversify its economy, but it is still heavily reliant on the forestry sector. Despite the \$1 billion community development trust that was announced prior to the budget, this budget implementation bill and the economic statement before it, although it acknowledged the difficulties in both manufacturing and forestry, that \$1 billion disadvantages B.C. in that it does not recognize the percentage of GDP that is reliant on forestry. The New Democrats have consistently called for a national forestry and manufacturing strategy. We do not see the kind of movement to make sure that those important sectors have the kind of support that is needed to keep them healthy.

On one hand, people talk about corporate tax cuts, but if a company is going into receivership, corporate tax cuts do not mean a darn thing. In my riding, just in the last two weeks, another company that makes products for the forestry sector has gone into receivership. That follows on two other forestry companies over the last couple of months that have closed their doors. This represents hundreds and hundreds of jobs in my riding. Yet the government is indifferent to the plight of working families in my riding and other ridings across this country.

I want to talk about housing for a moment. The budget failed dismally on the housing front. In a recent meeting of provincial housing ministers, the government once again failed to talk about a national housing strategy. In fact, the minister who attended for a brief period of time would not commit to extend some of those very important funding programs, and I will address that in one moment.

I want to mention a couple of numbers relative to my riding, from CMHC's statistics. This is a credible organization. It talks about trends. In Nanaimo apartment rents are rising and the vacancy rate is dropping. Many people on fixed and low incomes rely on rental accommodation for their living space. As rents rise, as vacancy rates drop and as no new units are being built, people are being squeezed out of their homes. For people who have lived in the same place all of their lives, it is unfair to tell them that they have to move now because they simply cannot afford or cannot find accommodation.

In the south end of the riding, in Cowichan, there was a study done on inadequate shelter in the Cowichan Valley from the fall of 2006. It reported:

No new rental units have been built in the Cowichan region during the last twenty years, therefore, the supply is scarce. Vacancy rates in private rental buildings in the City of Duncan and in North Cowichan have declined in recent years from 8.4% in October 2002 to 1.6% in October 2005.

In 2001 more than 6% of households in the CVRD, the Cowichan Valley Regional District, had incomes of less than \$10,000 and an additional 14% had incomes of between \$10,000 and \$19,000.

● (1250)

Those kinds of numbers show that a significant proportion of households in my riding are paying far more than 30% of their income for housing. Housing is one of the social determinants of health. When people cannot access affordable accommodation, it impacts on every other aspect of their lives. In a country as rich as ours, we should not be asking people to pay more than 30% of their income for their housing. They should have access to safe, affordable, clean housing.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been highly critical of the government. It talked about the fact that there needs to be a national housing strategy. In its plan, Recommendations for a National Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, it says:

Housing is a basic and fundamental issue affecting individuals and communities and an important determinant of health and well-being.

The federation went on to talk about the fact that it is not only a social issue, that it is an economic issue. If workers are not well housed, it is very difficult for them to go to work each and every day and be productive. In fact, people who are forced out on the street often lose their employment because they have no place to shower, no place to get adequate sleep, no place to store their work clothes.

Housing is a fundamental human right. We should not be having this conversation in this day and age in Canada.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has laid out a very concrete action plan. It has a five year target and specific things around ending chronic homelessness, expanding the stock of affordable non-market housing, reducing the backlog in core housing needs, preserving and modifying Canada's existing social housing stock, and extending and revising the residential rehabilitation assistance program to improve conditions in existing private stock and to rehabilitate 10,000 homes annually. That is some of the funding we are going to see disappear over the next couple of years. That funding has been absolutely critical for the economic and social health and well-being of our communities.

I want to briefly talk about transit. In my riding we have what we think is a jewel in a rail corridor with some functioning rolling stock. Although there was money announced in the budget around transit, there was no money targeted for Vancouver Island. Vancouver Island is growing by leaps and bounds.

Government Orders

The organization Our Corridor talks about the importance of investing in rail in our community. It can lead to sustainable economic development, reduce greenhouse gases, and support the efforts in terms of greening our transit systems. What it needs is some very specific federal attention.

This is an opportunity for the federal, provincial and municipal governments to come together in a very strong partnership to invest in rail on Vancouver Island. This initiative has been driven by municipalities and a number of businesses and first nations on Vancouver Island. I would urge the government to look at this very important investment.

In the time remaining I want to speak about first nations education. Consistently the Conservative government has talked about education as being a way out of poverty, yet the Conservative government has consistently underfunded education for aboriginal people. To put this in context, article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected—

Article 14 states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages—

These set a context that although Canada did not support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, countries all over the world have supported this declaration. Canada must agree that education is not only an economic driver and an important way of culture, but it is also a fundamental right in terms of ensuring that first nations and Inuit people across this country have access to education.

• (1255)

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague across the floor with respect to housing and affordability.

One of the issues in my riding, which is equally very needy, is an issue that I come up against day after day. It is the issue of foreign credentials and having those foreign credentials brought into the mainstream of acceptance within Canada's workforce.

It appears that the government is attempting to expand the list of people who could come to this country and deal with the waiting list. The government said that it would establish an agency that would deal with the issue of foreign credentials. However, we have 300 referral offices across the country and we still have no resolution to this issue, much to the frustration of thousands of immigrants who are here and cannot practice their trade or profession.

I wonder if the member would address that as I think it is a concern and it is not being dealt with in the bill that has been presented.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, over the years, New Democrats have taken a strong role in talking about foreign credentials and recognizing the skills that new Canadians bring to this country.

Many times, we actively recruit people from overseas who have particular skills but then we do not allow them to work in their particular profession, which is a huge loss of human potential. Far too many people, whether they are engineers, physicians, nurses, physiotherapists or computer technicians, are not working in their professions because we have failed to recognize their credentials.

We need to work with our provincial partners to ensure that people who come to this country can work and contribute to the Canadian economy.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member concerning affordable housing and homelessness.

Is she aware of the \$270 million investment in our homelessness partnering strategy to help those in vulnerable communities that have more poverty?

I also want to know if she is familiar with the housing trust, which is a \$1.4 billion investment?

This government, working with the provinces, has invested over \$1 billion in affordable housing. The member's province will benefit from all these programs.

To suggest that we are not meeting our commitments on affordable housing is misrepresenting our government. We have done exactly that. Annual funding for affordable housing and homelessness has never been higher than it is now.

The member might check her facts to get a better understanding of how much this government has done for those who are homeless and those who are looking for affordable housing.

• (1300)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, in 2004, the NDP worked hard through Bill C-48 to ensure that there was money for housing.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities said:

The main impediment to expanding these efforts is the scheduled expiry of all federal social housing funding programs in March 2009. This will mean the termination of \$2 billion in funding available in the 2007–09 period. At the same time, ongoing federal subsidies for existing social housing are already expiring, and in the next 10 years, annual spending on assisted housing will decline by an additional \$500 million.

The Conservatives are failing to implement a national action plan on housing and homelessness. They are playing a shell game with the money. They are using money that was often already allocated. They are not demonstrating leadership on this very serious issue.

We have been sanctioned by the United Nations special rapporteur on the housing crisis in Canada. This government's failure to act means more people will end up on the street or in inadequate housing.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did not speak to the budget but I did follow the debate and some of the issues fairly closely and I would like to make a couple of comments with regard to the housing issue that was just debated among members here.

Government Orders

Most of the homeless data and research is done in urban centres. A research study, which was actually funded in large part by the Government of Canada, was done on homelessness in Toronto. As the member has raised this issue, I tried to reflect on some of the numbers, which I think would exemplify why it is important for us to get the facts and to know them, rather than present issues as very simplistic and having simple solutions.

In the Toronto situation, and I think it was from the Anne Golden report, 35% of the homeless were people who suffered from mental illness. If we provide some sort of accommodation, whether it be a rent supplement or rent geared to income, they will not take it. A lot of this happened because we are not providing the mental health facilities for a very serious problem in Canada, and that is mental illness.

Twenty-eight per cent of the homeless in Toronto were youth on the street who had been alienated from their families. It was found that 75% of those youth who were on the streets of Toronto had suffered from physical or mental abuse in their homes. This does not have a lot to do with economics. It has to do with a serious social problem, and that is family issues and dealing with our youth. In fact, when 75% of these youth on the streets are suffering from physical or mental abuse, the problem is much more than providing a little box somewhere for them to live. We need to deal with the problem at the beginning.

Of the homeless in Toronto, and I am sure in Winnipeg, Manitoba it would be about the same, 12% were aboriginals off reserve. It is kind of interesting. A very significant number of aboriginals who are living off reserve are a significant number of the homeless in our country. This is a shame. I must admit that when the Kelowna accord was brought forward I thought there was hope for aboriginals, with the leadership as a starting role, to bring the dignity and assistance that was needed in our aboriginal communities, but the Conservative government decided that Kelowna just was not of interest to it.

Ten per cent of the homeless represent abused women on the street. We can only imagine that there are a lot of circumstances where women, who have been the provider for their families in terms of caring for the family homes and the children, do not have the economic independence maybe that their spouse has after a divorce or after a break-up because of abuse.

Therefore, what happens to women? Some in the shelters do their job but there is the mental duress of having a breakdown and of being an abused person. I know, having spent five years on the board of my own shelter for battered women, that there is a great deal of mental stress and duress with regard to that. We have people on the streets and just saying that we will give them a spot to live in a subsidized social housing unit or something like that will not solve the problem.

Finally, about 10% of the homeless were actually on the street for economic reasons.

Putting it all in context, it would appear that the solution to homelessness in Canada, particularly as it relates to urban centres, is not to provide subsidized homes to people. We need to deal with the root causes. When we approach problems, we need to demonstrate

first that we understand the problem and then, second, apply solutions that deal effectively with the root causes of the problem.

If we take that as an approach to legislation and to budget making, if we look carefully at this budget, we will find that it has not identified a problem. It has not defined a problem. It has not identified a priority or an objective.

● (1305)

This budget has presented Canadians with a litany of gimmicks. It is trying to look attractive to a bunch of different disparate groups. It is called trying to appeal to voters that one wants to get for the next election.

Governing is not just about spending taxpayers' money to get votes, or buying their vote with their money which is what it really is all about. Why I can say that is because when the Liberals took over government in 1993 it inherited from the Conservative government a \$42 billion deficit in that fiscal year. That was \$42 billion more spent than what was brought in.

We could not just cut some expenses somewhere and get rid of \$42 billion of overspending. It took some time. It took three years. It was not until 1997 that the Government of Canada finally boasted of a balanced budget. It was a lot of pain for everyone in the country. Cuts were made to things as fundamental as health care, social services and the operations of the Government of Canada itself took the biggest hit of all.

The good news was that after about three years the fiscal position of Canada was at least back in a balanced position. Then, with strategic initiatives, with investment in infrastructure, which we started in 1993 with the investment in science and technology and research and development, we invested in our future, and very slowly surpluses started to be developed.

Members will know that we paid down over \$100 billion worth of debt. When we started, 42¢ or 43¢ of every \$1 that was being paid by Canadian taxpayers to the Government of Canada to manage had to go to pay down the interest on the debt that we were carrying.

It was nothing like that any more. All of a sudden, as the fiscal health became stronger, more surpluses were being developed. It was not a matter of just paying down the debt. As we earned it, as Canadians earned it, as our economy started to grow, as we started to get more efficiency in the operations of the government, more and more dollars were there to put back into health care and into other issues that were the priorities of Canadians.

We had 10 years of balanced budgets. When the government across the way took over in January after the election, the House of Commons started the first session of the current Parliament in April. The year end of the Government of Canada is March 31. Therefore, before the government even did a thing, we reported for that last year a \$10 billion surplus, which the Conservatives like to take credit for.

I do not care who takes credit for it but the fact is the Conservative government inherited a very healthy fiscal position. We had cut taxes and we invested in the economy. We invested in people and in our health care and in the services they needed. We believe that governments have a role to play in the lives of people, particularly those who are not in a position to help themselves.

Government Orders

Therefore, it was really important to get the fiscal house in order. It led to the appropriate investments. We took the opportunity to get our fiscal house in order and Canadians have been the beneficiaries.

Where are we now? The government is forecasting no more big \$10 billion surpluses that can be invested or used to pay down debt. What is it talking about now? One SARS or one unforeseen circumstance will put this country back in deficit.

The bottom line is that the budget that the Conservatives have presented to Canadians has no vision and has no purpose other than trying to buy votes with Canadians' own money. It is bringing us back down to the old days of being back in deficit financing. That is what Canadians have to look forward to with another year of Conservative governing.

● (1310)

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the record, we should review and analyze. After 10 years of doing work in homeless situations and visiting shelters from coast to coast and throughout the United States, the most commonly accepted numbers of homeless people who are in the shelters and the conditions and reasons for being there are: approximately 25% because of addictions; 25% because of severe mental illness; and fully 50% because there is not affordable housing for them.

The member refers to the Anne Golden report for the city of Toronto. That report was done over 10 years ago. It identified the simple fact that singles housing had been torn down, removed and never replaced. It was identified, and the fact remains today. Singles housing is the largest need of those who are in the shelters. With affordable singles housing, the number of homeless could be drastically reduced.

The point being that over 13 years, the Liberal legacy is that the number of homeless people in the shelters is at a record all time high. Would the member explain why, after 13 years of Liberal management on the homeless file, the number of homeless is higher than it ever has been in the history of Canada?

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, first, the homeless are not in shelters. As the member knows, they have shelters for abused women. If he wants to provide statistics on abused women, that is fine, but I was not talking about that.

Therefore, I will not talk any further about the issue with the member other than to say there are root causes of homelessness, which involve all levels of government. The federal government also has a role to play.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, part of what my talked about was the priorities of the government in the budget. Our party happens to believe its priorities are wrong and are taking the country in the wrong direction. Working families are not going to be helped by this, particularly those who are being squeezed from what we have called the prosperity gap.

However, I want to get to where the Liberal Party is at. We had a debate in the House about corporate tax cuts. It seems to me that the Liberal line for today is that corporate tax cuts are good things because eventually the benefits will trickle down and there will be more jobs created and there will be a green and pleasant land.

What I am trying to understand from the Liberal Party, and maybe he can help me, is we changed the budget in 2005 to provide \$4.5 billion in investments for infrastructure in cities, for housing and for key investments. We had to get the Liberals to change the budget because they wanted to give out corporate tax cuts. They seem to now believe that is the wrong direction, that corporate tax cuts are the way to go, and they support the government on that. We had the debate in the House on this.

I am confused because by the same token they take offence to the Conservative government pointing the finger at the Government of Ontario for not cutting corporate taxes further. I am trying to understand this. Do they believe in sweeping corporate tax cuts or key investments in our infrastructure?

● (1315)

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, no one who would have a responsibility to govern a country would say, "Do you want this or that?" The recipe for governing is to balance the needs of the nation based on the priorities and be dynamic enough to move forward.

Last October the leader of the official opposition gave a speech in which he said that tax cuts were important. Let us at the content of the speech. He was talking about providing R and D incentives to companies so they could invest in green technologies, just like Dupont, the company he and I visited that very week before. We found that by changing to greener technologies in the processes of its business, it was saving \$300 million a year on fuel alone.

Again, as I said in my speech, we do not look at things in a linear basis. Everything we talk about has much more information. Let us inform ourselves and make right decisions.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this afternoon to join the debate on Bill C-50. First, I would like to state the position of the Bloc Québécois on this budget, which does not meet the conditions the Bloc set for giving its approval. You may have heard our position several times, but I want to state it for the people who are listening to us and watching us on television and who may not have heard it.

It is our position that the budget does not provide any direct, immediate assistance for the manufacturing and forestry industries, which are in crisis. It does nothing to help the workers and communities hit by the crisis. It contains no measures to reimburse seniors who have been shortchanged by the guaranteed income supplement program. It continues to take a polluter-paid approach rather than a polluter-pay approach, and it refuses to make a 180-degree turn on the environment.

Government Orders

Clearly, the budget makes no major investment in culture and does not undo the many ideological cuts made by the government in programs such as the court challenges program and the women's program. It also appears—the budget is clear on this—that the Minister of Finance is going ahead with his crusade to create a single securities commission for Canada. This plan has been criticized not only by the Bloc Québécois, but by the entire National Assembly and Quebec's finance minister, Monique Jérôme-Forget, who did not shy away from reacting publicly to the budget in the national media. And I am sure that she has made her views known to the Minister of Finance and the Premier of Quebec.

This bill covers a number of issues. As I have just 10 minutes, I would like to focus on areas I take a special interest in, such as natural resources. As a member of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, I paid special attention to this part of the bill.

The budget allocates \$10 million over two years to help the forestry sector break into the international market as a model of innovation. The timing is good, because the committee has just completed a study of the sector. Many witnesses told us that \$10 million is a nice gesture, but that it is not enough, given the crisis, and that more money is needed. We agree with the many witnesses who took the time to meet with parliamentarians during our hearings on the forestry crisis.

I am still wondering about this. We did not have a chance to talk to the Minister of Natural Resources because his agenda was too full to appear before the committee members and explain things to us. Apparently, however, he will soon come and tell us about the \$300 million in the budget for nuclear energy, most of it earmarked for the new CANDU reactor and for safety upgrades at the Chalk River lab in Ontario.

Naturally, we would not oppose making a facility safer. You all know about what happened recently at the Chalk River lab. The reactor was shut down last winter for safety reasons. Unfortunately, that resulted in the president, Ms. Keen, being dismissed. The Bloc Québécois still believes that the minister engaged in political interference by removing her from her position on the eve of her appearance as president of the facility before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources for a specific study.

As the natural resources critic for the Bloc Québécois, I look forward to hearing what the minister has to say and asking him questions. For now, we have no way of knowing how that \$300 million is going to be distributed, how much taxpayers will be asked to pay for the development of the advanced CANDU reactor, or how much of the \$300 million will be used to make the Chalk River site safer.

• (1320)

It is rather worrisome. They have started to think—and the Minister of Natural Resources comes right out and says so—that nuclear energy is an energy of the future, a clean energy. But my political party and I do not believe it is a clean energy. Although with this energy there are no greenhouse gas emissions, there is still work to be done before it can be considered clean, since it generates waste, and we are still unsure of the long-term effects of this waste, or how it will be managed.

It is natural that debates are being held in the provinces, since energy falls under provincial jurisdiction. The fact remains that the current Conservative government is promoting nuclear energy in Canada and all over the world. The Bloc Québécois and I do not think this is a good sign. We see that nuclear energy would perhaps cut down on greenhouse gases in the short term, but it also brings about major problems related to the management of nuclear waste, the safety of citizens who live near nuclear facilities, and the possibility that terrorists could use the waste to create weapons.

Now, I will talk about the environment. In the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, we did a study on the oil sands and we came to understand the significance and size of such operations in Canada in terms of the future and the potential of these operations.

Obviously the oil companies, the explorers and the beneficiaries are investing a lot, but in exchange, they make huge profits. One thing is certain, people in my riding have written to me to ask why oil companies, which make huge profits by operating in areas such as the oil sands—the royalties, after all, go to the Province of Alberta—and which have received so much assistance from the taxpayers of Quebec and Canada, are receiving more assistance in order to generate less pollution.

I would point out that \$240 million was allocated in the budget for carbon capture and sequestration pilot projects. I truly believe that oil companies and other producers of fossil fuels have the means to invest in green technologies. In fact, I believe that it is their responsibility to do so. It is not up to taxpayers to once again dig into their pockets. The budget already forces them to do that. The money in the budget is not government money but taxpayers' money. More taxpayer's money is being put on the table to help this industry develop green technologies. I believe this is a corporate responsibility they can afford.

In addition, in the last budget, there was a gradual withdrawal of the accelerated capital cost allowance for oil sands operations. We would have preferred that this measure be eliminated altogether, but it was nevertheless a step in the right direction. In this budget, the allowance has been reinstated for carbon dioxide pipeline developers. That means more money in support of polluters, who make large profits, so they can continue their exploration.

This responsibility should be shouldered by producers.

In closing, I will say that the budget allocates \$12 million to national parks. There is a federal wildlife reserve in the riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry which could use a great deal of money for its operations and to improve programming so as to become more accessible to the public and provide an appreciation of nature.

Private Members' Business

Unfortunately, programming for reserves was neglected. We would have liked to have seen a bit more financial support in the budget for federal wildlife reserves.

• (1325)

This bill ignores many groups and issues including seniors, older workers, the homeless, social housing and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It is with regret that I must interrupt the hon. member, but she has already mentioned that I gave her notice.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

[*English*]

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I ask my question, I want to mention that in 2006 the oil and gas sector paid over \$5.5 billion in corporate taxes. Therefore, she should not tell the House that it has taken more from the government than it has given. It has given a great deal through corporate taxation.

The member brought up seniors issues. She also brought up the tax dollars that we are to guard. Retroactivity is something we have looked at carefully and it cannot be done for seniors. However, we have done more for seniors than any other government in history. We have increased the guaranteed income supplement by 7% and we have increased the earned exemption. These are things that were asked for by the House and delivered.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, just a quick reminder: the last tax cuts that the government gave will benefit oil companies and will prevent the government from redistributing several million dollars to various programs like social housing and homelessness. For instance, there is no amount actually set aside in the bill to address homelessness.

I am not sure if you are aware, but the HPI program will be ending soon, in March 2009. There is no money set aside, no vision in this budget that would indicate that the Conservative government is concerned about homelessness and that it has a vision for the future and a plan to help the homeless.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): 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.

When we return to the study of Bill C-50, the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry will have 3 minutes left for questions and comments.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1330)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from March 10 consideration of Bill S-203, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals), as reported

(without amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Hon. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we again bring before the House further discussion and debate on a bill dealing with animal cruelty. It has been a long journey. In fact, between the House of Commons and the Senate, this legislation has been debated over and over through different bills for more than a decade.

We are really dealing this afternoon with Bill S-203, a bill that was presented in the Senate by Senator Bryden and which I introduced in the House some weeks ago. Basically we are dealing with amendments to the Criminal Code in sections 444 to 447.

The debate of this has been long. It has affected many people. In fact, many members of Parliament are receiving emails from different groups who stand on different sides of Bill S-203.

Today, I would like to present my argument in terms of the bill that has come from the Senate, a bill that reflects the need for changes in the Criminal Code which would place greater emphasis upon animal cruelty and to those who might be accused or involved with cruelty to animals.

Many people are affected. In fact, when we looked at other bills in terms of Bill C-10 and so forth, we began to realize how broad our constituency was in dealing with those involved and affected by animals. We found in fact that one of the largest jurisdictions is with people who have family pets, but of course the livelihood of many people involved in farming is also affected by what we might do in the House in terms of legislation.

We found that universities and university researchers, and those involved in research for humans dealing with animals, have great concerns of what legislation might produce. We have minor groups such as those who maintain zoos and those who are involved with circuses. In the previous legislation, we were also involved with fishermen because fish became part of the debate on previous legislation.

Above all, we have hunters and trappers, many people in our first nations communities who historically depended upon wildlife for their livelihood.

When we look at all these different groups, we look at what proposals come forward, what animal rights groups say to us, what pet owners say to us, and above all, those in our farming communities. It is interesting to note that in terms of pets, many Canadians have tremendous affection for the cats, dogs, horses, birds and those pets which they maintain in the vicinity of their homes.

When we look at American statistics, this industry, the industry of providing health resources to pet owners, approaches \$40 billion U.S. a year. So it is a growing industry. We have to respect and certainly pay great thanks to those who love their animals, those who care for them, those who maintain them, and those who are so interested in any legislation which the House and Parliament would provide.

Private Members' Business

I am not sure that the Criminal Code is the right place. Probably in future parliaments, we will see special legislation outside the Criminal Code. In terms of animals and cruelty, and respect for animals, the care for animals, we also have our provinces who have a vested interest in some of this because in terms of our wildlife, most wildlife species are protected under provincial legislation.

However, I would like to answer a few of our critics who have called upon some members of Parliament not to support Bill S-203. I personally have some difficulty with that logic because Bill 203 does not preclude the necessity or the fact that further legislation could be brought to the House which would improve upon this legislation. It would tend to see that the various groups that I mentioned are not seriously and adversely affected. It would indeed demonstrate that all of us as Canadians can enjoy the fact that we as a Parliament and as a nation can see that our animals are properly protected and that we can find joy, warmth and comfort in the relations that we have with them.

•(1335)

Bill S-203 basically deals with any person who kills, maims, wounds, poisons or injures cattle, or kills, maims, wounds, poisons or injures dogs, birds or animals that are not cattle and are kept for a lawful purpose.

If people were to commit offences under the Criminal Code with that description of it, they could be charged with an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years. That is a very serious penalty for those who would be convicted. Furthermore, if the court should decide it is not an indictable offence, there could be fines of up to \$10,000.

This cruelty, in section 445.1, says that anyone who wilfully causes or, being the owner, wilfully permits to be caused unnecessary pain, suffering or injury to an animal or a bird or anyone who assists at the fighting or baiting of animals or birds, or promotes, arranges, conducts, assists in, receives money in such circumstances, can be convicted of an indictable offence and receive up to five years in prison.

Section 446 goes on to state that anyone who, by wilful neglect, causes damage or injury to animals or who is involved with a domestic animal or a bird or an animal, whether it be wild in nature or in captivity, who abandons it in distress or wilfully neglects or fails to provide suitable and adequate food, water, shelter and care, would be committing an offence.

Furthermore, Bill S-203 also attempts to preclude from ownership of animals people who are guilty of these offences. The court, under section 447.1, may make an order prohibiting the accused from owning, having the custody or control of, residing in the same premise as an animal or bird during any period that the court considers appropriate, but in the case of a second or subsequent offence, a minimum of five years.

What I am advocating today is that the House could approve at report stage and third reading this legislation. I know it is not perfect, but it is a tremendous improvement upon the present legislation which was put in place almost a century ago.

There is another bill, in fact, that is before the House. It is further down than my own. However, there will be an opportunity in the

future for another government or another member to bring a private member's bill before this assembly that can be debated.

I hope that as time progresses we as Canadians can develop legislation which is valuable to all, protects our animals, birds and fish and, above all, does not cause harm or injustice to our farmers, fishermen, and those who rely upon these species for their livelihood.

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary for Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise to speak to Bill S-203, a bill introduced by Senator Bryden that would amend the animal cruelty provisions in the Criminal Code. Bill S-203 has passed the other place and has been reported back to the House by the justice committee, without amendment, and is now before this House for report stage and third reading.

We have before us a private member's bill that has one simple objective, improving the law's ability to deter, denounce and punish animal cruelty and make offenders take greater responsibility for their crimes.

In stating my support for Bill S-203, I recognize that some hon. members have expressed the view that they cannot support the bill because it does not address some limitations in the current law. It is true that Bill S-203 does not amend current offences or create new ones. However, as members well know, none of the bills introduced by the previous government over the course of about seven years ever pass both chambers.

I would like to take this opportunity to speak to two motions to amend Bill S-203, which were recently tabled by the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

The first motion proposes to delete the long title of the bill. This motion is irrelevant to the objective of Bill S-203, which is to increase penalties for current offences. Therefore, I will be opposing the motion.

The second motion is to delete clause 1 of the bill. The bill only has one clause and so that obviously is not warranted either.

Thus, the combined effect of both motions would be to completely gut Bill S-203 of its title and substantive provisions. I, for one, support Bill S-203 and anyone who does obviously will not support either motion.

Hon. members are well aware that if Bill S-203 is passed by this House with any amendments, the amended bill will have to go back to the other place for reconsideration. The report stage amendments tabled by the opposition are an obvious tactic to obstruct or delay any progress that we can make in strengthening our animal cruelty laws. I really have to question the logic and intent of this.

Let us face it, Bill S-203 is a step in the right direction, which in no way prevents any future legislation from being brought forward.

Again, I have to question the motives of anyone who would want to prevent us from moving forward and strengthening our animal cruelty provisions today.

Sending the bill back to the other place raises the prospect that it will join a long list of previous formulations of animal cruelty amendments that were not supported by both Houses. This is unproductive and unnecessary.

Some hon. members of the House have voiced criticism of what Bill S-203 does not address. It is important to consider whether the increase in penalties in Bill S-203, coupled with the current animal cruelty provisions in the Criminal Code, would provide more protection to animals than if the bill had not been passed. I believe the answer to this question is a resounding yes. Moreover, increasing penalties with regard to animal cruelty has been one of the issues that all proponents of stronger animal cruelty legislation have been able to agree upon over the years.

Currently, the Criminal Code provides a number of distinct animal cruelty offences. Some offences prohibit very specific forms of conduct and others are more general in nature. The offences are set out in sections 444 to 447 of the Criminal Code. The two most frequently charged offences are those of wilfully causing unnecessary pain, suffering or injury to an animal and causing pain, suffering or injury by neglect.

• (1340)

These types of actions are in fact what most Canadians think about when they think about animal cruelty. Cruelty can be intentional, meaning the result of conduct that a person knows will or would likely cause harm, or it can be the result of gross negligence or severe inadvertence.

With respect to maximum available penalties, all offences, except those concerning cattle, are summary conviction offences only. This means that the maximum sentence an offender can get is six months in prison, a \$2,000 fine, or both. This maximum applies no matter how heinous the act of cruelty may be.

By contrast, offences in respect of cattle are pure indictable offences and subject to a maximum of five years imprisonment.

One question raised by the law and addressed by Bill S-203 is whether this distinction is still justified. I will return to this point in a moment.

The Criminal Code also contains what is called a prohibition order. This mechanism allows a judge to order a convicted offender to refrain from owning an animal for up to two years.

Prohibition orders are mostly preventive; they actually work to keep animals away from animal abusers. In this way they are aimed primarily at preventing future cruelty toward animals. Prohibition orders are imposed relatively often in animal cruelty cases. The courts clearly feel that the prohibition order is a valuable tool at their disposal in dealing with the people who abuse animals.

Bill S-203 proposes three changes to the current animal cruelty regime, all in the nature of penalty enhancements.

All of the measures address concerns that have been identified with the existing law. There is strong agreement across all sectors that the low maximum penalties for cruelty are inadequate, both to denounce animal cruelty as unacceptable and to punish acts of

cruelty when they do occur. Bill S-203 responds to this concern and does so in the following three ways:

First, Bill S-203 would increase maximum terms of imprisonment. It would make all offences hybrid, meaning that the prosecutor may choose to proceed by way of summary conviction procedure or by way of indictment, depending on the seriousness of the case.

Currently, all the offences, except those in relation to cattle, are straight summary conviction offences. These would be hybridized by Bill S-203.

Bill S-203 makes the distinction between penalties for two categories of offences: one for injuring animals intentionally or recklessly; and the second for injuring animals by criminal neglect, to which I have already alluded. This is an important distinction. Some people commit cruelty on purpose. Others commit cruelty by extreme neglect.

Under traditional criminal law principles, knowingly or intentionally doing something is more blameworthy than doing the same thing by gross neglect.

Bill S-203 would introduce a new power to allow the sentencing judge to order the offender to repay the costs of medical care and other forms of care that another person or organization spent caring for the animal that was abused. This new power would be a means of holding the offender financially responsible for the costs of their crime.

Those are the three principal amendments. Unfortunately, I was not able to elaborate on the second major one, but together they constitute a significant improvement to the current law and one with which all Canadians would agree.

I encourage all hon. members to support Bill S-203 and to oppose the two motions currently before the House.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, true to its reputation, the Bloc Québécois carefully read Bill S-203 when it was before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. It listened with interest to the various witnesses and is well aware of the limitations of Bill S-203.

We are aware of the importance of properly protecting animals from cruelty, so we proposed a series of amendments to improve Bill S-203. Among our proposals was the idea of introducing a clear definition of what an animal is. We also sought to protect stray as well as domestic animals. We also wanted to clarify the criterion for negligence, thereby making it easier to prove. Finally, we also proposed an amendment to formally ban training cocks to fight. Unfortunately all the Bloc's proposed amendments were rejected and the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights agreed on February 14, 2008, to report the bill without amendments.

That is not stopping the Bloc Québécois from supporting Bill S-203 in that it is, in fact, a small but real step in the right direction and does not prevent the possible study and adoption of a more complete bill in line with Bill C-50.

Private Members' Business

The Bloc Québécois does oppose the amendments proposed at report stage by the NDP. These amendments seek nothing less than to kill the bill. Their first amendment would remove the title and their second amendment would remove the rest. The NDP's logic in all this is especially twisted. Instead of voting in favour of an improvement to the legislation, even though we know a lot remains to be done—it is true—the NDP prefers the status quo that it nonetheless vehemently criticizes. Where is the logic in that?

If the NDP truly had animal protection at heart, it would act differently. It would follow the Bloc Québécois' example and act responsibly. Although the Bloc Québécois is aware of the limitations of Bill S-203, it finds that this bill is a small but real step in the right direction, and does not hinder the possible study and adoption of another bill I will speak about shortly. The Bloc Québécois is making no secret of this. It is in favour of a real reform of the animal cruelty provisions and will seriously study this matter again, unlike our colleagues, apparently.

Introduced by the Senate, Bill S-203 is the result of a long legislative process. Indeed, in recent years, six bills were introduced by the Liberal government of the day, specifically, Bill C-10, Bill C-10B, Bill C-15B, Bill C-17, Bill C-22 and Bill C-50. To those we can add those proposed by the Senate, namely, Bill S-24 and Bill S-213, the two predecessors of Bill S-203.

All those bills sought to modify the offences set out in the part of the Criminal Code that deals with cruelty to animals. Some of the bills went even further, however, and proposed real reforms to this bill. The Bloc was particularly in favour of the principle of Bill C-50, which would have created a new section in the Criminal Code to address cruelty to animals, removing this topic from the sections of the code that deal with property.

However, since that reform raised a number of problems, Bill S-24 was introduced in the meantime, to allow much more modest changes. Bill S-203 is a copy of Bill S-213, which was itself a copy of Bill S-24—I hope people are able to follow me.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill S-203, even though we are aware that it does not go far enough. But it is better than nothing. Such a bill will send a message to anyone who mistreats animals. Protecting animals against certain despicable actions will always remain a concern of the Bloc Québécois. The current maximum sentences under the Criminal Code are too lenient for the seriousness of the acts committed.

The bill does not jeopardize legitimate activities involving animal death, such as agriculture, hunting and fishing. This bill, however, is less comprehensive and therefore does not replace Bill C-373, which is a revival of Bill C-50. However, we are not here to discuss that bill today.

The bill amends the Criminal Code to increase the maximum sentences in cases of cruelty to animals. For prosecution by indictment, the maximum sentence is five years. For summary convictions, sentences can range from six to 18 months, along with a possible \$10,000 fine.

• (1355)

In the past, judges could prohibit those found guilty from owning or residing with animals for up to two years. Now that ban can be for

life. The judge can now require the offender to reimburse costs arising from his or her actions.

Obviously, the bill does not solve all of the existing problems. As I said earlier, this is a baby step, but these new penalties will provide better protection for animals until such time as animal cruelty provisions can be reformed significantly.

By increasing the penalties, we are sending a message to criminals as well as to the judges who have to take this into account in sentencing. The seriousness of a crime is determined in part by the maximum penalty that can be imposed on an offender.

We are also hoping that by making the ban on owning animals indefinite, we will be able to prevent some animal abuse from taking place.

The bill we are considering this afternoon has three major advantages. First, it corrects an anachronism. When the Criminal Code was first drafted back in the 19th century, society did not regard animals the way it does now. The relationships between people and animals have changed, so it makes sense for the Criminal Code to reflect that. Everyone agrees that the current penalties are not severe enough. Bill S-203 goes a little way toward correcting the old-fashioned, weak penalties. The old penalties were based on how people interacted with animals in the 19th century.

The second good thing about this bill is the fact that, as penalties become more severe, there is a good chance that the courts will become stricter with those who are found guilty of crimes against animals, such as mutilation, slaughter, neglect, abandonment, or failure to feed them.

This bill would change the minimum sentence. From now on, if a case is tried as an indictable offence, the minimum sentence will be five years in jail. The fine will go up to \$10,000. As it happens, both of these provisions are in the member for Ajax—Pickering's bill, Bill C-373.

There is another excellent change. Henceforth, a court may ban an animal owner for life—or I should say a former owner—from having an animal in his possession. Bill S-203 will now allow a court to impose a prohibition order for life on this owner, whereas the current legislation provides for a two-year prohibition.

The third and last advantage of this bill is that it provides for restitution mechanisms through which the courts can order an individual to pay the costs if an animal has been taken in by an animal welfare organization, for example. Individuals who committed offences of negligence or intentional cruelty could be forced to pay the organizations that have taken in mistreated animals.

These three benefits alone represent a considerable improvement and warrant our support of this bill.

A number of our constituents have written to us comparing this Senate bill and the bill introduced by the member for Ajax—Pickering to be debated later. The Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of a step in the right direction rather than sticking with the status quo denounced by all. In other words, it is better than nothing.

Private Members' Business

[English]

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against Bill S-203, and to do so very strongly.

Before I begin my comments as to why our party is opposing this bill, I want to pick up on a couple of points that have been stated in debate and, I hope, provide a responsible refutation of those points.

For my Conservative friend from Winnipeg who said that the amendments brought forward by my colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh are not plausible or reasonable, I would just confirm for him that they were done with very direct intent. It was to delete the bill simply because the bill is wrong. He put the amendment forward because this a bill that does not deserve to be passed.

My friend from Winnipeg should know that the member from Windsor—Tecumseh did not fall off the turnip wagon. He knew exactly what he was doing. He was ensuring that this bill would not go further.

It is strange that, at the same as the Liberals have one of their members putting forward a progressive piece of legislation that is a private member's initiative, they would even think of supporting Bill S-203. Why would the Liberals settle for half measures?

I hope the members of the Liberal Party will take stock of the bill and the juxtaposition between Bill S-203 and Bill C-373, the private member's initiative from the member from Pickering.

I have a comment for my friends from the Bloc. The point that has been made time and again is that this is not good enough. In fact, the Bloc knows that when my colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh brought forward amendments at committee to replace this bill with what is progressive legislation, which was actually Bill C-50, that was the time for us to change the bill. However, sadly, that did not get the support of all the members of the committee.

What is wrong with the bill? I guess I will start with the people who, day in and day out, advocate for more responsible animal welfare. These people are not extremists. These people are responsible citizens. They are looking at the proposition that was brought forward by one of the members of the Liberal Party, which we support, as being the way to go. They believe that Bill S-203 will only take us half way. What is the problem with that? The problem is that this issue has been languishing since the 1800s. It puts Canada at the bottom of the list in terms of progress on animal welfare globally in progressive circles.

In fact, if we adopt Bill S-203, it says that it is as good as we could get. Every member who has spoken today has said that it is okay because it is the best we can do for now.

That is not good enough. It is not good enough for this House because this House, before, passed progressive legislation that was much better than this, which is a cut and paste, so to speak, from the member from Pickering's bill, and that was Bill C-50.

What happened to Bill C-50? It went to that other place and got done in, which is part of our problem with the other place. It has decent people there but the institution has absolutely no right to take a bill that has been passed by consensus here and gone through

committee and then let it sit there. It is wrong, and most Canadians feel that way about it.

In fact, I was honoured to join people this past weekend in my riding of Ottawa Centre just down the street from here. I joined in with everyday people who asked all members of Parliament to vote against Bill S-203 because it is the wrong way to go. They say that very deliberately, with conviction and with great intelligence.

In fact, Simone Powell and Beth Greenhorn from my riding, who helped organize a rally this past weekend, said just that. They wanted to know why members of Parliament were going to pass a bill that is inferior when we have progressive legislation right in front. I told them I had no idea why.

● (1400)

The NDP has been very clear. We will be supporting Bill C-373 but we will be voting against Bill S-203 because it is the wrong way to go.

We have a party that says that this bill is the best that can be done at this point. We took the content from Bill C-373, which was Bill C-50, and put it into committee as amendments so this bill might have a chance of working but members from the other parties did not want to do that. They did not want to be responsible for animal welfare.

I will explain some of the problems with the bill. We are taking laws from the 1800s and basically moving a nanosecond in terms of progress. We do not understand that it is wrong to have this kind of protection in property rights. It reminds me of the time in Canadian history when women were not considered persons. We now have animals considered as properties. The problem with the law is that it is wrong.

For anyone to suggest that we just torque up some of the fines and pass a law that will suggest that judges have a little more in their toolkits to extend the sentences is troubling and strange, particularly for the Conservative Party, which is saying that we need to be very deliberate with judges and tell them exactly how it is.

My friends in the Liberal Party should know that in making laws in legislation we must be deliberate. We must categorize them. Nomenclature is extremely important. If we are not able to properly define animals, animal welfare and understand where it belongs in terms of the law, then we should not bother trying to fix something that is not fixable because that is the problem with Bill S-203.

The bill says to Canadians that we can only do a little bit, that we cannot actually do the right thing. We can only do a little bit and we will eventually get to it and fix it down the road, maybe with Bill C-373, if it comes on the order paper later, or if it is a matter of having others put proposals forward.

Why is it that with each proposal that has been put forward since 1999, all of them have died on the order paper? Why do they die when they go to the other place? Canadians want to know that. People who work for the protection of animals want to know why that is.

Private Members' Business

This is something that has been pointed out to those who are looking to have more progressive legislation and are 100% against Bill S-203. They have said the following:

It is shameful that, in 2008, our parliament is considering entrenching animal cruelty offences from the Victorian days.

Further to that, they say:

This bill is simply 19th century legislation adjusted for inflation and we must put a stop to it.

I could not agree more. If we do not address the loopholes that exist in Bill S-203, we are admitting that we cannot fix the problem. It means that either we do not understand the problem or we do not care to fix the problem.

Again, why is it that when this place, through consensus in committee back three parliaments, passes a bill and sends it to the other place, the other place decides that it is not good enough? With all due respect, the Senate does not represent my constituents. The Senate should be saying that this is what the House has given to it and it needs to ensure it gets through and that it is responsible. Its decision to kill the bill was not only reprehensible but it was anti-democratic.

At the end, our party will stand with those who want better legislation, progressive legislation, which is why we will vote against Bill S-203 and, in doing so, will vote to protect animal welfare and not go backward.

• (1405)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member in our caucus who coordinates private members' business, I have followed this bill very carefully.

It is a bill by Senator John Bryden, who was successful in having the bill move through all stages in the Senate. It has been passed in the Senate and has been referred to the House of Commons and is now being sponsored by the member who tabled the bill here.

It is a very simple bill. It increases penalties, I believe up to 10 years.

Having spent all the time working on private members' business, in my experience private members' bills should not try to do government business, because our rules simply do not provide sufficient debate in Parliament to properly scrutinize any private member's bill.

Private members' bills that come before this place are usually a paragraph long. They are simply trying to make a very specific, focused change.

Under our rules, only two hours of debate are allowed at second reading. That might be 12 speakers. Of the 308 members, only 12 people could even speak.

Then the bill goes to committee. Committees are busy. Private members' business items are a nuisance and they very rarely get a lot of attention there, but let us assume the committee spends a meeting on one. That is another couple of hours. Then the bill is referred back to the House, if it passes at committee, and it gets another two hours at report stage and third reading. In grand total, a private member's bill at all stages in the House may only get six hours of debate. It is

ridiculous to think that one could do very much at all stages in just six hours.

Senator Bryden was aware of that. He knew that the only way he could demonstrate the importance of updating animal cruelty legislation was at least to take one step, one step that everybody would understand and that people would be able to take a position on without a lot of debate, because there is not a lot of debate. That is where we are today.

Interestingly enough, there is another private member's bill, Bill C-373, by the member for Ajax—Pickering. That bill was Bill C-50 from a prior Parliament. The justice minister of the day, the member for Mount Royal, had this bill. It was a comprehensive bill but a controversial bill nonetheless. It was quite controversial. There was a lot of debate. There were a lot of issues and a lot of changes were being proposed.

That is going to happen again with a full, comprehensive bill to update this archaic piece of legislation in the manner in which it is needed. We cannot possibly deal with it during private members' business. There just is not enough time to properly consider the bill.

I am speaking in favour of Bill S-203 for the reason that Senator Bryden proposed it, and that is to say, I do not see the government having an appetite to do this. It should be a government bill. It should have the broadest possible and necessary debate within the House to make sure when we correct this that we do the job right, and we cannot do it right in a private member's bill.

The possibility was suggested that maybe we could do this by getting a private member's bill into committee and then making all of the amendments to almost overlay this other bill into the small bill. I have a feeling that probably would not be possible, only because it would be beyond the scope of the bill and it probably would be out of order. There may be some problems.

There also have been some myths about Bill C-373. Many people have written to me saying that I have to vote against Bill S-203 because if that passes, then nobody will have any incentive to make any changes in the future, that it will have been already dealt with.

• (1410)

That is not right. Any piece of legislation can be amended at any time and from time to time. This is one demonstration of the importance of this issue. I hope that the House as a whole would agree that we need to have changes to the animal cruelty legislation.

This bill should in fact be the catalyst to get the government to propose legislation. I encourage and sincerely ask the government to please come forward with legislation which emulates Bill C-50 and any other improvements in there that would make the bill even better. Give that bill to the House and let us work with it. It has to be a government bill. If it is not a government bill, it will never get the proper time for debate and the scrutiny that will be necessary to make a good piece of legislation. That is the real problem.

Private Members' Business

To suggest that if we pass S-203 it is going to stop anything, that is simply not the case. It is incorrect. There will be changes in the future, but unless the House is going to have a piece of legislation in front of it that members can properly address, I do not think it is going to happen.

I can say for sure that if the Liberals form the next government, it will be part of our platform to introduce comprehensive legislation to bring it up to date, into the current realities, on animal cruelty legislation. It is an important piece. We had it the last time we formed government. The then minister of justice, the member for Mount Royal, had Bill C-50 and it will come back.

Bill C-373 is in front of me. It is quite a long bill. These are just the amendments to the existing legislation. There are six pages of amendments. No one is saying that six pages of amendments even in themselves are going to be enough. We need to have comprehensive debate on this legislation when it comes before the House. It needs to go to committee. We need to hear from stakeholders from across the country, those who represent the agricultural industry, farmers, fishermen, anglers, pet owners and those who just understand that we have legislation right now on which it is very difficult to get prosecutions and convictions.

It is a serious problem and Parliament should deal with it. The only way it can deal with it right now is either to have the government table a bill at least covering the items in Bill C-50 from a prior Parliament or at least to pass Bill S-203 to send a signal to Canadians that this is an issue that is important enough to Parliament that we will set the stage for the government to take action. And if it does not, then another party forming government will in fact bring it in. We had it before.

The NDP members are against everything these days. I do not know what it is. I know they have talked about maybe asking the Liberal member to give up his bill, give it to the NDP and one of its members will do it, but it is not going to work.

We all have to understand that with a private member's bill we are not going to get unanimous consent to do the kinds of things we have to do. It is not going to happen in this mix of the House. We need to have a bill that has that full and comprehensive debate, to make sure that all the questions that people have from coast to coast are answered and that the legislation reflects the priorities of Canadians with regard to animal cruelty legislation. We have to hear that and we will not hear that on a private member's bill.

I acknowledge 100% that S-203 takes one small step. It is not that it does not want to do more, but that is all that is possible using a private member's bill.

I am going to support the bill and I am going to continue to fight on behalf of all those who want current, updated and effective animal cruelty legislation.

• (1415)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the role the member for Windsor—Tecumseh has played in parliamentary committee.

Bill S-203 is opposed by every humane society across the country. It is opposed by the International Fund for Animal Welfare. It is

opposed by the World Society for the Protection of Animals. Whether Ontario humane societies, local humane societies, the Prince George Humane Society or the Toronto Humane Society, all are opposed to it.

People who are listening to the debate today need to know that the legislation is being opposed for extremely credible reasons. It does nothing to address the egregious cases of cruelty and negligence that we see across the country. It is a smoke screen for politicians to vote for, pretending they are doing something to address this problem.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the people who are concerned about this issue and who are listening today.

The NDP is going to force the vote today. That means there will be no vote in the House of Commons today. The vote will take place next week. The wide viewers who are listening today have the weekend to email their members of Parliament, the Bloc, the Conservative and the Liberal members of Parliament, who support the bill. They can pick up the phone now and phone the offices of those MPs.

The vote will not take place until next week, so there is still time for those who are concerned about the complete absence of real protection. There is nothing to stop what is happening now with respect to the cases of cruelty against animals across the country. For people who want to see the bill gutted, so we can force the government to bring in real meaningful legislation, the time is now.

The NDP has provided a fully array of amendments so some real change would take place.

We have heard case after case of animal cruelty. We heard about the 27 horses in Alberta, the cat that was microwaved to death and the puppies that were thrown down the outhouse pit. All these egregious cases of cruelty in the past few weeks can only be resolved by meaningful parliamentary action. That action comes from Canadians picking up the phone or emailing their members of Parliament now.

I know a lot of people listening to the debate this afternoon care profoundly about making these changes. They can make a real difference by picking up the phone, by sending in those emails, by talking to their neighbours, friends and family members concerned about this issue and getting them to phone their local MP.

Conservative MPs are going to vote against the NDP amendments and try to force Bill S-203 through the House. Even though the Quebec Humane Society is opposed to the bill, Bloc members are going to try to force this through. Liberal members are going to try to force the legislation through. It takes Canadians speaking up to make a difference.

I will mention some Canadians who are speaking up in my riding of Burnaby—New Westminster.

I would like to pay tribute to Ms. Rose Nadon, the president of the New Westminster Chamber of Commerce. Last Sunday she organized a huge rally in Vancouver to oppose Bill S-203. She has taken an active role on this issue.

Private Members' Business

Barbara Yaffe, a nationally renowned columnist, has written about this issue and spoken out on it as well.

I will quote from three letters I have received from my constituents.

Ms. Simpson from Burnaby, British Columbia writes:

The biggest problem with the current legislation is that it is difficult to enforce. In fact less than 1% of animal cruelty complaints lead to successful convictions. Bill S-203 maintains these inadequacies and loop holes which means that animal abusers will continue to get away with their crimes. As if this weren't bad enough, Bill S-203 also continues to leave wild and stray animals virtually unprotected, makes it nearly impossible to punish crimes of neglect and continues to legalize breeding animals to fight each other.

Another constituent, Ms. Denofreo from Burnaby, British Columbia, writes:

It is suggested that Bill S-203 was introduced to improve protection for animals yet not a single animal protection group in this country supports it. I oppose this bill too—because it is not an effective improvement to the current animal cruelty provisions of the Criminal Code, which haven't been significantly revised since first enacted in 1892. We should be ashamed that our country lags behind the Philippines and other developing countries when it comes to protecting animals from reckless acts of cruelty. Bill S-203 would hardly improve our ranking.

● (1420)

Mr. Schonfeldt from New Westminster writes:

Bill S-203 does not fix the problems in the current legislation which allows so many animal abusers to slip through the cracks unpunished. Less than 1% of animal abuse complaints in Canada lead to a conviction. While Bill S-203 increases the penalties for crimes against animals, I do not believe this to be very useful if law enforcement officers are unable to prosecute animal abusers in the vast majority of cases.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast, from communities like Burnaby and New Westminster and other communities across this country, the Calgary Humane Society, the Edmonton Humane Society, the Alberta Humane Society, and the Canadian Humane Society, experts in this area, they all say that adopting Bill S-203 would make an already bad situation even worse.

All it would do is increase penalties for offences that police cannot prosecute now. It is a meaningless smokescreen and a meaningless attempt by members of Parliament who are trying to address what is a legitimate concern in the minds of Canadians, given the many abuse cases we have seen in the past few weeks. It is a way of simply trying to stop cold any meaningful changes.

The only way for Canadians to see some real meaningful legislation put into place is for folks to make those phone calls. Canadians have to send in those emails over the course of the weekend, so that we can force members of Parliament to stop the Bill S-203 debacle and not to send it back to the Senate for ratification.

The second step is to force the government to take meaningful action. Most Canadians do not believe in this bill. Over 90% of Canadians who were most recently polled, when they see the appalling cases of cruelty and negligence that we have seen, do not want simply some sort of smokescreen around this issue.

Canadians do not want increased penalties for cases that police officers can never prosecute. The people who support this include our law enforcement officers. When they see cruel neglect and appalling violence toward animals, they know that many of these

individuals then move on to provide that same kind of egregious abuse to human beings.

Law enforcement officials are also supporting the NDP's stand to stop Bill S-203 and to put in place meaningful legislation. There is absolutely no way to justify Parliament adopting this bad bill. It is not being voted on today.

Canadians who are listening in now, along with their friends, neighbours and families, are hopefully making those phone calls. The Conservatives do not like this. They do not like public pressure. Of course they are reacting negatively. They are saying to Canadians, "don't phone, don't make your point of view known". That is essentially what they are saying. They do not want Canadians phoning MPs' offices. They do not want emails or letters to come in. It is obvious that every single member in this House has received emails and phone calls. Every single member of this House already knows what is the right thing to do.

What I am saying is that Canadians need to increase that pressure over the course of the weekend because the vote does not take place until next week. I can say that a member of Parliament, whether it is a Bloc member, a Conservative member or a Liberal member, who will hear from 100 constituents over the course of the next three days is not going to vote for this bad legislation. It will stop those members cold.

I am going to allow a couple of minutes for my colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan, who also feels strongly about this issue. I am saying that the jig is not up. If Canadians respond over the course of this weekend, they can stop this bad bill from being enacted.

● (1425)

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, I believe, did everything but drop to his knees and beg people to phone in, in opposition to this bill. I would say to that member that his pleading, his begging, his imploring for people to phone in, in opposition, is not necessary. People are already phoning in. In my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, my offices, both here and in the riding, people are phoning in. I have listened to them. They have overwhelmingly been telling me to support this bill, which I will.

Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just heard many words and the word I heard over and over was "meaningless" and a lot of it is coming from that end of the House.

There is a chance to do something. There is a chance to make a change. There has not been a change for many years. We can do that at this point. We can support Bill S-203 and make sure that something is actually done. We are going to try very hard to make sure that something is actually accomplished.

The member mentions many of the emails that he wants. Is he asking for emails from people who make their living from a lot of these efforts, trappers and hunters, the first nations people? He is talking about a group of people who want the same thing we want. We want to make the protection of animals a priority. Bill S-203 will do that. It will actually do something that has not been done in quite awhile.

The argument is that a future bill is coming in Bill C-373, but we have already heard that it will never see the light of day in the House. The time is not going to happen. We are not going to get to that discussion, so we will not be able to do that. We actually want to do something concrete and the time is now to deal with Bill S-203.

What do we want to do with this? We want to make sure that animal protection is a priority. We want to make sure the penalties are increased. We want everyone in Canada to know that we are actually doing something.

Starting out with this bill does not mean that we will not be doing something in the future. It does not mean that we cannot change and a new bill can come to the floor of the House.

As has been mentioned by every speaker, things can change and things will be changed in the future. We want to make sure that there is a lot of good sober second thought and a lot of effort put into this. We want to make sure that people's ways—

• (1430)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 2:30 p.m. the time provided for the debate has expired.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): In my opinion the yeas have it.

Private Members' Business

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*English*]

Normally at this time the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill, however, pursuant to Standing Order 98, the divisions stand deferred until Wednesday, April 9, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[*Translation*]

It being 2:33 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:33 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

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

MR. MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

MR. JAMES MOORE

MR. JOE PRESTON

HON. KAREN REDMAN

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Second Session—Thirty Ninth Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage..	Kootenay—Columbia.....	British Columbia	CPC
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Calgary—Nose Hill.....	Alberta	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga.....	Ontario	CPC
Alghabra, Omar	Mississauga—Erindale.....	Ontario	Lib.
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Allison, Dean.....	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board.....	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé.....	Québec	BQ
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Arthur, André.....	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.....	Québec	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard.....	Manicouagan	Québec	BQ
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior.....	British Columbia	NDP
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean.....	Québec	BQ
Bagnell, Hon. Larry.....	Yukon.....	Yukon	Lib.
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of the Environment	Ottawa West—Nepean.....	Ontario	CPC
Barbot, Vivian	Papineau	Québec	BQ
Barnes, Hon. Sue.....	London West	Ontario	Lib.
Batters, Dave	Palliser.....	Saskatchewan	CPC
Beaumier, Colleen.....	Brampton West.....	Ontario	Lib.
Bélangier, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bell, Catherine	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	NDP
Bell, Don	North Vancouver	British Columbia	Lib.
Bellavance, André.....	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn.....	St. Paul's.....	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon.....	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Ontario	Lib.
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories....	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake.....	Manitoba	CPC
Bigras, Bernard.....	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Québec	BQ
Black, Dawn.....	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill, The Deputy Speaker.....	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Blais, Raynald.....	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	BQ
Blaney, Steven.....	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Ontario	Lib.
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Status of Women	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	BQ
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooog, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	Québec	BQ
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Pontiac	Québec	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Québec	BQ
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	BQ
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	Ind.
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Chan, Hon. Raymond	Richmond	British Columbia	Lib.
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi— Churchill River	Saskatchewan	CPC
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	Ontario	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	CPC
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet— Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	BQ
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Hon. Roy	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	BQ
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Demers, Nicole	Laval	Québec	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	BQ
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes— Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	Lib.
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	British Columbia	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	BQ
Dykstra, Rick	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	CPC
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Québec	BQ
Fast, Ed	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary for Health	Charleswood—St. James— Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	BQ
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Québec	BQ
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing— Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	Québec	BQ
Godfrey, Hon. John	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la- Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Gravel, Raymond	Repentigny	Québec	BQ
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	Lib.
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	BQ
Gurgis, Hon. Helena, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport)	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix— Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	BQ
Hall Findlay, Martha	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Harvey, Luc	Louis-Hébert	Québec	CPC
Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	South Surrey—White Rock— Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Kamloops—Thompson— Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	Lib.
Hubbard, Hon. Charles	Miramichi	New Brunswick	Lib.
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	CPC
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce— Lachine	Québec	Lib.
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill	Ontario	Lib.
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge— Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Nunavut	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Keeper, Tina	Churchill	Manitoba	Lib.
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity)	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Khan, Wajid	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau— Mirabel	Québec	BQ
Lake, Mike	Edmonton—Mill Woods— Beaumont	Alberta	CPC
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	Québec	BQ
Lauzon, Guy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	BQ
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
Lebel, Denis	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Québec	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	BQ
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	CPC
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik —Eeyou	Québec	BQ
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
Lussier, Marcel	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	BQ
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	Lib.
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	BQ
Maloney, John	Welland	Ontario	Lib.
Manning, Fabian	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River— Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Ontario	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	Lib.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Right Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	Lib.
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	NDP
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Ontario	Lib.
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Ontario	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	Québec	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	BQ
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics.....	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.....	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Mourani, Maria.....	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	Québec	NDP
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick.....	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island....	Lib.
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Nadeau, Richard.....	Gatineau	Québec	BQ
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre.....	Manitoba	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of National Revenue	Carleton—Mississippi Mills....	Ontario	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.....	Calgary East.....	Alberta	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Ouellet, Christian.....	Brome—Missisquoi.....	Québec	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel ..	Québec	Lib.
Pallister, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of International Cooperation	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Paquette, Pierre.....	Joliette	Québec	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Secretary of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable.....	Québec	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	Lib.
Pearson, Glen.....	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.....	Québec	BQ
Petit, Daniel	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.....	Québec	CPC
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	Québec	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of Industry	Calgary Centre-North.....	Alberta	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London ...	Ontario	CPC
Priddy, Penny.....	Surrey North	British Columbia	NDP
Proulx, Marcel.....	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	Lib.
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East.....	Ontario	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Regan, Hon. Geoff.....	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.....	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis— Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Simard, Hon. Raymond	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Skelton, Hon. Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	BQ
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	BQ
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin— Kapuskasing	Ontario	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	Lib.
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	BQ
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette— Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	Ind.
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Ontario	Lib.
Tweed, Mervin	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent	Québec	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	Québec	BQ
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Lib.
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	NDP
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Ontario	Lib.
Williams, John	Edmonton—St. Albert	Alberta	CPC
Wilson, Blair	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	Ind.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	New Brunswick	Lib.
VACANCY	Saint-Lambert	Québec	
VACANCY	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Second Session—Thirty Ninth Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CPC
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	CPC
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity) ...	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Mike	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont ...	CPC
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of Industry	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	CPC
Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Medicine Hat	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
Williams, John	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Bell, Catherine	Vancouver Island North	NDP
Bell, Don	North Vancouver	Lib.
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Chan, Hon. Raymond	Richmond	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	CPC
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Vancouver Kingsway	CPC
Fast, Ed.	Abbotsford	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	Lib.
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Priddy, Penny	Surrey North	NDP
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	NDP
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	CPC
Wilson, Blair	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	Ind.
MANITOBA (14)		
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill, The Deputy Speaker	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary for Health	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Keeper, Tina	Churchill	Lib.
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Pallister, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of International Cooperation	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Simard, Hon. Raymond	Saint Boniface	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Mervin	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Hubbard, Hon. Charles	Miramichi	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Fundy Royal	CPC
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	Lib.
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	CPC
Manning, Fabian	Avalon	CPC
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	Ind.
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Central Nova	CPC
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Lib.
NUNAVUT (1)		
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Lib.
ONTARIO (106)		
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alghabra, Omar	Mississauga—Erindale	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of the Environment	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Barnes, Hon. Sue	London West	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West	Lib.
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Oshawa	CPC
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda	Guelph	Lib.
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	CPC
Cullen, Hon. Roy	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Lib.
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick	St. Catharines	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Godfrey, Hon. John	Don Valley West	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	CPC
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Lib.
Guergis, Hon. Helena, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport)	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Hall Findlay, Martha	Willowdale	Lib.
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Lib.
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Khan, Wajid	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lauzon, Guy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Lib.
Maloney, John	Welland	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Lib.
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of National Revenue	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	CPC
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	Lib.
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Lib.
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Lib.
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Lib.
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Lib.
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	York—Simcoe	CPC
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe	Egmont	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Lib.
QUÉBEC (73)		
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	BQ
Arthur, André	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	BQ
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	BQ
Barbot, Vivian	Papineau	BQ
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Beauce	CPC
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	BQ
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Jonquière—Alma	CPC
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	BQ
Blaney, Steven	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	BQ
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Status of Women	Beauport—Limoilou	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	BQ
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	BQ
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Pontiac	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	BQ
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	BQ
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	BQ
Demers, Nicole	Laval	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	BQ
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	BQ
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Gravel, Raymond	Repentigny	BQ
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	BQ
Harvey, Luc	Louis-Hébert	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	BQ
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	BQ
Lebel, Denis	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	BQ
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	BQ
Lussier, Marcel	Brossard—La Prairie	BQ
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	BQ
Martin, Right Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	BQ
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	NDP
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	BQ
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Secretary of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Petit, Daniel	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	CPC
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	BQ
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	BQ
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Ind.
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
VACANCY	Saint-Lambert	
VACANCY	Westmount—Ville-Marie	
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Batters, Dave.....	Palliser.....	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana.....	Wascana	Lib.
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre.....	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.....	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Skelton, Hon. Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar.....	CPC
Trost, Bradley.....	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.....	CPC
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon.....	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of April 4, 2008 — 2nd Session, 39th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Barry Devolin

Vice-Chairs:

Jean Crowder
Nancy Karetak-Lindell

Harold Albrecht
Rod Bruinooge
Rob Clarke

Tina Keeper
Marc Lemay

Yvon Lévesque
Anita Neville

Todd Russell
Chris Warkentin

(12)

Associate Members

Jim Abbott
Mike Allen
Dean Allison
Rob Anders
David Anderson
Charlie Angus
Gérard Asselin
Larry Bagnell
Dave Batters
Catherine Bell
Leon Benoit
Dennis Bevington
James Bezan
Steven Blaney
Sylvie Boucher
Garry Breitzkreuz
Gord Brown
Patrick Brown
Blaine Calkins
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Colin Carrie
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Colin Carrie	Laurie Hawn	Brian Murphy	Mike Wallace
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Mr. Steven Fletcher	for Health
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Mr. Ted Menzies	to the Minister of Finance
Hon. Jim Abbott	for Canadian Heritage
Mr. Pierre Lemieux	for Official Languages
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