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(HANSARD)

Friday, May 10, 2002

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 10, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE (CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND FIREARMS) AND THE FIREARMS ACT

The House resumed from April 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-15B, an act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act, be read the third time and passed; and of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-15B, an act to amend the criminal code and the Firearms Act. The stated purpose of the bill is to amend the criminal code by consolidating animal cruelty offences and increasing the maximum penalties. The bill would also add administrative provisions that are intended to simplify applications of the Firearms Act.

Bill C-15B re-introduces the proposed amendments to the cruelty to animals provisions of the criminal code that were introduced in Bill C-17 during the last parliament with certain changes. However, despite the minor improvements to the legislation, many people who are dependent on the harvesting and husbandry of animals for their livelihoods still have a number of concerns with the bill.

One concern is that the definition of animal is too broad. The proposed definition of an animal in Bill C-15B includes non-human vertebrates and all animals having the capacity to feel pain. The new definition would extend legal protection to a number of living organisms which have never before been provided that kind of protection.

Another key concern is that the criminal code would no longer provide the same level of legal protection afforded at present to those who use animals for legitimate, lawful and justified practices.

The phrase legal justification, excuse or colour of right in subsection 429(2) of the criminal code currently provides protection to those who commit any kind of property offence. However, in the new bill, the fact that the animal cruelty provisions would be moved out of the general classification of property offences and into a

section of their own would remove these provisions outside of the scope of that protection.

Moving the animal cruelty section out of the range of property offences to a new section in its own right would emphasize animal rights as opposed to animal welfare. This is a significant alteration in the underlying principles of the legislation and could elevate the status of animals in the eyes of the courts. The legislation could open up the possibility that farmers, sporting groups and scientific researchers would be unjustly prosecuted.

Animal rights groups in Canada will certainly use the new legislation as the basis for such prosecution and have already stated their intentions to do so. Liz White, the director of legislative revision from the Animal Alliance of Canada has stated:

My worry is that people think that this is the means to the end, but this is just the beginning. It doesn't matter what the legislation says if no one uses it, if no one takes it to court, if nobody tests it. The onus is on humane societies and other groups on the front lines to push this legislation to the limit, to test the parameters of this law and have the courage and the conviction to lay charges. That's what this is all about. Make no mistake about it.

The former federal justice minister assured us that what is lawful today in the course of legitimate activities would be lawful when the bill receives royal assent. However, the problem is that these new provisions would arguably narrow the scope of what constitutes legitimate activities.

The changes to the Firearms Act are administrative by nature. The provisions of the bill are intended to simplify the registration process and to incorporate information technology to reduce costs. Regarding the Firearms Act, I refer to section 31 of the Canadian Alliance declaration of policy where it states:

We believe there should be severe mandatory penalties for the criminal use of any weapon. We are committed to keeping guns out of the hands of violent criminals as a necessary part of making our communities safer. We will replace the current firearms law with a practical firearms control system that is cost effective and respects the rights of Canadians to own and use firearms responsibly.

We support increasing penalties for cruelty to animals offences but we do not support widening the scope of what currently constitutes a criminal offence. New animal cruelty legislation may cause the courts to interpret such offences in a different light. This could have significant and detrimental implications for farmers, hunters, and other agricultural producers who are dependent on animals for their livelihoods.

Government Orders

•(1005)

We do not support the amendments to the Firearms Act as we have a long held feeling that the act should be repealed entirely and replaced with a practical, cost-effective firearms control system.

To reiterate, the Canadian Alliance in no way condones intentional acts of cruelty to animals and supports increasing the penalties for offences relating to such acts. Moving animal cruelty provisions out of property offences to a new and separate section of the criminal code could elevate the status of animals in the eyes of the courts. The defences currently available would no longer apply in the new section. The new definition of animal would include an extremely broad definition that includes a vertebrate other than a human being and any other animal that has a capacity to feel pain. This new definition would extend legal protection to a number of living organisms which have never been provided that kind of protection before.

The former justice minister stated that what is lawful today in the course of legitimate activities would be lawful when the bill receives royal assent. If it was not the former justice minister's intention to change what is lawful today why did she not simply raise the penalties for existing animal cruelty offences?

Without substantial amendments to address the concerns I have I must join with my colleagues of the official opposition party and oppose the bill.

•(1010)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to take part today, at third reading stage, in the debate on Bill C-15B, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act.

This bill was the government's response to hundreds of letters and thousands of signatures from people asking for a more effective act regarding treatment, protection and penalties relating to animal cruelty.

The current legislation dates back to the 19th century and needs to be modernized. However, after scrutinizing this bill, we realized that the government has not been able to strike a proper balance so that breeders, farmers, hunters and researchers who carry out legitimate activities do not have to face unacceptable legal action.

The purpose of this bill is not, of course, to protect people, from all walks of life, who commit cruel and reprehensible acts against animals.

Everyone agrees on the need to make changes in order to find the proper balance.

However, while the Minister of Justice claims that the bill does not deprive the animal industry from its revenues, it would be important to specify this in the legislation, so as to reassure the animal, farming, medical and sports industry regarding any risk of frivolous lawsuits.

This was not done, and it is why the Bloc Québécois is against the bill. The minister simply amended the bill by adding the defences in

paragraph 8(3) of the criminal code. The minister and the Standing Committee on Justice rejected the Bloc Québécois' amendments, which would have explicitly added as a defence acting with legal justification or excuse and with colour of right.

The legislation would no longer provide any balance on the issue of cruelty to animals. We are shifting from an outdated legislation that did not properly protect animals from cruelty to a legislation that would put people carrying out legal and reasonable activities in an unfair and unacceptable situation.

As a member representing a rural riding, my duty is to protect not only farmers, but also the tourism industry which includes hunters, ranchers and researchers.

In my riding, for example, studies are conducted on a regular basis to see if the snow goose population is maintained at an adequate level. There are contentious issues involved here. The legislation, in its present form, could result in prosecution that would prove frivolous and that would hinder the very scientific and relevant process undertaken to ensure adequate management of the snow goose population.

This is also true for farmers. We have seen all over the planet animal rights advocates, whose point of view is defensible. However, we must avoid going too far and finding ourselves in a situation where it would be impossible to get into various types of operations that are currently accepted, that are normal in our society but that could result in vexatious prosecution.

The Bloc Québécois was in favour of the bill in principle, if it could have been amended to reflect the means of defence already allowed in part XI of the criminal code. This is why the Bloc Québécois asked that the means of defence in article 429 of the criminal code be added explicitly to new part V.1 of the criminal code. These amendments were rejected in committee.

This bill also deals with firearms. In that part of the bill, powers are taken away from the Government of Quebec, which created bodies responsible for issuing licences, namely the Bureau de traitement and the Centre d'appel du Québec. These responsibilities will be taken away from Quebec under this bill, which we also find totally unacceptable.

•(1015)

In short, the Bloc Québécois opposes the bill because it does not explicitly protect the legitimate activities of the animal industry, hunting and research, and because it strips the Government of Quebec of the power to enforce the provisions of the Firearms Act.

I will give a good example of what goes on in my riding. The Cégep de La Pocatière offers a popular course on animal health, which trains people to become technicians working with veterinarians. Obviously, in this line of work, one must operate on animals. The people who take such a course become animal health technicians. They learn to work with veterinarians and animals.

Government Orders

The bill, as it stands, could lead to lawsuits against this practice, with the major legal consequences that entails. Such proceedings would not, in my opinion, jeopardize the program as such, but they would give rise to costs that, in my opinion, are inappropriate. Consequently, we believe that the bill should be re-examined more thoroughly before being passed.

The same goes for farmers and ranchers. Our ranchers have to assume their responsibilities properly. I believe that the vast majority do just that. If there are exceptions, let us use the provisions currently in the act or amend the bill to focus on those cases. However, we should not make a blanket statement. Many ranchers behave quite appropriately and they should not be the object of frivolous lawsuits. I believe the bill should be reviewed and reworked to be made more palatable.

The purpose of this bill is to have more adequate means to deal with offenders who commit cruel and reprehensible acts against animals. It meets the intent of the reform, which is to protect animals, but it does not define precisely and properly enough what an offender would be. Consequently, the bill will be challenged in court time and time again. I do not believe making this kind of laws is what legislators intend. Their goal is to have laws that will be easily enforceable and that will help deal with problems. It is important to do this properly.

As I was saying before, the current legislation dates back to the 19th century. It is being updated. Let us hope we will not have to do it again within the next five or ten years. We should have legislation that is consistent with today's reality and that will enable us to deal with problems in the years to come.

We do not have that with this bill. Therefore, it should be sent back to the drawing board. I believe it is not a matter of such urgency that we need to do it for tomorrow morning, but it is important to have proper legislation we all agree upon, which is not the case at present.

This is why the Bloc Québécois will vote against the bill unless it is amended in a novel fashion.

Since we are at third reading, unless the government decides to change the content of the bill to better take into account criticism from those who raise animals, the Bloc Québécois will vote against the bill. As a member from a rural area, I can only applaud this position.

● (1020)

[*English*]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill C-15B, an act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act.

When we talk about cruelty to animals it raises compassion in people. It brings out what is best in human beings. It brings out their concern about cruelty to animals. I, representing the urban riding of Calgary East, have a lot of constituents who have written to me about this. When they hear the title of the bill, they automatically have compassion. I have been subject to numerous representations from them. They feel that we should pass the bill because, from their

point of view, the bill is needed to stop cruelty to animals and we have all seen many examples of cruelty to animals.

The title of the bill automatically makes it an emotional issue for people who live in urban areas and cities in Canada. Nobody would say they oppose protecting animals. Everybody would agree with the bill. As a matter of fact, I have a dog, and I can tell members that my own children would get upset if I were to tell them that technically I am opposing the bill. They would feel that I am agreeing with cruelty to animals.

However, that is not the issue here. The issue is not cruelty to animals. As I stated yesterday during debate on the private member's bill dealing with the killing of wildlife, which was presented by my colleague, the approach the government takes in addressing an issue is that it will try to address an issue but at the same time it will try not to address an issue. The government plays a role which at the end of the day turns out to be of no help to anyone. This is the typical kind of bill that comes from the—

Mr. Peter Adams: Nonsense. Are you for it or are you against it?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: There they go, Mr. Speaker. That is exactly what I am stating. What does he mean, am I for it or against it? The bill has flaws. The bill was not thought out. The member on the other side wants to go ahead with it and that is exactly what I am talking about. That is why today we want to highlight what is wrong with the bill.

Bill C-15B would penalize those who deal with animals as part of their life.

Mr. Peter Adams: That is not true.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleague who is screaming from the other side will have an opportunity to counteract when he gets up and debates this issue in a reasonable manner instead of screaming from the other side.

Some animal rights groups have stated that they will not target individuals. We seem to have a problem. Let me give the House an example. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has launched an anti-dairy campaign targeting school children. This group goes around to schools in Canada and tells children that the consumption of milk will make them fat, gassy and pimply. This group wants the bill to pass so it can propose its own agenda. We should think about this group and what it is telling children. This is not funny. This is real. This group is saying that the consumption of milk will make children fat, gassy and pimply.

● (1025)

Let us talk about our dairy industry. Our dairy industry is a success story. Canada has thousands of dairy farmers. They are concerned about this bill and legitimately so. It is stated here quite clearly, and I am telling members exactly what it says. When did that become fearmongering.

The problem is the bill does not address many issues that are of concern to people such as dairy farmers. As a matter of fact, they wrote to the Prime Minister of Canada highlighting their concerns about the bill.

Government Orders

What has the government done? It has done nothing. It is ramming the bill through, saying that it wants the bill passed.

I will state in short what my colleague has already stated are the concerns of the Canadian Alliance. My other colleagues will rise today to speak on this and we will again talk about this issue. In essence, we must be very clear, aside from what members on the other side might scream, that the Canadian Alliance will not support the bill, and not because of the issue of cruelty to animals. We all agree that cruelty to animals must be stopped. We want a bill that addresses this issue and other issues as well but in a balanced manner.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk to this bill today. I am also pleased to see that the Liberal member from Edmonton is with us today because he certainly will understand what I am about to say. I hope he can relate it to some of his colleagues in his caucus.

I also hope the heckler will stick around and listen to a specific story which is true and based on facts. It happened in my riding to a close friend of mine, a rancher who lives right outside the town I live in. I have an account of the events that took place in the life of this rancher, well written by an eyewitness to it. The fellow's name is Mr. Dave Morgan and he has given me permission to illustrate why this bill needs to be repaired and fixed properly.

Mr. Morgan is likewise a person who has lived in the area for many years. His family homesteaded the property on which he now lives over 100 years ago. They have dealt with animals all their lives and are truly respectful of animals. They like the idea of making certain that we have laws in place which prevent the absolutely unnecessary cruelty to animals that we know happens so often, something with which this party agrees.

I will just read the account of this story and hope that people on that side of the House can understand what we are saying because this is only one sample of hundreds across the board.

A well known rancher...75 years old...raising cattle all his life...ranching and farming on the land his father settled over 100 years ago... was charged by the SPCA with keeping a cow in distress. I know this rancher, I know his set-up as do many cattlemen and businessmen from far and wide not to mention his immediate neighbours. I saw the cow in question on the day she left the ranch, on October 25, 1999. She was a nice looking older cow with a slightly swollen eye, with calf by her side of approximately 550 lbs. This cow was culled from the herd and was not in any sort of distress at the time she left the ranch. She was taken, with three other cows, to auction and sold the next day weighing 1135 lbs. after a 24-hour stand to one of two buyers bidding on her...

In December 1999, two SPCA officers phoned to ask if they could pay a visit to the rancher. Which they did and impressed by the fine operation and cow herd. Shortly thereafter, even after seeing the Rancher's successful cattle ranch, a subpoena was presented. The Canadian justice system then became engaged!!!

And away went the system doing what it does best—wasting thousands of taxpayers dollars, and at the same time making ridicule of a prominent Alberta rancher through unsubstantiated allegations. This procedure took from December 14, 1999 when the SPCA laid charges, until February 8, 2001, when a two-day trial was finally scheduled. (In the meantime there had been two date changes for this trial).

On this day, the rancher & his wife, with his counsel, the judge, the Clerk of the Court, the Crown Prosecutor, 3 or 4 SPCA vehicles, complete with constables, plus, it was said, a pathologist, flown in from Saskatchewan especially for the two-day court case, all appeared at the trial to be held in Didsbury [Alberta]. It was a special court day in Didsbury and no other cases were on the agenda. All this expense for the 10 minutes it took for the Crown Prosecutor to ask for the charge to be withdrawn due to the fact that they did not have the evidence to prove the case.

The entire situation was a fiasco from the beginning. The Rancher's Counsel saw clearly there was no evidence to substantiate the allegations and by letter in June 2000 asked the Crown Prosecutor to drop the charge. Then came the "plea bargain" attempt by the Crown Prosecutor. If the rancher would plea guilty out of court, the prosecutor would lessen the fine...Later, days before February 8, the Crown Prosecutor offered another goodie...If the rancher wrote to two beef publications regarding the identification of cancer eye, and how to cull these animals, the charge would be dropped. Would you, the reader, not understand these two offers as the prosecutor saying, "I [think I messed] up and I need you to make me look good, so kiss my hind end and I'll drop the charge". The Rancher said, "See you in Court". And so he did for 10 minutes they did on February 8, 2001.

● (1030)

How much did it cost taxpayers to hold this trial???? Just a wild guess would probably be an underestimation. The whole case was a joke. What isn't a joke is the manner in which subsidized governmental departments handle matters without respect of citizens at the Taxpayers expense...One might say there was even double dipping here as I read in the Canadian Cattlemen Magazine (Jan. 2001)...Alberta SPCA inspectors go too far...that the SPCA received a grant of more than \$800,000.

There already have been cases where producers have plead guilty to similar charges and paid the fine only because it was much cheaper and a whole lot less fuss...

—The Crown Prosecutor failed to make a case. The Rancher has no recourse in the retrieving any of the several thousand dollars in legal fees he incurred. Furthermore, this ranch family was not even offered a simple apology by the Crown nor the SPCA for causing them unnecessary frustration.

Ladies and gentlemen...I ask you...who was in distress...the cow or the Rancher doing what he has always done to build a distinctive herd of cattle...and maintaining their integrity.

That story sums up what has to be done with the bill. There are hundreds and thousands of people who are in an industry who love animals. That is probably one of the main reasons why they are in the industry, as I am sure my colleague would agree, because they love animals. They know what they are doing. They know how to take care of them. Yes, they will run across problems. That is why they bring in veterinarians, spend thousands of dollars looking after herds and do all the right things. However under this kind of law they are guaranteed nothing in the way of protection for doing what is normal, ordinary, every day livestock enterprising. We cannot allow that.

Yes, we want to stop cruelty to animals. Yes, we want to protect all wildlife the best way we can. We want to continue doing the things we do with regard to their safety. We want to increase fines and prosecutions for those idiots out there who have no regard for the animal as living item.

However the bill does not protect the ranchers. What it will do is let the minister stand up and repeatedly say "that will never happen". He has done that before. If that is the case, then put it in the bill so it never does happen, because it has happened in the past. The bill would not prevent it from happening again.

If the member across the way cannot sit for a second and use his brain to think and ensure that the bill makes absolutely certain that the privileges of the good, hard working citizens, taxpayers of this land who thrive on providing an industry from which we benefit, who enter this enterprise are not abused, then we will have made a dreadful mistake.

I hope my friend from Edmonton, Alberta, the member from that party, recognizes what I am saying is true. He knows what ranching is all about in that neck of the woods, and I know he does.

Government Orders

The bill would ensure that this would happen under the present criminal code. Good grief, think what would happen if this bill replaced that criminal code section, which pulls animals out of a certain area. I do not know what the member is using, but it is not his head. I hope he will give it a shake and wake up.

• (1035)

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I strongly support Bill C-15B as it is currently written. However I will comment on the wording of an amendment to send Bill C-15 back to committee because the amendment is based on a false assumption that is inconsistent with the status of animals in common law.

The amendment assumes it is necessary to expressly state in law that animals can be used for lawful purposes. It assumes that if legislators did not do so the use of animals would be illegal. It assumes that if one wanted to use animals for a particular reason it would need to be authorized by statute.

I recognize the concerns raised by the hon. members who say that unless specific reference is made in Bill C-15B to the defences of lawful justification, excuses or colour of right, the use of animals for industry would become illegal. They are saying the defences are needed to render the use of animals lawful.

That is a false assumption. It is important to look at the argument more closely because it raises the question of what the status of animals has been historically. What was the status of animals in common law prior to the enactment of animal cruelty legislation? Did their use have to be expressly recognized in order to be lawful?

The answer is no. The status of animals in early common law before animal cruelty laws were enacted was described in the case of *Standard Sausage Co. v. Lee*, a 1933 decision of the British Columbia Court of Appeal. In that case Mr. Justice Martin confirmed that before legislation was passed in Britain in the 1800s making cruelty to animals a crime, members of the animal kingdom were at the mercy of the wanton brutality of their owners.

The early justification for animal cruelty laws focused on the morally corrupting influence that witnessing animal cruelty had on humans. It was felt that humans who saw people being cruel to or abusing animals believed it was easy to move on to other acts of violence. Bill C-15B does not talk about the use of animals which has been done historically. It talks about the abuse of animals. No one is questioning the use of animals. This is about abuse of animals.

In early common law animals had no rights or interests per se. The property rights of animal owners were protected but there was no prohibition against owners or anyone else abusing animals. The lawful use of animals is already protected. Bill C-15B would expressly prohibit the unlawful use or abuse of animals.

This is the reverse of the assumption made by some hon. members that under Bill C-15B all use of animals would be illegal unless there was recognition of the use of animals in statute. It is clear that since the inception of the animal cruelty provisions of the criminal code a minimum standard of behaviour has applied to everyone.

There is either a lack of understanding of historical common law or a lack of understanding of the history of animal cruelty legislation. That may be why the amendment is being brought forward. It could

also be a red herring. It is one of the two. I do not know which. If it is a red herring it is sad because it would put in the place of good legislation a trumped up charge that did not apply at all.

I do not think anyone in the House would condone the abuse of animals. That is what Bill C-15B is talking about. Let us expressly prohibit the abuse of animals. The use of animals is lawful in many areas of law. That would not change under the bill. I would like to see people here stand and say they condone the abuse of animals because if they do not support Bill C-15B that is what they are doing.

• (1040)

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, although waxing eloquent the previous member missed a fairly major point regarding the submissions of ranchers, farmers, researchers and so on. We in the Canadian Alliance want to make it clear at the beginning that we in no way condone intentional acts of cruelty toward animals. We would without a doubt support increased penalties for offences relating to such acts. However there are ways to do it other than those the minister has proposed.

As has been mentioned in the House by others today and previously, there are animal rights groups that target livestock producers and label them as cruel, inhumane and barbaric. We have seen this. We have been monitoring it on the Internet and elsewhere. One such group, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals or PETA, has launched an anti-dairy campaign targeting school-children.

I take offence to that. We have a lot of dairy farmers in Saskatchewan. My riding has probably the highest concentration of dairy farmers in the province. They are hard-working people who take care of their livestock. They need to do so for the sake of the bottom line. Indirectly targeting these people is something I am greatly opposed to and offended by. The Canadian Alliance is concerned Bill C-15B would arm groups like PETA and others with a powerful new tool to use against farmers, dairy farmers, ranchers and others whose livelihood requires careful care and treatment of animals.

Government Orders

The official opposition agrees with the majority of Canadians who want to see harsher penalties for those who mistreat or deliberately abuse animals. However because of the way Bill C-15B is currently worded many ranchers, hunters, medical researchers and so on might be subject to harassing prosecutions. They could be convicted of animal abuse even though they properly care for their animals.

Groups such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare and the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals claim they have no intention of using Bill C-15B to harass farmers and researchers. On the other hand there are groups like the Animal Alliance of Canada whose director, Liz White, hints she would use the legislation to attack animal producers. I will put it on record again if it is not already there. She stated:

My worry is that people think this is the means to the end, but this is just the beginning. It doesn't matter what the legislation says if no one uses it, if no one takes it to court, if nobody tests it. The onus is on humane societies and other groups on the front lines to push this legislation to the limit, to test the parameters of this law and have the courage and the conviction to lay charges. That's what this is all about. Make no mistakes about it.

The Minister of Justice has the ability to introduce legislation. However I cannot for the life of me understand why he does not introduce legislation that would strengthen and modernize the current cruelty to animals provisions of the criminal code without threatening the people who use and care for animals.

The minister has chosen to go a different route and not listen to the many submissions of those calling for changes to the bill. He has refused to explicitly protect farmers, ranchers, fishermen, hunters and medical researchers. He has refused to be explicit in the legislation and ensure the courts would not be able to interpret Bill C-15B in a way parliament did not intend.

In light of these refusals we are concerned the Liberals may be counting on the bill to reach much further than they publicly state in the House. The Canadian Alliance will continue to demand that the government amend Bill C-15B to ensure farmers, ranchers and medical researchers would remain protected, that their concerns would be taken into account, and that there would be no problems down the road with people going to court and using the legislation to the detriment of these individuals.

• (1045)

The bill's definition of animal must be amended. The present definition reads:

—a vertebrate, other than a human being, and any other animal that has the capacity to feel pain.

The definition is far too broad. It could interfere with the ability of farmers to eliminate pests and rodents which are destructive to their livelihood. We had a gopher problem in Saskatchewan we needed to deal with. Out on the range a problem like that can hurt other animals. If a horse gets caught in one of the holes it can create problems for the horse's owner who may be trying to conduct a ranching business. We need the amendment for that reason.

We are calling for the retention of the animal cruelty provisions in the property section of the criminal code. The criminal code currently provides protection from harassing prosecutions to those who use animals for legitimate, lawful and justified practices. It does so through the phrase cited by the hon. member opposite concerning

legal justification, excuse or colour of right. Bill C-15B would move the animal cruelty provisions out of the property offences section of the criminal code and into a section of their own, thereby effectively removing the legal justification protection.

I will quickly summarize. We in the Canadian Alliance in no way condone intentional acts of cruelty toward animals. We support increasing the penalties for offences relating to such acts. We should hike them up significantly to send a strong message to those who would abuse or deliberately hurt and maim animals in some cases for their own perverse pleasure.

New animal cruelty legislation might cause the courts to interpret such offences in a different light. As we have said, it could have significant detrimental implications for farmers, hunters and other agricultural producers who depend on animals for their livelihoods.

Moving the cruelty provisions from property offences to a new separate section would elevate the status of animals in the eyes of the courts. No one can deny that. The defences that apply to individuals who want to protect themselves against harassment and malicious charges would no longer apply under the new section.

The former minister stated that what is lawful today in the course of legitimate activities would still be lawful after the bill received royal assent. If it is not the former justice minister's intention to change what is lawful today why did she not go the route of raising penalties for those who perpetrate cruelty on animals? That is the way we would have preferred her to approach the matter.

I will again make plain our longstanding opposition to the Firearms Act. We in the Canadian Alliance oppose the amendments to the Firearms Act proposed by Bill C-15B on the basis that the act should be repealed altogether. Messing around with it or tweaking the edges to no account is not something we are favourable to. It should be repealed and removed altogether.

For these reasons we in my party oppose Bill C-15B as it stands.

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-15B, specifically the cruelty to animals provision of the bill which is of particular concern to residents in my riding. I will be addressing three specific aspects of the bill: the definition of animal, private prosecutions under the bill, and the inclusion of the terms wilfully and negligently

I will begin by discussing in general terms the objectives of cruelty to animals provisions in the bill. Bill C-15B has two primary objectives: to consolidate, modernize and simplify the existing scheme of animal cruelty offences; and to increase existing maximum penalties and provide new sentencing tools to enhance the effectiveness of the offence provisions.

Government Orders

The first objective would be achieved by removing inconsistent and confusing terminology. It would also be achieved by removing archaic distinctions between different types of animals. For example, section 444 deals exclusively with cattle, which I note are defined in the criminal code to include other named domesticated animals as well. Section 445 deals exclusively with animals kept for a lawful purpose and subsection 446(1)(f) deals only with birds.

The amendments would further rationalize the law by distinguishing between offences of criminal negligence and offences requiring subjective intent and providing separate penalty regimes for each type of offence.

Creation of a new part of the criminal code for animal cruelty offences would further the aims of modernization and simplification. The new part would better reflect the policy of the existing law, in place since 1953, that society has an interest in protecting animals from intentional cruelty and criminal neglect and that this interest is independent of their status as property.

However, because the offences were left in Part XI, a part of the code dealing with offences in respect of certain property, there is a lack of clarity and consistency in the law about the fact that animals, whether property or not, have a capacity to feel pain. It is the capacity to feel which is addressed by prohibitions against the infliction of unnecessary pain, suffering or injury. Creation of a new part would be a more accurate reflection of the principle upon which the law is based.

Those involved in the investigation and prosecution of cruelty offences report that some criminal justice officials fail to treat cruelty offences with sufficient seriousness, tending to view them as property crimes, such as simple mischief.

There is growing evidence of a link between cruelty to animals and violence against people, including domestic violence and even child abuse. In recognition of this link, animal cruelty offences are best viewed as offences of violence. The continued classification of these offences as crimes against property interests fails to educate the public and the justice system about the true nature of the crimes.

A new offence would also be created to cover a gap in the current law. Under the present law, a person with a lawful excuse for killing an animal is prohibited only from doing so in any way that causes unnecessary pain. This means that a person might use depraved methods of killing an animal for sheer enjoyment and so long as the animal dies instantly, no offence is committed. Although the animal has been spared pain or suffering, society recognizes that brutality or vicious conduct is outside the scope of acceptable behaviour and in fact may pose a serious threat to society at large. Such conduct could include tying an animal to a railroad track, fastening an explosive device to an animal or putting an animal in a microwave oven, of which we have seen cases. The new offence is created to update the law so that this type of behaviour would be punishable.

The second objective of the animal cruelty provisions in Bill C-15B would involve enhancing available penalties. This would be achieved by making existing summary conviction offences dual procedure, allowing the crown to proceed by way of indictment for the more serious offences. Where the crown proceeds by indictment, maximum penalties would be increased to five years for offences of

subjective intent and two years for offences of criminal negligence. An amendment adopted by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights raised the maximum fines available for intentional cruelty and criminal neglect where the offence is proceeded with by summary conviction to \$10,000 and \$5,000, respectively.

● (1050)

The maximum duration of an order prohibiting an offender from owning or having custody of an animal has been extended from two years to life. The courts are given a new power to order a convicted offender to repay to a person or to an organization the costs associated with the caring for the animal in respect of which the offender was convicted.

The term animal is defined in Bill C-15B as a vertebrate, other than a human being, and any other animal that has the capacity to feel pain. Some people suggest that this definition is too broad. The definition is actually narrower, not broader, than the existing law. Under the current cruelty provisions animal is not defined. At the present time the courts are free to interpret the word animal in accordance with everyday meaning resulting in an interpretation broad enough to include most, if not all, members of the animal kingdom and certainly including many invertebrates. The definition is included to clarify and simplify the law by introducing a greater degree of precision in the law's application, and by providing a rational and principled definition which accords with the underlying purpose of the cruelty provisions.

From a scientific perspective, vertebrates are generally viewed as having sufficiently developed nervous systems to allow for sense and pain perception. They are therefore, as a group, all given protection under the law. However some invertebrates have a developed nervous system and therefore also must have the capacity to feel pain. It would be arbitrary to permanently and absolutely deny protection to some animals because they happen to be classified as invertebrates. Bill C-15B would create a mechanism that allows the crown to proceed in appropriate cases. The onus is on the crown prosecutor to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the definition of animal has been satisfied.

A broad definition of animal is consistent not only with definitions found in some provincial statutes but also with statutes in the United States. The following may be of interest to members: "does not include a human being" is found in Alberta; "non-human living being with developed nervous systems" is found in Manitoba and New Brunswick; "includes every living creature" in the state of Arkansas; "every living creature except man", in the state of Maryland; "does not include the human race, but includes every other human creature", in the state of Nevada; and the list goes on. There is no indication that the definitions of animal used in these jurisdictions have generated inappropriate use of the legislation.

The concern has been raised that the new cruelty provisions would make it easier for interest groups to prosecute persons involved in legitimate practices involving animals. This argument is made even though the test of liability for intentional cruelty and criminal neglect in the bill has not been changed.

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The investigation and prosecution of the criminal code offences are the responsibility of local or provincial police forces and provincial attorneys general. Attorneys general decide when to pursue a charge laid by the police. In some cases, humane societies are mandated with investigating and prosecuting cruelty offences. These humane societies are constituted by provincial or territorial legislation and they exercise statutory powers granted to them by the legislation.

In every case brought to the attention of criminal justice officials, a number of considerations are taken into account in deciding whether to proceed, including whether there is a reasonable prospect of conviction. Procedures that ensure pre-trial screening of charges by prosecutors are more prevalent now than they were in the past and provide an additional safeguard against frivolous or vexatious prosecutions. Some 100 years of experience with animal cruelty laws shows no evidence of inappropriate use of criminal law by authorities to attack standard industry practices.

Private citizens are generally entitled to lay a criminal charge. However, in every case the attorney general in the jurisdiction retains the ability to intervene and take over the charge, and may withdraw the charges.

Mr. Myron Thompson: You are absolutely wrong. There are hundreds of cases out there.

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: My colleague across the way says that is bull.

Mr. Myron Thompson: There are hundreds of cases out there.

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Speaker, there may be hundreds of cases in his view but I am providing him with the facts. He may not want to listen to the facts but that is up to him. We had to listen to members from that party, I would expect that they would listen to us in terms of the information.

Mr. Myron Thompson: That is full of bull, like you.

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Speaker, I believe the time has come to move forward on the bill and I urge hon. members, including my colleagues across the way, to listen, learn about it and support the bill.

•(1055)

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage all hon. members to join in the recognition of National Police Week in Canada from May 12 to May 18.

National Police Week allows Canadians to show their appreciation for the tremendous job being done by members of police forces across Canada in protecting our homes and communities.

The government understands the importance and role of Canada's police. That is why we have made significant investments in the RCMP to fight terrorism and make Canadians safer. Especially in the difficult months since September 11, the men and women of

Canadian law enforcement rose to answer the call of duty and continue to make us proud.

During this week all Canadians are encouraged to reflect on the role played by Canadian police officers in making Canada the safe country that it is.

* * *

•(1100)

ST. BARBARA'S RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, St. Barbara's Russian Orthodox Cathedral: a historical Edmonton spiritual landmark with its picturesque dome crowned by a triple bar cross, symbolic of Orthodox churches around the world; and 100 years of community faith service, nearly 50 years in the present edifice alone.

For 30 years it has been the church of my family; our wedding, our children's christenings, our family's faith centre.

Father John, our priest for 20 years, whose presence is still felt as we gather to pray. Father Grigory ministers to our family and friends today.

Congratulations to St. Barbara's on its 100th anniversary of ministering to many thousands over the century. May our faith community continue to be spiritually served for another 100 years and beyond in this consecrated landmark.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL LAW COMPETITION

Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to inform the House that the final rounds of Le Concours Rousseau International Law Competition are being held this week in Montreal at the Faculty of Law of McGill University.

The Concours Rousseau is an annual event which brings together law students from around the world for a week of creative legal thinking, oral advocacy and social events, all in the spirit of international comradery. After having recently won qualifying rounds in their home countries, the members of 12 teams arrived in Montreal from Argentina, Belgium, Benin, France, Germany, Romania, Switzerland and Togo. Two Canadian law school teams also qualified to compete in the Concours Rousseau.

It is especially fitting that the competition is being held in Canada. The problem the students will be debating this year is a question of law related to the International Criminal Court, the most dramatic development in international humanitarian and criminal law since Nuremberg and a historic milestone toward ending the culture of impunity. Canada has been at the forefront of the international campaign to establish the ICC and to bring the treaty into effect.

I invite all members of the House to join me in congratulating all the participants in the Concours Rousseau as we also celebrate the coming into effect of the ICC treaty.

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 25, 1944, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Shawinigan* was on an independent anti-submarine patrol in the Cabot Strait when it was torpedoed by U1228. The *Shawinigan* sank in less than four minutes. All hands were lost, including nine Manitobans.

This past Sunday these nine brave men were honoured at a ceremony that took place at HMCS *Chippewa* in conjunction with the commemoration of the Battle of the Atlantic.

Members of their families were present to honour: Lieutenant William Edmund Callan, age 30; Engine Room Artificer 4 James Campbell, age 23; Able Seaman Ralph Earp, age 18; Ordinary Seaman Clifford Eppler, age 19; Lieutenant John Lawrence, age 28; Stoker 1 Glenn Murray, age 19; Petty Officer Howard Parsons, age 20; Ordinary Seaman James Phillips, age 20; and Able Seaman Clayton White, age 19.

All lost their lives fighting for their country and are commemorated at the Halifax Memorial which lists the names of 3,257 Canadian men and women who were buried at sea.

* * *

LORI'S ROOM FUND

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, May 11 the third annual Lori's Room walkathon will take place to benefit the St. Joseph's Health Centre Foundation and the Lori's Room Fund.

Established by her parents, Doug and Lorna Martin in 1996, the Lori's Room Fund honours the memory of Lorna-Lynn Martin, a young woman who struggled against a particularly virulent form of cancer which eventually caused her passing.

The Lori's Room Fund has already refurbished and refurnished every patient room on the sixth floor at St. Joseph's. In addition, the fund is now focusing on the establishment of the Lorna-Lynn Martin chemotherapy clinic. Work has already begun on this important addition.

Over the past few years the support of the Lori's Room Fund has been overwhelming. Through the support of many families, friends, staff and members of our community the Lori's Room Fund continues to grow.

* * *

NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, at noon today the National March for Life will congregate on Parliament Hill as they do every year. They meet to mourn the 100,000 children who lose their lives through abortion every year.

For the nine months a baby is in the mother's womb the baby has absolutely no legal protection in Canada. This is because the criminal code states that a baby does not become a human being until they have completely emerged from the mother's body.

Eighty-nine percent of my constituents say that the current definition of a human being is unacceptable and, I suspect, if the

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government were brave enough to ask, it would find that the vast majority of Canadians agree.

For that reason I introduced Motion No. 392 that asks the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to examine this life and death issue and determine if the definition of a human being needs to be amended.

I thank those who have the courage and take the time to speak up for those whose voices cannot be heard.

* * *

• (1105)

[Translation]

LAVAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 2 the Laval Chamber of Commerce and Industry celebrated its 35th anniversary with the Dunamis 2002 gala.

For the 21st consecutive year, awards were given out at the event to Laval businesses contributing to the expansion of that city's business sector.

Awards were presented in a number of different categories: young entrepreneurs, women in business, communications, social and cultural animation. I should point out that there was also one for research, a field of great importance to Laval.

This initiative focused attention on the hard work and major contribution Laval's businesses make to our community.

I join with the people of Laval once again in highlighting the exceptional contribution our local businesses to the economic health of our community.

Congratulations to all the winners.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Mental Health Week is drawing to a close. I would therefore like to draw the attention of the House to a number of facts that cannot leave us unmoved.

Twenty per cent of the population of Canada, and of Quebec, will have to deal with mental illness at some point in their lives. Some 2.5 million adults are coping with depression. One in five children is suffering from a psychiatric problem.

Worldwide, five of the ten major causes of disability relate to mental health. The socio-economic consequences of this cannot be ignored. Here in Canada, psychiatric illness accounts for 16% of health expenditures.

When we know how much problems with interpersonal communication, poverty and lack of emotional support can generate unbearable stress, we realize that we have a collective obligation to stay attuned to others.

In accepting to share our stories, we will help a friend or relative to go from darkness to light, so to speak.

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[English]

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we remembered the 10th anniversary of the Westray mining tragedy and the loss of so many lives.

Allen Martin, whose brother died in the blast, was reported as saying “workers still have little control over the safety of their workplaces.”

This past week, MPs have been asked by former Westray miners and members of the steelworkers union to make corporate executives and directors accountable for unsafe working conditions. The call for corporate accountability was first made in 1997 as one of the recommendations of a public inquiry.

It has been 10 years since the Westray mine disaster and 5 years since the inquiry's recommendations. It is time for the government to proceed and amend the criminal code. Every possible preventive measure is most desirable so that the death of miners not be repeated.

* * *

MEMBER FOR WEST VANCOUVER—SUNSHINE COAST

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the official opposition has just gone through a leadership race which resulted in a brand new leader, Stephen Harper.

During the race, my seatmate, the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, held down the fort. Quiet, reserved, invisible he is not. Open, straightforward and forceful he is. The interim leader's role can be a ceremonial job, almost a holiday. I can honestly say that I have never seen him work so hard.

He and his wife Yvonne have fulfilled the role of leader and first lady of the official opposition and the Canadian Alliance with vigour and style.

In this, the last question period for the interim leader, let me express my sincere personal thanks for a superb job well done.

* * *

CHRONIC IMMUNOLOGICAL AND NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the last eight years May 12 has been the International Awareness Day for Chronic Immunological and Neurological Diseases. These diseases include chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia.

May 12 was selected as the day to bring attention to these conditions since it is Florence Nightingale's birthday. Most people know her as the founder of modern nursing but few know that she spent most of the last half of her life confined to her home suffering from a disease similar to what we now call chronic fatigue syndrome.

These diseases have no known cause and no cure has been found and because they are difficult to diagnose nobody knows how many Canadians suffer from these diseases.

Like Florence Nightingale, many people with these afflictions are bedridden and often require numerous medications and constant medical attention.

I ask all hon. members to join with me in recognizing May 12 as the awareness day for chronic immunological and neurological diseases.

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● (1110)

REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's legislation on assisted human reproduction acts to prohibit certain practices which are deemed to be unacceptable, such as commercial surrogate motherhood, paying sperm donors or the buying and selling of human eggs.

What is curious is why this well-grounded insight into the moral dangers of such commercialization of life itself does not extend in the Liberal government's moral imagination to the patenting, commercializing and marketing of DNA and DNA therapies for the exclusive profit of certain corporations.

Why is there one law for individuals and another for the corporate sector? If we demand of individuals that they not profit from trading in life forms, and rightly so, then perhaps the government should summon the courage to discipline the morality of the corporate sector with the same vigour that it now applies to individual Canadians.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—L'Érable, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for 31 years the Club 2/3 has organized March 2/3, a peaceful demonstration by youth committed to international co-operation. The march takes place tomorrow in Montreal, and this year's theme “Consomm'acteur debout” encourages consumers to act in accordance with their conscience. The spokesperson this year is the well-known actor, Serge Postigo.

Thousands of young people will take to the streets of Montreal to demonstrate their commitment and their support for the poor around the world. This peaceful rally will focus on challenges for our collective future, such as the environment, food and sustainable development.

Primary and secondary students will use the march to send a message to today's leaders and to ask them what they intend to do to create a more fair and just world.

Tomorrow I will march with these young people. I invite all of my colleagues to encourage, directly or indirectly, this call to action being made by the leaders of tomorrow.

Oral Questions

[English]

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the end of the United Nations special session on children. The session brought together young people, government leaders and non-governmental organizations from around the world.

At home our government has taken action to make sure that every child gets the right start in life. In fact, each year the Government of Canada invests \$11 billion in programs and services for Canadian children.

For example, by the year 2004 the Canada child tax benefit will provide low and middle income families with a maximum benefit of more than \$2,500. We have also invested \$2.2 billion in early childhood development and the child expense tax deduction now stands at \$7,000 per year for each child under seven.

The Government of Canada will continue to help disadvantaged families to ensure that they have access to the services and support they need to care for their children.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, there are just too many skeletons in the Liberal closet. The government has rewarded its closest friends and political allies with lucrative government contracts. Political patronage is rampant.

The auditor general said that the government broke every rule in the book when doling out public money.

The government has mismanaged Canadians' hard-earned money, but there is more. It has also removed the powers of elected officials and put it in the hands of the Liberal cabinet and the PMO.

Instead of admitting its mistakes, the government simply sweeps the sleaze under the rug. The government sends its corrupt minister to Denmark and hides its gerrymandering ministers in the back benches.

No wonder 70% of Canadians think politicians are corrupt, the Liberal government leads by example. Canadians are tired. Now is their chance to send a powerful message to the government. Canadians must not reward Liberal patronage and neglect in the upcoming byelections. In the byelections on May 13 it is their responsibility to send a message to the government: no more Liberal corruption.

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[Translation]

MONTGOLFIÈRE AVENTURE

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Martin LaFrance and Luc Gaudreault for their ingenuity in founding Montgolfière Aventure, two years ago.

These two intuitive, creative and innovative managers share a philosophy that has allowed them to distinguish themselves in a

short time. Starting in June 2002, they will offer rides to tourists throughout Canada.

The company's constant growth, which has made them a leader in their field, is the result of the exceptional commitment made by its founders and employees since the beginning, in addition to their constant efforts to develop the business.

Montgolfière Aventure's motto is "higher, farther, stronger", and thanks to Canada's innovation strategy, launched on February 12, we will be able to find the resources to support a variety of diverse, dynamic businesses, both big and small, that want to develop new markets thanks to their innovative products and services.

I congratulate Montgolfière Aventure, and wish them a long and prosperous future.

* * *

● (1115)

[English]

BYELECTIONS

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Public Works and Government Services Canada has outlined to Canadians that values and ethics are the critical foundation and unifying element for the management of the public service. Pursuing a dialogue on values and ethics has become a top priority as of late in reaction to how the Liberals manage.

This morning across Ottawa the dumpsters are full of paper. A \$100 million project about writing job descriptions has been abandoned. This is another Liberal failure.

In the byelections on Monday, Canadians have an opportunity to send a clear message that voters are very aware of Liberal incompetence, corruption and the rot of power. The Liberals cannot manage and need to be held accountable. Let us use the byelections to say Canadians can do better and that change is on the way. The last thing Canadians need is another Liberal MP.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal culture of corruption has shown Canadians that the last thing this country needs is another Liberal member of parliament. No matter how much the government tries to blame civil servants, the media or the opposition for its problems, 70% of Canadians think the government is corrupt, and for very good reason.

When will the government stop slinging mud and own up to Canadians about this Liberal culture of corruption?

Oral Questions

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe corruption is getting up and repeatedly saying something that is not true in the House of Commons, for example, the reference to the polling results.

Maybe the Leader of the Opposition would recognize the fact that the auditor general, reviewing three contracts for \$1.5 million, is not exactly a culture of corruption.

Maybe he will recognize that this persistent attempt to exaggerate what is going on will only undermine his and his party's credibility. Perhaps that is just as well.

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government must spend so much time flying around in its new Challenger jets that it has not read the full report or the Deputy Prime Minister would not agree with that.

Let us remember the old expression, a fish rots from the head. Let me read a quote from January of this year by the former minister of public works and government services, Mr. Gagliano, about the current Prime Minister, "He's the boss. I served the way he wanted me to serve".

As the auditor general has already found that the government broke every rule in the book, will the Deputy Prime Minister now agree with his former colleague that it is the Prime Minister who is responsible for this culture of corruption?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition does not reflect what the auditor general said. What is his problem with the truth? Why is he so challenged that he has to take some comments and exaggerate them and try to turn them around? Perhaps he is uncomfortable with the fact that this government took the action required, asked for a review by the auditor general and co-operated fully from the beginning of this incident. What exactly is his trouble with transparency and openness?

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, those people over there spin better than Spiderman. He needs to remember that it was this opposition, after two days of questions, that forced him to go to the auditor general.

Let me quote the former minister, Mr. Gagliano, again. He said "I served the way he wanted me to serve". Mr. Gagliano did the Prime Minister's bidding.

Problems have plagued public works and other parts of this government, regardless of the rules, regardless of who the minister was.

How can the Deputy Prime Minister pretend that anyone other than the current Prime Minister is responsible for this culture of corruption?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind the Leader of the Opposition that in fact it was the former minister of public works who initially asked for the internal audit on this issue to begin with. It is the current minister of public works

who forwarded the file to the auditor general and has been entirely supportive of the work she has tried to do.

I remind the Leader of the Opposition that much as he would like to try to create a culture of corruption out of thin air, that in fact is simply untrue and it undermines his own credibility, which must be getting very thin.

• (1120)

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is not thin air, it is pungent air.

The auditor general looked at three contracts and she found things so bad that she called in the RCMP. There is something the government can do right today. While the RCMP investigation is going on, it could stop all discretionary advertising spending. Will it do that?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member understands the contracting process at all.

This is not discretionary spending of any kind. This is work done pursuant to standing offer agreements, done in full compliance as the rules are established. It is not discretionary spending.

The hon. member might want to ask his critic. No doubt he could explain to him how the contracting procedures work.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, let us punch the replay button on the minister. Ten years ago this is what he said when he was on this side of the House:

I wish the minister would tell us when the government will stop its futile exercise in patronage and propaganda and finally put its money where it is needed...not by rewarding Conservative advertising companies.

Why do we not just put Liberal advertising companies in that statement? Why does the minister not stop the patronage and sleaze?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong again. In the question he has just asked, he is trying to draw a parallel saying that I am not going out for a new bidding process. In fact that is exactly what I announced two days ago and I will provide him gladly with a copy of the press release when I announce it.

The actual tendering date will be June 15 to start in October. That is the earliest possible date. If it is ready before that, we will go even sooner, but it has already been announced. The answer is already yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government would love to put the blame for the advertising contract mess on public servants, but we have now learned that the government has known for two years that there were serious problems, including the intimidation of public servants, departmental interference and irregularities in the advertising contracts awarded by Public Works Canada.

How can the Deputy Prime Minister justify that the government was aware of all this two years ago, but is only acting now, thus allowing the system to be remain in place and lead to the scandal with *L'Almanach du peuple*, among others?

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are some elements missing in the question of the hon. member opposite, when he claims that the government has known about certain things for two years, but did not take action.

Has the hon. member forgotten about the internal audit conducted in the year 2000? Has he forgotten the additional audit that was done? Has he forgotten the new rules set out by my predecessor in 2001? Has he forgotten, intentionally or otherwise, the rules that I announced on February 13 and those that I just announced again this week?

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is all too easy for the government to mention certain measures that were taken after the government had, for years—they have been in office since 1993—been an accomplice in the intimidation of public servants and in political interference to give contracts to Liberal friends.

Does the government realize that the internal audit report is not only damning, but that it is also silent as to who is responsible, who authorized what, and what the political responsibility of the minister is?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his supplementary, the hon. member says that I should not have mentioned the measures that were taken, while in his first question he implied that I had not taken any action. It is either one or the other, it cannot be both at the same time.

The hon. member is right. A number of measures have been taken over the past two years. It is true. This is what the government, my predecessor and myself have done.

I am grateful to the hon. member for finally recognizing the measures taken.

• (1125)

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the government received a damning report on the contract awarding process at Public Works Canada, in 2000, two years have gone by without any change being made to the existing system. Yet, during this period, \$1,324,140 has been thrown away without any justification, just for advertising in *L'Almanach du peuple*.

Does not this complacency on the part of the government in itself justify a public inquiry? Should we not know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, why the government kept on with what it was doing, even though it knew?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member tells us that in 1999-2000, there was an internal audit. He claims that our predecessors took no action at that time. Once again, this is incorrect.

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Why did Groupaction come after that?

Hon. Don Boudria: Furthermore, an audit framework was established. It is even available on the Internet, although the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot does not want to hear about it.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the report obtained

under the Access to Information Act talks about overbilling, double billing, intimidation and ministerial interference.

Will the minister of public works admit that ministerial interference and the relationship between the government and its pet companies are not part of the auditor general's mandate, and that only through a public inquiry will we find out what really went on and who is responsible?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to the mandate given to the auditor general. As far as the report she is going to produce is concerned, she has the mandate given her by parliament. This is not a specific mandate given by the government. In this case, the Auditor General's Act gives her the authority to conduct any audit she wishes. This is what she does four times a year. As things now stand, she can comment on any file she wishes.

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[English]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister or whoever happens to be answering for the Minister for International Trade.

It has to do with the fact that members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union were on the Hill this week and were expressing concern that the peace in the war over softwood not be worse than the war itself. They are concerned that whatever arrangement might be arrived at with the United States would be a danger not only to the softwood industry but also to the pulp and paper industry. The two are connected and any surrender of our forest management practices would be harmful to them as well.

Could we have an assurance that the peace will not be worse than the war itself?

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct that the softwood lumber problem also affects the pulp and paper industry because the supply of chips may have an effect. We are certainly concerned with that.

It is in the best interest for the U.S. to come forward with a reasonable offer so we can come to an agreement. The softwood tariff is unacceptable to Canada. We urge the parties to go back to the table. We ask that the U.S. government administration put on the table a reasonable offer so we can come to an agreement to ensure that people can continue to work and our sawmills can continue to operate.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what we want to hear from the government is that under no condition will it surrender the ability of Canada to manage its own forestry. The agreement with the United States cannot be the acceptance of an offer whereby we conform to how the Americans think we should manage our forests. We want that assurance from the minister.

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade throughout this whole matter has worked closely with the provinces and with the industry. I can assure the hon. member that we will not allow Washington to dictate how we manage our forestry in Canada. We will manage it here.

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, the indignant denials and attacks on the impartiality of the auditor general are insulting. What was uncovered was one sampling of one file in one department.

What Canadians are concerned about is mounting evidence of rampant corruption throughout government. No public servant would jeopardize his or her career to see that good Liberals got rewarded with taxpayer funded contracts. The order had to come from a political master. What is needed is a broad examination of all documents, records of private companies and immunity for whistle-blowing bureaucrats.

In the interest of integrity, when is the current don of public works going to call a full public inquiry?

• (1130)

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the auditor general has referred the matter of the three contracts to the RCMP.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Be honest with us, Don.

Hon. Don Boudria: I see somebody in the Conservative Party disagrees with that.

I would like to quote the right honourable member for Calgary Centre, the member's own leader. On March 19 he asked why the problem had not been referred to the RCMP. That is what the members wanted. That is what they got.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is a master of minutia.

The auditor general's scathing report is only a sampling of evidence of patronage and corruption. A public inquiry would reveal the true source of the corruption that must exist. Perhaps this is the reason the Prime Minister will not act.

The Prime Minister crows about no cabinet resignations. No wonder: no standards, no resignations.

The Prime Minister is off on another world tour. Perhaps he should hop on his multimillion dollar Challenger, recall the former don of public works and launch that full public inquiry.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referred to the sampling. If he wants to quote the auditor general, why does he not also quote when she said that we should not generalize about the contract awarding process by way of the inquiry that she did in those two contracts? Why does he not actually say that? Why does he not quote the auditor general for what she did say?

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is now shamefully using smear tactics to discredit an officer of parliament. Let me quote from the auditor general's website:

We are committed to making a difference for the Canadian people by promoting, in all our work for Parliament—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. I would point out to the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough that he has had his supplemen-

tary. We are continuing now with the hon. member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar. She has the floor.

Mrs. Carol Skelton: Mr. Speaker, the quote from the website is:

We are committed to making a difference for the Canadian people by promoting, in all our work for Parliament, answerable, honest and productive government—

Some Liberal MPs over there have publicly attacked the auditor general. Will the government stop its attack on her now?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nobody who is speaking on behalf of the government has attacked the auditor general. We have complete confidence in the work that she will undertake on behalf of parliament and Canadians.

Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I guess the Liberal backbenchers are not part of this government.

The mission of the auditor general is to “conduct independent audits and examinations...advice and assurance to Parliament. We promote accountability and best practices in government operations.”

Will the Deputy Prime Minister fully endorse the auditor general's role, both here in parliament and for Canadians?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should have some sessions for new MPs so that they understand how officers of parliament function and what authority they operate under.

We have provided the auditor general with the reference to do the initial work. What I do not understand is why the opposition members therefore are not satisfied with relying on the auditor general to complete her work. Instead they want who knows how many different kinds of processes in order to simply do what the auditor general already has the authority to do under the statute that creates her position.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, hon. members will recall just what a marked increase in federal propaganda we experienced around the 1995 referendum. Last week, the Prime Minister confirmed that, for him, all means are acceptable for crushing what he calls “the separatists”.

With such a statement, is the Prime Minister not revealing that this entire operation had his blessings, even though he had been aware for two years that the rules of ethics and good management were being flouted regularly?

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member over there is saying that the Government of Canada's sponsorship program is nothing more than propaganda, or something akin to it, I trust that he will pass the same message on to the Government of Quebec, which has a similar program and it is even run from the premier's office.

• (1135)

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will speak seriously and without demagoguery.

When a minister receives an audit report that makes charges as serious as those contained in the report tabled in 2000 by the department's internal auditors, it is clear that the PMO and the Privy Council are aware of the situation.

How could we believe that the Quebec political lieutenant of the Prime Minister, Minister of Public Works Alfonso Gagliano, could have received this report without acting on it and without discussing it with the Prime Minister or the PMO?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very much to the contrary, my predecessor established a new framework for sponsorship programs, and this is available on the Internet.

I recommend to the hon. member that, for the answer to his question, he consult the departmental Internet site.

Finally, I would point out that I myself have, on two occasions, added measures to improve the system and make it more accountable.

[English]

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, public servants rarely break the law knowingly because to do so would jeopardize their careers, but the auditor general said that:

...senior public servants responsible for managing the contracts demonstrated an appalling disregard for the Financial Administration Act...Treasury Board policy, and rules designed to ensure prudence and probity in government procurement.

Just who is it over there who ordered our public servants to break the law?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is prepared to quote the auditor general and to believe what she said, as he should, why does he go beyond that and put in something that she did not say?

She did not say that these people had been overruled, manipulated, or whatever other words, by either my predecessor or anyone else in public office. He recognizes that and he should stick to the facts as they are in the auditor general's report.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, is that minister now passing the buck to the bureaucrats? The former head of the Business Development Bank told us all about political interference.

Public servants gave verbal approval to contracts and kept no paperwork. They waived legal and quality control reviews and they gave contracts on an emergency basis for no reason at all. An

employee told the auditor general that "this was how business was done".

Public servants do not break the rules on a whim. Someone told them to. Why are the Liberals corrupting our supposedly independent public service?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I remind the hon. member what the auditor general said about extrapolating from what she reported and giving it definitions which are not there. He should stick to the facts.

She referred to what she saw as being unacceptable. She has reported on it. If the hon. member is prepared to accept the auditor general's report, which he is, why then does he say something that is not in there?

* * *

[Translation]

MIRABEL AIRPORT

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone is pulling together to help ensure the survival of Mirabel airport, with the exception of the federal government, which is sitting on its hands.

Yet it is Ottawa that is responsible for this whole mess, and it is up to Ottawa to share the burden and make it possible to create an international free trade zone at Mirabel, like Quebec has done.

Does the federal government not feel that it has made enough blunders in Quebec, and that it must act?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is fully aware of the national policy on airports. Under this policy, it is up to Aéroports de Montréal to manage the interests of the two airports in the Montreal region.

ADM has made a decision, and this decision respects the terms of its lease with the federal government.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everything that has been proposed by the federal government until now has fallen short of the mark. What is needed are tax incentives like those granted by the government of Quebec to put Mirabel solidly back on its feet.

Will the government finally decide to act and agree to measures similar to those taken by the government of Quebec to support the development of Mirabel?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ADM is responsible for managing the airports in a way that would demonstrate the viability of both airports. This is a collective responsibility.

It made a decision to transfer passenger flights to Dorval. This is a management decision made by ADM. As I have already stated, this respects the terms of the lease between ADM and the federal government.

Oral Questions

●(1140)

[English]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government will try anything to divert attention from the culture of corruption. The Liberals blame us for raising it, they blame the media for reporting it, they blame the bureaucrats for creating it, and they blame the pollsters for counting the 70% of Canadians who believe it.

Now they are even blaming the auditor general for doing the work that they asked her to do, after plenty of prompting from us, I might add, to bring her in. Instead of blaming, why do they not admit their mistakes and apologize to Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I blame the opposition for misstating the facts repeatedly and continually.

If there is corruption, that suggests criminal offences. Is there evidence of criminal offences? If so, then the police should prosecute. We on our side hope that if that is the case the people are held criminally responsible for what they have done, whoever they may be.

If it is an administrative problem, then we need to take the measures necessary to correct it. That in fact has already been undertaken by the minister of public works, and if the auditor general recommends further steps we will take those as well.

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the blame, they throw up smokescreens and keep repeating the same mistakes. They make a few cosmetic changes so they can claim that they have cleaned up their act, but nothing changes.

This Sunday is Mother's Day. I can think of no better time and no better way to acknowledge the role of mothers in teaching right from wrong than a simple apology. Will they do so?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, that the question did not come through on the device but—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. It is very difficult for the Chair to hear the person who has the floor, who happens to be the Deputy Prime Minister, and I know all hon. members want to be able to hear as well.

Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, here is what we are trying to deal with. In the first place, the auditor general has identified some administrative deficiencies in the way the program was run. Those need to be corrected and there should be no hesitation on our side in acknowledging those deficiencies and in taking the steps necessary to correct them, and there is no such hesitation. If there are criminal things, then they have not yet come to light, but it is our hope that they will face appropriate prosecution in the appropriate place.

INTERNATIONAL AID

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations General Assembly's special session on children that is being held in New York this week needs to address many critical issues. One of these is micronutrients, which play an important role in saving and protecting children's lives. Food in industrialized countries has been fortified with micronutrients like vitamin A and iodine for a very long time.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation tell the House what Canada is doing to ensure that vital supplements are made available to women and children in developing countries?

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that the Minister for International Cooperation has just announced this week that Canada is contributing \$20 million toward the micronutrients initiative aimed at combating micronutrient malnutrition.

Members should know that vitamin A has been shown to dramatically reduce the child death rate while iodine improves learning ability and iron increases productivity. It is estimated that over seven million children have been born free of mental impairment because of Canada's contribution to these initiatives.

We are concerned and we want to do—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Palliser.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker:

...if Canada is to work as a country, Canadians have to see themselves as belonging not to a society composed of isolated individuals or of competing interest groups, but to a society of reciprocal obligation, in which each of us is responsible for the well-being of the other.

With that red book Liberal commitment, would the Deputy Prime Minister please explain why the party that brought it in and was elected on it refuses to support a trade injury compensation program for grain and oilseed farmers?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that when I met with the ministers of agriculture from across Canada earlier this week, I pledged with them to do a full review of the U.S. farm bill and its effects and to find every way that we can to challenge and counter that.

That work is being done, it is being done with the support of the provincial ministers of agriculture, and I can assure members that it will be done.

●(1145)

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us cut out the rhetorical nonsense. Western Canadians know the score. That party over there can continue to win elections without support from western Canada. It has zero to do with reciprocal obligations, rights, fairness or justice. It has to do with rewarding those regions of the country that the Liberals need to continue to stay in office.

Oral Questions

As the Prime Minister stated in the last election campaign, he likes to do politics with people in the east. Would the minister of agriculture concede that this is the real issue?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member should concede is that last year the province of Saskatchewan, in program payments from the province but mostly from the federal government, got \$962 million of support, more support than any other province got from the federal government.

* * *

LEWISPORTE MARINE TERMINAL

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I raised a question about the marine terminal in Lewisporte, Newfoundland, which will be closed later this year. It is the major industry in Lewisporte and will take with it 30 or 40 jobs and put at risk the entire rural community.

Why is the Minister of Transport allowing the reduction of ferry service from Lewisporte to coastal Labrador and why is there this continued attack on rural Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my absence, there was apparently an answer given by the secretary for ACOA that talked about discussions underway with respect to this particular matter. I think the motivation for the question is not really the hon. member's concern about ferry service between Newfoundland and other parts of the country but rather a certain event that will happen on Monday which will show the Liberal members' return from Newfoundland.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, at least we will bring it up in the House rather than just discuss it like the minister said yesterday, but I have another question.

Ottawa bureaucrats who do not know a codfish from a herring are now determining which Newfoundland and Labrador fishermen are core fishermen and which ones are non-core fishermen. By creating red tape and blaming technicalities, they are preventing lifelong fishermen from qualifying as core fishermen.

Will the minister correct this offensive strategy that deliberately excludes lifelong fishermen from being designated as core fishermen?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Georges Farrah (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are obviously very concerned about this. We know that it could disrupt fishing activities in Newfoundland.

As the minister has often said, we must find a way to work with the communities, so that they have access to the resource and so that people can make a decent living from it. This must be done with respect for the resource, because what is at stake is the future of the fishery.

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, known members of Hamas are among the 13 militants reported to maybe, apparently, be possible invitees to Canada by the Prime Minister.

Hamas, of course, is the terrorist organization which proudly took responsibility for slaughtering 18 innocent civilians at a pool hall in Israel this week.

Did the Prime Minister consider that members of a group banned by Canada's terrorist legislation could possibly join the throngs of illegal fugitives already in Canada who may never be removed because they will enjoy the endless ability to appeal deportation for—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in effect the question is moot, because at no time was Canada requested to take in Palestinian deportees nor did we make any specific offer to do so.

We have been urging, as has been the result, a peaceful resolution. As I said yesterday, the safety of Canadians and Canadian security is our number one priority. We are pleased that a difficult situation has finally been resolved and we commend members of the EU who were major players in that regard.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we all know there was no request to do this. The Prime Minister just blurted it out. We know that.

Yesterday a spokesman for the government said the Prime Minister said one thing and then another spokesperson said the Prime Minister said something else. Then a cabinet minister said "this is the position" and that was at variance with what the Prime Minister was reported to have said.

Would someone on the other side please stand up and simply admit to being the author of this confusion, or just explain what the foreign policy position is on inviting people like this into the country? Could someone just simply explain it? These are matters of life and death in some cases.

● (1150)

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think difficulties frequently arise when our sole source of information is newspapers. The result has been made very clear. As I said yesterday, there was no request. We did not offer to do so. Again I have to say that the issues raised are simply not concerning us and are really moot.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CHILD POVERTY

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the UN Conference on the Child held this week in New York, the Deputy Prime Minister announced \$500,000 in funding to assist the poor children of this world. This is less than what the government paid for one phantom report from Groupaction.

Is the government not ashamed of the amount of its funding for poor children compared to what it is channeling to its cronies?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member did not listen to the earlier questions and answers, but it is true that we have contributed \$500,000. We have also contributed \$20 million for the third world micronutrients project.

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is all very nice to shine on the international scene, but the government does not hesitate to spend millions of dollars on propaganda, while in Canada, one child in five goes to bed hungry.

Since the Deputy Prime Minister has admitted that Canada's effort in this area is not good enough, what specific action does he intend to take to rectify a situation which everyone describes as unacceptable?

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question, because it provides us with an opportunity to tell the House exactly what the government has done and will continue to do.

In 2001-02, for instance, we made available approximately \$7.8 billion—yes, billion—under the Canada child tax benefit, including some \$2.4 billion for the national child benefit.

I would add that these two benefits are fully indexed and non-taxable.

* * *

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, according to recent press reports, the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Canadian Heritage will be vigorously pursuing grey market satellite users.

When the RCMP's precious resources are being used to investigate the Groupaction affair, why does the government want to use RCMP officers to crack down on Canadians who apparently, according to the government, are making the mistake of watching the wrong television channels in their living rooms?

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question because the government has always been against black market satellite transmissions.

As the hon. member knows, on April 26 the supreme court ruled that the Radiocommunication Act applied not only to the black

market but to the grey market. We will continue to enforce that decision.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is a perfect example of the government's mixed up priorities.

The Canadian Police Association has lobbied the government to protect children and to stop the club med prison system. Instead, the government wants the RCMP to swoop into rec rooms of law-abiding Canadians.

Would not negotiating a new arrangement with the United States be a more appropriate response to the issue of grey market satellite users than calling in the RCMP?

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we will continue to defend the law of the land as announced by the supreme court on April 26.

* * *

[Translation]

FORESTS

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, National Forest Week is an excellent opportunity to reflect on the current state of our forests.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. What is Canada doing to ensure that we will continue to benefit from this extraordinary resource, which means so much to Canadians?

● (1155)

[English]

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, in addition to offering exceptional recreational activities and precious wildlife habitat, Canada's forests support a vibrant forest industry.

Canada is the world's largest forest products exporter. The latest figures available show that forest products were the largest contributors to Canada's surplus balance of trade, which was \$37.5 billion in the year 2000.

More than one million people across Canada are employed directly and indirectly by the forest sector. Communities, in rural Canada especially, depend on the forests to maintain their quality of life.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap. What farmers need now is action. In the last few days both houses of the U.S. congress have passed the farm bill. It only needs the president's signature.

Oral Questions

Prairie premiers are meeting in an emergency session in Regina today to fight rising U.S. subsidies and protectionism. Canadian farmers and their provincial governments cannot and should not fight this battle on their own as the government continues to neglect them.

Will the minister of agriculture implement a federally funded trade injury protection program immediately?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years the federal government has increasingly supported farmers and the challenges they have had, whether it has been trade challenges, weather challenges, market challenges, et cetera.

As I said to the ministers earlier this week, and they agreed, we need to sit down and talk about how we can continue to do that for and with our farmers and with the provinces.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture has said over the last few days that he wants to mitigate the impact of the U.S. farm bill but no farmer in the country has any idea what he means by that statement. Meanwhile, many farmers are still living below the poverty line. The minister's estimates have cut \$650 million of support for farmers.

When the minister says mitigate, does that mean he will commit new federal money to grain and oilseed producers, and will he have this money in the hands of farmers this summer?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years we have found ways to help counter the effects of a number of challenges that the agriculture and agrifood industry has had, and certainly the challenges of farmers, be they drought, trade challenges or whatever. I pledge that we will continue to seek all the resources we possibly can to do that.

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[Translation]

SHIPBUILDING

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, following an agreement reached on March 31, 1998, the public works department awarded a \$12 million contract to Davie Industries to repair the Champlain dry docks, plus an additional annual amount of \$800,000 for operating costs. The work has been completed since December, but there is still \$2 million to be paid for repairs, and another \$800,000 for this year's operations.

What is the department of public works waiting for to pay the money owed to Davie Industries?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. We have both discussed this issue on a number of occasions in the past. I also discussed it with some of my cabinet colleagues.

MIL is bankrupt, and the company's assets are managed by a trustee in bankruptcy. This situation has the effect of nullifying the agreement in question. However, we are currently working with the trustee in bankruptcy to find a way to make the contribution, either

under a special or conditional agreement, and be able to contribute nevertheless.

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CHILDREN

Ms. Hélène Scherrer (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the United Nations Special Session on Children this week, progress made since the World Summit for Children in 1990 was examined. In this way, the governments are recommitting to ensuring a better future for all children, creating a world action plan and, in particular, setting the objectives for the next ten years.

Can the Secretary of State for Human Resources Canada again tell the House what the Government of Canada is doing to help children get the best possible start in life?

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Louis-Hébert, but I am merely a parliamentary secretary, not a secretary of state.

Her question provides me with the opportunity to indicate how pleased the Government of Canada was to take part in the special United Nations session devoted to children.

Since another member has already asked that same question, this gives me the opportunity to remind hon. members of how much Canada has done for its children, particularly concerning the child tax benefit, assistance to the provinces and territories for early childhood development, and—

● (1200)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Charlevoix.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport has dragged his feet for so long regarding the port transfer policy that he let the docks of Trois-Pistoles and Les Escoumins deteriorate, which resulted in the interruption of the ferry service between the two towns, thus depriving the North Shore and the Lower St. Lawrence of this service.

Does the minister intend to authorize the urgent repair of these two docks, which are essential to eastern Quebec's economic development and tourism?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must inform the hon. member that my departmental officials are monitoring the situation and are well aware of the problems experienced by many Quebec ports. We hope to be able to settle this issue.

[English]

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Ontario truckers, the CAA and others are outraged by possible tolls on Highway 403. The federal government spends only 5% of gas tax revenue on roads.

Routine Proceedings

In 1999 the auditor general criticized Transport Canada's funding process and lack of accountability in spending to help the provinces maintain and upgrade the country's highways. What is the consequences? Bad roads, toll highways, user fees and more taxes.

When will the government make a real investment in Canada's highways so we do not have to continue using the idea of tolls?

Hon. David Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member has been for the last few years, but in the 2000 budget \$600 million was appropriated for highways across the country. Those are now being worked out in agreements with the provinces.

Two billion dollars was announced in the last budget for critical infrastructure and hopefully a lot of that can be spent on highways. In fact there has been a lot of discussion about highways in the last number of weeks. The government has programs and those programs will bear fruit.

The hon. member should realize that notwithstanding the criticism in 1999 by the auditor general, in the last auditor general's report Transport Canada was congratulated for remedying the situation.

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LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this will be my last question as opposition leader today.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Good job.

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, I have played a lot of roles in the House but none as interesting, demanding or rewarding as this. Still, I am looking forward to May 21 when our new leader is sworn in and takes his seat. I know the Prime Minister is looking forward to this as well and will welcome Stephen Harper as the eighth Leader of the Opposition that he has faced.

I would ask the government one final question. Will it commit today to have the Prime Minister stick around long enough so that he can welcome prime minister Stephen Harper as Mr. Harper's first Leader of the Opposition?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what timeframe he may have in mind. I know the Prime Minister's intention is to be in politics until at least the year 2020 which may or may not accommodate that timeframe.

We congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on the excellent job he has done and we wish him well. My advice to him on his last day is that he probably should stick around just in case he is needed to fill in again.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of a parliamentary delegation from Mexico led by Senator Silvia Hernandez.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1205)

[*Translation*]**CANADIAN FORCES**

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the standing orders, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2000-01 annual report of the Canadian Forces Housing Agency.

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[*English*]**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 56th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding its order of reference from the House of Commons of Tuesday, February 28, in relation to the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, in regard to vote 30 under Privy Council, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The committee reports the same.

I also have the honour to present the 57th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding its order of reference from the House of Friday, April 19 in relation to Bill S-34, an act respecting royal assent to bills passed by the Houses of Parliament.

The committee has considered Bill S-34 and reports the bill without amendment.

[*Translation*]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I move that the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, presented on Tuesday, December 4, 2001, be concurred in.

Mr. Speaker, in December and during all of last fall, we, at the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, were pleased to study, among other things, the issue of seniors.

For that study, the committee invited many people to speak to this issue in particular. There were discussions about the guaranteed income supplement.

We realized that a really scandalous situation had been going on for eight years across Canada and that about 270,000 Canadians were deprived from the GIS they were entitled to.

Routine Proceedings

Out of these 270,000 Canadians, 68,000 live in Quebec. That is simple. When we talk about figures, we are always asked where they are coming from. Those figures were provided to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities by the department itself. As for the figure of 68,000, we simply divided 270,000 by four since Quebecers account for about 25% of the Canadian population.

Who is entitled to the GIS? Those people who do not have enough income to have decent standard of living in their old age. The expression guaranteed income supplement says it all: it is a supplement provided to those who need it most.

We realized that, almost on purpose, the government and the department forgot about the poorest members of our society, the people who are eligible to this supplement, the people they do not look for or simply fail to find because they do not have the proper tools to do so.

Who is not missing out on the guaranteed income supplement? According to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, whose members unanimously supported the report, and the expert witnesses we heard, these are usually the people who find themselves outside the mainstream society. They are almost always the poorest members of our society. Who are these people we are looking for? Let me list some of the target groups that the department should have tried harder to reach out to.

When we heard about this issue, the caucus of the Bloc Quebecois asked me, as the critic for seniors, to look into it. I was also asked to try to find people the Department of Human Resources Development could not reach.

I met with thousands of people at 27 meetings, press conferences and other get togethers with representatives of senior organizations in Quebec.

I realized not only that the report was not an exaggeration, but that the situation was even worse. When we go in the field and talk to people, we realize that many more people than we thought are missing out on this program.

Who are the people that could not be reached? We have, for instance, the people who have never worked outside the home. As Yvon Deschamps, a stand-up comic from Quebec, once said, "They are the people who had too much work at home to work outside the home".

Between 95% and 98% of these are stay at home mothers who worked hard to build our society and to make us what we are. At this late stage in their lives, they do not necessarily show up on any list of the Department of Human Resources Development to be entitled to the guaranteed income supplement. They are among the forgotten ones.

• (1210)

At the same time, when we try to determine who is affected by poverty in our society, we find, oddly enough, that elderly women are forgotten in the guaranteed income supplement program. These people do not file income tax returns.

During my visits, I asked them "Why do you not file an income tax return?" Someone told me, "I do not have a penny to declare. Why would I file a tax return?" Of course we have to explain to this person that it pays to do so, because it allows him or her to claim the guaranteed income supplement.

These people include aboriginal, residents of remote communities and people who do not have much of an education. In spite of the measures taken by the government to reach them, if these people can neither read nor write, if they are isolated, they have little chance of having access to the information provided by the government.

These are people who speak neither of the official languages, immigrants who have been here for a number of years and whose children have adjusted well. However, a number of these immigrants have continued to live in their own language and society. Therefore, they cannot be reached through advertising, or through the information that is provided.

These people also include disabled and sick persons. During my consultations and meetings, I met many people who were alone, sick and old. These people often no longer want to fight a system that does not help them. This group also includes, of course, the homeless.

These people, who are the poorest and who have the greatest needs, have been forgotten. Why? Because, instead of attracting them, the system excluded them. Just to obtain the guaranteed income supplement form, one must dial a telephone number and wait for hours to get service. It is true, we checked. The caller is asked to press key No. 1, 2 and 3. In the end, the poor person, who had to fight to get the information, just gives up.

After finally getting service, we are sent a form to fill out, but this form is out of proportion with the service provided by the government. So, these people give up again. The system is designed to forget the elderly and the poor, that is those who need this money the most.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities came to the conclusion that the bureaucratic intricacies were part of the reasons why some of the most disadvantaged members of our society are forgotten almost on purpose.

I have just listed some facts that support this conclusion. Take for example the problems with telephone service; this is an automated service, and seniors do not get to speak to another human being. The telephone service is automated and the voice mailbox system is complex. There are also forms, which are complicated, and publicity that is obviously not working.

Incidentally, I have to admit that publicity is somewhat better now. It has improved, but it is still not very efficient. One liberal member was telling me the other day "I do not know where you find these people that we have forgotten. In my riding, we do a lot of publicity and the people who answer are not forgotten by the system". Well, of course, when you look where there is nothing to be found, it is quite normal not to find anything.

Routine Proceedings

●(1215)

We cannot rely only on radio, television and newspaper publicity. Publicity has to be done through word of mouth. It must rely on human contact. It must reach those who are difficult to reach for the reasons I gave earlier.

There are also administrative excesses. I have filled forms all my life. When I see the forms sent to the poor people who are often also disadvantaged on the instruction level, people who are alone and often disheartened by the system, these forms are so complicated that it is tantamount to excluding these people from the system on purpose.

There is also conflict of interest. I think that this has played a large role. For eight years now, the government has boosted its fund with \$3.2 billion taken from the poorest members of society; \$3.2 billion which should have gone to those most in need, to those whose income does not even top \$12,648 annually if they are single, and \$16,640 if they are living as a couple, whom the government has failed to locate.

The government has saved \$3.2 billion on the backs of these disadvantaged citizens. In Quebec alone, some \$800 million, close to \$1 billion, has been saved and is in the government's coffers. This has helped to wipe out the deficit. All it did was further swell the EI fund which we so often speak about. There is \$45 billion in the EI fund, which also belongs to workers, who are certainly not among the richest members of society.

This has gone into the fund, not just to eliminate the deficit, but also to pay down the debt. This debt is not something seniors and the disadvantaged owe. It is wrong to claim that these people must pay down the debt, when they barely have enough for a comfortable old age.

What we discovered was an unspeakable scandal. In every region of Quebec I visited, and even outside Quebec, since I went to Vancouver, I spoke about this issue. It is a scandal.

What makes it worse, Mr. Speaker, is that if the government discovers after the fact that people owe it money, it can collect it for five years back. If an investigation finds that you are at fault, there is full retroactivity.

In the case before us, in Quebec, I found seniors who were owed large amounts, because the information had not been provided, because it had been badly targeted, and because the government was at fault. In Quebec, I found cases where the government owes seniors up to \$90,000. In Rimouski, I found someone to whom the government owes \$4,000 a year. Similar cases are being found throughout Quebec.

Do you know what kind of answer we get? When we told the government that it owed money to seniors, that we had proof of this, the government told us that the retroactivity was for 11 months. It is keeping money that does not belong to it, that belongs to the poorest members of society. When these people, after going through a terrible hassle, finally get the necessary information, they are told that there is only 11 months of retroactivity.

●(1220)

This is unacceptable. This was also the conclusion of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. It is unacceptable to behave this way when dealing with the poorest members of society, those who helped build this country, people to whom we owe so much more than money, to whom we owe recognition and respect. It is unacceptable for them to end up in this type of situation.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities made proposals to the government. We asked the government to simplify the registration procedure, for instance. It is ridiculous that there is such a complicated process to ask for that which one deserves. It makes no sense to use such complicated forms for people who are poor and often worn down by life. When people reach 70, 72, 75 or 80 years of age, they are often tired, sick or depressed, and they do not feel like fighting. When they have to fight against a system that denies them what they deserve, it is depressing.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities also reached the conclusion that retroactivity must go back five years. Retroactivity must be full and total. The government must adopt the same measures when paying out money owed to the poor as they use when collecting the money it is owed.

When I owe income tax to the government, it can go back five, eight or ten years. If I am responsible, I must pay a penalty, and interest on the amount. It makes no sense that when the same thing happens in reverse, to the poorest members of society, when a lady from Sherbrooke realizes that the government owes her \$90,000 in guaranteed income supplement, the government says to her "We will only give you 11 months of retroactive benefits". Yet, if the opposite were to happen, that person would be required to reimburse the government \$90,000 in addition to a penalty and interests.

I believe the committee has reached the conclusion that the government must improve the way it is doing things. It must change its procedures. The system must be made as automatic as possible. It makes no sense that a person in need of the guaranteed income supplement must reapply yearly. Everything in possible is being done to exclude people, whereas if they were honest, they would be doing everything possible to include them, if only out of respect for those who built this country.

My colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois and myself will do our utmost to see that this matter is finally settled and that more honest methods are adopted. It is not a matter of charity, but merely of honesty to those in our society who are the least well off.

What would you or I do with \$12, 648 a year? If a person has less than that, and is entitled to the GIS but no effort is made to get that money to them, their situation almost defies description.

I have introduced a private member's bill in order to force the government to change its way of doing things and to apply the same approach and the same retroactive period as it does when it owes taxpayers money. It is not true that seniors are responsible for going after the money they are owed. When the government owes them money, it has to pay it back. It will have to show some basic honesty.

Routine Proceedings

•(1225)

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hope you are not too disappointed that the Montreal Canadians lost last night. We know that your son, Chad Kilger, wears jersey No. 25 for the Montreal Canadians. You will understand that, as a resident of Quebec City, I do not really cry when the Montreal Canadians lose a game.

That being said, I want to congratulate my colleague from Champlain who travelled all through the province last autumn and winter to galvanize the community into action and to raise public awareness.

The whole issue was addressed in an unanimous report tabled by the committee; there was no dissenting opinion. Who is the member who set out on a tour of all the regions in Quebec, pilgrim's staff in hand, and what party does he belong to? He is my colleague in the Bloc Québécois, the hon. member for Champlain.

I remember when he came to Beauport, in my riding, last March, on his 65th birthday. He is very much concerned about the situation of the elderly, since he can now say: "I am part of that age group". You could never tell by his mental agility, because I believe that age has nothing to do with it. We sometimes see very young people who are not as keen minded as 75- or 80-year old people. Age has nothing to do with mental agility. I remember wishing happy birthday to my colleague for Champlain.

I have a two-part question for him. First, I would like him to tell the House and every one watching us what support and cooperation he got from civil organizations to ensure that these 68,000 Quebecers could be found.

I remember the meeting that was held in Beauport. In attendance were representatives of FADOQ, the Quebec Federation of Senior Citizens, the local senior citizens club, the Society of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, the Cercle des fermières, and parish councils from the surrounding area .

There was nothing partisan about that tour, as evidenced by the fact that two civil servants from Human Resources Development Canada came to take notes, to hear what the various groups had to say on this issue, to try to correct a situation that has been going on for too long.

With regard to this first part, I would like my colleague from Champlain to elaborate on the co-operation that he has received from certain groups involved with seniors, with low income Canadians, or from people who are active in their communities. I would like him to elaborate on that.

The second part has to do with information for those who watch our debates on television. I remember a question the member for Frontenac—Mégantic put in the House to the Minister of Human Resources Development. The minister thanked the member—who, incidentally, belongs to the same party as the minister—for taking an interest in this issue.

When our colleague from Champlain directs questions to the Minister of Human Resources Development, they are not what we call planted questions. The minister does not know what the question will be—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Michel Guimond: That hurts, Mr. Speaker.

The minister does not know in advance what the question will be. When a member of the Bloc Québécois rises to defend Quebec's interests, the ministers opposite do not have the questions.

•(1230)

It is important to inform the public about that. When a Liberal minister is asked a question by a member of the Liberal majority, let it be known that the question has been forwarded to the minister ahead of time. The answer is written by the minister's assistants. It is known in advance.

I would like my colleague from Champlain to comment on that.

•(1235)

The Deputy Speaker: I will resist the temptation to reply to the preliminary remarks relating to this evening's hockey game. It is a matter of relevance. I will therefore give the hon. member for Champlain the floor.

Mr. Marcel Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, you do well to point that out. I am almost certain that the people I am concerned about are not former hockey players.

I am pleased to be asked this question. Our tour was carried out in collaboration with all my Bloc Québécois colleagues, and I even offered my services to others outside the party.

I enjoyed the co-operation of all groups and associations of retired persons. We spoke to the FADOQ and the AQDR, and all associations concerned by the issue we raised. These groups have been involved in actions on the local and regional levels. There is, for instance, Fierté Mauricienne, which is going to hire four summer students to seek out these people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank these people for their co-operation. This is what success is all about.

Every year, there is a Christmas tree for the forgotten people. I have always wondered why they are forgotten. Why not stop forgetting them? Why not think of them year round? Then we would not have to organize charity at Christmas time. Perhaps less charity and more honesty is what is needed.

If they are not to be forgotten, we must work with the associations, with those who are familiar with them and can identify them. That is the way it is done in Quebec, and without any partisanship. In the Christmas baskets distributed by Moisson Montréal, Moisson Trois-Rivières and Moisson Québec, we included over 50,000 notices to locate people the Bloc had not managed to identify. The purpose of this was to find and help those in need.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped out. I am sure that, even with their co-operation, things are not finished. I do not want to hear that the problem is settled, as they claim in Verdun. My foot it is. There are \$3.2 billion in the government's coffers that belongs to them. We will do our utmost to find these people and to see that the government pays them what is owing.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a short question. When my colleague from Champlain talked about this issue with regard to the elderly, I received numerous phone calls in my riding. Many people were entitled to this benefit, but did not know it. They are often women at home who have trouble understanding the documents.

This document makes no sense whatsoever. It is absolutely unreadable. We even have trouble understanding it, so you can imagine what it must be like for people who are not used to dealing with such documents; it becomes incomprehensible.

I would like my colleague from Champlain to explain what he has done so far to make it easier for these elderly persons to read these documents and submit their application.

Mr. Marcel Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, it is too bad that I have so little time to answer.

Indeed, to make it easier for the elderly, we asked certain associations to help them. First, we asked the minister to simplify the form. There has been some improvement in this regard. We also asked all the associations to establish some committees.

I gave the example of Fierté Mauricienne, which will have four students this summer to help the elderly. First, they will find them, tell them what they are entitled to and, finally, help them to fill in the application forms. Then, there will be a follow-up so that these people will not be forgotten once again.

• (1240)

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to respond to the speeches made by members of one of the opposition parties, to inform the House and the general public of exactly what has happened, and what the government's initiative has been regarding the guaranteed income supplement.

First, I would like to say a word or two about the concern of the government and the Minister of Human Resources Development to respond to the needs of the poor, not only in Quebec, but throughout Canada, and I include Quebec in Canada.

In fact, this government has created several programs to help them. One of them, being discussed today, is the guaranteed income supplement. It is an amount given by the government to help people who have an extremely small income. This amount is added to the benefits paid out by the Canada pension plan.

The purpose of the guaranteed income supplement is, as its name indicates, to help reduce the poverty rate among seniors. This is a purpose that is important to highlight, because this government is committed to this.

For the benefit of those listening, I would like to add that the percentage of low income seniors is decreasing. This is partly due to the fact that the Canadian economy is doing better and better. Allow me to provide some figures.

One senior in 12 needed the guaranteed income supplement in 1999, compared to one in five in 1980. This is a figure that

demonstrates that seniors are better off today than they were 20 years ago.

This is not to say that seniors do not have problems. That is not what I am saying, to the contrary. We know that some people need this supplement. This is why the supplement exists, and it will continue to exist as long as it is needed.

The government wants all seniors who are eligible for the guaranteed income supplement to receive the benefits. We know that there was a lack of information among the general public, and we acted very swiftly to meet this information need.

Let me take a few minutes to clearly explain to the House what this government did to inform the people. The government is required to do so and it met that requirement.

For example, since February, more than 30,000 documents have been sent to the eligible seniors in Quebec, to inform them about the guaranteed income supplement; I am talking about Quebec since all the members who have raised the issue up until now were from that province. Of these 30,000 documents, 23,500 were application forms sent by the department and 6,300 were letters sent by the the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, for Quebec.

This is why I say that two departments are responsible. Thanks to the co-operation, that partnership with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, we can identify seniors with a very low income, since the agency gives us data on the income tax paid by these individuals.

However, and that is extremely important, we abide by the law, which prevents us from intruding into the private lives of citizens. This is why it was hard to get the information. Until now, we have been unable to match the data from Human Resources Development Canada to the data from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, in order to know how much income tax was paid by certain individuals. However, we have been able to find out about the income tax without contravening the Privacy Act. So that is one measure we took. I must say that 30,000 documents is no mean feat.

• (1245)

Second, and this is very important, we obtained the partnership, co-operation and help of the Conseil régional de l'âge d'or, not only through its main office but also through its regional branches throughout Quebec, to organize conferences given either by the minister, myself or officials of the Department of Human Resources Development of Canada who work in those regions.

So we used what Americans call the outreach approach, which means that there were special, particular and specific initiatives to go into all the regions of Quebec to allow people to get the information.

We also distributed the information at various activities, in community health centres, to senior organizations and volunteers who help these people to fill out their income tax return. Clearly, some people have difficulty understanding all the details contained in these returns, which can be complicated for certain people.

Routine Proceedings

However, we specifically sought the co-operation of people who do this kind of volunteer work and organizations that work with these persons, so that they could pass the information on to those who need it. I am thinking here not only of seniors who may already be sick or in dire straits, but also the illiterate who have trouble reading an income tax return.

We also contacted some 2,000 service providers and senior groups. I will name only two, since the list is very long. There was the Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec and the Conseil des aînés du Québec. The list being quite long, I will not read it in the House.

All of that to say that the Canadian government assumed its responsibilities. It is aware that there are difficulties with the guaranteed income supplement and with the information that must be given to the public. The government acted rapidly and took steps so that the information could reach people and that they could understand how the system operates and file their own applications.

Second, I would like to remind my colleagues on the other side that when those efforts were made by the minister, the member for Champlain stated, and I quote:

The minister has made efforts to locate these people.

That is, people who did not know about the guaranteed income supplement. Let me continue:

For example, she sends letters to those who are not collecting the guaranteed income supplement, or even the old age pension.

There are some 65,000 people not even collecting the old age pension, and the minister has made an effort.

That is what the MP for Champlain had to say. Clearly, in spite of their invective, even the party opposite recognizes—grudgingly, but this is normal—that this government made an effort and succeeded in its effort to reach the public, since most people now know what they can do to get the guaranteed income supplement.

My colleague also spoke about retroactivity. If I may, I shall say a few words about this very important point.

The problem is that my colleague would like retroactivity to go back, obviously—as the term indicates—ad vitam aeternam. Clearly, that is not possible. We suggested that retroactivity be for 11 months before the application, plus the month in which the application was submitted, for a total of 12 months.

As my colleagues pride themselves on representing a certain government here in the House, I would like to bring to their attention several programs of the Quebec government.

• (1250)

For example, there are no retroactive payments in the employment assistance program, the provincial program run by the Quebec government.

Second, there are no retroactive payments in the Quebec rent subsidy program.

Third, there are no retroactive payments in the low cost housing program.

Fourth, there are no retroactive payments in the housing allowance program.

I am not saying that we should not make any retroactive payments, on the contrary. I think that the government has acted properly. It showed how much it cared for the seniors and recognized the difficult situation they were in and it granted 11 months of retroactive payments, which is 11 months more than what the provincial government is giving, this government that is so close to the member opposite who represents a riding from Quebec, where I also come from.

Finally, I would add that the fact that the individuals had no access to the information or did not know how to request the guaranteed income supplement is not a problem unique to Quebec. The members opposite who are from Quebec should not think that there is a movement against them. On the contrary, this was a weakness in the system. We admit it. This weakness has had an impact across Canada.

To give the House a couple of bits of information, we have sent all across Canada 4.5 million information sheets with the T4 statements. I do not want to bother the members with figures, but I do want to emphasize that this is now a thing of the past. We have recognized that there was a flaw in the system. Unfortunately, this happens in any system. We have reacted. We reacted quickly and we wanted to show once more how concerned the government was about the economic well-being of Canadians. This is what we have done.

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think we should set the record straight.

If the Bloc Québécois had not discovered this issue, if we had not looked into it, if we had not managed to find out that so many elderly were not getting the guaranteed income supplement, the government would not have done anything. The government is defending its position on retroactivity by pointing to the fact that retroactivity is not recognized at the provincial level. That is not the point.

The point is that elderly people living on minimum incomes, people who are already in dire straits, did not and will not get retroactive payments, even though their application has been on file for five years. Imagine what it was like for these people who, for five years, could not benefit from these amounts, which were essential to their survival. These people are often older women living alone at home, including widows. They are barely surviving, but the government will not give them the guaranteed income supplement. It will not pay them retroactively.

The federal government must stop defending itself by blaming the provinces. The issue is a federal one. With all due respect to the hon. member opposite—we both sit on the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development—whenever we raise an issue here in Ottawa, and it is often the Bloc Québécois that does it, because it has a great social conscience, whenever we propose a positive measure for the public, the government always pulls the rug out from under our feet. This is unacceptable.

We present to this government proposals that are sensible, honest and fair to the public. And what does the government say? Nothing. It does nothing.

Routine Proceedings

If we had not taken action regarding this issue, if we had not continued to take action regarding the forms, the same old thing would have happened again. This does not make any sense. It is because the Bloc Québécois has acted that the government has no choice. It has to do something.

They can say all they want in this House, but I am proud of what we did and we will continue to do it. I hope that the member opposite will support us. We do not want to engage in petty politics on this issue. This is an important and priority issue. The government must put all its energy into it. These people are entitled to retroactivity and the government must pay. There is no other option.

● (1255)

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Mr. Speaker, I did not want to blame the provinces for anything. It seems to me that 99% of what I just said dealt precisely with what the federal government, the Government of Canada, this government has been doing to correct a flaw in the system. Unfortunately, there are often flaws in systems.

We realized there was a major flaw in the system, but it was not thanks to the members opposite. It was thanks to the work done by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, which revealed that information based on what was said by witnesses who appeared before us. The hon. member is a member of that committee, as I am.

Clearly, there was a flaw in the system. Now we are looking ahead. Our responsibility is to seek ways to correct that flaw and to help people understand the system, so that they can have access to the money they are entitled to. We are not talking about charity here, but about money people are entitled to. This is what we have done.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great attention to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development. I cannot imagine that she believes everything she is saying.

The government has done nothing for eight years. It is beyond belief that the entire government machinery, and you, the people in power, have been unaware that for eight years you have been depriving seniors of their just due.

These people are constituents of mine living under the poverty level. These people came to see me in my office and said, "Madame Bujold, what can we do? We are unable to make ends meet. We receive our Canada pension cheque and we cannot make ends meet". I could not believe it. I told myself it made no sense.

The Canada pension cheque and the guaranteed income supplement are supposed to help people stay above the poverty line. I did not understand what these people meant. I told myself, "They used to pay taxes to the government. People who helped to build the country, build the regions, are not supposed to be left in poverty".

The parliamentary secretary has the nerve to tell them now that it was a committee which uncovered this flaw in the system, when this has been going on for eight years. On top of that, the government is refusing to make the payments retroactive.

In my riding, if I had not been there to visit some women individually at home in order to help them fill out their forms, they would never have received anything. The government was doing

nothing. I was the one who told them, "We will help you fill them out". The parliamentary secretary can tell us that it was uncovered because of the committee, but the government would have done nothing if the Bloc Québécois had not intervened.

I have nothing against her. What I am angry at is the system, which has allowed this unfair treatment of seniors to drag on and on. It is unbelievable. In my riding, people have been deprived of \$90,000 for eight years. What is \$90,000? It may not be much for the member opposite, but for people who have lived in poverty for eight years, it is a lot of money.

Poverty leads to physical and psychological decline and has a negative impact on the family. Seniors use the most medication. Why? Because there was a flaw in the system which the member was unaware of.

She must stop blaming the public servants. The government is there to ensure that all Canadians who have paid taxes get their fair share from the system. She must stop saying that it is the public servants' fault. I am not blaming public servants, I am blaming the government. It knew. It is impossible that the parliamentary secretary has not had, as I have, people coming to see her in her riding to tell her that they did not understand the form. She is in her second term, so she must have had people like that in her office. And she did not see that something was wrong.

How many times did we tell them that this did not make any sense? Public servants replied, "What can I say, madam, it is the government that allows that". I am not accusing them, but I am accusing the government of doing nothing about it.

Today, the parliamentary secretary had the gall to say that these people will not receive any retroactive payments. It is their money. Does that mean that this money that the government has saved was used elsewhere, and used to pay down the debt or to reward the government's friends? I will never accept that.

We will have to look closely at the situation of seniors one of these days. Living conditions have changed. Housing is very expensive. Seniors are increasingly in need of services.

I am asking the parliamentary secretary to rise and tell the House today, May 10, that the government will grant retroactivity to seniors for what they were denied for eight years.

● (1300)

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Mr. Speaker, I find that the comments that my colleague made about me are very personal. This is most unfortunate.

I would like to add that, given the comments made by the last two or three opposite members who spoke, it would appear that members of that party need to be thanked. They need to get the credit for having found this flaw in the system. I repeat that, whoever found the flaw, what matters here is that we have been able to respond quickly to help the elderly receive the guaranteed income supplement, to which they are entitled.

I repeat that, whoever it is, the Bloc or the committee, we did our job. The minister also did hers.

Routine Proceedings

I would also like to add that we have a parliamentary system that has helped us reach these people. The member said that many people came to see her. I would simply like to point out to her that she is not the only person on this planet and that there are many other members who have seen the elderly.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: I am happy to hear that.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: They have talked to them and they have helped them.

With regard to income tax, I think that the member does not realize how difficult it has been, because of the Privacy Act, to match the data from Human Resources Development Canada with the data from the Customs and Revenue Agency. This is something we are doing now, but it was extremely difficult to do so. This is an important point.

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we still have a lot to say on this issue. I do not want my colleague across the way, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, to construe this as a personal attack. It is not, on the contrary. As a matter of fact, in committee we are very often on the same wavelength. She knows it, and I am not embarking on a personal attack, far from it.

However, we have a situation here, a very real situation. The Bloc raised the issue. The Bloc went on a tour. Indeed, my colleague from Champlain toured every single riding in Quebec to raise awareness among seniors associations, various groups, everyone in fact, by telling them "Listen, there is something there; you are entitled to it and you are not getting it".

Even though we discovered it in committee, the government cannot take credit for it. It was my colleague from Champlain who went crusading from riding to riding to explain the situation and tell people "You are entitled to that. It is yours. Get the information. Inquire. Look at the documentation. Call HRDC. Apply for it, and you will see whether or not you are entitled to it".

This woke everybody up, and not only senior citizens who are destitute, as I said earlier. For quite some time, calls poured in at my riding office. People would call and inquire "I don't know if I am entitled to this supplement. Could you help me, Ms. Guay? I do not understand the form. It is not clear".

We helped these people. We did not try to play politics. We just tried to give back to people what was theirs.

Let us talk about retroactivity. If I am entitled to a certain amount of money out of the taxes I paid and if the government forgot to give it to me, it seems to me that I should get some interest back and have the right to ask for it eventually.

If I owe taxes to the government, it will invoke retroactivity and ask for the money owed to it, plus interest. I cannot understand why retroactivity would not apply to money which should have been paid to seniors. It should.

We are not talking about huge amounts. The government is proud of the fact that the surplus in the employment insurance fund is in the billions of dollars. There are billions of dollars in the surplus, but the government cannot give the seniors what they are entitled to.

There are not that many seniors who would be entitled to more than five years of retroactive payments. This money belongs to them, and we have to find a way to give it back to them.

The Bloc members are very sensitive to social policies. Our vision encompasses the defence of all, men, children, women and seniors. Every time we have talked about something positive for the Canadian population, the government has pulled the rug out from under our feet. Why? We are told, "It is too expensive. No. We will do it later".

Let us talk about preventive withdrawal for pregnant women. We have been beating about the bush for ten years on that issue. This is the Department of Human Resources Development's responsibility. We hear all sorts of stories about somebody being hired specifically to study that matter, while this has been in effect for ten years in Quebec.

We do not need extensive studies to allow a woman to have a healthy child, without her having to experience physical or psychological problems. It is very simple. We need to adopt the preventive withdrawal. However, the government still lacks the courage to do so.

The Department of Human Resources Development deals with all sorts of issues. I was talking about this yesterday. I was in New York for the conference on children. We keep boasting abroad about all the aid we are giving on the international scene. It is something that we have to do. It is part of our responsibilities. However, in our own country, 20% of the children still live under the poverty line. Is that acceptable in Canada?

When it is time to do our homework here in Canada, if we did not have a solid opposition with sound social policies, there would not be too much activity on the other side of the House. This is why we find it quite insulting to hear the government say "It is not because of you" or "You are looking for recognition".

It is not recognition that we are looking for. It is time to act. How is it that publicity suddenly appeared in the newspapers right after we undertook to increase public awareness in this regard?

● (1305)

How is it that there was no answer on this subject in employment centres? Since we have raised the issue, they finally decided to put people in charge of this issue.

It is unacceptable that the people across the way have no social sensitivity. Yet, when the Liberals were in the opposition, they had a social conscience; they defended people.

Today, they are in office, there is a surplus in the employment insurance fund, they make cuts in employment insurance benefits, they reduce the number of benefit weeks, they reduce the percentages of benefits and they do not give senior citizens what they are entitled to. It is unacceptable. The government has the means to act on this issue, but it is not doing it.

Routine Proceedings

My colleague from Champlain has introduced a bill so that senior citizens can benefit from this guaranteed minimum income. If we can examine it in the House, it would be a big step forward. If the government really takes to heart social policy and the well-being of senior citizens, it ought to vote in favour of this legislation.

It is a Bloc Québécois initiative, but we are not seeking recognition by it, we are only trying to push things ahead. It seems that we are the only ones to do so on this issue. We are taking initiatives.

You should see the array of bills coming from this party: they are innovative and reasonable and should be debated in the House. The government should seriously examine those bills instead of tossing them aside.

I would like the whole issue to be brought to light and I would like all the eligible seniors to be informed of their entitlement. The problem is that some of these people are very hard to reach. Some of them do not read the newspaper and some are disadvantaged people who do not necessarily watch television. There are sick people who do not have access to these things. Some are simply afraid of any kind of document. This does happen.

It happen even more among the elderly. They are afraid because they do not know what they are getting into. They fear that the government might come and take something away. We must find a way to reach these people. We must look for all sorts of approaches. There are ther senior citizens' associations where these people often meet; there are the hospitals, the long term care centres and the homes for elderly people. There are all sorts of networks, but we must reach them and I am not sure we can do it through the media and the television. We must go to them.

Some hon. members: Ah.

Ms. Monique Guay: I hear people sighing, but this is true. There are indeed people who do not watch TV and do not read a paper.

An hon. member: There are people who do not own a TV.

Ms. Monique Guay: This is normal. It happens. Not everyone is part of the wired world.

An hon. member: When the government wants their vote, it goes around knocking on doors.

Ms. Monique Guay: Exactly. They even send buses out to get the people when they want their vote.

These people must be found, must be sought out, must be informed. If we are not able to do that, and I can see there is not much desire on the other side to go out after people and inform them, we are not doing our job.

These people have paid taxes all their lives to this government, and perhaps it is time they got some recognition. It is perhaps time something was done for them. It is perhaps time for these people, if they are entitled to a certain amount of money, to enjoy a slightly more comfortable retirement. We are not talking about millions of dollars each.

If the government does not have that sensitivity, we have missed the boat somewhere along the way. You know what will happen. We

cannot create two societies, two levels of society, and this is what the government is in the process of doing. It has created two classes of worker, and now it is in the process of creating two societies, the haves and the have nots. There is no longer any intermediary between the very rich and the very poor. If a situation like this is created, it will blow up in our faces. Eventually there will be trouble. In the next election, they will reap what they have sown.

• (1310)

I am not the one who will be able to change things. People will know quite well what to do. We will be there to remind them that we did our job and that we suggested amendments and changes. We made suggestions to the government, but it does not take them into consideration.

The elderly are not important to the government. Women and children are not important to the government. Seasonal workers are not important. We will remind the government about all these issues.

For the time being, what is important is to further the issue of the elderly and to raise awareness in everyone. All those who are entitled to the guaranteed income supplement must be reached. This is what counts, this is what is important. In future, people must be able to complete their documents easily, they must be able to know they are entitled to this income supplement and, finally, they must be able to easily get access to these documents, without a lot of hassles.

The elderly do not need a hard time. They already have enough problems managing their affairs. They have coped with difficulties all their lives. I think that, when they retire, we can allow them to live better, to live quietly and with serenity, in a reasonably decent manner.

The people entitled to this supplement are not rich. They are in the lower income bracket. They are almost below the poverty line. They are not asking for hand-outs, just what they are entitled to. Who could be against that? I do not see any reason why someone would be against that.

In a situation like this, retroactive application is very important. It can make a huge difference in the life of a couple, an older woman or man, or a single senior who really needs the money.

By improving the life quality of our seniors, we improve our society as a whole. These people have invested their whole lives in our society. They will continue to spend their money to live a better life and to enjoy better housing. They will contribute to our economy. As retired people, they usually contribute more fully to the economy. They have the time to take a more active role in their community, they are willing to do it, they only need the means to do it. We must give them what they are entitled to. I think we have made our point pretty clear.

I want to congratulate my colleague from Champlain, who has done a truly remarkable job. He travelled throughout the province of Quebec, in a very appropriate and professional way. I want to commend him for his work. He will always be able to rely on my support from now on to ensure that every senior at least gets the information needed and that those who are eligible can be reached and sent the money they are entitled to.

Routine Proceedings

•(1315)

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's answer shows that party's bad faith.

I used my whole speech, which lasted 20 minutes, explain to how this government really wanted to meet potential guaranteed income supplement beneficiaries, meet them in their homes, and meet groups dealing with these persons, among them senior groups and groups working with the illiterate. I gave a very detailed description.

Now, I hear the member saying that we used televised ads. Maybe the member gave a prepared speech and did not hear what I said.

Unfortunately for the party on the other side and fortunately for the Canadian public, not only did we use radio and television advertising but we also made a great effort to meet people in their homes.

I may not quote figures, but I will ask a question to the hon. member directly.

Yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources Development appeared before the Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. She spent two hours answering questions from members of the opposition as well as Liberal members. At no time did any member from the opposition or the Liberal Party ask the minister what measures she was taking or what she should be doing, nor did they make any suggestion or comment about what still had to be done to reach these persons.

I think that this party across the way, which is using the time of the House in front of the television cameras to tell Canadians that they should thank them, is acting in bad faith. We did the work but when the time came to ask the real questions in private to the minister, that party was absent. I really would like to get an answer from the member.

Ms. Monique Guay: Mr. Speaker, when I began my speech earlier, I said that I would not engage in any kind of personal attack. If the member opposite is so upset, I think it may be because we are right. One does not get upset for no reason.

That is not the issue. I have been in the House for nine years, and we have been making suggestions, proposing amendments and questioning the minister for nine years. We have been trying to improve legislation for years.

When the Employment Insurance Act was reviewed, how many hours does the member think we put in to try to improve the legislation? We need no lessons from her.

It is totally inappropriate to comment on who is present or who is absent, because I can assure you that there are a lot more people from the other side than people from our side who do not show up at committee meetings. When I have to be called at my office so that there will be a quorum, it means that someone somewhere is not doing his or her job.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Monique Guay: Some people are not doing their job. Let us say that certain people are not there for certain committee meetings.

If we had not gone out, if we had not met the people, I doubt that the government would have done it. In fact, they did not do it, we did. We need no lessons from them in this regard. Definitely not.

As I said, I sincerely hope that we can go out and explain this to people. Some have still not been reached. We could not reach everyone, but we must do it to give them what they are entitled to. We refuse to play petty politics. We do not expect acknowledgements. That is not at issue. We want to see this through. We want to reach everyone. We want all those who are entitled to benefit.

It is that simple. We do not expect acknowledgements; we are just doing our job. I would like members opposite to do theirs. Going out on the street is too hard for them. They keep reacting to something that made us react before them, because they have no choice. In this case, they did not have a choice, they had to act. It was too much, it was horrible. So, we are taking measures.

When such things happen, one must act, one goes out. If we had not gone out, if the hon. member for Champlain had not visited the senior citizens' associations, nothing would have happened. We have no lessons to learn from nobody. We do our job here, in Ottawa, it is up to them to do theirs.

•(1320)

Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her kind words. I would like to confirm that across Quebec we met with people with no political affiliations. Indeed, I met with more people who sympathize with the party opposite.

Everyone was scandalized that this had not been done in eight years. Now is the time to do it, and 27 assemblies were held in Quebec. I congratulate you for doing this now, but you were not the ones that raised the issue, we pointed it out.

As my colleague said, what it is important now is that justice be done. We must give back to the poorest members of society the money that is in the coffers and that belongs to them.

My colleague said earlier that one child in five is poor. I do not know if she is aware that one senior in five does not receive the guaranteed income supplement he or she is entitled to. That is exactly the same percentage as for children living in poverty.

Are we cultivating poverty, or eliminating it? I put the question to my colleague.

We saw the reactions opposite. They said, "Are we doing enough to reach seniors?" I can tell the House that recently, in my riding, at the Caisse populaire, a person told me, "Thanks to your work, I sent someone to apply for their guaranteed income supplement. We were never told about it before".

Private Members' Business

Everyone from the bishop to the chamber of commerce in my riding, including all of the associations in between, asked me the same question, "How is it that now we know about this issue?" These people are not all lying. Has my colleague run into this type of reaction?

Ms. Monique Guay: Mr. Speaker, I have certainly seen this kind of reaction, which is perfectly normal.

Moreover, we have to realize that it is not with one ad campaign that the issue will be settled and that everyone will have been reached. Reaching people is not easy. We have to reach them where they are. Any means to reach them, including seniors' associations, chambers of commerce, newspapers, radio and television, are to be used. We need to be everywhere.

There are still people who telephone—we have been discussing this issue for a while—or visit me at my constituency office to talk about the leaflet they have received. They tell me, "We didn't know that, Mrs. Guay". This is in spite of the fact it has been discussed for some time. But these people were informed only very recently, because we were able to reach them in another way.

So we have to be able to reach people everywhere. But this takes time. This was the government's responsibility, but it is my colleague who did the job. Had we not informed senior people and have-nots, no one would have done so.

We must continue to put this approach forward. This is not petty politics. This is a very important issue. We must put an end to poverty.

One person out of five, this is already one person too many. We cannot have a two-tier society, with extreme wealth and extreme poverty. We need a balance. One way to achieve balance is to pay people what we owe them. They must be given back what they are owed.

Let us stop filling the pockets of the government with billion dollar surpluses. These are billions, not millions. Let us give society what it is owed. Let us pay what we owe. Let us solve the problem. Let us have solid framework legislation. Let us make sure that forms are clear, accurate and easy to fill, so that people have no problem filling them.

This would make us happy on this side of the House. I hope that, next time, the government will listen to and follow up on our suggestions.

•(1325)

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to address the guaranteed income supplement issue.

I want to stress the comments made by the hon. member for Champlain, who expended a great deal of time and effort in trying to help his fellow citizens, Quebec's elderly, so that they get their due.

Put simply, the issue can be summed up in one sentence: to get their due. Seniors in Quebec and Canada have worked all their lives to now get what they are owed. The fight led by the Bloc Québécois on the GIS issue was simply to ensure that all men and women, all seniors who were entitled to it, would indeed get it.

We are once again here in this House to discuss a program that government members are trying to defend by saying "Yes, we are advertising, we are promoting this program".

As for us, we have now moved on to the second stage, which is to obtain retroactivity. It is fine to say "Yes, we will give the guaranteed income supplement to seniors in Quebec and in Canada", but the government must also repay these people the money to which they have been entitled for eight years and of which they have been deprived. So, the Bloc Québécois has moved on to the second stage.

It is the seniors who are listening to us now who are entitled to this money, and they alone can judge. The Liberal members have just said that they have done everything.

How long has it been since seniors in Quebec and in Canada saw their old age pension increased? The cost of housing has shot up in recent months and in the past year, but the old age pension has stayed the same.

Seniors in Quebec and in Canada must therefore understand that it is up to them to pass judgment on the government, and they should not let it off lightly. In the end, all the government wants is to be able to point to nice budgets and wonderful surpluses so that it can get re-elected.

We on this side of the House are being accused of grandstanding, when in fact we have devoted much time and energy to trying to meet with Quebec's seniors and obviously attempting to do something to improve the lot of seniors in Canada..

We have invested all this time and energy—as the hon. member for Champlain so aptly said—not to grandstand but simply to ensure that Quebec's seniors receive their due.

Once again, I would point out that, unlike the Liberal Party of Canada, we have moved on to the second stage, which is to obtain full retroactivity for these people, in other words, everything owing them for the past eight years.

In the months to come, we will no doubt move on to the next stage, which is getting the old age pension indexed so that seniors can keep up with increases in the cost of housing.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 1.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

•(1330)

[English]

TAX CREDIT

The House resumed from May 1 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak on this motion, especially one that addresses student loan issues which are very important for the country. I would like to commend my colleague for bringing forward a private member's motion that is votable, and I am glad it is votable, which addresses the issue of education in the country.

Private Members' Business

Education is critically important for our nation. It is no longer a privilege for the rich as it used to be. I come from a country which is poverty driven. The state cannot provide education so education is the responsibility of the individual. We have seen the disparity between the rich who can afford to send their children to good schools and the poor who cannot. Unfortunately there are many deserving candidates but parents cannot afford the education. Therefore the cycle of poverty carries on and on.

The current United Nations conference in New York talked about education. It was pointed out that education was becoming absolutely critical for a nation's prosperity. When we move that to Canada, it has become more obvious that our long term prosperity depends upon a highly educated workforce which will allow us to compete globally in the world market.

With globalization taking place, it is obvious that competition is increasing and other nations are competing with Canada. It is incumbent upon us for future generations that we seize these opportunities. We can only seize these opportunities if we have an excellent educational system that allows parents to send their children to school irrespective of the social structure or whether they can afford it or not.

I came from a nation where the government could not afford an educational program. It was a pleasant surprise for me to see that Canada had a student loan system which allowed children to obtain an education. As a matter of fact, one of my daughters has completed two degrees and the other is on her way to completing a second degree, all of which was possible because of the availability of student loans.

Student loans play a most critical and important part in the post-secondary education system. As such, it is necessary for us to look at the whole structure to ensure that we have viable institutions and a viable educational system accessible to everybody.

Unfortunately, over the last 10 years obtaining an education has become more and more expensive and the debt load on students has risen rapidly, to a level where many feel constrained by it. Attempts have been made to look at this. The Prime Minister came up with the millennium fund, a legacy of faith, addressing this issue to some degree. The Canadian Alliance has put forward a similar proposal to that of Australia and New Zealand, which is a contingency income issue where people pay their debts based upon what their incomes enable them to pay.

I represent Calgary East which has large numbers of people not only going to university but also acquiring a higher education in other aspects. I receive numerous phone calls from people who are unable to pay because of their inability to get a job immediately after they have finished their schooling.

• (1335)

With the ever rising cost of education, what is the ability of student to pay? My friend from the Conservative Party has come up with a proposal where a tax credit would be granted so that the burden on students would be less. As education becomes more costly, they would be able to access institutions and carry on with higher education.

I noticed that about 20 years ago it was all right to get high school level education and then go on to other careers. With globalization, high school in itself has not been sufficient and people need a university degree which costs a lot of money.

What is now happening is students need not just one degree but two degrees to get a good job. As I said, both my daughters have two degrees and this has been costly. Therefore it is commendable that my colleague from the Conservative Party brought this issue to the floor for us to address.

There are a lot of proposals. The important issue is for us to debate this and come forward with a proposal that will address this. There is the contingency plan that the Canadian Alliance has put forward. There is the tax credit plan that my colleague from the Conservative Party has put forward, and I am sure more will come forward. However somewhere along the line we will have to address the issue.

Although my party's critic has put more emphasis on the Canadian Alliance plan and feels that the plan of my colleague now before us would have some difficulty, many of us on this side feel that this proposal also has merit. Since this is a private member's motion, which means a free vote, I am sure many of us will support the motion, including myself.

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to rise and speak about and in favour of the motion, which states that in the opinion of the House we should consider introducing a tax credit based on the repayment of Canadian student loans to a maximum of 10% of the principal, per year, for the first 10 years after graduation, with the important proviso that the individual remain in Canada.

I want to begin by thanking the member for Fundy—Royal. As my colleague from Vancouver East said when she spoke on the bill, it is important that we do talk about post-secondary education, and we do not often have an opportunity in the House to do so. I think we all agree, regardless of which side of the House we are on, that in this information world in which we now exist, post-secondary education is important and indeed will become much more important in the years ahead. We have all heard it said that every future job in this knowledge based economy will require post-secondary education and, indeed, life-long learning.

The second reality is that we do have a growing crisis in our post-secondary institutions. Tuition fees, for instance, have gone up by more than 120% over the past 10 years. The average student debt load has tripled in that time from about \$8,000 on average to more than \$25,000. Indeed, we hear horror stories of student debt loads in the range of \$40,000, \$50,000 and even higher.

Private Members' Business

How did this crisis come about? How did it develop so rapidly? I think members can look at a couple of reasons, including the end of the Canada assistance plan, the beginning of the health and social transfer program and, indeed, the social union that was instituted a few years ago. As a result of the end of CAP and the beginning of CHST some \$7 billion has been removed from federal transfers in the area of post-secondary education. That amounts to a drop of more than 17%. This has to be met by provinces and territories that have post-secondary institutions and also has to be absorbed by the students themselves in the form of higher tuition fees. That is why there is a crisis at the moment.

One part of the consequences of this crisis is that we are eroding accessibility for low and moderate income students, as the member from Calgary noted in his remarks. Documentation provided by Statistics Canada shows that high income families are now more than two and a half times more likely to send sons and daughters to post-secondary institutions than low income Canadian families. The reason given most frequently is that households with perhaps \$30,000 or less of total income lack financial resources with which to send their sons and daughters. It amounts to discrimination, pure and simple.

Education must be a national priority and the federal government must be an equal partner. This means that long term, stable funding is essential. We need a national grant program, something that the Canadian Federation of Students has advocated. In fact, at the moment Canada is the only industrialized country without a national grant program.

We also need the bankruptcy law repealed. Changes were introduced by the government against students simply on the basis that they were students. It is regrettable in the extreme that this has happened.

As I indicated, this is a good motion as far as it goes. It is not a panacea, as the mover has acknowledged both publicly and privately. We believe, he and I and others, that we have to go further. We believe that education is a right and that the federal government has a responsibility to provide leadership on funding and establish national standards.

● (1340)

The motion before us would allow students to deduct up to 10% of the principal of their student loans for up to 10 years if they stayed in Canada. This would permit loans to be repaid more quickly because the economic stimulus would be there. It may also reverse the brain drain if one exists.

The real catch 22 in the current dilemma is that with tuition fees 126% higher than they were 10 years ago many students are unable to choose post-secondary education. This in turn threatens our competitiveness in the international arena. Tuition fees have gone up to \$3,400 a year, double what they were 10 years ago.

The manager of the Canada student loans program, Claude Proulx, says federal efforts have missed the target. He says people are not qualifying in the magnitude that had been anticipated. It would therefore be debt forgiveness in name only. In the meantime some 350,000 students rely on federal loans worth a grand total of \$1.6 billion.

Fifteen years ago there was virtually no difference between low and middle income earners who planned to send their children to post secondary institutions. By the mid 1990s, eight years ago, pollsters could discern a 7% gap between low and middle income earners in terms of their ability to send their children to post-secondary education.

The gap has continued to grow. Some 80% per cent of parents with household incomes of less than \$30,000 a year hope their children will go on to post-secondary education. However the sad reality is that less than 20% of them are able to save to assist their children in this worthwhile endeavour. In contrast, virtually all parents with a household income of \$80,000 or more not only hope to send their children on to post-secondary education. More than 60% of them are able to put money aside for the opportunity.

The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, introduced after the 1997 election by the current Prime Minister, has not been a great success. It has often gone directly to provinces. It has been applied to existing debt. It has not assisted cash strapped students in the way that was envisaged when it was announced.

We need to make post secondary education a national priority. Lifelong access to training and education must be a right for all. Public investment in this is crucial. However Canadian industry is lagging behind in investment. Colleges, universities, professors and especially students are suffering as a result.

We need to work toward eliminating college and university tuition fees altogether. We need to establish a national grants program and national standards for accessibility. We need lower tuition fees; interest free student loans; and a ban on private, for profit universities. We need to insist on affordable education and research in the public interest. They are an important part of developing a better Canada.

● (1345)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Motion No. 178 moved by the hon. member for Fundy—Royal. He has been an outstanding advocate for students and worked hard to see the motion come before the House of Commons.

The Progressive Conservative Party has spoken clearly in favour of doing more for students, particularly with respect to post-secondary education and the enormous debt load and strain placed on students throughout Canada. It is clear that the government has not made this a priority. It has not appeared on its political radar screen for some time. However it is such a priority for the Conservative Party that part of our 2000 election campaign platform addressed the issue of helping young Canadians access post-secondary education.

We need the attention and the direction of the government to address the problem. We hear a great deal about the need for Canada to compete in the world today and be more productive. The ingredient we need to make that happen is active, educated students who can fulfill Canada's potential.

Private Members' Business

The government does not appear to be taking the concerns of students seriously. Post-secondary education costs have skyrocketed to the point where many students graduate from universities and community colleges with the equivalent of a home mortgage without the home. Almost immediately after graduating they are required to start paying the money back. Graduates who in many instances have no discernible means of income and are scraping to get by are put under immediate pressure to start repaying their enormous loans.

Much of the money from the Canada health and social transfer helped fund education. Much of it found its way into universities and colleges. As a result of the unilateral cuts to the program in the last decade we are seeing the debt load downloaded onto the backs of students.

Between 1990 and 1998 university operating revenues from government sources declined by more than 25%. In real terms that is about \$2,700 per full time equivalent student. Some \$2,700 has been taken directly from the pockets of struggling students living on kraft dinner and trying to get by in a competitive university atmosphere. It has been taken from people like our pages, as an hon. member mentioned.

Since 1993 the Liberal government has cut \$5.3 billion from post-secondary education funding. Total university operating revenues per full time student were 7.1% less than in 1990, falling from \$13,793 to \$12,809. University operating expenditures fell 8% during the same time frame.

The infrastructure is being eroded. In a perverse way students are being forced to pick up the costs of their education while at the same time being told forcefully, through media and government spin, that they are the engines of productivity and the future of the country. They are being told to pick up more of the costs, do more of the work and shoulder more of the load. They are being given a contradictory message.

The government's share of university operating revenues per full time student was \$10,894 in 1990. It fell to \$8,174 in 1999. That is a decrease of almost 50%. At the same time tuition has increased 125%. These statistics speak volumes to the challenges and burdens students face. As we all know, their education is what is preparing them to enter the competitive economy, put something back and, dare I say it, become taxpayers. They are facing this huge challenge as a result of the government withdrawing from its commitment and obligation to help them along that road.

• (1350)

Tuition fees in Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador have increased by over 200% and 145%, while British Columbia and New Brunswick had the second lowest. At the current rate, by the year 2008 tuition fees will be almost 200% higher than they were in 1990. Students who paid about \$1,400 in 1990 could be expected to pay as much as \$4,800 in tuition in the year 2008.

According to the Statistics Canada report released in August 2000, it now costs an average of \$3,300 per year for tuition in Canada. This, it is very important to note, excludes living expenses, books, food and other miscellaneous expenses that of course can as much as double the cost of attending a university or college. Speaking of double, this tuition increase is more than double the average, which

was roughly \$1,500 per year just 10 years ago. Therefore we can see that tuition fees are accelerating at an incredible rate, plus we know that the cost of living generally would add to that accelerated cost.

Michael Conlon, the national chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students stated recently that "the 1990s was the worst decade in Canadian history for tuition fee hikes".

Higher tuition fees have resulted in swelling debt loads. The average student loan load of a graduating student completing a four year degree in post-secondary education sits at approximately \$25,000. This is up from the average four year debt of \$13,000 just 10 years ago.

According to Claude Proulx, manager of policy for the Canada student loans program, federal efforts to keep university grads struggling with unprecedented debt loads are missing their target. As an example of that, a program to forgive qualified applicants for up to \$10,000 or half their debt, whichever is less, is aimed specifically at helping 12,000 people when it is fully phased in by the next year; that is just 467 borrowers qualified for \$2 million in debt relief over the past year.

The program proposed by this motion is a debt forgiveness plan. It is an opportunity, though, to phase it in over time, to give students an opportunity to pay back their loans and actually receive tax credits for doing so. There is a built in incentive for them to pay back their loans, to stay in the country to do so and to receive credit while working, while contributing, while doing something positive right here and putting their education to work.

This year about 350,000 students will rely upon federal loans, which will amount to about \$1.6 billion. However, according to Statistics Canada, 79.8% of those parents with household incomes of less than \$30,000 hoped that their children would attend post-secondary education, and yet only 18.7% of them were saving for that post-secondary education. There is an obvious impact when one factors in the ability of parents who are just on that fine line of being able to help fund their children. They are in the perverse situation of almost being punished for being just above that line and yet being unable to contribute significantly to their children's education. I would suggest that this has a very detrimental impact on a parent-child relationship. It causes great guilt and angst for many parents who are unable to make that significant contribution. Of parents with household incomes over \$80,000, 95% wanted their children to attend post-secondary education and 62.6% of them were saving for that purpose.

Canada's youth deserve more than a one shot, problem riddled millennium fund. It will take them over a millennium to pay it back. The government has to delve into this issue with greater vigour. It has to look at ways in which students can be encouraged to pay down that debt, but at the same time it must not punish them for getting an education, for seeking the ability to better themselves and to make themselves more competitive.

Private Members' Business

● (1355)

It is clear that market demands, along with competitive pressures and technologies, are causing a shift in the occupational requirements. The proportion of new jobs requiring 16 or more years of schooling has risen above 40%. The current government policy does not meet those demands. The problem is severe and it threatens competitiveness in this country and in the international arena.

Schools, like St. Francis Xavier University and the Nova Scotia Community College, are doing a phenomenal job with their available resources. They go out into the community more to recruit but, at the same time, to fundraise, which is something that takes away from their primary responsibility which is to provide the best education possible.

The motion would give the government an opportunity to step forward, to set an example, to improve provincial relations in this regard and to ensure that students will be given the best opportunity to compete and stay in the country so Canada can be the most competitive and most productive country that it can be.

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion proposes that the government introduce a tax credit for Canada student loan principal repayments made by graduates who remain in Canada. The credit amount would be limited to 10% of the principal per year for the first 10 years after graduation.

I believe we can all relate to the challenges that students face today with higher tuition fees and student debt burdens. Is it different today from what it was in the past? I for one and probably all of us in the House worked our way through university to pay for our fees and our debts. Many university students today do the same. Some of them have jobs while they study.

The difference today is the steep increases in tuition fees. The member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough threw out a litany of numbers. I read something recently which said that for universities like Carleton and Ottawa University, the per student grant from the province has shrunk by about \$1,500 a year, and at the University of Toronto by some \$2,000 per student per year. The member opposite talked about a bigger number, \$2,700. He talked about fees going up 125% and provincial grants going down 50%. I am not sure where the difference is made up. Obviously there are some cost pressures at the university level.

However, notwithstanding all the statistics, we do know that students are facing higher tuition fees and a greater debt burden.

While I can appreciate the intent of the motion from the member for Fundy—Royal, I believe the motion is wrong-footed for the following reasons. First, I cannot agree with an initiative that rewards individuals for discharging their responsibilities. It tells the students that if they pay their debts the government will reward them. In my view that is not what the tax system should be used for. I do not believe Canadian taxpayers would support this approach. Surely students must accept the responsibility to repay their student loans. Did they not have a choice when they took out the loan? Did they not commit to repay the loans?

However, rather than ignore the problem, we should be coming at the problem in two different directions.

First, the provinces and territories must discharge their responsibilities and adequately fund post-secondary education. That is their job. As I indicated earlier, provincial government grants, especially in provinces like Ontario where I live, have been significantly eroded over the years.

The Canada health and social transfer is the main program through which the federal government supports post-secondary education. In 2001-02 CHST cash will increase by some \$2.8 billion. In 2002-03 it will grow to \$19.1 billion, a \$3.6 billion increase. By 2005-06, CHST cash will reach \$21 billion, a \$5.5 billion dollar or a 35% increase over 2000-01 levels.

At the same time, the tax transfer component of the CHST, which grows in line with the growth in the economy, provides increasing support to the provinces and territories, growing from \$16.5 billion in 2000-01 to \$18.8 billion in 2005-06. Anyone who says that the tax points do not count should ask why it is that the Quebec government wants more tax points. Clearly there is great value to them.

Together with the increases in CHST cash, total CHST will reach close to \$40 billion in 2005-06 compared to approximately \$32 billion last year.

Some individuals blame reductions in federal transfers as the reason for the declining investment in post-secondary education by the provinces. Allow me to debunk that theory yet again.

While federal transfers were reduced as we grappled with a \$42 billion deficit left to us by the Tories, when we took office in 1993 federal transfer were cut much less than federal government departments, agencies and direct delivery programs.

Some provinces, like Ontario, have chosen tax cuts as a priority over investments in post-secondary education. I have a good example of this. If the Mike Harris Tories had reduced taxes by 25% instead of 30% in the first tax cut go around in the province of Ontario, they could have completely topped up the cuts in the transfers to the province. Is that such a difficult thing to ask?

● (1400)

It is time for the provinces and territories to take their responsibilities more seriously and increase funding to colleges and universities. This is the first and most important line of attack in keeping tuition fees in line with student economics.

Second, the federal government is able to make additional contributions to post-secondary education through directly delivered programs and through tax policy. The government has been doing exactly that and I will give some examples.

Private Members' Business

The Canada education savings grant is a grant of 20% on the first \$2,000 of contributions made each year to registered education savings plans. This encourages and assists families in saving for their children's higher education.

The Canada millennium scholarships provide more than 90,000 students each year with scholarships averaging \$3,000 a year to reduce the debt that they would otherwise have to incur.

Canada study grants of up to \$3,000 provide assistance each year to approximately 25,000 students, including students with disabilities, high need part time students and students with dependants.

Tax measures that support post-secondary education have been enhanced, including the education tax credit, the tuition credit and the scholarship exemption. These measures make education more affordable.

The Canada student loans program has been enhanced to help graduates manage their student debt by increasing the number of people eligible for interest relief and providing debt reduction for those in extended financial difficulty. As well, students can now claim a tax credit for interest paid on federal and provincial student loans.

Finally, tax free registered retirement savings plan withdrawals and an extension of the education tax credit and child care expense deduction to part time students help Canadians upgrade their skills through their working life.

Another important area that enhances the quality of a student's experience at post-secondary educational institutions is in research and investments in research.

Key investments have been made by our government in every budget since fiscal balance was restored to increase Canada's research performance. These investments have greatly improved Canada's research climate. Moreover, they have built in financial momentum that will see greater support for research over the next several years.

To add further momentum, the last budget provided close to \$1 billion of targeted investments over three years to promote leading edge research and to sustain Canada's leadership in innovative uses of the Internet.

In recent years the government has made significant investments in research conducted in universities and research hospitals. The benefits of such research include new products, services, therapies and industry practices that contribute to economic growth, a higher quality of life for Canadians and a better educational experience for students.

Universities and research hospitals have been highly supportive of these investments. However they have expressed concerns about their rising indirect costs; that is expenses associated with administration, maintenance and commercialization activities that are not covered by direct federal funding for research.

In budget 2000 and in the most recent budget the federal government has again stepped up to the plate to provide support for indirect administration costs, support which the provinces and territories should be providing. We are providing the research dollars

and research chairs. In budget 2000 the government provided a one time \$200 million grant to help with those costs. We increased the budgets for the National Research Council, the granting councils, the NSERC and the SSHRC. These are all things which enhance a student's life on campus.

Let us get on with the job of investing in post-secondary education to achieve tuition fees that are affordable and to enhance the educational experience for students in colleges and universities.

While the motion is well intended, it does not really do that job. It is for that reason that I will not be supporting it.

• (1405)

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this is a delicate issue and I believe the motion put forward has some valid points. It may not be perfect, as the last member just mentioned, but it is a step forward in my opinion to address what is going on with young people and their ability to pay back student loans.

The best way to do this would be to speak from personal experience. I have two students in my family. They have been very fortunate. Their father and mother is in a position to help them out. In order for them to complete their education student loans have been essential.

In the case of my daughter the student loan would be \$3,500 U.S. every three months. That is unaffordable for most children these days. There needs to be a support system in place and I applaud the fact that we do have student loans in Canada. As a parent I understand my daughter's perspective when I ask her when she is coming back home. We want her to come back home as soon as possible. Obviously she will be of benefit to Canada and we want her back here. Her response to me is pretty simple. For every \$1.00 Canadian that she owes, she can earn \$1.50 U.S. She can pay taxes that are considerably lower and afford to pay the loan back more quickly.

If the proposal that is in front of us today were to be enacted, she might change her mind on that and so might a lot of other Canadian students who are in the United States getting their education. Personally I would like to see that happen. As a member of parliament I believe it is important that we bring back all of the students who are in foreign countries studying to benefit this country. That is what the student loan program is about. It is about helping children to be educated. If we were to find a way to take away that burden of paying back what they owe by doing it through tax incentives, I think it would be something worth exploring.

When I was in New York City in early December some comments were made at the Canada loves New York weekend that had a serious impact on me. Mayor Giuliani at the time said there were 600,000 Canadians living and working in New York City. We can bet our bottom dollar that those 600,000 Canadians working in New York City were not there doing part time jobs. They were there because they had an education that Canadians paid for, one way or another, through their taxes.

Private Members' Business

It is imperative that we be able to reap the benefit of putting out that kind of money for education in conjunction with the provinces. For that to happen we must have some sort of system in place that would encourage those people to come back and give back to Canada. The motion is not perfect, but it is a step in the right direction. It is worth looking at and possibly worth amending. We could make this a starting position.

When I go back to my riding, the people I like to talk to most are those kids who are in university. They are probably the toughest audience to stand before, but they give us the most honest answers that we could possibly ask for. Sometimes their questions are a lot harder than the questions we are asked here in the House and they are a lot harder to answer, but they come from the heart. The students are honest in their approach.

The question that keeps coming up is how the government will help the students? They want to get an education but they cannot afford to do it on their own. Tuition fees are high, which of course are the responsibility of the provincial government and not our responsibility. It is hard for students to do this. I listen carefully to what they have to say.

I must say that the proposal in front of us today is the closest thing to a resolution that I have seen so far. It was well thought out. It has the intent to help students in mind. When we help students to receive an education we help Canada. That is what must be kept in the forefront. We must do something that will benefit students and benefit this country. We will be paid back for it. This is all very well and good, and worth looking at even further.

• (1410)

I hear frustration in the classrooms. I hear that same frustration coming from my own children in their studies. They are trying their best to be independent. My daughter has three part time jobs to try to pay her own way. As I said earlier, \$3,500 U.S. every three months is a huge burden. That is the tuition. That does not account for the books as my hon. colleague pointed out earlier. One has to eat and have some place to live. All those expenses add up.

The young pages sitting in front of you, Mr. Speaker, can relate to exactly what it is that I am saying. It is not cheap to get an education. It is valuable and worth the struggle. If we were to find some way to help these kids over this hump it would be worth looking at.

I have not quite made up my mind on whether I will support the motion or not. I see some pitfalls and some holes that I would like to see remedied. I believe it is the provincial government's responsibility. It is incumbent upon us at the federal level to speak to provincial governments and work something out so that we have equal opportunity for students who come from homes where it is not affordable and for students who come from homes where it may well be affordable but where the parents have said that if they want a post-secondary education, they should pay for it.

I will listen carefully to the remainder of the debate. I have listened carefully to the beginning of the debate. I will make my decision when the time comes. I appreciate what has been put forward and I applaud my colleague for putting it forward.

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to begin my remarks by commending the member

for Fundy—Royal for bringing forward the motion. Increasing access to education is an important issue. I am proud to say that the province of Manitoba is one of the leaders in its efforts to ensure access to a wide range of the population to the post-secondary education system. I have much sympathy for his position and his concerns.

The federal government recognizes the important matter of expanding access to post-secondary education. We know that from this flows significant benefits to individuals, to the economy and to society. A cornerstone of the government's efforts is the Canada student loans program which the member is addressing.

From its inception in 1964 to March 2001 the program has indeed assisted four and a half million full time students by providing a total of nearly \$20 billion in subsidized loans. The assistance allows needy students to access the knowledge, skills and learning to obtain better jobs and a better standard of living for themselves and their families.

Not only does the Canada student loans program provide loans to needy students it also provides additional assistance to students in school and provides help to graduates to deal with the problems of high student debt levels. Many of these measures were key components of the Canadian opportunities strategy announced in the 1998 budget.

Specifically, the federal government assists those students in school and in financial need in a number of ways. It provides them with access to student loans of up to \$5,610 per year to help them with their financial needs. We all know provinces supplement Canada student loans programs with their student financial assistance programs.

The government fully subsidizes the cost of interest on the loans while students are in full time studies at a cost to the government of nearly \$250 million annually. Importantly, the government assists students with special needs through grants to supplement their student loans. There are grants for students with dependents, students with disabilities, high need part time students, and women pursuing doctoral studies.

In the recent 2001 budget the federal government increased by \$10 million a year the assistance available for students with disabilities. In addition, the Canada millennium scholarship foundation which was established and funded by the federal government provides bursaries averaging \$3,000 to 90,000 students annually.

I heard a colleague over there make a disparaging remark about the Canada millennium program. I invite the member to my office to meet with students who came in to thank us. The Canada millennium scholarships indeed reduce student loans and help students reduce their debt load, which is important as we all know.

In recognition of the problems caused by increasing student debt loads the federal government provides significant additional assistance for graduates experiencing financial difficulties in repaying their student loans. Graduates experiencing financial difficulty in repaying their loans are eligible for interest free periods on their loans for up to 54 months after graduation. During these periods of interest relief the government pays interest on the loans so that they are kept in good standing.

Private Members' Business

If the graduate is still experiencing financial difficulty after interest relief has been exhausted the loan repayment period can be extended from 10 to 15 years. If there are still problems further debt reduction is available. The maximum amount of assistance is the lesser of 50% of the loan or \$10,000.

In addition there is a tax credit for interest paid on federal and provincial student debt. On Canada student loans the tax credit reduces the effective interest rate on the loan to slightly above prime.

•(1415)

Together, these measures provide an insurance policy for graduates in repayment. They ensure that those having difficulty repaying their student loans will not have to go into default. Those with the most serious problems will have their debt reduced, unlike the member's proposal for a tax credit for principal paid on student loans. These measures target federal assistance to those who need the help the most. It is a good example of smart spending.

In summary, the Canada student loans program currently disburses over \$1.5 billion in loans annually to nearly 400,000 students and up to \$120 million in Canada study grants. Annually the program assists over 30% of all Canadian post-secondary students. The cost to the government of the program is expected to be \$925 million in 2002-03.

There is little doubt the Canada student loans program has been an effective way to make post-secondary education more accessible for Canadians. The cost borne by Canadian taxpayers to expand access to post-secondary education is a necessary investment in Canada's future and one which will pay dividends in many ways.

Expanding access to post-secondary education must continue to be a priority for the federal government. A key objective of the recently announced innovation strategy is to ensure that all Canadians have access to post-secondary education, be it university or community college. The Minister of Human Resources Development continues to consult with partners and stakeholders to determine how this objective can best be met. There are many strategies that must be explored and as my colleague said, provinces must assume responsibility.

Increased direct funding to universities must be a priority to lower tuition fees. This provides increased opportunities and increased access. In the province of Manitoba lowering the tuition fees has resulted in increased attendance both at universities and colleges. I am advised the number is near 5,000. Direct grants to identified targeted groups are important to increase access, as are increased forms of tax credits for students. Increased private-public partnerships for student support must continue to be explored and built upon.

I am sure there is no member of the House who does not want to ensure that all talented young people have access to the best education opportunities available to them. However we want to be sure that the moneys and support reach those who most need it to gain access to post-secondary education most appropriate for them.

This is an important issue. Discussion must continue. We must have a full and comprehensive understanding of the results of the measures that we take before we jump on a bandwagon.

•(1420)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, somehow I am often the speaker to wrap up the debate on a Friday and I might be again today. I eagerly stand to speak to the motion because of my longstanding interest in education.

I always enjoyed being a student. Teachers told me when I was a very young person, even before I went to high school, that it is important to learn something new every day even after finishing school. It is probably true that with very few exceptions I have learned something new every day of my life. I hope that continues. I learned a few good things today but I will not bother getting into that as that would be what is called a side bar.

I have a great interest in education. As is known by most members now since I mention it frequently in my various speeches, I taught at the post-secondary level for 27 years and I shared with many students the frustrations they had in their education.

Some students came to the institute with an inadequate academic background. Unfortunately, some of them were the victims of an inadequate school system and for some there were other reasons. They did not have the necessary prerequisites and therefore for academic reasons, they could not survive at the technical institute level in the programs I was teaching.

There were other students who had reached the limit of what they could learn. I would tell them there was nothing wrong with that. I personally will never be an Olympic runner. I have a physical limitation which would prevent me from doing that. I told them we all do not have the same mental abilities. A false assumption which is sometimes spread around in educational circles is that all students can be successful. That just is not true. There are some who reach their limit of education earlier than others. That is a reality of life. I do not think it is pejorative statement at all. It is just a true statement.

One situation frustrated me the most. On numerous occasions there were students with more than an adequate ability to learn and who had the prerequisites. They could have received an education and done better in their lives with an education than without but they were forced to leave for economic reasons. It always bothered me when students came to me and said they were dropping out and it was their last day. When I asked them why, the students would say they just could not make ends meet, that they had to work and they could not study and hold down a job at the same time because they just could not do them both.

That always bothered me. I often wished I were a multimillionaire so I could help tide those students over to keep them in school. In some cases they had exhausted their student loan capacity and other methods of financing and were simply forced to leave. I believe a large part of Canada's population is below average on the socioeconomic scale. We have a huge untapped reservoir of talent and ability in young people who will not receive an education because of a lack of financing. That is a very serious flaw in the system.

Private Members' Business

I commend the member for Fundy—Royal for this initiative because it is well motivated. He wants to do something to solve the problem. However I have some reservations with the motion. One very large one is it promotes a culture of debt. Mr. Speaker, I do not know what you or the other members think but we have an incredible culture of debt. Every Canadian bears a part of the national debt.

If members want to visit my office, I have a picture of my grandson when he was about one hour old. My wife put it together for me. It shows my little grandson Noah who was one hour old. He was still pretty pink. The coloured caption reads "I owe how much of the national debt?" It is on the shelf in my office. He has a \$20,000 debt and he is one hour old. Then he has provincial debt.

● (1425)

Fortunately we live in Alberta. We at least have some hope in the near future that the provincial debt will be eliminated. We sincerely hope it will happen. The provincial government is committed to reducing the debt, unlike the federal government which will reduce the debt only if there is nothing else it can think of to do with the money.

Besides that, the students go to school and what we do is provide them with a student loans system. When they graduate from school they will have another \$20,000 to \$35,000 debt in student loans to pay off. By the time a young person in Canada graduates from university, collectively that person's share of the federal and

provincial debt and his or her student loan could amount to a debt of \$50,000 to \$70,000. That is wrong.

The member has a plan that would enable the students upon graduation to get rid of at least the student loan portion of their debt more quickly. However I think what we ought to do is to push very hard for adequately funded post-secondary education right across the country so that student loans are much less necessary.

There should also be lower tuition. There should be lower costs for books. It is atrocious that the government charges GST on student books. Some of those textbooks cost \$100 and the GST must be added to every book they buy.

The Chair knows I am on a roll but no one can argue with the clock in this place, so with that and it being Friday, I wish everyone a good weekend.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

It being 2.30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 21 at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 24 and 28.

(The House adjourned at 2.30 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

Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Whole

MR. BOB KILGER

Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole

MR. RÉGINALD BÉLAIR

Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House

MS. ELENI BAKOPANOS

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

HON. ANDY MITCHELL

MR. BILL BLAIKIE

MS. MARLENE CATTERALL

MR. BOB KILGER

MR. PETER MACKAY

MR. JACQUES SAADA

MR. PIERRE BRIEN

HON. RALPH GOODALE

MR. DALE JOHNSTON

MR. JOHN REYNOLDS

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Thirty Seventh Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CA
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CA
Adams, Peter	Peterborough	Ontario	Lib.
Alcock, Reg	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	Lib.
Allard, Carole-Marie	Laval East	Quebec	Lib.
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CA
Anderson, David	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CA
Anderson, Hon. David, Minister of the Environment	Victoria	British Columbia	Lib.
Assad, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Gatineau	Quebec	Lib.
Assadourian, Sarkis	Brampton Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Asselin, Gérard	Charlevoix	Quebec	BQ
Augustine, Jean	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Bachand, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Quebec	PC
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	Quebec	BQ
Bagnell, Larry	Yukon	Yukon	Lib.
Bailey, Roy	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CA
Bakopanos, Eleni, The Acting Speaker	Ahuntsic	Quebec	Lib.
Barnes, Sue	London West	Ontario	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West—Mississauga	Ontario	Lib.
Bélaïr, Réginald, The Acting Speaker	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	Lib.
Bélangier, Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellehumeur, Michel	Berthier—Montcalm	Quebec	BQ
Bellemare, Eugène	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	Lib.
Bennett, Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Lakeland	Alberta	CA
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères—Les-Patriotes	Quebec	BQ
Bertrand, Robert	Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle	Quebec	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio, Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development)	Vaughan—King—Aurora	Ontario	Lib.
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—Petite-Patrie	Quebec	BQ
Binet, Gérard	Frontenac—Mégantic	Quebec	Lib.
Blaikie, Bill	Winnipeg—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Blondin-Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Secretary of State (Children and Youth)	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Ontario	Lib.
Bonwick, Paul	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	Lib.
Borotsik, Rick	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	PC
Boudria, Hon. Don, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	Lib.
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Quebec	BQ
Bradshaw, Hon. Claudette, Minister of Labour and Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Lib.
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CA
Brien, Pierre	Témiscamingue	Quebec	BQ
Brison, Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	PC
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Bryden, John	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Aldershot	Ontario	Lib.
Bulte, Sarmite, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	Lib.
Burton, Andy	Skeena	British Columbia	CA
Byrne, Hon. Gerry, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Caccia, Hon. Charles	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Cadman, Chuck	Surrey North	British Columbia	CA
Calder, Murray	Dufferin—Peel—Wellington— Grey	Ontario	Lib.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Caplan, Hon. Elinor, Minister of National Revenue	Thornhill	Ontario	Lib.
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Quebec	BQ
Carignan, Jean-Guy	Québec East	Quebec	Ind.
Carroll, Aileen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford	Ontario	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester	Nova Scotia	PC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CA
Castonguay, Jeannot, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.
Catterall, Marlene	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	Lib.
Cauchon, Hon. Martin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Outremont	Quebec	Lib.
Chamberlain, Brenda	Guelph—Wellington	Ontario	Lib.
Charbonneau, Yvon	Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies	Quebec	Lib.
Chatters, David	Athabasca	Alberta	CA
Chrétien, Right Hon. Jean, Prime Minister	Saint-Maurice	Quebec	Lib.
Clark, Right Hon. Joe	Calgary Centre	Alberta	PC
Coderre, Hon. Denis, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Bourassa	Quebec	Lib.
Collenette, Hon. David, Minister of Transport	Don Valley East	Ontario	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—St. Clair	Ontario	NDP
Comuzzi, Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	Lib.
Copps, Hon. Sheila, Minister of Canadian Heritage	Hamilton East	Ontario	Lib.
Cotler, Irwin	Mount Royal	Quebec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Kamouraska—Rivière-du- Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Quebec	BQ
Cullen, Roy	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Cummins, John	Delta—South Richmond	British Columbia	CA
Cuzner, Rodger	Bras d'Or—Cape Breton	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Dalphond-Guiral, Madeleine	Laval Centre	Quebec	BQ
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Stockwell	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CA
Desjarlais, Bev	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Desrochers, Odina	Lotbinière—L'Érable	Quebec	BQ
DeVillers, Hon. Paul, Secretary of State (Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Simcoe North	Ontario	Lib.
Dhaliwal, Hon. Herb, Minister of Natural Resources	Vancouver South—Burnaby	British Columbia	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Quebec	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Discepola, Nick	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Quebec	Lib.
Doyle, Norman		Newfoundland and Labrador	PC
Dromisky, Stan	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Ontario	Lib.
Drouin, Hon. Claude, Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)	Beauce	Quebec	Lib.
Dubé, Antoine	Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la- Chaudière	Quebec	BQ
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Quebec	BQ
Duncan, John	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CA
Duplain, Claude	Portneuf	Quebec	Lib.
Easter, Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eggleton, Hon. Art, Minister of National Defence	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Elley, Reed	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	CA
Epp, Ken	Elk Island	Alberta	CA
Eyking, Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Farrah, Georges, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de- la-Madeleine—Pabok	Quebec	Lib.
Finlay, John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Oxford	Ontario	Lib.
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CA
Folco, Raymonde, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development	Laval West	Quebec	Lib.
Fontana, Joe	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster— Coquitlam—Burnaby	British Columbia	CA
Fournier, Ghislain	Manicouagan	Quebec	BQ
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Quebec	BQ
Gagnon, Marcel	Champlain	Quebec	BQ
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing— Pembroke	Ontario	CA
Galloway, Roger	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	Lib.
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval	Quebec	BQ
Girard-Bujold, Jocelyne	Jonquière	Quebec	BQ
Godfrey, John	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton Centre-East	Alberta	CA
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Gouk, Jim	Kootenay—Boundary— Okanagan	British Columbia	CA
Graham, Hon. Bill, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Toronto Centre—Rosedale	Ontario	Lib.
Grewal, Gurmant	Surrey Central	British Columbia	CA
Grey, Deborah	Edmonton North	Alberta	CA
Grose, Ivan	Oshawa	Ontario	Lib.
Guarnieri, Albina	Mississauga East	Ontario	Lib.
Guay, Monique	Laurentides	Quebec	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Beauport—Montmorency— Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans	Quebec	BQ
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CA

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Harb, Mac	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Harris, Richard	Prince George—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	CA
Harvard, John	Charleswood St. James— Assiniboia	Manitoba	Lib.
Harvey, André, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Quebec	Lib.
Hearn, Loyola		Newfoundland and Labrador	PC
Herron, John	St. John's West		
	Fundy—Royal	New Brunswick	PC
Hill, Grant	Macleod	Alberta	CA
Hill, Jay	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CA
Hilstrom, Howard	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CA
Hinton, Betty	Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys	British Columbia	CA
Hubbard, Charles	Miramichi	New Brunswick	Lib.
Ianno, Tony	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	Lib.
Jackson, Ovid	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	Lib.
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	CA
Jennings, Marlene, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce— Lachine	Quebec	Lib.
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CA
Jordan, Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	Lib.
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Nunavut	Lib.
Karygiannis, Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore	Nova Scotia	PC
Kenney, Jason	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CA
Keyes, Stan	Hamilton West	Ontario	Lib.
Kilger, Bob, The Deputy Speaker	Stormont—Dundas— Charlottenburgh	Ontario	Lib.
Kilgour, Hon. David, Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)	Edmonton Southeast	Alberta	Lib.
Knutson, Hon. Gar, Secretary of State (Central and Eastern Europe and Middle East)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	Lib.
Kraft Sloan, Karen	York North	Ontario	Lib.
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau— Mirabel	Quebec	BQ
Laliberte, Rick	Churchill River	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Lalonde, Francine	Mercier	Quebec	BQ
Lanctôt, Robert	Châteauguay	Quebec	BQ
Lastewka, Walt	St. Catharines	Ontario	Lib.
Lebel, Ghislain	Chambly	Quebec	BQ
LeBlanc, Dominic	Beauséjour—Petitcodiac	New Brunswick	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.
Leung, Sophia, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	Lib.
Lill, Wendy	Dartmouth	Nova Scotia	NDP
Lincoln, Clifford	Lac-Saint-Louis	Quebec	Lib.
Longfield, Judi	Whitby—Ajax	Ontario	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Quebec	BQ
Lunn, Gary	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CA
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CA
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence, Solicitor General of Canada	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
MacKay, Peter	Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough	Nova Scotia	PC
Macklin, Paul Harold, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Northumberland	Ontario	Lib.
Mahoney, Steve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations	Mississauga West	Ontario	Lib.
Malhi, Gurbax, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour	Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Maloney, John	Erie—Lincoln	Ontario	Lib.
Manley, Hon. John, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
Marceau, Richard	Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier	Quebec	BQ
Marciel, Serge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Quebec	Lib.
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River	Manitoba	Ind. Cons.
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Ontario	Lib.
Martin, Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	CA
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Hon. Paul, Minister of Finance	LaSalle—Émard	Quebec	Lib.
Matthews, Bill, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Mayfield, Philip	Cariboo—Chilcotin	British Columbia	CA
McCallum, Hon. John, Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)	Markham	Ontario	Lib.
McCormick, Larry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	Lib.
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
McGuire, Joe	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
McKay, John	Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Minister of Health	Edmonton West	Alberta	Lib.
McNally, Grant	Dewdney—Alouette	British Columbia	CA
McTeague, Dan	Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga—Maisonneuve	Quebec	BQ
Meredith, Val	South Surrey—White Rock—Langley	British Columbia	CA
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CA
Milliken, Hon. Peter	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Alberta	CA
Mills, Dennis	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria, Beaches—East York	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.
Mitchell, Hon. Andy, Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	Lib.
Moore, James	Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CA
Murphy, Shawn	Hillsborough	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Myers, Lynn, Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada	Waterloo—Wellington	Ontario	Lib.
Nault, Hon. Robert, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Kenora—Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.
Neville, Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Normand, Hon. Gilbert	Bellechasse—Etchemins—Montmagny—L'Islet	Quebec	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Nystrom, Hon. Lorne	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	NDP
O'Brien, Lawrence	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	Lib.
O'Reilly, John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Haliburton—Victoria—Brock	Ontario	Lib.
Obhrai, Deepak	Calgary East	Alberta	CA
Owen, Hon. Stephen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Pagtakhan, Hon. Rey, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Winnipeg North—St. Paul	Manitoba	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CA
Pankiw, Jim	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	Ind.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	Quebec	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Denis, Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie)	Brome—Missisquoi	Quebec	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Quebec	Lib.
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	Alberta	CA
Peric, Janko	Cambridge	Ontario	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Quebec	BQ
Peschisolido, Joe	Richmond	British Columbia	Lib.
Peterson, Hon. Jim	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Pettigrew, Hon. Pierre, Minister for International Trade	Papineau—Saint-Denis	Quebec	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	Quebec	BQ
Pickard, Jerry	Chatham—Kent Essex	Ontario	Lib.
Pillitteri, Gary	Niagara Falls	Ontario	Lib.
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Quebec	BQ
Pratt, David	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	Lib.
Price, David	Compton—Stanstead	Quebec	Lib.
Proctor, Dick	Palliser	Saskatchewan	NDP
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Quebec	Lib.
Provenzano, Carmen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	Lib.
Rajotte, James	Edmonton Southwest	Alberta	CA
Redman, Karen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Reed, Julian	Halton	Ontario	Lib.
Regan, Geoff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Carleton	Ontario	CA
Reynolds, John, Leader of the Opposition	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	British Columbia	CA
Richardson, John	Perth—Middlesex	Ontario	Lib.
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CA
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, President of the Treasury Board	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Quebec	Lib.
Robinson, Svend	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Rocheleau, Yves	Trois-Rivières	Quebec	BQ
Rock, Hon. Allan, Minister of Industry	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Roy, Jean-Yves	Matapédia—Matane	Quebec	BQ
Saada, Jacques	Brossard—La Prairie	Quebec	Lib.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	Quebec	BQ
Savoy, Andy	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	Lib.
Scherrer, Hélène	Louis-Hébert	Quebec	Lib.
Schmidt, Werner	Kelowna	British Columbia	CA
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Serré, Benoît, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Ontario	Lib.
Sgro, Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shepherd, Alex, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Durham	Ontario	Lib.
Skelton, Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CA
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CA
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CA
Speller, Bob	Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant	Ontario	Lib.
Spencer, Larry	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CA
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil	Quebec	BQ
St-Jacques, Diane	Shefford	Quebec	Lib.
St-Julien, Guy	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik	Quebec	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin	Ontario	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stewart, Hon. Jane, Minister of Human Resources Development	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CA
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Strahl, Chuck	Fraser Valley	British Columbia	CA
Szabo, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Telegdi, Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Thibault, Hon. Robert, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Thibeault, Yolande	Saint-Lambert	Quebec	Lib.
Thompson, Greg	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	PC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	CA
Tirabassi, Tony	Niagara Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Toews, Vic	Provencher	Manitoba	CA
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Torsney, Paddy	Burlington	Ontario	Lib.
Tremblay, Suzanne	Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis	Quebec	BQ
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	Lib.
Valeri, Tony	Stoney Creek	Ontario	Lib.
Vanclief, Hon. Lyle, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	Lib.
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CA
Venne, Pierrette	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Quebec	BQ
Volpe, Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Lib.
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Wayne, Elsie	Saint John	New Brunswick	PC
Whelan, Hon. Susan, Minister for International Cooperation	Essex	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
White, Randy	Langley—Abbotsford	British Columbia	CA
White, Ted	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CA
Wilfert, Bryon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.	Oak Ridges	Ontario	Lib.
Williams, John.....	St. Albert	Alberta	CA
Wood, Bob.....	Nipissing	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Lynne.....	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CA

N.B.: Under Political Affiliation: Lib. - Liberal; CA - Canadian Alliance; BQ - Bloc Quebecois; NDP - New Democratic Party;
PC - Progressive Conservative Party; Ind. - Independent

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Thirty Seventh Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (25)		
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	CA
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CA
Benoit, Leon	Lakeland	CA
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CA
Chatters, David	Athabasca	CA
Clark, Right Hon. Joe	Calgary Centre	PC
Epp, Ken	Elk Island	CA
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton Centre-East	CA
Grey, Deborah	Edmonton North	CA
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	CA
Hill, Grant	Macleod	CA
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	CA
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	CA
Kenney, Jason	Calgary Southeast	CA
Kilgour, Hon. David, Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)	Edmonton Southeast	Lib.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Minister of Health	Edmonton West	Lib.
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	CA
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	CA
Obhrai, Deepak	Calgary East	CA
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	CA
Rajotte, James	Edmonton Southwest	CA
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	CA
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CA
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	CA
Williams, John	St. Albert	CA
BRITISH COLUMBIA (34)		
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay—Columbia	CA
Anderson, Hon. David, Minister of the Environment	Victoria	Lib.
Burton, Andy	Skeena	CA
Cadman, Chuck	Surrey North	CA
Cummins, John	Delta—South Richmond	CA
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Stockwell	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CA
Dhaliwal, Hon. Herb, Minister of Natural Resources	Vancouver South—Burnaby	Lib.
Duncan, John	Vancouver Island North	CA
Elley, Reed	Nanaimo—Cowichan	CA
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby	CA
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Gouk, Jim	Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan	CA
Grewal, Gurmant	Surrey Central	CA
Harris, Richard	Prince George—Bulkley Valley	CA
Hill, Jay	Prince George—Peace River	CA

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Hinton, Betty	Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys	CA
Leung, Sophia, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Vancouver Kingsway	Lib.
Lunn, Gary	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CA
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CA
Martin, Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	CA
Mayfield, Philip	Cariboo—Chilcotin	CA
McNally, Grant	Dewdney—Alouette	CA
Meredith, Val	South Surrey—White Rock—Langley	CA
Moore, James	Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam	CA
Owen, Hon. Stephen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Peschisolido, Joe	Richmond	Lib.
Reynolds, John, Leader of the Opposition	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	CA
Robinson, Svend	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Schmidt, Werner	Kelowna	CA
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan—Shuswap	CA
Strahl, Chuck	Fraser Valley	CA
White, Randy	Langley—Abbotsford	CA
White, Ted	North Vancouver	CA
MANITOBA (13)		
Alcock, Reg	Winnipeg South	Lib.
Blaikie, Bill	Winnipeg—Transcona	NDP
Borotsik, Rick	Brandon—Souris	PC
Desjarlais, Bev	Churchill	NDP
Harvard, John	Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia	Lib.
Hilstrom, Howard	Selkirk—Interlake	CA
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River	Ind. Cons.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Pagtakhan, Hon. Rey, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Winnipeg North—St. Paul	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	CA
Toews, Vic	Provencher	CA
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North Centre	NDP
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Bradshaw, Hon. Claudette, Minister of Labour and Secretary of State (Multi-culturalism) (Status of Women)	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
Castonguay, Jeannot, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Madawaska—Restigouche	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Herron, John	Fundy—Royal	PC
Hubbard, Charles	Miramichi	Lib.
LeBlanc, Dominic	Beauséjour—Petitcodiac	Lib.
Savoy, Andy	Tobique—Mactaquac	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	Lib.
Thompson, Greg	New Brunswick Southwest	PC
Wayne, Elsie	Saint John	PC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (5)		
Byrne, Hon. Gerry, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	PC
Hearn, Loyola	St. John's West	PC
Matthews, Bill, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Burin—St. George's	Lib.
O'Brien, Lawrence	Labrador	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Blondin-Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Secretary of State (Children and Youth)	Western Arctic	Lib.
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Scott	Kings—Hants	PC
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester	PC
Cuzner, Rodger	Bras d'Or—Cape Breton	Lib.
Eyking, Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore	PC
Lill, Wendy	Dartmouth	NDP
MacKay, Peter	Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough	PC
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Geoff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley— Eastern Shore	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	West Nova	Lib.
NUNAVUT (1)		
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Lib.
ONTARIO (102)		
Adams, Peter	Peterborough	Lib.
Assadourian, Sarkis	Brampton Centre	Lib.
Augustine, Jean	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Barnes, Sue	London West	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West—Mississauga	Lib.
Bélaire, Réginald, The Acting Speaker	Timmins—James Bay	Lib.
Bélangier, Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bellemare, Eugène	Ottawa—Orléans	Lib.
Bennett, Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio, Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development)	Vaughan—King—Aurora	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Bonwick, Paul	Simcoe—Grey	Lib.
Boudria, Hon. Don, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Lib.
Bryden, John	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough— Aldershot	Lib.
Bulte, Sarmite, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Parkdale—High Park	Lib.
Caccia, Hon. Charles	Davenport	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Calder, Murray	Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey	Lib.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Caplan, Hon. Elinor, Minister of National Revenue	Thornhill	Lib.
Carroll, Aileen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford	Lib.
Catterall, Marlene	Ottawa West—Nepean	Lib.
Chamberlain, Brenda	Guelph—Wellington	Lib.
Collenette, Hon. David, Minister of Transport	Don Valley East	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—St. Clair	NDP
Comuzzi, Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Lib.
Copps, Hon. Sheila, Minister of Canadian Heritage	Hamilton East	Lib.
Cullen, Roy	Etobicoke North	Lib.
DeVillers, Hon. Paul, Secretary of State (Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Simcoe North	Lib.
Dromisky, Stan	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Lib.
Eggleton, Hon. Art, Minister of National Defence	York Centre	Lib.
Finlay, John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Oxford	Lib.
Fontana, Joe	London North Centre	Lib.
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CA
Galloway, Roger	Sarnia—Lambton	Lib.
Godfrey, John	Don Valley West	Lib.
Graham, Hon. Bill, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Toronto Centre—Rosedale	Lib.
Grose, Ivan	Oshawa	Lib.
Guarnieri, Albina	Mississauga East	Lib.
Harb, Mac	Ottawa Centre	Lib.
Ianno, Tony	Trinity—Spadina	Lib.
Jackson, Ovid	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Lib.
Jordan, Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister	Leeds—Grenville	Lib.
Karygiannis, Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Keyes, Stan	Hamilton West	Lib.
Kilger, Bob, The Deputy Speaker	Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh	Lib.
Knutson, Hon. Gar, Secretary of State (Central and Eastern Europe and Middle East)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Lib.
Kraft Sloan, Karen	York North	Lib.
Lastewka, Walt	St. Catharines	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Longfield, Judi	Whitby—Ajax	Lib.
Macklin, Paul Harold, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Northumberland	Lib.
Mahoney, Steve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations	Mississauga West	Lib.
Malhi, Gurbax, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour	Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale	Lib.
Maloney, John	Erie—Lincoln	Lib.
Manley, Hon. John, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations	Ottawa South	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Lib.
McCallum, Hon. John, Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)	Markham	Lib.
McCormick, Larry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Lib.
McKay, John	Scarborough East	Lib.
McTeague, Dan	Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Milliken, Hon. Peter	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Mills, Dennis	Toronto—Danforth	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria, Beaches—East York	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Mitchell, Hon. Andy, Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Lib.
Myers, Lynn, Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada	Waterloo—Wellington	Lib.
Nault, Hon. Robert, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Kenora—Rainy River	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade	London—Fanshawe	Lib.
O'Reilly, John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Haliburton—Victoria—Brock	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga Centre	Lib.
Peric, Janko	Cambridge	Lib.
Peterson, Hon. Jim	Willowdale	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Lib.
Pickard, Jerry	Chatham—Kent Essex	Lib.
Pillitteri, Gary	Niagara Falls	Lib.
Pratt, David	Nepean—Carleton	Lib.
Provenzano, Carmen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Sault Ste. Marie	Lib.
Redman, Karen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Kitchener Centre	Lib.
Reed, Julian	Halton	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Carleton	CA
Richardson, John	Perth—Middlesex	Lib.
Rock, Hon. Allan, Minister of Industry	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.
Serré, Benoît, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Lib.
Sgro, Judy	York West	Lib.
Shepherd, Alex, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Durham	Lib.
Speller, Bob	Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stewart, Hon. Jane, Minister of Human Resources Development	Brant	Lib.
Szabo, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.
Tirabassi, Tony	Niagara Centre	Lib.
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Torsney, Paddy	Burlington	Lib.
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Lib.
Valeri, Tony	Stoney Creek	Lib.
Vancief, Hon. Lyle, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Prince Edward—Hastings	Lib.
Volpe, Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.
Whelan, Hon. Susan, Minister for International Cooperation	Essex	Lib.
Wilfert, Bryon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Oak Ridges	Lib.
Wood, Bob	Nipissing	Lib.
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Easter, Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence, Solicitor General of Canada	Cardigan	Lib.
McGuire, Joe	Egmont	Lib.
Murphy, Shawn	Hillsborough	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
QUEBEC (72)		
Allard, Carole-Marie	Laval East	Lib.
Assad, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Gatineau	Lib.
Asselin, Gérard	Charlevoix	BQ
Bachand, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	PC
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	BQ
Bakopanos, Eleni, The Acting Speaker	Ahuntsic	Lib.
Bellehumeur, Michel	Berthier—Montcalm	BQ
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères—Les-Patriotes	BQ
Bertrand, Robert	Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle	Lib.
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—Petite-Patrie	BQ
Binet, Gérard	Frontenac—Mégantic	Lib.
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	BQ
Brien, Pierre	Témiscamingue	BQ
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	BQ
Carignan, Jean-Guy	Québec East	Ind.
Cauchon, Hon. Martin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Outremont	Lib.
Charbonneau, Yvon	Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies	Lib.
Chrétien, Right Hon. Jean, Prime Minister	Saint-Maurice	Lib.
Coderre, Hon. Denis, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Bourassa	Lib.
Cotler, Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup— Témiscouata—Les Basques	BQ
Dalphond-Guiral, Madeleine	Laval Centre	BQ
Desrochers, Odina	Lotbinière—L'Érable	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Discepola, Nick	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Lib.
Drouin, Hon. Claude, Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)	Beauce	Lib.
Dubé, Antoine	Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	BQ
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	BQ
Duplain, Claude	Portneuf	Lib.
Farrah, Georges, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok	Lib.
Folco, Raymonde, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development	Laval West	Lib.
Fournier, Ghislain	Manicouagan	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Gagnon, Marcel	Champlain	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval	BQ
Girard-Bujold, Jocelyne	Jonquière	BQ
Guay, Monique	Laurentides	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans	BQ
Harvey, André, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Lib.
Jennings, Marlene, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lalonde, Francine	Mercier	BQ
Lanctôt, Robert	Châteauguay	BQ
Lebel, Ghislain	Chambly	BQ
Lincoln, Clifford	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Marceau, Richard	Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier	BQ
Marcil, Serge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Lib.
Martin, Hon. Paul, Minister of Finance	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga—Maisonnette	BQ
Normand, Hon. Gilbert	Bellechasse—Etchemins—Montmagny—L'Islet	Lib.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Denis, Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie)	Brome—Missisquoi	Lib.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Pettigrew, Hon. Pierre, Minister for International Trade	Papineau—Saint-Denis	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Price, David	Compton—Stanstead	Lib.
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, President of the Treasury Board	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Rocheleau, Yves	Trois-Rivières	BQ
Roy, Jean-Yves	Matapédia—Matane	BQ
Saada, Jacques	Brossard—La Prairie	Lib.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	BQ
Scherrer, Hélène	Louis-Hébert	Lib.
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil	BQ
St-Jacques, Diane	Shefford	Lib.
St-Julien, Guy	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik	Lib.
Thibeault, Yolande	Saint-Lambert	Lib.
Tremblay, Suzanne	Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis	BQ
Venne, Pierrette	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	BQ
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CA
Bailey, Roy	Souris—Moose Mountain	CA
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CA
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CA
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Wascana	Lib.
Laliberte, Rick	Churchill River	Lib.
Nystrom, Hon. Lorne	Regina—Qu'Appelle	NDP
Pankiw, Jim	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Ind.
Proctor, Dick	Palliser	NDP
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CA
Skelton, Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CA
Spencer, Larry	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CA
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CA
Yelich, Lynne	Blackstrap	CA

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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YUKON (1)

Bagnell, Larry..... Yukon..... Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of May 10, 2002 — 1st Session, 37th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Chair:	Raymond Bonin	Vice-Chairs:	Nancy Karetak-Lindell Maurice Vellacott	
Larry Bagnell	David Chatters	Richard Marceau	Brian Pallister	(16)
G�rard Binet	John Finlay	Inky Mark	Beno�t Serr�	
Serge Cardin	John Godfrey	Pat Martin	Guy St-Julien	
Jean-Guy Carignan				

Associate Members

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Diane Ablonczy	Norman Doyle	Dale Johnston	Joe Pescholido
Rob Anders	John Duncan	Jason Kenney	James Rajotte
David Anderson	Reed Elley	Robert Lanct�t	Scott Reid
G�rard Asselin	Ken Epp	Gary Lunn	John Reynolds
Andr� Bachand	Brian Fitzpatrick	James Lunney	Gerry Ritz
Claude Bachand	Paul Forseth	Peter MacKay	Jean-Yves Roy
Roy Bailey	Ghislain Fournier	Preston Manning	Werner Schmidt
Leon Benoit	Cheryl Gallant	Keith Martin	Carol Skelton
St�phane Bergeron	Yvon Godin	Philip Mayfield	Monte Solberg
Bernard Bigras	Peter Goldring	Joe McGuire	Kevin Sorenson
Rick Borotsik	Jim Gouk	Grant McNally	Larry Spencer
Garry Breitkreuz	Gurmant Grewal	Val Meredith	Darrel Stinson
Scott Brison	Deborah Grey	Rob Merrifield	Chuck Strahl
Andy Burton	Art Hanger	Bob Mills	Greg Thompson
Chuck Cadman	Richard Harris	James Moore	Myron Thompson
Bill Casey	Loyola Hearn	Anita Neville	Vic Toews
Rick Casson	John Herron	Lorne Nystrom	Elsie Wayne
Joe Clark	Grant Hill	Deepak Obhrai	Randy White
Joe Comartin	Jay Hill	Jim Pankiw	Ted White
John Cummins	Howard Hilstrom	Pierre Paquette	John Williams
Stockwell Day	Betty Hinton	Charlie Penson	Lynne Yelich

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair:

Charles Hubbard

Vice-Chairs:
Murray Calder
Howard HilstromDavid Anderson
Rick Borotsik
Garry Breitzkreuz
Claude DuplainMark Eyking
Marcel Gagnon
Rick LaliberteLarry McCormick
Dick Proctor
Bob SpellerPaul Steckle
Suzanne Tremblay
Rose-Marie Ur

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Peter Adams
Rob Anders
André Bachand
Roy Bailey
Leon Benoit
Scott Brison
Andy Burton
Chuck Cadman
Bill Casey
Rick Casson
David Chatters
Joe Clark
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Stockwell Day
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John Duncan
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Brian Fitzpatrick
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Peter Goldring
Jim Gouk
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Brian Pallister
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Pierre Paquette
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Joe PeschisolidoJames Rajotte
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Jean-Yves Roy
Werner Schmidt
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Myron Thompson
Vic Toews
Maurice Vellacott
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Randy White
Ted White
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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Chair:	Clifford Lincoln	Vice-Chairs:	Jim Abbott Dennis Mills	
Paul Bonwick Sarmite Bulte Rodger Cuzner Claude Duplain	Christiane Gagnon Roger Gallaway John Harvard	Loyola Hearn Betty Hinton Wendy Lill	Caroline St-Hilaire Chuck Strahl Tony Tirabassi	(16)

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SUB-COMMITTEE ON SPORT

Chair:	Dennis Mills	Vice-Chair:		
Rodger Cuzner Cheryl Gallant	John Harvard Loyola Hearn	Robert Lanctôt Serge Marcil	Dick Proctor Hélène Scherrer	(9)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Chair: Joe Fontana

Vice-Chairs:

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Jerry Pickard

Mark Assad
Yvon Charbonneau
Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral
John Godfrey

Art Hanger
Steve Mahoney
Inky Mark

Anita Neville
David Price
Stéphan Tremblay

Tony Valeri
Judy Wasylcia-Leis
Lynne Yelich

(16)

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Jay Hill
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Dale Johnston
Gerald Keddy

Jason Kenney
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James Lunney
Peter MacKay
Preston Manning
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Rob Merrifield
Bob Mills
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Brian Pallister
Jim Pankiw
Charlie Penson
Joe Peschisolido

James Rajotte
Scott Reid
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Greg Thompson
Myron Thompson
Vic Toews
Maurice Vellacott
Elsie Wayne
Randy White
Ted White
John Williams

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Charles Caccia

Vice-Chairs:
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Bob MillsRoy Bailey
Bernard Bigras
Joe Comartin
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Nancy Karetak-Lindell
Rick LaliberteGary Lunn
Karen Redman
Julian ReedAndy Savoy
Hélène Scherrer
Alan Tonks

(16)

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Dale Johnston
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Robert Lanctôt
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Chuck Strahl
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Myron Thompson
Vic Toews
Maurice Vellacott
Elsie Wayne
Randy White
Ted White
John Williams
Lynne Yelich

FINANCE**Chair:**

Sue Barnes

Vice-Chairs:Nick Discepola
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Scott Brison
Roy Cullen
Albina GuarnieriRahim Jaffer
Sophia Leung
Yvan Loubier
Grant McNallyMaria Minna
Shawn Murphy
Lorne Nystrom
Charlie PensonPauline Picard
Gary Pillitteri
Bryon Wilfert

(18)

Associate MembersJim Abbott
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Brian Fitzpatrick
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Elsie Wayne
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Ted White
John Williams
Lynne Yelich

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Chair:

Wayne Easter

Vice-Chairs:
John Cummins
Paul SteckleSarkis Assadourian
Andy Burton
Rodger Cuzner
Georges FarrahLoyola Hearn
Dominic LeBlanc
James LunneyBill Matthews
Lawrence O'Brien
Jean-Yves RoyPeter Stoffer
Suzanne Tremblay
Tom Wappel

(16)

Associate Members

Jim Abbott
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G rard Asselin
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Charlie Penson
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Myron Thompson
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Maurice Vellacott
Elsie Wayne
Randy White
Ted White
John Williams
Lynne Yelich

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Chair:	Jean Augustine	Vice-Chairs:	Stockwell Day Bernard Patry	
Sarkis Assadourian	Mark Eyking	Francine Lalonde	Deepak Obhrai	(18)
Aileen Carroll	John Harvard	Diane Marleau	Pierre Paquette	
Bill Casey	Marlene Jennings	Keith Martin	Svend Robinson	
John Duncan	Stan Keyes	Pat O'Brien		

Associate Members

Jim Abbott	Stan Dromisky	Gary Lunn	Scott Reid
Diane Ablonczy	Antoine Dubé	James Lunney	John Reynolds
Rob Anders	Reed Elley	Peter MacKay	Gerry Ritz
David Anderson	Ken Epp	John Maloney	Yves Rocheleau
André Bachand	Brian Fitzpatrick	Preston Manning	Benoît Sauvageau
Claude Bachand	Paul Forseth	Richard Marceau	Werner Schmidt
Roy Bailey	Hedy Fry	Inky Mark	Carol Skelton
Colleen Beaumier	Cheryl Gallant	Pat Martin	Monte Solberg
Leon Benoit	Peter Goldring	Philip Mayfield	Kevin Sorenson
Stéphane Bergeron	Jim Gouk	Grant McNally	Bob Speller
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Hon. Stephen Owen	Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mr. Joe Jordan	to the Prime Minister
Mr. André Harvey	to the Minister of Transport
Mrs. Karen Redman	to the Minister of the Environment
Mr. Geoff Regan	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
Ms. Sarmite Bulte	to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Mr. Steve Mahoney	to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations
Mr. Bryon Wilfert	to the Minister of Finance
Mr. John O'Reilly	to the Minister of National Defence
Mr. Jeannot Castonguay	to the Minister of Health
Mr. Serge Marcil	to the Minister of Industry
Mr. Lynn Myers	to the Solicitor General of Canada
Mr. Alex Shepherd	to the President of the Treasury Board
Mr. Paul Harold Macklin	to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Ms. Raymonde Folco	to the Minister of Human Resources Development
Mr. Bill Matthews	to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Mr. Pat O'Brien	to the Minister for International Trade
Mr. Paul Szabo	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services
Mr. Larry McCormick	to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Mr. Benoît Serré	to the Minister of Natural Resources
Mr. Gurbax Malhi	to the Minister of Labour
Mr. John Finlay	to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Ms. Sophia Leung	to the Minister of National Revenue
Mr. Mark Assad	to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Mr. Georges Farrah	to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Mr. Carmen Provenzano	to the Minister of Veterans Affairs
Ms. Aileen Carroll	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mrs. Marlene Jennings	to the Minister for International Cooperation

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