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Monday, March 22, 2004

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 22, 2004

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*English*]

MOTION NO. 479

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): It has been brought to my attention that an error has taken place regarding Motion No. 479, standing in the order of precedence in the name of the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Langley.

The motion calls for the House to instruct, in accordance with Standing Order 68(4)(b), a legislative committee to prepare and bring in a bill. However, when the House adopted its new provisional standing orders relating to private members' business on March 17, 2003, it specifically suspended the application of Standing Order 68(4)(b). The Journals Branch should have so advised the hon. member.

In order to respect the provisional standing orders and in fairness to the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, I am directing the clerk to modify Motion No. 479 to read as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, all ministers of the Crown, secretaries of state, ministers of state, parliamentary secretaries, Governor in Council appointees and full time ministerial appointees should file quarterly financial statements with the Auditor General of Canada, who should review these and report to the House of Commons.

I wish to apologize to all members, particularly the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

It being 11:05 a.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

• (1105)

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC) moved that Bill C-221, an act to amend the Criminal Code (no parole when imprisoned for life), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to discuss my private member's bill, Bill C-221.

I have to think back to 1995 when I first introduced the bill into the House. At that time I was the party's critic for the solicitor general and certainly was fed up with the way the parole system was working, just as I am now. Very little has changed. There are still many murderers being released out onto our streets. Many have only served 15 years of their life sentences, some even less if they were convicted of second degree murder.

The purpose of the bill is to amend certain provisions of the Criminal Code that relate to life imprisonment. In effect the bill would eliminate the provisions for parole eligibility for any criminal sentenced to life in prison. In other words, criminals sentenced to life in prison would not serve 15 or 25 years but the remainder of their natural life behind bars. A life sentence would indeed mean life.

We hear the murmurs and complaints from those on the other side of the House when this issue comes forward, the serving of life sentences or penalties that they deem to be harsh.

Murder is a heinous crime. I think more and more people are beginning to share the view that these individuals who commit such crimes should be staying in prison for longer periods, in fact for life.

Interestingly, in 2002 the *Winnipeg Sun* reported that in Manitoba:

—the Doer government is asking Ottawa to get tougher on killers by making life sentences real life sentences.

Twenty-five years, in my view, is not sufficient protection for the public, particularly with people who are convicted of shooting police officers,

That comes from the mouth of Premier Gary Doer and was in response to a rash of police shootings in that city.

[Manitoba] Justice Minister Gord Mackintosh said a new provision should be created under the federal Criminal Code allowing a judge to sentence a cop killer to a jail cell for the rest of his days.

I do not believe “life means life” should just apply to police officers alone. I believe it should be extended to all murderers who receive a life sentence.

Having served more than 20 years on the Calgary police department, I have seen my fair share of crimes. I have seen the anguished faces of loved ones. I have felt their pain when they learn that someone dear to them has been murdered. I am not talking about dying in an automobile accident, in a fire or in a sporting accident. We are talking about cold-blooded murder.

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This leads to unspeakable pain for the victims' families. I have heard people second guess themselves by wondering whether, if they had done something different, they could perhaps have spared him or her that fate. In some cases members of victims' families have come to seek help to deal with their grief. Why is that? For one reason, often there is no closure once a killer is convicted. The victim's pain is so deep, it is often unbearable.

The first thing the state should do is to send a clear message to criminals and to those contemplating the taking of another person's life, the message being that they will never be able to walk the streets of the country a free man or woman. They will be locked away for the remainder of their natural lives.

● (1110)

Our laws should be designed to restrain the violent and the rebellious. Good people do not need to engage the law; it is those who have turned against authority, turned against society and committed these acts who should have the law applied to them. There should be a clear message that there will be severe consequences for their actions. Yes, it is true that there are those who will forge right ahead anyway and commit an act without even thinking about the consequences; however, we hope that the punishment meted out to such individuals will serve as a deterrent to others.

I am hearing more about deterrents now in our law than at any time in the past 20 years, and even from those who have crafted our very liberal laws in relation to punishment. Many members in the House will recall that once upon a time in this country capital punishment was the punishment of choice for those convicted of murder, but back in 1976 the government of Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau introduced Bill C-84, which abolished capital punishment and replaced it with life imprisonment. Two new categories of murder were created, first and second degree, both of which carried a minimum sentence of life imprisonment.

It did not stop there. A life sentence does not mean that a criminal will spend the rest of his or her natural life in prison. This was the intent of their legislation. It simply meant that a killer could not apply for parole until he or she had served 25 years in jail. This applied to those convicted of first degree murder. Those convicted of second degree murder would have to serve 10 years. The sentencing judge could set a longer period of anywhere from 10 to 25 years.

It was in 1976 that the Liberals crafted this legislation. They then added the infamous section 745. In the present Criminal Code, it is section 745.6, which is also known as the faint hope clause. This section allows an offender to have his or her parole ineligibility period reduced after serving 15 years of a sentence.

Stories abound about lifers who used the faint hope clause to get out of prison early. I have a few examples and will relate a couple of them. One deals with a police officer I worked with in the Calgary city police department. In 1977, a colleague of mine, Constable William Shelever, was shot in the back of the head. His assailant, Roy Glaremin, also shot and injured another constable that night. Glaremin applied for a judicial review under the faint hope clause in 1993. He was denied and again reapplied, and so on and so forth goes his application for early release.

I am going to point to some statistics on this from the time period between 1987 and June 2000. There were 103 applications heard across Canada in those 13 years, with 84 of the 103 applicants getting reductions in their parole ineligibility period. In other words, 81.6% of those applicants actually had their sentences reduced and were out on the street early. That is quite phenomenal when we are talking about cold-blooded killers. It is something that should not be happening. There should be truth in our sentencing.

It is no secret that we on this side of the House have long advocated repealing section 745.6 of the Criminal Code. This has raised the ire of many criminal rights activists who have argued that locking away a murderer for 25 years is a waste of a person's life. They forget about the trauma that is created in a community when another murder takes place, and I do not care if the murderer is an adult who is 50 or 70 years old or a young offender who is 15 or 16.

I can relate to members a situation from Maple Ridge, B.C., about which many in the House may very well know. Colleen Findlay, an outstanding community activist, mother and wife, was brutally assaulted and murdered by a young offender. It was on the front page of every paper and has been for the last week. It was a horrible crime. Citizens are outraged.

● (1115)

What brings about a lot of that outrage is the seven years' sentence eligibility for parole because the individual is a young offender. The punishment does not fit the crime. Life should mean life regardless of the age of the offender, yet our Criminal Code clearly points to the fact that even for this crime the offender will not do much time because he is a young offender. He is 15 years old. He may not have been alone. It was a terrible offence that rocked the community and rocks a province and in fact an entire country.

The murderer who committed this crime ends up doing the time, in part. The murderer is still alive, at least, while the victims and the family in Maple Ridge will suffer and suffer because this case will not go away with the present law. The murderer can go back into his prison cell. The state looks after him. He can communicate with whomever he wants to on the outside. He gets his colour TV. He will even have his computers.

Some murderers have even gotten married in prison. Roy Glaremin was one. He shot a police officer and killed him. They will have their conjugal visits. They will get whatever education course they need. We are talking about murderers who should be doing time for life, forever. They will be allowed their visitors. Also, they get to eat very well, much better than many hard-working, taxpaying Canadians. But the relatives of the victims can only visit the graves of those who were killed.

These arguments have been put forward in the House before. The Liberals have been joined by other special interest groups who say that we have to give these murderers some hope, that we have to allow them some chance to look at the future and say, "In 15 years I am going to be out". That is the thinking on that side of the House, but on the side of the victim they do not seem to want to address the pain that goes on in the lives of so many when these issues come to the forefront.

The only way the criminal can pay for his crime is if he and the community know for sure that he will never, ever walk away. We have heard the arguments from the Liberals. We also have heard the arguments from many victims' groups across this country. In this party on this side of the House, we stand for those who are suffering and for those potential victims out there because of laws that will not deal with violent people. We want to make sure that the criminals are behind bars, not only for the benefit of those who are victimized but for those potential members of our society who know that they will struggle if it comes their way in the future.

In closing, let me say that this private member's bill reflects the view that justice will be served when murderers sentenced to life in prison serve a full, court ordered life sentence. For families of victims, a true life sentence is an issue of closure. It is also a matter of fairness. Let us send a message that if an individual takes the life of another, that offender will spend the rest of his or her natural life locked away, with no parole. Life will indeed mean life.

• (1120)

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for his initiative in bringing this issue forward. He mentioned the very personal situation he dealt with when he was on the force in Calgary and one of his colleagues was brutally murdered. He mentioned what that has meant not only for our colleague here but for the family of the victim in having the offender come forward and go through this repeated application process. Every time that happens there is a parole hearing, which puts an incredible amount of strain on the family and which simply is not right.

The member also alluded to a horrific crime in my own riding, in Maple Ridge. A loving mother was brutally assaulted and murdered by a young offender who has pleaded guilty to that crime but could be out in as short a period of time as four years given the time he has already served. It is unbelievable. It is a story that ran on the front pages of all the newspapers in Canada last week and certainly highlights the fact that our colleague's bill is necessary.

I would like him to comment, if he could, on the personal impact on the individuals he has dealt with who have faced this kind of terrible situation in their lives and on what he has noticed in that period of time, which I would think is giving him motivation for bringing forward this bill.

Mr. Art Hanger: I thank my colleague for the question because it does go to the heart of the matter. For those who have been victimized, for those families who have been left behind, whether they are police officers' families or other citizens who have encountered violent criminals, when the life of a loved one taken away, there is more than grief. There is rage. There is guilt. There is blame. There is hate and there is anger. There is grief. Some have gone into the position of just being a recluse and living alone.

I can speak of my colleague's family. Mrs. Shelever has a room all set up in her house with her husband's things in there. She had such a hard time in dealing with his death. He was taken away before their daughter was even born. Her daughter never knew her dad. Mrs. Shelever collected his items and put them in a room in her house. In her eyes, that room is dedicated to her husband. It is a very difficult having to relive this every time Glaremin comes up for a parole hearing. It is a tortured way to live, in a way, because it is brought up

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every time. Yes, some people have to get by all of that and move on, but it is easy to say and very difficult to do.

My colleague mentioned the young mother in Maple Ridge. There will be a tremendous upheaval in that family. That victimized family will go through every emotion I have described. The state does not help. Unfortunately, in fact, the state perpetuates it because of the laws and because of the inconsistency in looking for what is right, that is, there are more rights for the prisoner than there are for the victims.

I grieve along with that family and every family that goes through this. I know what they are going to go through and, with them, I have experienced some of that pain as a police officer.

• (1125)

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward the bill, but I ask him about the difficulty we as members of Parliament have, for instance, when we speak to the parents in regard to a pedophile case. I stood in the House and spoke about the pedophile who committed his tenth offence and went to prison. He was then let out and at that time I asked the justice minister, "What do I tell the parents of the eleventh victim?" All the experts were saying that this pedophile would reoffend. Within the year he reoffended. There was an eleventh victim and a twelfth.

Obviously the justice system failed those two sets of parents. Of course he is about to get out again and this will go on. I wonder what the member thinks of that sort of situation.

Mr. Art Hanger: Madam Speaker, all of us in the House have a responsibility. We were elected to represent our communities. We were also elected to ensure that there was good order in general in the country. As members of Parliament, we must advocate for those in the community who have been victimized. We have a responsibility to do that.

I know we on this side of the House are not the government, but there will come a day when we will be.

An hon. member: Soon.

Mr. Art Hanger: Very soon, Madam Speaker.

The accountability factor is coming into play right now, and it will be hitting those on that side square in the eyes. I hope and pray that we will soon have an opportunity to be able to change some of the injustices that have been handed down by that side.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Sue Barnes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today on the subject of Bill C-221. This bill introduced by the hon. member for Calgary Northeast is to amend part XXIII of the Criminal Code concerning life imprisonment.

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[English]

This means that offenders subject to life imprisonment would have no access to parole. It also proposes to amend sections 745.6 to 745.64 of the Criminal Code, which will allow an offender to apply after 15 years for a reduction in the period to be served before parole eligibility.

It is important for hon. members to be aware that the bill would affect not just homicides, but more than 40 other offences in the Criminal Code that would provide for a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. Some examples are: to overcome resistance for the purpose of committing an indictable offence; robbery; breaking and entering in relation to a dwelling house; and extortion. It is unlikely that many Canadians would agree that individuals convicted of such offences should necessarily spend the rest of their natural lives in penitentiaries.

Although the Minister of Justice does not support Bill C-221, the government will continue its strong record of introducing effective legislation aimed at making Canadians safer in their homes and communities.

The concept of parole has been part of Canadian law since 1899. Parole recognizes that imprisonment is only one aspect of the reform of an offender and that rehabilitation of the offender and reintegration back into the community are also necessary if offenders are to become law-abiding citizens when they are eventually released. We believe that rehabilitating offenders is the best protection for the community in the long term.

Parole does not reduce a sentence, but permits offenders to serve the balance of their sentences in the community under supervision. This facilitates a gradual, controlled release back into society. Parole is not automatic. Offenders must meet specified criteria aimed at protecting public safety. Some offenders are denied parole and remain in custody for the entirety of their sentences.

Because of the importance of encouraging rehabilitation of all offenders, Canadian law does not endorse the concept of a life sentence without eligibility for parole. In exceptional cases, the Criminal Code does provide for the designation of an individual as a dangerous offender, who is sentenced to an indeterminate period of imprisonment.

Members may be interested to know that Canada's parole ineligibility period of 25 years for murder is among the longest in the western world. Prior to the introduction of the 25 year parole ineligibility period introduced as part of the repeal of the death penalty in 1976, the average time served for the equivalent of first degree murder was 15.8 years. In 1994 the average length of time served by offenders for first degree murder in Canada was 28.5 years. This is much longer than the average time, 14.3 years, served in a number of the other democracies, including western Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

In the U.S.A., in cases where parole is available, the average time served is actually 18.5 years. In the United States in cases where murderers are sentenced to life without parole, the average time served is approximately 29 years, very similar to Canada's 28.5 years.

It is also important to point out that in the case of a life sentence, an offender who is released on parole will be under the supervision of the National Parole Board until death. As is the case for anyone on parole, if the offender breaches his or her conditions, parole can be revoked and the offender may be returned to prison to serve the remainder of his or her sentence.

The faint hope clause, section 745.6 of the Criminal Code, is based on the belief, shared by not all Canadians but many of them, that even people who are guilty of terrible acts should be given a chance to come to terms with their crimes and rehabilitate themselves. Section 745.6 is intended for the exceptional case where a serious offender has already been able to turn his or her life around.

In 1997 the government amended the Criminal Code to ensure that offenders who committed multiple murders would no longer be allowed to apply for a review of their parole eligibility period under this provision. I and all my colleagues on the government side supported that. In addition, a new screening mechanism was put in place whereby a superior court judge could screen out applications that had no reasonable prospect of success, and a new requirement was added that the jury considering the application must be unanimous in order to reduce the eligibility period.

• (1130)

Those were the changes done by this government earlier on to ensure that a tightening occurred, but that it was in line with the concepts of rehabilitation and proper sanction.

It is interesting to note that most eligible offenders convicted of murder do not apply for early release. Although 652 murderers have served more than 15 years in penitentiaries, there have only been 134 applications since 1976, when the faint hope clause was introduced. Of these, 54 resulted in the offenders being released on full parole.

I believe the law must provide appropriate penalties for serious crimes so that Canadians can continue to live in safety and security. However, research indicates that the extension of imprisonment by and of itself does not enhance public safety. The proposed provisions in the bill would ensure an ever increasing number of incarcerated federal offenders with no hope of release. This would seriously compromise the security of Correctional Service Canada personnel without providing more public safety.

Our government is committed to public safety while also encouraging and supporting strides toward rehabilitation. The evidence is clear that this balanced approach is the most effective way of contributing to safe homes and safe streets. People in the government, people on this side of the House, as well as colleagues on the opposite side of the House, are concerned about the victims in our society, and we also have empathy with them, but we do it in a measured way. We have to be responsible to the Canadian public for our system of justice and ensure that it covers all the best methods to address these very serious issues.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Bloc Québécois to participate in this debate on Bill C-221 introduced by my hon. Conservative colleague from Calgary Northeast.

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At the outset, I must say that we have very great reservations about this bill and that, unfortunately for the hon. member, we will not be able to support it. And that is not because I am opposed to the amendments concerning the punishment of certain criminals. In fact, this very day, I will be introducing a bill intended to get tough on the sexual predators who prey on our children. I shall introduce a bill calling for minimum mandatory sentences for these predators, pornographers and pedophiles.

While I was drafting that bill, which I will be introducing later, I asked myself the following question: Should I take away the possibility of parole for these people? After many hours of research, discussions, dialogues and studies, I came to the conclusion that the answer is no.

In some cases, criminals can be rehabilitated. The division in this House is along the same lines as what we saw during the debate on young offenders. At the time, the Bloc Québécois advocated a rehabilitative approach for young offenders because we believe in human dignity and feel that, if someone is carefully monitored and accompanied, they can change. Would it not be the greatest success of the criminal justice system to contribute to changing a person?

All this to say that parole should be granted on a case by case basis. This must be done right. Particular attention must be paid to all the details. Nonetheless, case by case must prevail.

In committee, we have already started examining conditional sentences. I hope we can pursue this study, which, in my view, is fundamental for our criminal justice system. I would not be opposed at all to broadening our study to include the whole issue of sentencing, including minimum sentences, conditional sentences and all the factors to be considered in sentencing. It is not too late for the members of this House to look at this issue, which, as we know, affects thousands of Quebeckers and Canadians.

In this context, we must also take into account the victims of these crimes, who deserve to be heard; we must listen to them and give them our attention.

I will conclude by reiterating the Bloc Québécois position. We will oppose Bill C-221 for the reasons I have just explained.

•(1135)

[English]

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the member for Calgary Northeast for presenting Bill C-221 to the House today. This issue has been on the minds of a number of Canadians for many years. Canadians, throughout the land, have asked me, why does life not mean life? Why do we say it is a life sentence when it really does not mean that?

There are some people who do pay a life sentence and those are the people who are victims of heinous crimes such as murder. I can guarantee that the families of those victims have just begun to serve a life sentence. Not only has the person who died at the hands of a murderer paid the penalty of a life sentence, but the parents, the brothers and the sisters, the relatives and friends, and the communities that these people came from pay a life sentence. It never goes away. It is a life sentence for them.

In our society today, there are people who have been convicted of multiple murders. I can think of several people who are in penitentiaries today who have taken more than one life. I can think of one individual who was convicted of 11 counts of murder. That individual should be paying a life sentence for each life that he took. In our system, a life sentence is provided for individuals who have committed multiple murders, but with eligibility for parole at 25 years. There is even the possibility of parole after 15 years.

We have all heard stories and talked to victims. I think in particular of the five year old girl in Calgary who was a deaf mute. She was taken by someone while playing in the backyard of her home. Later that evening her body was found in a trash can. Her throat had been cut, and she had been raped. The killer was caught and he received a life sentence.

People thought there was something wrong with that guy, and there certainly was. I cannot begin to tell the House how much was provided to this person as far as legal aid and psychological treatments were concerned. Many hours were spent on this little child's killer, helping him to overcome this tragic thing that happened. I talked to the mother and relatives of this little girl and they received not one nickel's worth of help from the federal government or any other level of government to deal with their terrible crisis. That family is still serving its life sentence.

I can mention many other cases involving other people. I think specifically of Melanie Carpenter, a young lady from British Columbia who was kidnapped. She was just starting out in life and had a good career ahead of her. After several weeks of searching, her body was found. She had been murdered by a person who had just been released on parole from a penitentiary where the front line officers, the caseworkers who worked closely with this individual, begged the Parole Board not to release this guy because they felt he was extremely dangerous and would kill again. The only difference in this particular case was the fact that he also took his own life. I guess he decided it was time to punish himself for what he had committed over the years.

This is another example of another life lost simply because life did not mean life. That man was supposed to be in prison for his entire life. He was paroled even against the advice and the wisdom of the people who were working on the front lines, who constantly told the Parole Board not to give him parole.

•(1140)

Madam Speaker, I know you were not here at the time, but a lot of members were and will remember when the cab drivers had a big demonstration because there was not a more severe sentence imposed on the individual who beat, robbed and murdered one of their colleagues.

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Most of the cab drivers, and other people, I have talked to over the last 11 years come from other parts of the world. The one question they ask more than any other question when we are talking about government and what it is doing is: Why do we not punish our criminals in Canada? I have a difficult time explaining our system to them.

I have heard 100 times from members from the other side of the House that our system is the envy of the world. Do I ever have shocking news for them. I do not know who told them that it was the envy of the world. They must have dreamed it because it is certainly not the envy of the world. Members should talk to any of the immigrants who come to this country and they will hear that it is the laughing stock of the world, if anything.

But that is a good question. Why is it that only the victims and those close to them are the ones who suffer a life sentence?

What value do we put on life? Some people would even say that if someone takes a life, he or she should be prepared to give his or her own life. But that is extreme. Even though it is done in many parts of the world, this government would classify it as extreme.

Along with all that, there is something else that really bothers me to no end. I was in this House of Commons, when John Nunziata, a member from the Liberal Party, brought before the House a private member's bill to get rid of section 745, the faint hope clause. I know that several colleagues who are here remember the day we voted and passed that bill. It was accepted by this House of Commons that clause 745 should be gone. Well, it never happened.

It was accepted by this House of Commons in this wonderful democratic system. What kind of a judicial body do we have here that made a law that said this should be removed from the Criminal Code, and yet it never happened?

It was not only a month ago that there was unanimous consent in this House to support a motion that I put forward that said we should eliminate all defences for child pornography. It was accepted. What bill has been presented? A bill that does absolutely nothing about getting rid of all the defences. In fact, it opens the door even wider.

What are we doing around here? What are we doing in this place? We make a decision and it does not happen. Somebody else makes the decision. Why does the government not bring somebody else in here to run the country and we will all go home and save the taxpayers millions. Certainly, if this government would go home, we would save millions.

Why is it that we cannot make a decision in this place that deals with very serious offenders and crime? Once we make a decision, it never happens.

I have been here 11 years, waiting for something exciting to happen, that people across the land would be excited about. John Nunziata's bill got people excited, and it passed. It was accepted.

An hon. member: It is a democratic deficit.

Mr. Myron Thompson: It is a democratic deficit, my colleague said. We better believe it is a democratic deficit.

I do not know what this new Prime Minister is even talking about when he says he will fix the democratic deficit. We have had one going on here for years, right before him, when he was sitting in the House of Commons voting for these things that never saw the light of day.

It is time we started listening to the grassroots people. They want some serious action taken to deal with the killers of our land when they take the lives of individuals.

● (1145)

Life is important. It is valuable. We need to send a message to those who might even think they would like to take someone's life that they had better think twice. Canada is a country where this is totally unacceptable, and they will pay dearly. We have to start adopting this attitude if we want to make the country as safe as the government claims it is making it, when it is not.

● (1150)

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Northumberland, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this private members' bill, Bill C-221, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding the sentence of imprisonment for life.

I am aware, and I am sure the Chair is aware, of the time and effort that the hon. member for Calgary Northeast has invested in bringing forward this legislation. I appreciate the opportunity to address this criminal justice issue.

Bill C-221 seeks to accomplish two related objectives.

The bill first proposes that for all offences which carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, life imprisonment be defined as imprisonment for the rest of the offender's natural life without any opportunity for parole.

Second, the bill proposes to repeal section 745.6 to 754.64 of the Criminal Code, which is commonly referred to as the faint hope clause. These provisions allow offenders to apply, after 15 years of imprisonment, to have a judge and jury review their parole ineligibility period for possible reduction.

It is crucial to recognize at all times that sentencing is a complicated field, where even a minute change in one of the components can result in serious and unforeseen consequences. Each and every part of the complex and interrelated system must work in co-ordination with the other components to ensure public protection and the safe and effective reintegration of offenders.

In this light it is apparent that the proposal to incarcerate all offenders sentenced to life imprisonment for the remainder of their life is a proposal which would violate the basic purposes and principles of sentencing. In a matter where precise tools are required, this proposal would be described as a blunt instrument.

In this regard it is important to note that a maximum sentence of life imprisonment is not restricted to only the violent offences in the Criminal Code. In fact there are over 40 offences to which this bill would apply. Reducing or removing the discretion of the courts in sentencing makes the criminal justice system more arbitrary and expands resources unnecessarily on incarceration when other measures may be less expensive and more effective.

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The guiding principles related to sentencing are explicitly set out in the Criminal Code. Most relevant is section 718.1, which provides that every sentence must be proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the degree of responsibility of the offender. In other words, justice is best served when the judiciary has the necessary discretion to ensure that the punishment fits the particular crime and offender. Moreover, in paragraph 718.2(d) of the code it states that “an offender should not be deprived of liberty, if less restrictive sanctions may be appropriate in the circumstances”.

A key element of effective corrections is distinguishing between offenders who need to be separated from society and those who can be safely and better managed in the community. Parole, first introduced in 1899, has proven to be an effective tool in the application of these principles and in reducing recidivism.

The “throw away the key” aspect of the bill before the House today is a clear contradiction with the principles of sentencing that reflect basic Canadian values and the results of carefully conducted research. This research has shown that the extension of imprisonment by itself does not reduce crime. Most Canadians believe that many people who commit crimes can learn to be better citizens and contribute to society.

This belief is correct. Experience has shown that most offenders are more likely to become law-abiding citizens if they participate in a program of gradual, supervised release.

● (1155)

Canada already has one of the harshest systems for lifers in the western world. On average, first degree murderers serve an estimated 28.4 years in jail, approximately twice as much as is the case in many other western countries.

In Canada, life means life. A life sentence remains in force for the offender's natural life, and statutory release is not available to those offenders. Some inmates serving life sentences or who have been designated as a dangerous offender will never be released. Where parole is granted, the offender is supervised for the rest of his or her natural life, and any violation of the conditions of parole may lead to reincarceration even if no further crime is committed.

The proposed amendments in the bill will ensure an ever increasing number of incarcerated federal offenders with no hope of release. This will seriously compromise penitentiary security and the costs related to the increased correctional population would be significant.

The bill under consideration today also seeks to repeal sections 745.6 to 745.64 of the Criminal Code, known as the faint hope clause, which allow offenders to apply after 15 years to have a judge and jury review their parole ineligibility period for a possible reduction.

The history of these provisions begins in 1976, when Parliament formally abolished capital punishment and replaced it with mandatory life sentences for high treason, first degree murder and second degree murder. Parole eligibility periods were established at 25 years for high treason and first degree murder and 10 years for second degree murder, with the judge having the power to increase the period for up to 25 years.

At the same time, Parliament also introduced the so-called faint hope clause for those convicted of murder where parole eligibility was set at more than 15 years. In fact most eligible offenders convicted of murder do not apply for judicial review. In the time between the introduction of the judicial review provisions in 1976 and December 2003, 652 murderers have served more than 15 years, and there have been only 134 applications. Of those 134 applications, 107 offenders have had their parole ineligibility reduced and 87 have actually been granted parole.

In 1977 the government took significant steps to tighten the judicial review process for lifers by instituting several measures. Today, offenders convicted for multiple murders are excluded from judicial review and their parole eligibility period is automatically set at 25 years. There is a screening process whereby a judge must decide if the application has a reasonable prospect of success or else it may not proceed. The jury must be unanimous as opposed to the previous standard of two-thirds. Information from victims must be considered at the judicial review hearing if provided.

It must be made clear that judicial review is not an early parole hearing and does not result in the release of the offender. It only determines if the offender may become eligible to apply to the National Parole Board for parole.

The judicial review process serves to provide a degree of hope for the rehabilitation of convicted murderers, and thus serves to protect prison guards and recognizes that the public interest is not served by keeping offenders in prison beyond the point in the sentence where they can safely and gradually be reintegrated into society.

The government is fully committed to improving mechanisms that enhance the public protection. That is and will continue to be of paramount consideration for the government. However, the amendments proposed by the bill would run counter to the principles and objectives that underlie the effectiveness of our criminal justice system. That is why the bill before us is not the way to go, and should not be supported.

● (1200)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to see you in the chair, here in the House.

*Supply**[English]*

I listened with great interest to the former parliamentary secretary to the justice minister talk about life being life. As a former crown prosecutor, that is simply not the case. It is the rare instance where a life sentence would actually carry on the 25 year sentence, being the maximum sentence. If the individual is a young individual, that does not amount to life. Also, only in the very specific cases of a dangerous offender designation does this happen.

While the member was speaking, I was handed a recent article. It talks about the Doer government in Manitoba calling specifically on the government in Ottawa to make life sentences mean life, and to make the sentencing structure tougher. This is not to underline or undermine the important element of rehabilitation in our justice system. It is simply to clearly enhance elements of deterrents which are talked about every day in our justice system by hard-working police officers, by those working in the justice system and by judges who are meting our sentences. Canadians should not be misled or misdirected about life sentences for the most heinous crimes. We are talking here about those sections of the Criminal Code that deal with the most heinous crimes in the country, such as murder, sexual assault and home invasion, where individuals are hurt or maimed in their own home environment. These are the types of unspeakable offences that are life altering and life ending for victims.

Therefore, if we are to have a justice system where it is credible, where Canadians believe they are truly protected and the protection of the public is first and foremost the responsibility of government and the justice system, there have to be sentences that matter.

Altering a life sentence to bring about this type of an amendment, which deals with the ability only of a judge to offer that discretion by handing down a life sentence which actually is tantamount to that life sentence, would be a great improvement. It would be tantamount to greater protection. It is tantamount to a common sense change within our justice system today and still very much puts in the hands of judges the ability to offer and review the discretion in each and every case. It is not to shackle the hands of a judge. In this instance it is simply to open up another important sentencing element in an array of sentences currently available to judges in the court system.

We in the Conservative Party certainly support whole-heartedly efforts to embrace and improve upon our justice system that would protect Canadians in their homes, that would protect Canadians first and foremost against victimization of those most heinous offences and that would ensure the element of deterrence is there so the sentencing judge is given the flexibility, the reach and the tool to impose that type of sentence which will protect Canadians first and foremost.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): 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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***SUPPLY**

ALLOTTED DAY—LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC) moved:

That, given the lack of new legislation introduced by the Liberal government during the Third Session of this Parliament, this House recognize that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence, and has accordingly lost the confidence of this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending March 26, 2004, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills.

In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed

Mr. Peter MacKay: Madam Speaker, I compliment you for the work you do in the chair. We are always glad to see you there.

The supply day motion is a very timely motion, on behalf of the new Conservative Party. It comes at a time when we are returning to this historic chamber with a new leader.

I want to take a moment of my time to congratulate the new leader of the Conservative Party. I also want to congratulate him on the work he did in achieving the broad support and overwhelming victory which he received on the weekend.

[Translation]

I want to take just a moment to congratulate the new leader of the Conservative Party of Canada on his great victory. It is a momentous occasion for the new party to be represented by a new leader who is extremely capable and talented. All the party members are extremely enthusiastic about working with him as their new leader.

● (1205)

[English]

For the first time in over a decade, the Liberal government will face a very united, very focused and determined Conservative Party. To that extent, we are stating the obvious in the motion that is currently before the House. I want to recite that again for the record. It reads:

That, given the lack of new legislation introduced by the Liberal government during the Third Session of this Parliament, this House recognize that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence, and has accordingly lost the confidence of this House.

I believe those words echo the sentiment that we would find at any Tim Horton's, mall, bingo hall or legion anywhere in Canada where Canadians are extremely troubled by the mismanagement and the level of corruption exposed by the Auditor General. The information that is dribbling out in the House of Commons from the Liberal side, as well as what we see not forthcoming in committee, is unsettling and shaking the very confidence of Canadians in their government.

Supply

Further to the point, the Auditor General's report speaks of hundreds of millions of dollars that have gone missing or, more frightening, can be accounted for if we go to those Liberal friendly firms that received that work, in many cases work that was not done, work that was not complete or work that was duplicated.

At this time more than any other, as Canadians are huddled around their kitchen tables filling out their income tax forms thinking about whether they should be sending their money off to Ottawa, what an unsettling feeling to have this type of scenario, this type of corruption and graft playing out in the government at the highest levels.

The government has been in limbo. It has essentially been idling since the new leader took over. Great effort and great aplomb was made to put a new face on the new Prime Minister of Canada and great effort made to try to detract from any previous association he might have had with the Chrétien government, knowing of course that he was second in command. He was, as has been described by one of our leadership candidates, the second mate on the good ship Chrétien, not a stowaway.

The current Prime Minister, by trying to put a new face on government, is really telling Canadians that he is the man of a thousand faces. He can put on any face they want and be all things to all people but the people are not buying it. More than that, they are angry at the way in which he has refused to take any responsibility for his own actions and involvement in decisions made by the government. I need not list them at length, but I will say that most Canadians are quite clear in their recognition that this man who wrote the red book was part and parcel of every decision and every big whopper that was put out there in that document, that red-faced reversal document known as the red book where the Liberals promised to get rid of the GST and to renegotiate free trade. They were going to clean up government. Do members remember that whopper? They were going to reinvigorate Canada's military. They were going to fix health care. They were going to work with the provinces.

What have we seen in this decade of debacle and debauched government promises? The man who was in the passenger seat, the man who was, as they used to call that seat in high school, riding shotgun, the man with the road map giving instructions to the man driving the car, was the man telling the Prime Minister where he thought the government should go.

Where did the government go? Where is the country going? It is slipping. It has fallen significantly in the areas of health care, of relations with other countries and of interprovincial relations. Our military capacity has been severely diminished. Our armed forces personnel is so much in decline. We are stretching those resources to the max. Our justice system has been undermined. Our national police force has been politicized to a large degree, as was noted in a recent article by Lawrence Martin in the *Globe and Mail*.

The government is rotten to the core. The corruption is now starting to rise to the top like the film on an old cream can. It is rising to the top and some of the other scum is sinking to the bottom. It is time for a change. This Conservative Party is poised, ready and primed with new policies to present the country with a clear alternative.

●(1210)

The Prime Minister, upon achieving his reign over the Liberal Party and over the country, has seemingly backed away again from the commitments that he made. He talked about changing the way things would be done in Ottawa. One of the phrases he was so prone to using during his time undermining his predecessor was a democratic deficit in Ottawa. That democratic gulf has widened, even in the interim period that he has been here.

Before arriving here the democratic deficit was a major issue and yet we see very little change in the attitude and the approach taken here in the House of Commons. It did not take the Prime Minister more than a few days to invoke closure on a debate in the House of Commons, both here and in the other place. It did not take the Prime Minister any time at all to soften those promises.

We all remember how committed he was to a gas tax rebate to the municipalities. It is out the window, gone. He tells the provinces he will get back to them.

I know I cannot comment on the Prime Minister's absence, but he has become very much like the invisible man during question period. While this is the place in which he can be held to account, he has been on the mad as hell tour. Pardon my use of that term. He has been out touring the country. It reminds me of an angry mob gathering outside a window, yelling up at the king, "We're mad at you". However, rather than come out and face the crowd, what does he do? He goes out and joins the crowd and yells up at the empty window. This is an absolute farce, an abdication of his own responsibility.

Yesterday was March 21, a significant day, the first day of spring. It marked the 100th day of the Prime Minister's reign and this little slogan of immediate action that he brought into play and the promises he made on dozens of priorities. He had all kinds of number one priorities and if he did not like those priorities, there were other priorities.

I would like to point out some of the promises that have been broken already. Before his cabinet was even unveiled, the Prime Minister spoke of the need to increase the representation of women in the Parliament of Canada. He was going to make dramatic increases in his own cabinet. One additional woman was added to his cabinet.

We had a female candidate in our race who fared extremely well. She knows she will not be knocked on the head in the same way we saw in the Liberal leadership contest. She will be running for a seat.

The Prime Minister also promised greater representation for the west in his government. His cabinet actually includes fewer ministers from the west; seven rather than eight. There are now more ministers from New Brunswick than there are from Alberta. I know my colleague from Saint John might like that.

He also promised to address the democratic deficit that I mentioned and yet six days after coming into office his government invoked closure and cut off debate in the House of Commons. He also delayed the reopening of Parliament. What a very democratic approach, to delay the opening of Parliament.

Supply

He used the Senate to force through a bill to allow for electoral redistribution by the April 1 deadline.

Similarly, despite promising more democratic reform in this place, more independence and more votes for MPs, the House leader of his new government, supposedly called, has made it clear that Liberal MPs will not be allowed to vote freely on votes on funding for such things as the flawed gun registry. There will be no free vote on the gun registry.

We are used to this flip-flopping on issues and Canadians are certainly used to it from this Prime Minister.

There is a tendency to flip off more of these controversial issues to the Supreme Court under this new Prime Minister. That is a new trend, is it not, to see the Prime Minister avoid taking those issues head on here in the House of Commons?

This place should be doing the important work of Canadians on those issues that matter most. That is certainly a commitment we will find from the new Leader of the Conservative Party and from this Conservative Party when it forms the government.

The Prime Minister also promised gas tax changes without delay, without equivocation. Delay and equivocation is all we have seen on that and many other issues. He repeatedly promised, and which may go down as one of his best in his first 100 days, a new appointment process for an independent ethics commissioner for Parliament.

• (1215)

This important watchdog may have been able to bite some of the members who needed it during the ad scam. This supposed watchdog I could only describe as a toothless, anemic, emaciated chihuahua that has no bite. It is time we put some bite back in that office if it is to mean anything.

I am quick to add that the ethics counsellor, who is still sitting in that office drawing a salary, cleared the previous prime minister of any wrongdoing on Shawinigate only to have a Quebec Superior Court judge absolutely castigate the Liberal government, the Prime Minister's Office and the BDC for the way that they persecuted François Beaudoin. This treatment of a senior bureaucrat will go down in history as one of the country's most atrocious cases.

There was also discussion on the legislative agenda. What an active agenda this was going to be under this new Prime Minister. Out of the 23 pieces of legislation that have come before the House since the Prime Minister took office, 21 of those bills are exact duplicates of bills introduced by his predecessor, Prime Minister Chrétien. These bills were not only reintroduced but they are part of the so-called legacy of Mr. Chrétien.

It spells it out pretty clearly that the current Prime Minister is very much a part of that legacy, and it is not a very proud legacy, if I might say so. Canadians are looking for new ideas that will get results and address the issues of equalization, health care, military, foreign affairs, environment and education. Action needs to be taken in so many important areas and yet all the Prime Minister and his cabinet could do was reintroduce, rehash, bring back and recycle—

An hon. member: Regurgitate.

Mr. Peter MacKay: —regurgitate all the same legislation introduced by his predecessor.

The throne speech included commitments that date back to 1993. Again, a replacement for the Sea King helicopters was cancelled by the Prime Minister's pen. While his predecessor might have promised to write zero helicopter, the current Prime Minister took his pen and cancelled that contract. It cost the country half a billion dollars plus the component parts that would have been made in British Columbia, plus the lives that could have been saved, the protection that would have been there for our coastal communities in the rest of the country and the important work that has to be done by our military.

Similarly, that throne speech reiterated many of the commitments made under the Chrétien government, such as the Stryker purchase or the \$2 billion for health care. At least the 39 promises outlined in the throne speech are repeated fully or in part from promises made in the previous throne speech.

If the Prime Minister's intention was to repeat the tired old Liberal agenda, the agenda that was left by the member from Shawinigan, he certainly has done a good job of it. He has certainly walked lockstep, cheek by jowl with his predecessor in his performance in the House of Commons, when he is here.

Why was the House prorogued in the first instance? Why was there an attempt perhaps to delay the arrival of the Auditor General's report? That is a common practice. That is something we have seen from the Prime Minister's predecessor: hold off, avoid, delay, deny and distract. Those are common catch phrases and words very much attached to both the past and present Prime Ministers.

The Prime Minister's advisers promised 100 days of action and decision. Well, the government has been adrift, awash in scandal, up to its ears in attempts to cover up and deny responsibility in the House and at the committee. These 100 days of promises have resulted in hundreds of broken promises.

In other words, this is exactly the same government that we have had for the last 10 years and it needs to be flushed out of office like the cleaning out of the Aegean stables in Greek mythology.

It has been 100 days for the Liberal government and Canadians are no doubt hoping for 100 days in which to rid themselves of the government in very short order. Despite the dramatic promises of changing the culture in Ottawa and ending patronage and cronyism, we have seen nothing but evidence of chronic cronyism and a continued legacy of rewarding Liberal friends and putting patronage and partisanship ahead of principle when it comes to filling the important roles and important jobs within crown corporations, and other important work that has to be done by the government.

• (1220)

On ending cronyism, the Prime Minister had this to say, "We will put an end to cronyism. No longer will the key to Ottawa be who do you know. We are going to condemn to history the practice and the politics of cronyism". The Prime Minister had no difficulty offering patronage positions with no parliamentary review or oversight immediately within hours of making that statement.

Allan Rock was placed as ambassador to the UN. Similarly, there were patronage offers made to former leadership rivals John Manley and Sheila Copps. The well-connected lobbying firm Earncliffe, the PMO in waiting, a beneficiary of millions of dollars in contracts from the finance department during the Prime Minister's time in that office, became the hub of his leadership campaign. Now many of the staff at Earncliffe are senior advisers and have been drawn directly from the ranks of Earncliffe into the PMO.

Whistleblower protection was promised. We are finally seeing that today.

An hon. member: It was promised in the red book.

Mr. Peter MacKay: It was promised in the red book 10 years ago. Many of those initiatives are yet to be even acted upon let alone initiated.

In 2002 the Forest Products Association of Canada was awarded a \$17 million grant by the then international trade minister. Until recently, and this is quoted from the *Globe and Mail*, the Prime Minister's long time staffer, Ruth Thorkelson, was a tier II lobbyist with that group.

There are numerous examples of individuals who previously were lobbying government and who are now working for government. That dividing line, that protection, or Chinese wall if you will, has been permeated repeatedly by the Prime Minister.

I know that time is short and other members want to participate in the debate. The motion is very much intended to simply point out the obvious, that "new" is the last word we would use to describe the Prime Minister and the government. It is very much a continuation of the culture of corruption that Canadians have sadly had to live with during the last decade.

There is much that can be done in this place to improve upon the sad record and legacy left by a Liberal government, both past and present. They are one and the same. If we were to try to put some kind of a wedge between the present Prime Minister and the previous one, it would be next to impossible when we examine their records, their involvement, their initiative, or lack thereof.

I would encourage all members, including those on the government side, to indicate their support for this motion. I encourage them to indicate on behalf of their constituents how they feel about the inaction, about the Prime Minister coming to the job after 10 years of pining away and undermining his predecessor and finally achieving that role and coming here with nothing to do but try to defend and cover up the tracks of his predecessor and himself.

This is a place of action, not inaction. This is a place in which Canadians are looking for direction and leadership. We are going to see that in spades. We are going to see a clear indication of an alternative, a government in waiting, a man in the new leader of the Conservative Party who is prepared to take this country into the 21st century with confidence and with leadership skill and ability.

I encourage all members to speak favourably and to support this motion before the House of Commons.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I read today's motion and I was sort of mystified. I would have thought that

Supply

a party which on the weekend presumably came together as a united party would have had a new vision, yet I have come here today and I have found that there is no new vision, there is no new policy approach. Those members are wasting the time of this chamber on cheap politics. I think the people out there thought things might be better, but once again they have been disappointed.

I was surprised when the member talked about the red book, on which I ran in 1993. He said that somewhere in those pages there was a commitment to abolish the GST. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is that within those pages it talked about reviewing the GST to see how we could make it better. I was fortunate to be one of those people who went across this country and asked people what they wanted to do and how they wanted to reform it. I can only assume that the member has never even read the very book that he is seeking to criticize.

The fact of the matter is there is no change on the other side. It is the same rhetoric that we have heard from those people, whether they were the Reform or the Alliance or whatever they will be called in the next couple of months. Maybe they are going to change their name again or change their colours, like some kind of a chameleon that fits into the Canadian landscape and changes colour depending upon what the mood is. The fact of the matter is they can change their spots several times but the animal is still there. It is the old Reform party and the old Alliance party to me.

I am just making a comment. I am not even going to bother to ask a question because the member has stood here and said that there has been no change in the Liberal Party which presented a new throne speech and which tomorrow is going to present its first budget. It will have some very exciting things for the business community of this country, some very thought-provoking ideas about how we can encourage education, how we can get more people to raise the knowledge base of our economy. There are some very important things on people's minds today, yet members of that party, the very day after they have had a leadership convention, are using none of the House's time to talk about where they want to take this country or what their policies are, to talk about the things that mean something.

The member talked about the Tim Hortons of this world and I agree with him, but the people are talking about health care. They are talking about things that bother them. They are not talking about cheap political tricks in the House of Commons. They are talking about things that are important to them and those are the things people expected to hear. My comment is that it is the same old same old from that party.

● (1225)

Mr. Peter MacKay: Madam Speaker, there were so many contradictions in that Janus based statement that I do not even know where to start.

As far as having a copy of the red book, like most Canadians, I think it has wound up on the bottom of a bird cage, because we know that any of those commitments went completely out the window. The prime minister of the day went around the country promising to kill, abolish and get rid of the GST, so there is absolutely no discussion on that point.

Supply

As for not having talked about health care, the military, education or the environment, the member was not in the House I guess, because I certainly touched upon all of those points.

The point I am trying to make is that the government, rather than addressing those issues and rather than ponying up the necessary resources to address the shortcomings of the provinces and their ability to deliver services in those areas and others, has been wasting money by funneling it to its friends. All of this has been uncovered not by a partisan opposition member of the House, but by the Auditor General, an impartial, dispassionate officer of this place.

If this is not an important issue, I do not know what is because the money that would pay for the issues to which the member opposite has pointed was there. It was in the government budget and the Liberals chose to blow it on partisan exercises. They chose to blow it on things like the gun registry, HRDC spending and other wasteful programs that have been pointed out time and time again.

If that is not the discussion going on in the coffee shops, then the member must be dining out at some fancy restaurant, because he is not getting the same feedback that I am getting in my constituency.

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton Southwest, CPC): Madam Speaker, I compliment my colleague on his comments today. Before I comment on one important point in his speech, I would like to congratulate him on his recent selection as our deputy leader. He is going to do a fantastic job in that role.

The Prime Minister said that it is a brand new government that started office on December 12. He also said that he is a policy person bursting with new ideas and that he could not wait to become Prime Minister to implement his ambitious agenda.

As our deputy leader pointed out, there have been 24 bills introduced thus far in the House of Commons. Three of those bills actually have some difference from those in the last session. Bill C-1 is a pro forma bill that implements the throne speech but does not actually contain any legislation. Bill C-24 was a correction to the Parliament of Canada Act regarding benefits to members. There was nothing whatsoever in that bill about policy.

Bill C-18 actually had something different from the bill in the previous session. Half of the bill was from the Chrétien government and extended equalization. The second part contained a one time payment to the provinces regarding the health care accord of 2003.

In 24 bills, what we have from the policy agenda Prime Minister is half a bill, half a piece of legislation. The government called the House back three weeks late and took six days to invoke closure to reintroduce Prime Minister Chrétien's agenda. The government is so bereft of vision, so bereft of a policy agenda that it is implementing Chrétien's agenda. Why did those members throw the last prime minister out if his agenda was what they wanted to implement?

I would like the member to comment on the fact that the government has absolutely no vision. This is shown in the fact that in all the legislation one-half of one bill is all the government can produce. That is all the policy agenda Prime Minister can produce.

• (1230)

Mr. Peter MacKay: Madam Speaker, when it comes to policy there are few more informed and articulate members in the House

than my colleague from Edmonton Southwest. I thank him for the work that he is doing in preparing this new Conservative Party in presenting Canadians with a thoughtful, costed, well laid out plan for the future in many policy areas.

Why the Liberal government even bothered to change its head when it is pursuing the same agenda is really a rhetorical question. It was more a matter of internal conflict in the Liberal Party, a real bloodless coup and a power thrust behind it.

All of the talk of who one knows in the PMO and the promises on the policy front are all gone. It is really what did they know in the PMO and how much dough did they blow. That is on the minds of Canadians.

Canadians would like to know what the government is actually going to do. It is nice to put these areas of examination into the hands of committees and into the hands of public inquiries. Unless people are willing to come forward and truthfully give an account as to how that intricate and deliberate process of funnelling money to friends was implemented and who was responsible, much of the policy discussion that should be taking place is awash. It is cast aside.

The undeniable truth remains. The former minister of finance liked to speak about his business acumen. He has now risen to the position of Prime Minister. If he ran his Canada Steamship Lines the way that he ran the Department of Finance with hundreds of millions of dollars wasted or spent on ill-advised priorities, his company would consist of nothing more than a couple of old tugs tied up in a harbour somewhere and not the multinational company we see today. However that is for another day. The story as to how that happened and what involvement the Prime Minister himself might have had in ensuring that tax loopholes were available to his company during the time he was in the Department of Finance is for another day and another discussion.

The main thrust behind the motion is the fact that the government is visionless, rudderless, is simply following along, kicking over the traces of the previous government's lacklustre agenda. That is not what Canadians need at this important time. We need a change in government. The government can try to reinvent itself. It can try to somehow portray its vision and its expertise as being new, but it is the same tired, old gang. The Liberals need to be thrown out of office. There is going to be a time in the very near future when Canadians will have their say on that important issue.

• (1235)

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Saada (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to take part in this debate on a motion by the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough

Before jumping into this debate, I want to congratulate his colleague, the member for Calgary Southwest and new leader of the Conservative Party, on his win yesterday. I wish him a happy honeymoon. His intellectual thoroughness will no doubt ensure quality debates in the House of Commons.

This motion is based on certain premises. Unfortunately, these premises have no basis. There is criticism about lack of change. However, those who say that are closing their eyes to what is going on here. Reference was made to a lack of new legislation. Such a conclusion could only be drawn by someone truly out of touch with what goes on in Parliament. Democratic reform was mentioned. The members opposite often talk about democratic reform, but it is increasingly apparent to me that these are hollow words for them, since they did not have the courage to do what we did in this area. I will show the House what I mean.

Our brand new government was sworn in barely three months ago. Almost immediately, we were confronted with the Auditor General's report. Faced with allegations like those from the people across the way, particularly following that report, no government has ever acted as promptly, or in such a determined and transparent way, to get to the bottom of the matter. Never.

It is not just the words. Let us look at concrete facts. For the first time, to my knowledge, in the history of our Parliament, cabinet documents have been revealed to a parliamentary committee so that it could get to the bottom of all this. That was a first. An investigation was conducted by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which was convened earlier than planned. An independent inquiry was set up under Justice Gomery with absolutely extraordinary powers to get to the bottom of the matter. A special prosecutor has been appointed to recover any funds that might have been misused.

This set of measures is a perfect illustration of our approach to problems when they arise. It is a perfect illustration of the approach recommended by the Prime Minister to deal with the problems faced by our government.

The Conservatives are deploring, using rather dubious arguments at that, the lack of new bills, claiming that therefore nothing is getting done in Parliament. This is such a simplistic approach, to judge what is being done in Parliament by the number of bills before it, so simplistic that it is almost beyond comment.

It shows that they have grasped absolutely nothing about democratic reform. It also shows that they are not interested in what is done in committees. Committees are not necessarily involved only with bills. There are a number of other things they can do, and I will give some examples in a moment. Neither are they interested in the take note debates held in this House, which are so vital as a reflection of what the Canadian public thinks of the hot issues of the day. Does none of this count as parliamentary work?

To reduce parliamentary work to a mere list of bills is to mislead the public. Nevertheless, I shall offer in a moment proof that many new things have been introduced, including bills.

Since our government was sworn in, democratic reform has not only been a major issue in our debates in this House, it has also been the object of concrete actions taken unilaterally by this side of the

Supply

House, after inviting opposition members to join us. To this day, I am still waiting for a reply to the invitation that I sent them to reform parliament to make it more receptive to the needs of Canadians. I am still waiting for a reply.

● (1240)

Now, I see that some very nice rhetoric is being used in electoral platforms, such as "We are supporting it". What reform are they talking about? Are they talking about words or actions? About words coming from members opposite, or about actions taken by us?

Here is a concrete example of our efforts to implement a democratic reform. Members opposite know about this and, in fact, they agreed to it because they had no choice. Indeed, from a political point of view, it was neither proper nor feasible to reject this initiative.

The Supreme Court told us, in a ruling, that the criterion that we had been using, namely that to be recognized a political party must have 50 candidates, was unconstitutional. Some quick action was in order to correct the situation and act on this ruling.

We succeeded in doing two things regarding this issue, and this very simply. First, we tabled a new bill which, in the short term, will allow us to prevent the use of political parties for financing purposes. This is somewhat technical, but there is an important issue here. For the first time in our history, we have a definition of a political party. We did not have such a definition in our legislation before. Now we do.

Nevertheless, what I have done as well, as government House leader, at the instigation of the Prime Minister and our cabinet, of course, has been to say, let us go further. This is where democratic reform becomes important. Let us go further.

The consequences of this ruling are much broader than those covered in this bill. Is there a way to make the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs—a multi-party committee where all parties are represented—responsible for examining these consequences, producing and actually writing a draft bill, and not a draft bill written by the bureaucracy, however good it may be, or by a minister, however good he or she may be, but written by parliamentarians tackling a problem that affects all Canadians, that affects the definition of a political party, that affects the very foundation of our democracy?

We have implemented democratic reform. We have announced that the role of parliamentarians will be strengthened. I remind you that they have not yet agreed to this reform. Nevertheless, why is there a need to reform the role of MPs? The answer is simple. When a member rises to vote here in the House, and is told how to vote, when he goes home to his riding and talks to people, they ask him, "Why did you vote that way?" He replies, "I had no choice; I had to". That is not representation. That is an echo; it is transmitting a decision made by Ottawa to the riding and not the opposite.

We have introduced the principle of a free vote. What does that mean? Each of us must assume our own responsibilities. When, as MPs, we assume our responsibilities and return to our ridings, we are accountable to the people. With free votes, the people will have the power to evaluate their elected representatives.

Supply

We have already been doing this. Other than those votes identified in the action plan, related to the budget or fundamental issues for the government, such as the throne speech, all the other votes in the House have been free votes and, for those opposite, not free votes. That is what we have done in concrete terms.

Democratic reform is absolutely fascinating. Currently, five provinces are seriously considering this issue. In fact, measures have been taken. I spent 24 hours in Vancouver. The day before yesterday, I went to Vancouver to meet the Citizens' Assembly.

[*English*]

The Citizens' Assembly in B.C. is a beautiful experience which proves that if we call upon what citizens have best to offer, they do offer the best. I came back from B.C. inspired. They are working on the other side of democratic reform, which is how people are sent here to represent them. We in this House have started to work on what it means to be representing the people. These two things are complementary.

[*Translation*]

I met with students at the Université de Chicoutimi and professors at the Université Laval. I met my colleague in Quebec City, the minister responsible for democratic reform. There is a fundamental movement inspiring the young and the not so young that has a growing national presence. This motivating and idealistic movement seeks democratic reform in the true sense of the term.

Our democracy is meaningful and has stood the test of time. It is time to take the next step. That is what we are doing, and they are still refusing to join in. They are lagging behind and there is nothing we can do about it.

Democratic reform is also, and above all in my opinion, a question of confidence. That is why, as the government, we have adopted measures reinforcing ethics standards and ensuring more transparent management of public finances. All this has been done here, and yet the opposition dares to say that no work is being done here. Can it be serious for two seconds? Can it be open-minded enough to stop playing petty politics and understand and recognize what has been happening here over the past three months alone?

While the parties opposite—in particular the Conservative Party of Canada—persisted in waging procedural battles when we came back to the House, we brought in a time allocation motion on procedural debates so that we could move on to substantive issues. We felt it was important for substance to prevail in this House in order to serve the public; procedure no, substance yes.

•(1245)

[*English*]

It is quite fascinating when we see the agenda that this government has already set for Canadians for the 21st century. Let us look at it. There is a new deal for Canadian communities. There are bold initiatives in health care, including transfers to provinces, of course, but also the creation of a public health agency. There are innovative measures for early childhood learning and child care. There are innovative measures to help students; we know how heavy the debts are on students.

There is a much needed environmental program to clean up contaminated sites. We have a plan to develop a 21st century knowledge based economy. There is the promotion of Canada's international role. I can give complete examples of a number of things which have already been done within the framework of this Speech from the Throne. They have already been done here in this House and those people do not even know they exist.

This is just the beginning. Tomorrow, my colleague, the Minister of Finance, will table this government's first budget. With seven consecutive balanced budgets, Canada is in a league of its own in the G-8. The budget also will introduce new financial control measures. In short, this government's plan has Canada poised to achieve unparalleled success.

Winston Churchill once said, "The empires of the future are the empires of the mind". This is also a reminder to all of us that government has a responsibility to innovate.

Just over three months ago, the Prime Minister's government entered office determined to modernize government and to provide solutions to the rising concerns and priorities of Canadians. We created a new public safety and emergency preparedness department to promote safety for all Canadians. We instituted a new public health agency to better manage public health risks. We restructured the former department of human resources development to arm Canadians with two strong proponents for social policy.

[*Translation*]

To govern is also to listen. We are all aware of the challenges of globalization. The people demonstrating at the summits have to be heard. They represent the desire for social conscience that we all should have.

Many of the demonstrators at the summits are young people. Our young citizens have to be heard. That is why it was so important to reinstate Bill C-3, and allow Africa to get drugs from Canada under conditions beneficial to that continent, in order to address its problems and pandemics.

Yes, this bill was first introduced under the former government. I will not apologize for continuing to be concerned about Africa because we have a new government. I have no reason to apologize. Africa needs our help. We have to be there to help.

It is the same for tariffs. Hon. members know there are preferential tariffs that provide less developed nations access to our markets without tariff barriers. This helps them to start to develop their own industries. I have no reason to apologize for reinstating this bill. On the contrary, I am proud to do so.

Supply

As for the ethics bill, we began to study it a while ago. Your humble servant, at the time a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, worked with the hon. members on establishing the position of ethics commissioner—independent and reporting not to the Prime Minister, but to Parliament. Was I to say that we should no longer do that because the government has changed? That would be nonsense. It was good, it was necessary, and we are doing it.

I could continue in this vein for a very long time. For example, we all know how strongly Canadians feel about the Assisted Human Reproduction Act.

We had begun work on a bill containing measures to prevent the exploitation of children. If the opposition could be serious for 30 seconds, could it say that we should have let that legislation drop just because we have a new government? Should we say that, because we have a new government, it is no longer worthwhile to protect our children? Of course not; that is ridiculous. Of course it is a worthwhile bill. Of course we brought it back. And of course I hope that it will be passed quickly.

The same is true of the sexual offenders bill. For those interested in specifics, it is Bill C-16.

We are not guided by dogma, or division, but by what we think is good—in our opinion—for the people of Canada.

I would like to speak to you a little about leadership in action and initiative. We are a new government and we are advocating a new culture; our approach is new and we are implementing a new program. Unfortunately, rather than trying to understand how important this is for Canadians, the other side is content to laugh stupidly, without really understanding what is going on. This revolution is beyond them. They have not yet understood it. It will take time; they will understand one day, not because they want to understand, but because the public will force them to understand.

Today, we are introducing a bill on whistleblowers. This means that a public servant who observes activities that are not normal or proper or acceptable in the management of public funds or in procedures, will be able to denounce such activities without fear of reprisal.

I hope that I will not hear that this bill will be opposed. It is a bill that ensures we will have more means of better administering government.

The health bill, as I have said previously, includes \$2 billion in transfer payments to the provinces, plus the equalization arrangements. Moreover, the Bloc Québécois, with all its loud hilarity, voted against equalization; yet Quebec benefits from it. Incidentally, they voted against the \$2 billion for health care.

We are also going to introduce a bill implementing an agreement with British Columbia, Manitoba and the first nations on allocating parts of national parks to certain reserves to meet urgent housing needs.

The government we want to give Canadians is a government of passion, a government that is inspired and is not afraid to innovate.

●(1250)

No government can be perfect. We cannot provide perfect government, but we do have a duty to acknowledge what has not been done well and, above all, to learn from it.

This is a new approach. What we want to provide Canadians is a straightforward government, one that is not afraid to break down barriers, a government that brings people together. Canadians take pride in the lead role played by our country in a number of areas, including our international credibility and our social conscience. What we want to provide is a government that chooses to build bridges to the future rather than rehashing the past.

Canadians will be able to differentiate between allegations made in a motion that is not unexpected—a surprise to no one—and seek political revenge, and our government's determination to work to further enhance the greatness of our country, inspired by the people in all regions of Canada, a Canada where the best is yet to come. A Canada of ideals and vision, a Canada that will inspire our youth to great things.

A vote in favour of this motion is a vote in favour of the past; a vote against it, a vote for the future.

●(1255)

[*English*]

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased that the hon. member mentioned health care. If there is one thing the government cannot erase from the minds of Canadians from coast to coast to coast, it is seeing the 50% originally promised in the act drop to 16%. Canadians across Canada see this on their televisions. It is the most powerful ad. What is the source of that ad? The provincial health departments across Canada.

To stand here and say that the government will rectify this with an infusion of \$2 billion is sheer nonsense. Canada's health today, the health act and the future are dependent and will be determined in this decade. This is what everyone writes about. I do not see that coming with this government.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if, by these questions, my colleague means he is going to support the basic principles of the Canada Health Act? I would like to know if, with this question, he is supporting the basic principles that make health accessible to anyone who is sick, not just those with money?

With respect to the health transfer percentage, why does the opposition conveniently forget the tax points that have been transferred? Why do they forget the arrangements made two or three years ago whereby more than \$30 billion was transferred for health? They forget about the \$2 billion for health. They should talk. They were the ones who voted against this transfer to the provinces for health.

Let us be clear: health concerns us all. We all want to do the right thing. No one here wants to cause any harm. I do not accept, however, the biases and claims by the members opposite that we just accept figures without making any effort to explain the reality to Canadians. I do not agree with these figures.

Supply

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will take the government House leader at his word since he is talking about health.

It is difficult for us to believe that this is a government that has changed, considering that it is using the same old rhetoric, telling us that we and the provinces voted against health. We voted for what little money your government transferred for health. Your government knows that the needs are greater. The Romanow report told your government to pump up to 25% into the health system. This is why we are defending the interests of Quebecers.

I find it very hard to see any difference when the government's message is the same as it was with Jean Chrétien as Prime Minister. He used to tell premiers, "Why would you not be happy? You agreed and you signed agreements". The provinces always have to settle for sellout deals, and your government knows that. When will your government openly say, "Yes, it is true; we did not invest enough money in health"? When we hear that, then perhaps we will understand. Tell me why you keep saying that the provinces have what they need, when you know that it is not true.

I hope that, if it is true, the hon. member will support the latest motion of the Bloc Québécois, urging the government to invest half of this year's surplus in health care in order to achieve as quickly as possible a 25% federal contribution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I remind hon. members that they must address their comments to the Chair and not directly to another member.

Hon. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, might I recommend a little more intellectual rigour to my colleague in his questions? I never said that the provinces had enough money. I never said that there was enough money for health. I never took the arrogant tone he claims I took toward the provinces. I never said that. I simply said that his 16% figure does not correspond to reality. That is quite a different thing.

Also, we are all aware that there are some completely obvious factors that justify the increase in health care needs. We are, of course, aware that the population is ageing and needs are increasing. The whole range of medical technology must be made available. Additional efforts are required to that end.

That is why a premiers meeting is planned for this summer, if memory serves—if I am wrong on the timing, I stand to be corrected. The specific purpose of that meeting is to find a solution or solutions acceptable to all of the country as far as health care is concerned.

The provinces are not adversaries, they are allies. If we could work with them in the best interests of the population, I would be extremely pleased. Not only that, I am confident that this is what the outcome will be, because we and the provinces share responsibility for one and the same citizen.

•(1300)

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out a couple of things on which I have to disagree with the House leader, with all due respect.

Certainly, contrary to what the House leader stated, I do not believe this is a new government. It is a tired old government with a lot of tired old faces in the front row and an unelected Prime Minister. The deck might have been shuffled, but I think it is the same old crew.

With respect to the current scandal, the ad scam and this corruption the government is currently trying to put on the back burner, I think perhaps the government needs to look inward. The Prime Minister was there. He was finance minister throughout the whole process. He was vice-chairman of the Treasury Board. How can he not be responsible?

With regard to our borders, the real solution to the BSE problem is to reopen the borders. That needs to be done. The government has been unable to do that.

Also, it has been unable to resolve the softwood lumber issue, which is devastating communities across Canada, especially in the west.

So I would like to ask the hon. House leader this: What kind of vision is this for Canada and Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, softwood lumber is an issue of utmost concern to Canadians. It is of concerns to us too.

There are two approaches to this matter: one is a legal or judicial approach, and the second involves negotiation. As we say, it takes two to tango.

Much remains to be done. The situation is unacceptable. On numerous occasions, we have reaffirmed the principle according to which there must be true free trade. I think this is clear. It is so easy to sit there and then rise to ask a question, like a white knight on a white horse representing virtue. However, doing the work is something else entirely. It is much more complex than that.

One really has to take Canadians for fools to suggest that this can be resolved with a snap of the fingers. That is not how things work. We are determined to win, but winning takes time.

In the meantime, we need to think of those suffering the consequences and see how we can help them because, ultimately, that is our concern. That is where we are concentrating our efforts.

Very quickly, I want to stress something. How can those opposite give lessons on integrity when, in fact, I have here at least five or six examples of things said by their new leader, by their former leader and in the platform they have unveiled today that directly contradict one another? They have nothing to teach us about integrity or ethics. Above all, I would ask them to look ahead instead of behind. They might find interesting things to look at.

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—L'Érable, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I will tell you that I shall be sharing the 20 minutes allotted to me with the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel. He has many things to say as well, especially after what we have heard from the House leader.

Supply

On the weekend, I smiled when I saw how the Liberals were beginning to panic a little, especially the new Minister of Canadian Heritage, the new minister responsible for Canadian flags, who is fed up with hearing the word “scandal”. We must not talk about scandals any more. So, I will try to take her advice, and I will use other, perhaps harsher, words, but I will use them anyway to try to give a general picture of what this government has done since 1993.

First, I will say something about the sponsorship mess that enabled five Liberal Party of Canada-friendly agencies to pocket commissions of \$100 million by overbilling for their production services. There is one thing that must be understood. If someone wants to make money on contracts, they must be large ones. In that case, with the work they had to do to ensure the visibility of Canada, they had to make it pay. So, to make it pay, they billed incredible amounts, making their commissions larger. As a result, out of the \$250 million available for this program, \$100 million went to them. That is not a scandal, since we must not use the word “scandal”, but I can state that these are Liberal government administrative horrors.

Let us now talk about the theft from the employment insurance fund, which now totals \$45 billion. This theft is the main reason why Quebec regions are becoming deserted. It is the main reason why seasonal workers no longer qualify for EI benefits. This really shows that the government is not at all in touch with the Quebec and Canadian realities, because its program is not working. It only works to pump up money that is then used to pay off the deficit. This is a tax in disguise paid by the most vulnerable in our society, namely the unemployed, or our small and medium size businesses. These people came and testified on numerous occasions before the Standing Committee on Finance to condemn this injustice, but the situation has yet to be corrected.

Elderly people have been deprived of tens of millions of dollars under the guaranteed income supplement program. The most vulnerable people in our society, people who worked hard to raise a family or build a business, people who deserve a decent and fair pension, were deprived of this guaranteed income supplement by the government.

The government now recognizes its fault, but does not want to pay these people what they are owed. However, should one of these people have the misfortune to forget whatever amount in his or her income tax return, inspectors would quickly get on their case and demand payment. But when the government is asked to make retroactive payments because it made a mistake, it is only prepared to go back one year. And they would have us believe that this is not also a scandal.

Then there are the dozens of textile workers who have lost their jobs, or who will lose them in the coming months because this government lacked leadership when it knew that import quotas would be lifted in January 2005, but did not support the textile industry, which is severely affected by the increasing Asian competition.

During meetings of the World Trade Organization, Canada merely raised the financial issue. The government ignored critical issues such as the environment, health and occupational safety, thus giving countries such as China all the necessary leeway to achieve minimal

production costs. This is what we call a government that lacked leadership.

And then there is mad cow disease, which has plunged the cattle and dairy industry in Quebec into a full-blown crisis, while the current Prime Minister, and the former and current Ministers of Agriculture and Agri-food have completely abandoned producers, leaving them to declare bankruptcy and face huge debts, not to mention the personal and family problems they have experienced.

• (1305)

Today, by total coincidence, the master of amnesia in the House, the current Prime Minister, is in Alberta to announce an assistance package. This is vote buying and comes on the day after—again by coincidence—the election of the new leader of the Conservative Party.

The current premier of Alberta, Ralph Klein, was away this morning. He was in Washington. That is where the decision must change. It is the American government, the Bush administration, that refuses to lift the embargo on beef exports.

So what did the Prime Minister do this morning. He announced, once again, a political solution tainted by Liberal partisanship. Will this make me believe that this is a new government? I will say one thing. There has been a change in the House. There is a new problem gripping the House and the Hill. But not to worry, only the Liberals are affected.

It is called collective amnesia: the current Prime Minister did not know; the President of the Privy Council does not remember; Alfonso Gagliano, the shadowy head of the sponsorship program, has forgotten everything. The new ministers have lost important parts of the files of their predecessors. I point to the arrogant and smug new President of the Treasury Board, who is always rising to talk of change.

The change is that these people do not have a memory. Quebecers have a memory. They have a collective memory of pride. In the next election they will tell the Liberals to leave. That is what this government can expect.

There is no use in trying to convince us this is change. It is legislative drivel. It is misleading to say that there is change in this government. The motion put forward today by my colleagues from the Conservative Party of Canada addresses this.

I will digress for a moment. Recently, we talked about the democratic deficit. It is omnipresent at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, where the majority of Liberals are dragging their feet and have become true accomplices of the Prime Minister in trying to get us to believe that there are no guilty politicians, that a dozen officials were involved.

We might question the role of Chuck Guité. We might also wonder about Pierre Tremblay, Mr. Gagliano's former chief of staff, who later was in charge of the sponsorship program. I do not know if Mr. Gagliano treats all his former employees this way, but last week he admitted that he no longer speaks to Mr. Tremblay and has not had any contact with him.

Supply

I think Mr. Gagliano sent Pierre Tremblay to replace Chuck Guité because he knew exactly how the sponsorships were rigged, and he wanted to make sure things continued to run smoothly. This was done without a deputy minister. As our committee progresses, we will really find out who lied and who told the truth.

I also met officials who are outraged and incensed at having the current Prime Minister point the finger of blame for this scandal at them. Yes, we are talking about a dozen officials. Mr. Guité and Mr. Tremblay may have been involved. However, it is clear that when it comes to partisanship and irresponsibility, this government is prepared to blame its own employees. Is that change? Is that what makes this Parliament innovative?

I do not buy it. Quebeckers do not buy it and Canadians do not buy it. Rest assured, at the next election Quebeckers will say: I remember.

• (1310)

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the Conservative Party of Canada motion, which is simplicity itself. I will read the main thrust of it:

—recognize that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence, and has accordingly lost the confidence of this House.

First of all, I wish to thank my colleague from Lotbinière—L'Érable for allowing me to share his allotted time. I congratulate him for what he is currently contributing to the public accounts committee.

It is not easy to try to get the truth out of people who choose not to remember. It is a feather in his cap that he is trying every way possible to achieve that. As we saw last week during the Alfonso Gagliano appearance, it is very difficult to get someone to admit to having known something when he has already made it clear to all the media that he knew nothing.

This is what we have to deal with as far as the whole Liberal government is concerned. This is the harsh reality. I understand, of course, why the Conservative Party of Canada is bringing such a motion before the House. The Liberals are trying to pass this off as a new government, with no one at fault. Some of the guilty parties have been fingered, the heads of some crown corporations have been dumped. They have even dared to say, the Prime Minister first and foremost, that there was a certain political control. However, as we speak, no political control can be pinpointed. Ministers remember nothing, nor does the Prime Minister, although several charges have been made against him.

I will list a few of these, and the ones I will cite did not come from the Bloc Québécois. We have already spoken about what has been said in the media, including the million flags operation.

In 1996, the president of the federal Liberals of British Columbia, Doreen Braverman, informed the then finance minister, the current Prime Minister, that the government had bent the rules by which contracts were awarded and issued fake invoices under the flags operation. However, the current Prime Minister and former finance minister said, “I am not going to interfere. This matter comes under the former Minister of Canadian Heritage”. He said that he knew

nothing, but that was not true. The president of the federal Liberals of British Columbia, not the Bloc Québécois, made this accusation.

In February 2002, the Liberal policy committee chair, Akaash Maharaj, wrote a letter to the finance minister and current Prime Minister telling him that there were increasingly persistent rumours among the party faithful that the funds paid to advertising agencies were used to fund the Liberal party. Once again, the finance minister and current Prime Minister turned a deaf ear. This was from the Liberal policy committee chair, not a member of the Bloc Québécois.

Then we learned last Thursday in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts from Mr. Gagliano himself that the close advisers of the current Prime Minister and former finance minister were present at the Communications Coordination Committee each time money matters were mentioned. I understand this, since the Minister of Finance issues the cheques. Therefore, department employees and close advisers were present.

The list of friends of the current Prime Minister goes on. As early as 1994, the finance minister had his own list. In a memo dated May 3, 1994, the current Prime Minister and former finance minister's chief of staff, Terrie O'Leary, asked finance department officials to consider various communications firms for an advertising campaign, including the Gingko/Groupe Everest consortium. The president of Everest, Claude Boulay, had worked on the current Prime Minister's leadership race in 1990.

I could go on. On the weekend, the Quebec Liberals told us that the word to use was no longer scandal but matter. I say that the more we investigate the matter of the sponsorship scandal, the better we will be able to prove that the current Prime Minister and former finance minister knew. Even if he did not intervene, he will be as guilty as the person who did commit the crime.

As for that topic, we shall see. That is the way the government is telling us today—as I heard the government House leader tell us a little while ago—“We have a new way of governing”.

• (1315)

Until now, all we tried to do was to have legislation in the future to ensure that the Liberal Party will never again be able to do what it has done. I agree with that. But today, they are still not ready to tell the public, which is demanding the truth, exactly what went on. That is hard to understand.

Under Jean Chrétien, it was the same thing. As for the 440 questions that have been asked—we heard Mr. Chrétien this weekend saying he had answered in English, in French and even in joul—the results were the same. The replies were the same ones we are hearing today from the mouth of the current Prime Minister and other ministers. No one remembers. It was nobody's fault. And they are trying to tell us today that things have changed. I am sorry, but absolutely nothing has changed.

I will continue to say that it has not changed. In fact, I am a member of the Standing Committee on Transport. This committee has provided the government with the current Minister of Human Resources—a graduate of the previous Standing Committee on Transport, as is the current Minister of National Revenue. There is also the hon. member for London North Centre, who is now a parliamentary secretary, and of course, the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario, who was the former chair of the committee.

I think that is funny, considering we are being told things have changed. The last week the committee sat, flight attendants came and told us that the government was getting ready to introduce regulation to reduce the number of flight attendants from one flight attendant for every 50 passengers to one flight attendant for every 40 passengers. Therefore, there would be fewer flight attendants on board. This was, once again, a regulation that was introduced.

I remember that every member of the Standing Committee on Transport I just named, who went on to become cabinet members, said it made no sense for the former transport minister to make decisions that were not ratified by the committee.

Believe it or not, the current Minister of Transport is on his way to having regulation adopted to change the number of flight attendants on aircraft without the Standing Committee on Transport having approved this option, heard witnesses or ascertained the safety of this measure, even though the Liberals talk about and rehash the issue of security in this House. No analyses were done, still they are about to introduce the change. This was denounced by all former Liberal members of the Standing Committee on Transport who have now become ministers.

Nonetheless, the current Standing Committee on Transport is doing the same thing, in that it is supporting the Minister of Transport who wants to regulate to reduce the number of flight attendants on aircraft, which could adversely affect safety.

Also, a noise regulation was referred to the Standing Committee on Transport by the former government as part of Bill C-27, which included a number of clauses dealing with noise pollution in railway yards and train stations. I am thinking of the Joffre yard, in Charny, and the Mercier-Hochelaga yard, in Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. There are problems there. Citizens are confronted to noise pollution issues.

Bill C-27 included an amendment allowing Transport Canada to take corrective action. The problem with noise pollution and the railway system is that there is no legislation—whether municipal or provincial—that can apply to Government of Canada property. All railway transportation lines and railway yards are federal property and thus come under federal jurisdiction. This means that no provincial or municipal standard can apply.

I mentioned the Joffre yard, in Charny, and the Mercier yard, in Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, but there are many others all across Canada. For the first time, there was an opportunity to force businesses that create noise pollution to try to correct this problem. But we have been told that Bill C-27 was not brought back by the new Liberal government.

Supply

So, hon. members can understand why it would be very difficult for me to support the position of the government House leader, who just told us, “This is a new government”. He said it very clearly in his speech. The democratic reform proposed by the government must be based on trust. The problem right now is that the public no longer trusts this government. Regardless of the measures that the Liberals will want to propose, the public will not believe them. So, it is time to call an election and let the public say whether or not it trusts this government.

• (1320)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating a motion by the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, asking that:

—this House recognize that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence, and has accordingly lost the confidence of this House.

I think we can just say that the opposition parties are in favour of this motion.

I think also that the party from Quebec in particular has a big problem with this government, because of what went on with Groupaction and the others.

• (1325)

[*English*]

It is interesting though to watch both the opposition day motion and the government response. There is a dynamic going on that I find quite interesting from an historical perspective. I am not sure this has happened very often in the past, maybe never in this chamber. The dynamic that I see is that on one hand we have a government party that is pretending it has not been here for the last decade or been involved in any of the scandal around the sponsorship, that it was somebody else who did that. We see the Prime Minister going around the country, not even mentioning the name of his party, again pretending that the Liberal Party did not exist when he was part of the government, that he was not part of that. He is distancing himself as much as possible.

I must say that with my constituents, and from what we are seeing around the country by way of opinion polls, it is not selling very well. The Canadian public has not bought it and in the Province of Quebec, it is not being accepted at all.

While that dynamic is going on, if I can move over to this side of the House and the official opposition, the official opposition is pretending that somehow its history never occurred, that which got it to where it is now.

We see that element of the Conservative Party, which came out of the Progressive Conservative Party, pretending as if the former Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, did not exist, and that all of the scandals that that government perpetrated on this country over a nine year period did not really happen. Or if it did—and here those members are taking a page out of the Liberal government's playbook—that it was not them, that they were not there and were not part of it, even though the former Prime Minister was very much involved in this last campaign for the leadership. Unfortunately for him, it was for a candidate who was not ultimately successful.

Supply

They do not want to acknowledge either the scandals that seem to be erupting out of the provincial Conservative Party in Ontario involving the former premier there and some of the money that he and his close associates were paid, which very much mimics what we saw in the sponsorship scheme and scandal. It concerns services being paid for and not delivered, or delivered at a scale that was inconsequential in proportion to the amount of money paid, whether it was to the former premier or to a number of his close associates who helped run the government when he was premier. There is a very similar pattern there, but again the mover of this motion and the party of which he is part is pretending that those situations did not exist at all.

We see this party pretending that it was somehow born like a virgin birth, that it came from nowhere with no background and no ancestry, but in fact it does. We need only to think of some of those scandals—as I was reading some of the material in preparation for this debate—like Justice Parker finding, in the case of Sinclair Stevens, 14 separate conflicts of interest over a relatively short political career. We saw things like the scandal around the movement of the airplane maintenance contract. It was well deserved to be placed in Winnipeg but was moved to Montreal.

Mr. Pat Martin: We remember.

Mr. Joe Comartin: I am getting some support from one of our members from Winnipeg who remembers that situation very well, as does the whole Province of Manitoba. It is unwilling to forgive that Conservative government for doing that. There was the Oerlikon affair, just outright graft in that case.

• (1330)

Also, who can ever forget Michel Cogger and his shenanigans over an extended period within the Conservative government at that time? I have to say that there is a real level of hypocrisy in this motion from the Conservative Party when one takes that history into context.

I could mention others. Probably the most scandal ridden government ever in this country was the Grant Devine government in Saskatchewan. More than a dozen—I think it was 15 or 16—members of that government ultimately were convicted on criminal charges and sent to prison. The list goes on.

I want to say a bit more about the hypocrisy of the Conservatives in this regard. I want to challenge the new leader, the leader once again of this new party growing out of the old party. There is a real hypocrisy going on there. I want to challenge the new leader on his position because of his attack this past week on our party. He took a shot at us as being some kind of a major threat to the future of this country, but then refused to engage in a debate.

I think my colleague from Vancouver has pointed out that there really is a level of fear on the part of the new leader, but there is hypocrisy as well. How many times during the leadership campaign did we hear him and his supporters attack Ms. Stronach for refusing to take part in a debate? I say rightfully so, because someone who is going to be involved in the politics of this country has to be prepared to have his or her policies scrutinized and debate is one of the ways of doing that.

So when the leader of the official opposition, elected this past weekend, refuses to debate after attacking a leader of one of the other opposition parties, it really undermines his position. It shows the level of hypocrisy of that position and it shows a real lack of appreciation of what democracy is and should be about in this country.

Let me turn now to the motion as it applies to this current government. It is just a standard vote on confidence that we are seeking. As I said earlier, we are quite prepared, given the conduct of the government under both the former prime minister and the current Prime Minister, to say we do not have confidence in the government to lead this country and to provide governance to this country.

I should say, Mr. Speaker, that I am using the full 20 minutes. I am not dividing my time.

We have that dynamic going on, so let me for a moment fall into the trap that has been prepared and speak about the old Liberals, the government under the former prime minister. The sponsorship scandal we are currently confronted with and which is taking up so much of the time of the House and of this Parliament, to the detriment of other major national issues that should be addressed, is one in a series. We can talk about the gross mismanagement of HRDC or the computer scandals, which we saw first with the gun registry and the amount of money we lost on that and now with what appears to be more than just mismanagement and perhaps outright corruption around computer software and computer systems in the defence department.

We have, in addition to that, the scandal that is going on around the Fontaine health centre in Manitoba. As well, we have pending—we are still waiting to hear from the government on it—a scandal that is potentially about to erupt around the conflict of interest, if not outright criminality, in the environmental assessment division as it affects the work that the division is responsible for doing in the Yukon. We are still waiting for that report. We have not heard from the government. I do not know how much more it can take in the way of scandals. I assume the government is sitting on the report right now.

• (1335)

On the sponsorship scandal, clearly what has happened is that the Canadian people have said this is it. We have this other list, of which I have only mentioned a few that are around mismanagement if not outright corruption, but the sponsorship scandal was the final one for the electorate in this country.

Last week when the House was down I spent time canvassing some of my riding. It was interesting to hear how the government is viewed. For a number of people, but not a lot, there was very high anger and there were very harsh words. Most people said that they are over the anger now, but I come from an Irish background and it is that model of not getting angry but getting even. Certainly in my riding they are at the stage where they are going to get even. They are asking us to have that election and to get even with the government for all the corruption it has perpetrated upon the country.

It is interesting that we are hearing, as my colleague from the Bloc mentioned earlier, some rationalizations. We heard it in the public accounts committee from the member for Toronto—Danforth. He said it was not really that bad. He said that a good deal of the \$100 million that was taken from the \$250 million was in products and other things; he said that there is something there. Of course as more evidence came out, we saw how lacking in credibility that position was.

This past weekend we heard from the current heritage minister. What did she have to say? She said that this is a tempest in a teapot, that it is not really that important, that it is being blown out of proportion, or words to that effect. I have to ask the minister, what does it take for it to be important and significant? If this is blowing it out of proportion, how bad does the situation have to get on that side of the House before Canadians are able to say the government went too far?

I can tell members that at this point the Canadian public has made the decision and is saying that the government has in fact gone too far, that this incident is not being blown out of proportion.

I will deal with one final point, again falling into this trap that the Liberal government wants us to fall into even though I think it is at the point of not even wanting to talk about being Liberal. I will talk about the current administration. We constantly hear from any number of the cabinet members, from the Prime Minister himself, and from other members and apologists for this current administration, that they have changed. They say that this will not happen anymore.

In that regard, I have pulled out some of the appointments of some of the people who were involved with the Prime Minister's run for the leadership of the Liberal Party, people who have now become part of the administration in the PMO. I have a list of about 12 or 15 names here. A number of these people who are now in the PMO have ties to and were registered lobbyists. Some of them have very clear conflicts in terms of their position in advising and providing services to the Prime Minister and the PMO in general.

For instance, there is Bruce Young, out of British Columbia, who has been registered as a lobbyist. One of his clients before he became senior special adviser to the Prime Minister was a group of private health clinics, whose position very clearly was to undermine the existing health care system in this country and move us toward a full two tiered system. That person is now in the Prime Minister's Office advising him as a senior special adviser.

● (1340)

My background as critic is the environment and now we have the deputy chief of staff who was registered as a lobbyist before she was placed in the Prime Minister's Office after he took over. What was she a lobbyist for? She was a lobbyist for the Forest Products Association of Canada, which has a great deal of interest in how this federal government develops and delivers that policy around our forests in this country. I should point out that one of those associations—I believe this is accurate—is being sued for the ads being run across the country about the fact that the forests are actually getting larger in Canada when the reality is just the opposite: that they are shrinking at quite a rapid rate.

Supply

The list goes on. Of eight people who are in that office, all of them were registered lobbyists before they went in. Then there are the other people who worked directly on the leadership campaign, all of whom have close ties to or were registered lobbyists while they were working for him and are now back working full time. Of course Earncliffe is the one that comes up all the time.

The point of all this is that we are faced with the situation where they are pretending that it was the other government, that they were and are not part of it. I am not sure who was there at the time, but certainly some of them were. Anyway, they want us to believe they were not part of that. That is what they want the country to believe. The country has already said it does not.

What I want to say for Canadians and the government as a whole is that if this is the way it developed over the first 10 years of the Liberal administration after 1993, when we look at these names and the people who are around the current Prime Minister, why would we have any expectation but that a similar set of circumstances would evolve if the government were to stay in power with these people advising the Prime Minister?

Let me go back to one point that I find troubling as an individual member of Parliament. Again, that is the amount of time we have been forced to spend—and I do not think we had a choice—on this scandal. We have major issues confronting us. Whether it is the environment, health, defence or education, the list goes on. Any number of public policy issues have to be addressed, but so much of our time is taken up with this scandal that the country is suffering as a result. That suffering our country is going through at this point lies directly at the feet of this government, whether it is under the current Prime Minister, the former prime minister or both.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech just made by our NDP colleague. I would like to address but one issue of the many things he said when he directly attacked our new leader.

I would like to point out to him that calling our new leader to a debate does not mean that our new leader automatically should drop everything he has on his plate right now and engage in a debate with the leader of the NDP, as wonderful as that would be. For the hon. member to conclude that there is an unwillingness to debate because of the fact that the schedule does not now possibly permit it with an election looming, I think he is jumping to an unwarranted conclusion.

Further, I would also like to point out that when finally the Prime Minister does decide to go to the people for a vote, there will be more than ample opportunity to debate among the leaders of the various parties, to put their visions forward, but that will then be done in an orderly fashion among all of the leaders.

I think the member is incorrect when he misinterprets this and says that our leader is unwilling to debate. The schedule right now does not permit it. There will be time for it and we will be very happy to debate especially the Liberals but also the NDP on the values of Canadians for the next election.

Supply

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, I have a bit of a problem with that position taken by my colleague from the Conservatives. We need to go back a bit before this particular history of last week to when the leader of the official opposition was running for his seat in Calgary. He refused not once, not twice, not three times, not four times, but five times, to debate the NDP candidate in that riding, Reverend Bill Phipps.

An hon. member: But they're insignificant in Alberta.

Mr. Joe Comartin: The insignificance was that we got 25% of the vote in that riding at that time; all 25% of that vote was insignificant to that leader and to his party.

The other point I want to make is that he initiated the debate. He attacked us. He attacked our leader and our party as also-rans. I have to ask the leader of the official opposition, if that was the case when Ms. Stronach would not debate him, was she treating him as an also-ran?

● (1345)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Windsor for a number of things that he pointed out in his speech, and for raising some recent history that is helpful I think as we view the situation today. It is always useful for us to look back.

He reminded members in the House that Liberal, Tory same old story is a phrase that we are fond of in the Province of Manitoba. He pointed out some of the similarities between the history of corruption from the current ruling Liberal Party and the corruption of the Tory government under Brian Mulroney.

There were guys like Roch LaSalle, who frankly make the current Liberals smell like a spring day. There was corruption under the Mulroney years that used to horrify Canadians right across the country, and they turfed them out with such vigour that the party had only two seats remaining. We should be conscious of recent history as we hear the new Leader of the Opposition remind Canadians about the corruption of the Liberal Party.

I want to thank the member from Windsor for pointing this out and for helping us keep in context the fact that we had the least popular government in Canadian history, the Mulroney government, because once a week a crooked cabinet minister would fall. Almost weekly Tory cabinet ministers were busted for the most blatant, overt corruption one could imagine. They were less creative than the Liberals. In fact they were crude.

Tory corruption is often blunt and crude. The Province of Manitoba comes to mind. The most recent Conservative government in the Province of Manitoba was turfed out for election rigging, vote rigging, and for corruption scandals.

It is bizarre for us to hear the sanctimonious bleatings of the new leader of the official opposition, now in fact the old Tory party, trying to claim that it will be less corrupt. It is Liberal, Tory, same old story. We cannot tell the difference from where we sit.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I did not find anything in my Winnipeg colleague's comments with which I could disagree. However, it is worrisome, when we see the self-righteousness that embodies the background of the motion, that

there is not some acknowledgement on the part of the Conservatives that they are also at risk.

I want to say to them and to the government that we need not so much the protestations of substance that we got from the House leader earlier this afternoon around democracy and the democratization of this institution. One of the greatest protections we have is if there is full democracy here, if the members of Parliament can in fact perform their duties fully, whichever government is in power at any given time. That is our greatest protection from this type of scandal being allowed to evolve to any degree.

● (1350)

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House precisely what we are debating today. We are debating an opposition motion that reads as follows:

That, given the lack of new legislation introduced by the Liberal government during the Third Session of this Parliament, this House recognize that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence, and has accordingly lost the confidence of this House.

The part about losing the confidence of the House by not bringing forward legislation is something that does not need to be articulated because it is quite clear. This Liberal Prime Minister campaigned to be the Liberal leader and the incumbent Prime Minister of the House of Commons for probably five or six years. He never really stopped campaigning, but it really kicked into gear about five or six years ago. He has been trying to have a bloodless coup with the former prime minister Jean Chrétien for quite some time.

The current Prime Minister became leader of the Liberal Party by promising many things such as a new agenda, a new deal for cities and by promising a comprehensive approach to all kinds of things under the sun. We have seen virtually no new legislation in the House of Commons over more than 100 days since he was elected and sworn in December of last year as Liberal leader and Prime Minister.

I saw a television program the other day where one of the Liberal cabinet ministers had this very point put to him. The minister said that was not exactly true. He said that the Liberals had put forward whistleblowing legislation, and it is true that whistleblowing legislation will be coming forward. The interesting thing to note is the official opposition put forward whistleblower legislation quite some time ago, but the government failed to acknowledge that fact. It would only be under a Liberal government, with the layer upon layer of corruption that we have seen over the past while, that would actually need comprehensive whistleblower legislation.

In the tradition of parliamentary democracy, it used to be that ministers would take responsibility for their portfolios. It was quite sad and embarrassing to hear the former public works minister, Alfonso Gagliano, last week play a who, what, me, I do not know role. It was the most important program that the country had after the 1995 debacle of the Quebec referendum campaign, where the prime minister essentially sat on his hands and almost saw the country dissolve. Alfonso Gagliano was put in charge of the fundamentally important program where \$250 million was pushed into the province of Quebec to raise the profile of the federal government. Some basic cursory realities of what constitutes sound fiscal management were not adhered to at all. The average hot dog stand had better lines of financial accountability than the Liberal government had with \$250 million in what was supposed to be one of the most important and comprehensive programs to meld the country back together after the divisive 1995 leadership campaign.

Before I go further and talk a little more broadly about Liberal scandals and some of the numbers involved in this, I want to comment on some of the remarks made by my colleague from Winnipeg Centre and on the remarks made by the member for Windsor—St. Clair.

Sanctimonious hypocrisy and posturing is something that is entirely inappropriate on issues like this. I always find it a bit funny when the NDP and Liberal members of Parliament talk about the Conservative Party led by Brian Mulroney. I am tempted to remind people that when Brian Mulroney came into power in 1984, I was seven years old. I was not exactly one of the backroom bagmen boys for the Brian Mulroney regime involved in that kind of corruption.

The reality in politics is that we tend to say that they are Liberals and they are all bad, or that they are New Democrats and they are all scandalous, or that they are all Conservatives and they have all been involved in scandals of the past.

The reality is we have to hold individuals accountable for their own actions and for that behaviour. It is not fair to say that all New Democrats under the government of Glen Clark were corrupt and irresponsible. It is not fair to say that all Progressive Conservatives under governments in the past were corrupt and irresponsible. Equally, it is not fair to say that all Liberals are corrupt and shadowed by the scandals that we have seen over the past couple of months.

What is fair is to ask for some accountability and responsibility. It is fair to ask for people who knew things to step forward and to be honest and straight up with what they knew and when they knew it, not to play hide and seek and not to run away.

It really is a fool's game to look at politics, as I described politics, as professional sports; that is all Liberals are bad, all Conservatives are good, all NDP are evil and vis-à-vis, and the rotating goes on depending on how one looks at federal politics. That kind of simplistic, frankly childish look at politics is totally inappropriate. We are all individuals.

• (1355)

The problem with this scandal has been the individuals who are at the heart of it. Those individuals who are truly responsible for the throwing away of \$250 million in the ad scam and more than that

over the past decade are hiding behind all kinds of political games and smoke and mirrors.

I had to take a long view of Liberal scandals over the past decade. If we add up all the money that has been wasted, stolen or spent irresponsibly over the past decade, we come to a startling number \$7.093 billion. That number is arrived at by adding up the following things: \$2 billion for the gun registry; the helicopter cancellation; the billion dollar HRDC boondoggle; the home heating fuel rebates that went to almost everyone who did not require them; in 1992 to 1993 the company owned by the Prime Minister received \$161 million from government contracts; the ad scam of \$250 million; and the unnecessary Challenger jets of \$100 million.

If we want a global number, when we add up all the scandals and all the corruption, the number we arrive at is \$7.093 billion. That is an astonishing amount of money that could do wonderful things for Canada. For that amount of money, we could solve a number of problems.

It is very interesting how the debate has unfolded, not just over the past five minutes but over the past little while, and I see the member from Brampton West—Mississauga, an anonymous MP who no one ever knows. It is interesting how Liberal members of Parliament have had smirks on their faces, the sort of awkward arrogance that they are the incumbent government party and that they will be in power forever.

With the new Conservative Party and with the momentum we have with our new leader, the smirk and the arrogance that the Liberals have had for the past decade will be wiped away. It is being wiped away by the emergence of the new Conservative Party and a governing alternative that is really present for Canadians. It is also being wiped away by the number of Canadians who are sick and tired of the Liberal arrogance, the Liberal corruption, the throwing away of money and all the scandals they have seen over the past decade.

Canadians deserve better and taxpayers deserve better. Certainly all Canadians can agree that those people who knew what was going on, when a quarter of a billion dollars was being spent in a high profile program, should have been held accountable. That is what we are doing as the official opposition. That is why we have this motion. That is what we expect from the Liberal Party of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I inform the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam that he has 12 minutes left in his speech after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

KENT ELLIS

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to note the passing of one of Prince Edward Island's most beloved sons, Dr. Kent Ellis, who was in the truest sense of the word the Island's country doctor.

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After 43 years of practising medicine, he has been acknowledged as a deep caring man for his patients, his province and his country. He at one time cared for 3,500 patients, while the average was 1,500.

Beginning his practice at his house, in 1959, Dr. Ellis diligently served patient by patient, family to family, generation to generation, and was respected by all.

As well, he started Marco Polo Land, a landmark campground, and served on Unit Three School Board. He was active in the tourist association, the hospital and health services commission, his church, and was current chair of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Foundation. Above all that, he found time to show his love for his family.

Dr. Kent Ellis, a figure larger than life, will be greatly missed by all of us privileged to have had the honour to know him.

* * *

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in my riding of Calgary East share the same goals like other Canadians: families raising their children; senior citizens looking forward toward quiet retirement; new immigrants looking forward to settling in their new country; and youth aspiring for a brighter future.

They all work hard and pay their taxes. In return, they expect responsibility and fairness from the federal government. But what do they get in return? They get patronage, self-promotion and abuse of taxpayer dollars, for example, the sponsorship program, the Liberal flag scandal, an immigration scandal due to patronage appointments, and Gagliano crying to Canadians that he is poor, while we know that is not the truth.

It is time to get rid of this government. It clearly does not deserve the confidence of honest and hardworking Canadians.

* * *

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

RIDING OF COMPTON—STANSTEAD

Hon. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to discover for themselves the beauty of the riding I have the honour to represent.

Those who would like a preview of the magnificent landscapes and superb historic buildings that are found all over my riding can go to see two films which have just been released and which were filmed in Compton—Stanstead last summer.

The first, *Taking Lives*, starring Angelina Jolie, was filmed in the heart of the town of Stanstead. Hollywood worked its magic, for the film crew arrived in July to shoot wintry scenes in this charming town.

The second film, *The Secret Window*, stars Johnny Depp. It was filmed in the picturesque village of North Hatley, where French President Jacques Chirac also vacationed last summer.

The riding of Compton—Stanstead is an extraordinary place.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 15, the Prime Minister of Canada went to Val-d'Or. He attended two meetings and had an opportunity to listen to many requests made by the people of the vast riding of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik.

He was told about many things, including: the importance of assistance for mineral exploration and the mining sector; the urgent need to resolve the softwood lumber crisis; the need to help the agricultural sector; as well as the need for support for projects benefiting the James Bay Cree, the Inuit of Nunavik, the Algonquians of Kitchisakik and Lac Simon, and the native friendship centres in Val-d'Or, Senneterre and Chibougamau.

The Prime Minister was very attentive to the requests coming from our large resource-based region, and asked many questions about the issues.

In particular, he noted two major concerns of the region: the first is economic development, which involves the forestry, mining, and agri-food sectors, and the native peoples and Inuit; the second is the issue of native and Inuit education.

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[*English*]

TORONTO JEWISH COMMUNITY

Hon. Art Eggleton (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to condemn the anti-Semitic incidents that occurred in my riding of York Centre over the weekend.

Twenty-two tombstones on Jewish graves were upturned at Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park. Swastikas and genocidal slogans desecrated the Pride of Israel synagogue and the Eitzchaim Jewish Day School. Numerous United Jewish Appeal signs were defaced.

This, only two days after 13 residences in neighbouring Thornhill were sprayed with anti-Semitic graffiti. This, on the weekend marking the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary, where 500,000 Jews perished. This, on the day marked by the United Nations as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This, on the streets of Toronto, here and now.

The League for Human Rights of B'nai B'rith Canada reports that the number of anti-Semitic incidents in Canada has doubled in the last three years. This is unacceptable.

I call on all Canadians to stand with their Jewish neighbours to confront bigotry. I call on Canadian law enforcement officials to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable.

I ask the Government of Canada to consider new measures to combat the rising tide of extremism targeting Jewish Canadians.

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, rural Ontario is under assault from federal and provincial Liberal governments that neither understand nor respect the rural way of life.

At the core of the Liberal attack is the belief that it is acceptable for governments to strip away the value of private property without providing compensation, or to arbitrarily adjust taxation levels in ways that amount to a confiscation of some or all of the value of private property.

In Ontario, this attack on rural property includes: the shutting of local slaughterhouses that cannot keep up with everchanging and arbitrary rules, the imposition of new sawdust disposal rules that may shut down many small sawmills, and the creation of nutrient management rules that make perfectly safe existing practices unlawful.

Finally and most egregiously, it is a year since the Liberals passed the Species at Risk Act without the amendment that I had proposed, which would have guaranteed full and prompt compensation for landowners who lose the use of lands inhabited by endangered species. The government promised that compensation would be assured in the regulations under the act. Today, it is clear that this was just another Liberal lie to rural Canadians.

Nobody disputes the right of governments to take property for public purposes or to limit its use, but depriving rural Canadians of full, prompt and just compensation is unjust and it must stop.

* * *

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a day of mixed emotions in the political history of this country. The new so-called Conservative Party finally has a new leader as per the results from the weekend.

However, it is a sad occasion, because it marks officially the death of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, the death of the party that was the home of memorable names such as Macdonald, Cartier, Borden, Diefenbaker and Stanfield.

Sadly, the new Conservative Party is not progressive. It simply demonstrates to all Canadians that the so-called merger was nothing more than an Alliance takeover, which is what we said.

There might be a new Conservative leader, but it is the same old Reform/Alliance Party with no Tories allowed.

* * *

• (1405)

[Translation]

MIDDLE EAST

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning Israeli helicopters killed the spiritual leader of Hamas in an air strike as he left a mosque. Two of his bodyguards and five bystanders also died.

This has triggered an international outcry. The Bloc Québécois agrees with the foreign affairs ministers of the European Union, who voiced concerns about the consequences of this assassination, in

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stating, “Not only are extrajudicial killings contrary to international law, they undermine the concept of the rule of law, which is a key element in the fight against terrorism”.

We also support a motion today by four members who state that Canadian law must recognize suicide attacks as crimes against humanity.

The Bloc Québécois considers that acts of violence by both sides must cease and urges the Government of Canada and international organizations to step up their efforts to put an end to violence in the Middle East. The road to peace starts with an end to violence.

* * *

WORLD WATER DAY

Mr. Christian Jobin (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, the international community marks World Water Day. Water, which is the source of life, is a major concern for our government.

In my opinion, it is appropriate to highlight the numerous steps taken by my colleagues from Compton—Stanstead and Brome—Missisquoi to defend the quality of this country's water reserves.

In fact, at a time when there is a plan to expand a landfill site on the banks of the Black River in Coventry, Vermont, my two colleagues are doing everything possible to inform our American neighbours of the associated risks. The plan threatens the main tributary of Lake Memphrémagog, which supplies drinking water to hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

Unfortunately, my colleague from Sherbrooke does not deserve similar congratulations. While the quality of his constituents' drinking water is at stake, he prefers to take part in partisan spats.

* * *

[English]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians finally have what they need: a united Conservative Party doing what is right instead of a divided Liberal Party doing what is wrong and corrupt.

Our recent leadership convention attracted the strongest candidates for Prime Minister in a very long time. Tony Clement and Belinda Stronach proved that Canadians hunger for experience and change. Of course, no one better embodies both these qualities than the overwhelming winner, the member of Parliament for Calgary Southwest.

As Prime Minister, this man will lead Canada into a new era in which we will all be proud to call ourselves Canadians. It will be an era where Canadians are able to save for their families' future; an era where our streets are safe; and an era where being sick does not mean waiting months on end for necessary surgery or cancer treatment.

This is his vision for Canada. It is a Conservative vision. It is a vision all Canadians can share.

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MITCHELL SHARP

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay respect to Mitchell Sharp and his remarkable life of public service.

Mitchell Sharp began his career in public service during the second world war when he joined the Department of Finance as director of economic policy division. Sharp notably helped negotiate Newfoundland's entry into confederation in 1949.

In 1951, Sharp moved to the trade department and after working briefly in the private sector he was drawn back to public service when he was asked by Lester B. Pearson to organize a Liberal thinker's conference in 1960.

[*Translation*]

This marked the beginning of his great political career. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1963 and served in cabinet for nearly 15 years. Even though he left politics as an MP in 1978, Mitchell Sharp continued to serve the government for another generation.

[*English*]

I invite all members in the House to join me in recognizing the brilliant career of a great man who served his country so well and who was respected by all Canadians.

* * *

●(1410)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the Native Women's Association of Canada launched its national campaign "Sisters in Spirit" to raise awareness and to demand action about the tragedy of over 500 aboriginal women who are missing or murdered in Canada.

The exploitation, murder and violence against aboriginal women, sex trade workers, and poor women is increasing at an alarming rate, but the government has failed to act. The 61 missing women in Vancouver's downtown east side, the closure of women's centres, and deepening poverty and violence all point to an ongoing failure of public policy.

The government shows its real intent in the federal budget. So what is it to be, the rhetoric of the debt or the real and desperate need of aboriginal women?

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, March 21, is a time to express our solidarity for this campaign. Federal New Democrats will not allow these sisters to be forgotten. We will demand accountability from this government and its miserable record that has hurt so many women in Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the answer from the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development given on March 9, regarding employment insurance.

The minister's answer to the question by my colleague, the member for Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, clearly shows the incredible lack of interest by the Liberal government in the fate of seasonal workers in Haute-Côte-Nord and Charlevoix.

These citizens have had more than enough. They have gone so far as to block traffic on route 138 in order to be heard and show the federal government just how exasperated they are. Yet, these workers are only asking for what they are owed: the \$45 billion that was stolen from the employment insurance fund.

These workers have to cope with a gap every spring and the minister keeps saying that there are already training funds to help them. Nonetheless, does he not see that these funds do not meet their needs?

The minister has to open his eyes once and for all. He has to see that the current employment insurance system does not correspond in any way to the reality of seasonal workers.

In conclusion, I invite the minister to meet with these unemployed people and explain his reasons for not giving them what they are owed.

* * *

[*English*]

HARRISON MCCAIN

Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great New Brunswicker and a great Canadian businessman, Harrison McCain, who passed away last week at the age of 76.

He was one of four brothers who grew up in Florenceville, New Brunswick. In 1956, they started what today is an international food processing enterprise that employs more than 18,000 people on four continents. Its annual sales exceed \$6 billion. McCain's French Fries is a household word around the world.

Today, the small rural community of Florenceville, on the Saint John River, and the headquarters of his company, McCain Foods, mourns his passing.

On behalf of all members in the House, I extend my deepest sympathy to his entire family and to the community of Florenceville. Harrison McCain's success shows to all Canadians the product of hard work, vision and determination.

* * *

THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the first 100 days of office of the new Prime Minister have proved that everything old is new again. Despite spending 10 years preparing for the role and despite spending 10 years organizing to oust Jean Chrétien, the Prime Minister's agenda for the first 100 days is reduced, reused and recycled.

All 23 items of legislation being debated in the House are bills that were authored and championed by his predecessor, Jean Chrétien.

The Prime Minister promised to address the democratic deficit, yet he delayed the opening of Parliament by three weeks and then only six days later his government invoked closure to cut off debate in the House.

The real legacy of this Prime Minister is that for each day the Prime Minister has sat at his desk, \$1 million went missing from the taxpayer and into the Liberal ad scam coffers.

With the election of the new Conservative leader, it is clear that we are in the twilight of this tired, old, and scandal ridden government. The first 100 days of the Prime Minister could very well turn out to be the first of the last for the Liberal Party of Canada.

* * *

BILL C-250

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his historic victory this past weekend. He has proven that he has the support of those within the Conservative Party of Canada. Now it will be his challenge to reach out and secure the support of all Canadians. Many social conservatives have trusted his leadership and hope he will continue to provide alternative social policy.

I would also like to address the current situation regarding Bill C-250. There is a movement in the Senate to delay the passage of this contentious bill. I would urge that other place to fulfill its role and provide real sober thought on this bill.

I ask the government to allow Canadians to have their voices heard on this issue. Many Canadians feel that the bill will seriously infringe upon the rights of freedom of speech and religion. The government should cancel the passage of this bill until after an election, allowing Canadians to consider this issue as they cast their votes.

* * *

● (1415)

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been to the temporary Out of the Cold winter shelter many times in my riding and have seen the challenges faced by those who find themselves homeless.

In my riding, the Cambridge Shelter Corporation and the Cambridge Kiwanis Village Non-Profit Housing Corporation have come together to address this challenge by building and operating The Bridges. This permanent shelter facility, with transitional housing units and a drop-in centre, needs the support of the entire community to succeed.

I call upon the caring people and businesses in my riding of Cambridge to demonstrate their support by donating to the "Who Cares?" campaign. Let us all work together to make a difference in Cambridge by donating to the "Who Cares?" campaign.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have to ask if anything happened while I was away. Two years ago my first questions as Leader of the Opposition were on Liberal waste, mismanagement and corruption. Two years later, we have no answers. Two years later, we have more Liberal waste, mismanagement and corruption.

My question is simple and it is for the Prime Minister. How long until Canadians get answers to who is responsible and the truth behind this Liberal sponsorship scandal?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, on behalf of the government, let me congratulate the hon. member for his ascension to the leadership of his party and welcome him back as Leader of the Opposition. May he have a long and compelling career in that role.

As the hon. gentleman will know, beginning on December 12 the Prime Minister has taken a series of very decisive actions, beginning with the total cancellation of the sponsorship program, the expedition of the work of the public accounts committee, the appointment of a public inquiry, and a number of other steps in order to ensure that, indeed, Canadians get the answers they deserve.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the member can talk about decisive steps, but Canadians are entitled to the truth. They do not have the truth today and they want the truth.

The Prime Minister was clear. He said that there had to be political direction. Mr. Gagliano said last week that it was not him. Who was it? Was it the former finance minister? Was it the former vice-chair of the Treasury Board? Was it the former senior political minister from Quebec? All are innocent, yet the money is gone.

Where in the government did the political direction come from?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear to ensure that all answers are in fact provided in the proper way and after thorough investigation.

In addition to the steps that I announced earlier, the Prime Minister has also appointed a special counsel for the recovery of money. He has moved to discipline the behaviour of crown corporations. He has announced a new system to select crown corporation directors, chairs and chief executive officers. He has implemented advertising reform measures to ensure transparency in competition and we have in fact cut the budget for advertising.

The Prime Minister is acting on all fronts.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we do not want process. We want answers. I will ask again.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

The Prime Minister made it very clear, stating “There had to be political direction”. Mr. Gagliano says it did not come from him. All the Liberals are saying “Not me, not me”.

Who will be held responsible, and when will Canadians find this out?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that both process and substance are important. This government has put in place the steps through a very detailed series of investigative measures that will make sure that first of all, process is followed, and second and equally important, that Canadians receive all of the answers that they are anxious to have.

• (1420)

[Translation]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend the Minister of Heritage described the sponsorship scandal as nothing but an opposition attempt to sully the reputation of the government. This is absolutely false. Her words notwithstanding, the scandal is a real problem and one on which Canadians expect some real answers before the election.

Does the Prime Minister also believe that the scandal does not exist?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the quotation to which the hon. gentleman refers, but I want to assure him that this government is taking this matter very seriously. That is obvious by the actions we have already taken, the most elaborate and detailed investigation ever conducted.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a recent illegal Liberal fundraising letter, the Prime Minister referred to the ad scandal as an unfortunate set of circumstances. It is reminiscent of the classic Chrétien “maybe a few million were stolen”.

For the average Canadians filling out their income tax forms next month, this is a huge problem. The minister of heritage's and the Prime Minister's flim-flam attempts to say that this is not a big deal shows contempt for Canadians' concerns and cash.

Will the Prime Minister unequivocally commit to getting to the bottom of the ad scandal before an election call?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to paraphrase the Prime Minister the other day, these matters will be thoroughly ventilated come hell or high water.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Privy Council, who is steering the whistleblower legislation through the House, is in fact being fingered by a whistleblower for his involvement in the sponsorship scandal. According to a former employee, the minister regularly pressured Pierre Tremblay, director of the sponsorship program.

To borrow the terminology of this Public Works employee, will the President of the Treasury Board admit that he “abused his power” by interfering in the way sponsorship contracts were awarded?

Hon. Denis Coderre (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Minister responsible for the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to inform the friends of Pierre Falardeau, Jacques Parizeau and Gilles Rhéaume that, after oral question period this afternoon, we will be again moving ahead with an extremely stringent action plan. We will be moving ahead with a bill that will protect our public service and allow it to meet its responsibilities.

We are very pleased to have such an extraordinary public service. Once again, it is proof of this government's transparency and sense of responsibility.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I agree that the public service is extraordinary. The problem lies not with the public service, but with the ministers over there.

The public servant in question worked in the communications branch with Pierre Tremblay, and she states categorically that the minister contacted Pierre Tremblay on a number of occasions in connection with the sponsorships, but took great care not to leave any tracks.

Will the minister admit that his contact with Pierre Tremblay was unacceptable, which is why it was not recorded on anyone's day planner and everything was done secretly over the phone, using secure lines?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned in reply to other questions, there are detailed investigative procedures underway to allow all of the people who have evidence or comments to make with respect to this issue to bring that evidence forward.

It will be decided in due course in terms of the proper reaction in response to that.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is here in this House that transparency must start. The Prime Minister tells us that he met with all his ministers, including the President of the Privy Council, before he formed his cabinet, to verify whether there was any involvement in the sponsorship scandal.

I ask this of the President of the Privy Council. Can he tell us if he did indeed inform the Prime Minister that he had close ties to Pierre Tremblay, that he used a secure telephone line to talk to him, and that he avoided writing these meetings in his agenda, so as not to leave any traces of his encounters with Mr. Tremblay? Did he say that to the Prime Minister?

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has informed the House that he made the appropriate inquiries of all his ministers and all the ministers informed the Prime Minister that there is no cause for concern.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today the President of the Privy Council will table a bill in this House to protect those who blow the whistle on wrongdoing in the public service.

By making the President of the Privy Council responsible for the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act—the very person who was the first victim of a disclosure, does the government not see that there is a definite credibility gap? The one who has been denounced is the one who will protect the whistleblowers? It seems very odd.

Hon. Denis Coderre (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Minister responsible for the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time we have seen such a show of hypocrisy from the Bloc. This is not the first time they have tried to tarnish people's reputations.

Not only are we very proud to be part of this government, but we are very proud to show all Canadians that we are going to shoulder our responsibilities. I hope that the Bloc will vote in favour of this bill, which is essential to demonstrate transparency once again.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

I am sure as we speak the Liberal propaganda machine is devising a plan to vilify the new leader of the official opposition because he wants to privatize our health care system. Yet it is under the Liberals that we have seen the progressive privatization of our health care system.

I want to ask the Minister of Health, where do the Liberals get the nerve to attack the leader of the official opposition for wanting exactly the same kind of health care system that is being brought to us courtesy of the Liberal Party?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is absolutely committed to the Canada Health Act. We realize that the five principles of the Canada Health Act are very popular with Canadians from coast to coast and we stand by the five principles of the Canada Health Act.

We take the sustainability of our health care system extremely serious which is why it was already the subject of the first ministers' meeting in January. The Prime Minister has committed to holding another first ministers' meeting on the subject this summer.

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not enough just to get up and repeat this mantra about the Canada Health Act. The fact is that the government has not done anything with respect to the Romanow recommendations. It has weakened the Canada Health Act by changing the regulations. It has allowed all kinds of privatization to the health care system.

Oral Questions

How the Liberals can attack the Tories on this is a bit like Bush attacking Kerry for making things up. The fact is that it is under the Liberal government that privatization has been proceeding.

Will the Minister of Health not just stand by the Canada Health Act but move against privatization and say that his government will not tolerate the privatization of our health care system?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not see why the member gets all excited about attacking the Conservative Party, the Tories. As of this morning their website was still the Canadian Alliance.com. Therefore we can tell very well that it is just an Alliance takeover of the Conservative Party.

However the one thing I can say is that Canadians are proud of their health care system and they want us to stand by the health care system. We will work in collaboration with the provinces to make sure Canadians receive the best possible delivery of health care.

* * *

THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even though the Prime Minister was both vice-chair of the Treasury Board and the finance minister and he had also taken control over the Liberal Party, he claims that he knew nothing at all about ad scam, which is exactly the same as what Gagliano is saying.

How can the Prime Minister fault Gagliano when they are both using the same I was ignorant talking points?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I say to the hon. gentleman that the Prime Minister is absolutely determined to deal with this issue. He has dealt with it in the most open, comprehensive and transparent way. He has not been in a bubble hiding away from Canadians. He has been confronting the issue directly and squarely.

Some hon. members: Where is he?

Hon. Ralph Goodale: They ask where he is. Today he is in Alberta announcing \$1 billion for Canadian farmers. That is where he is.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there will be nothing left after they take all the sponsorship money, so it is good they found a few dollars.

Neither one of those two people read the 2000 audit. Neither one of them noticed the scandal and corruption that was going on right under their noses.

How does the Prime Minister justify firing Gagliano for the same level of neglect that he displayed as both the finance minister and the vice-chair of the Treasury Board?

● (1430)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is drawing an awfully long bow in trying to tar the Prime Minister. That is obviously the strategy of the opposition.

Oral Questions

What the record shows is that on the very first day the Prime Minister took office he cancelled the sponsorship program. Within five minutes of the publication of the Auditor General's report he expedited the work of the public accounts committee, he called a public inquiry and he appointed a counsel to recover money.

Since then he has taken action to deal with the crown corporations. He has taken action to change the appointment process. He has reduced the advertising budget and has established a whole new set of rules.

The Prime Minister is acting—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Southeast.

* * *

FUNDRAISING

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal corruption just keeps getting deeper and deeper.

Last year the Liberals promised to clean up the mess they had created in fundraising by creating the \$5,000 contribution limit in the election finance law. However now we have caught the Liberals red-handed breaking their own law.

I have here a fundraising letter signed by the Prime Minister soliciting donations in the amount of \$7,000 for the Liberal Party.

Why is the ethically challenged Prime Minister inviting Canadians to break the law to benefit the Liberal Party?

The Speaker: Tempting as this may be, I am not sure that the fundraising of political parties falls within the ministerial responsibility for which members answer in the House. I have serious doubts that this question is in order.

Perhaps the hon. member, in his supplementary, will put the question in a way that is in order.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in this fundraising letter the Prime Minister invites people to make their illegal contribution of \$7,000 using their MasterCard. Giving tax dollars to Liberal ad firms, \$100 million; funnelling tax dollars to the Prime Minister's shipping empire, \$161 million; breaking the finance law, priceless.

Why is the Prime Minister asking Canadians to break the law in order to benefit the Liberal Party?

Hon. Jacques Saada (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the goal for funding, which appears on the website of the Liberal Party, makes very clear that what is in the letter is, at most, a typo. I think—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Calgary Southeast asked the question. He must want to hear the answer but I cannot hear a word that is being said. The hon. government House leader has the floor and we will hear the answer.

Hon. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, I have difficulty hearing myself.

The Liberal Party website is very clear. There is nothing in this that is outside the law of course. If my colleague has a copy of the letter I would ask him to table it so we can have a close look at it to see where it comes from.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, the Prime Minister rejected out of hand a unanimous motion by the National Assembly calling on the federal government to recognize the fiscal imbalance and demanding that it transfer funds for health in particular. He explained that there would not be any new money for health before this summer's first ministers conference.

How can the prime minister reject this unanimous motion and refuse to invest new funds in health care, when health is the top priority for all governments and the public?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that this government is deeply committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our health care system. That is why the Prime Minister already called a preliminary meeting of the first ministers in January. He asked the provincial premiers, the finance ministers and the health ministers to sit down together and make recommendations for the next first ministers' conference to be held this summer.

As for some of the other aspects of the health issue, we must wait for the Minister of Finance to table his budget tomorrow. Health, the number one priority, will no doubt garner considerable interest—

● (1435)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the current problem in the health care system is the result of the terrible budget cuts that the current Prime Minister forced on Quebec and the provinces over the past ten years, when he was finance minister.

Does he not understand that he needs to start investing funds now, and make them recurring, to repair the damage he inflicted on the health care system throughout Canada?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, \$34.8 billion will be invested in the health budgets over the next five years. In the coming years, we have committed to an 8% annual increase.

With regard to health, everyone agrees that the long-term sustainability of the system depends, naturally, on stable funding.

We will work with our colleagues in the provinces on ways to find this funding and also ensure adequate reform. That is what Canadians expect, and we will work with Canadians, the provinces and all of our colleagues.

PUBLIC HOUSING

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec is still waiting for its share of the \$320 million for affordable housing announced in the 2003 budget. Again this year, many Quebec families are going to suffer through a housing crisis while the money sits in Ottawa.

What is the federal government waiting for to free up the \$320 million earmarked for affordable housing in last year's budget?

[English]

Hon. Andy Scott (Minister of State (Infrastructure), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a good question because to this date we have spent over \$300 million. We have established 14,000 units, many of them in Quebec. In fact, 3,200 of those units are in Quebec with 900 in Montreal and 400 in Quebec City. We are currently negotiating for even more.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the federal government justify denying Quebec money earmarked for affordable housing by citing the dubious reason that the other provinces have not fully expended their housing budgets?

[English]

Hon. Andy Scott (Minister of State (Infrastructure), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the contrary. In fact, we have been most successful in Quebec and those negotiations continue to be even more successful and offer more affordable housing in Quebec.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I were a cynic I would think there must be an election coming. The Liberals over there are finally recognizing there is an urgency in the agricultural sector in Canada. More announcements today that they never plan to deliver.

The real issue is reopening the border. Does the Prime Minister not think that his time would be better spent lobbying in Washington than photo ops in Lethbridge?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I saw the reaction this morning of the president of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. I saw the reaction this morning of the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. I saw the reaction of the president of the Canadian Beef Export Federation.

They did not consider it a photo op. They appreciate the \$1 billion. They are also working with the government on the other front, which is to get the border open.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody is denying that it was a Liberal love-in in Lethbridge this morning.

Agriculture Canada officials admitted to the committee last week that of the BSE moneys allocated in last year's budget, less than one-third actually were delivered.

Oral Questions

The announcement this morning was just more of the same. We are still missing all the criteria: the dates and the application forms, all the things that let producers trigger the money.

Is the minister going to wait until after the next election to give producers the details of this newly recycled money?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no, indeed, this is not recycled. This is incremental and we fully expect the cash to begin to flow in April.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Prime Minister used the pain and despair our farm families are going through as a backdrop for what turned out to be nothing more than a Liberal campaign stop.

The Prime Minister was surrounded by more Liberal candidates than producers when he made that announcement.

The government has known for months that it has had money in reserve. Why did it put farm families through hell before the money was delivered?

• (1440)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister and myself spent a number of weeks consulting intensively with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and other farm organizations to ensure, first, that we got the amount right, and second, that we got the program designed right because we wanted this program to be of direct benefit to Canadian farmers and to put the cash in their hands at the earliest possible moment. This government will not apologize for helping the farmers of Canada.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been into this crisis for 300 days and this morning the Prime Minister said that we have to recognize the urgency of the moment.

We have been fighting since May 20, 2003, to make the government wake up and deliver something to these producers. It took 300 days for the government to finally realize the urgency of the moment.

When will producers get one thin dime from the Liberal government?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has previously budgeted in the order of \$500 million for this process.

In relation to the announcement made this morning, if the hon. gentlemen—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the Minister of Finance appreciates all the help he is getting in his answer but he seems to know what he is trying to say and I cannot hear it.

Hon. members will have to calm themselves and allow the Minister of Finance to give his answer. He has the floor.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentlemen were more interested in substance than histrionics he would have noticed that in an earlier answer I said that we expect the cash to begin to flow in the month of April.

Oral Questions

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

We have heard much about the devastating blows that the agricultural community has faced. I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary could please tell us what the government is doing to assist farm families.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. We are hearing a question. Has the hon. member finished her question?

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Agri-Food), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see everybody excited about this great money that is going to farm families today. I would like to thank the member for Winnipeg South Centre for bringing in that concern today: \$1 billion, with two-thirds going to the beef industry. That, along with the other programs, is going to put the farms in pretty good shape. This is a good day for agriculture and a good day for the rural community.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister still will not come clean on star wars.

Fact: the former assistant U.S. defense secretary calls missile defence "Star Wars II". Fact: the U.S. Missile Defense Agency is budgeting for 304 interceptors in space. Fact: both George Bush and Donald Rumsfeld have called, on the record, for the weaponization of space.

How can the government deny all of this evidence and continue to pretend that missile defence is not about weaponizing space?

Hon. David Pratt (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that what passes for facts with the NDP does not necessarily pass for facts with the rest of Canada. It is also important to keep in mind, as has been said by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, by the Prime Minister and by me, that the government is opposed to the weaponization of space.

It probably has not been lost on the hon. member as well that there does happen to be an election occurring this year in the United States. Some of what we heard, I think, is a result of some of the partisan politicking going on in the U.S.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, from the sponsorship scandals to star wars, the Liberals refuse to come clean with Canadians. The NDP's star wars facts have been proven right. It will cost more than \$1 trillion. Weaponization of space is the plan. It is already triggering a new arms race.

This time last year, Canada called up George Bush and said no to the war in Iraq. Why does the defence minister not call him up again and say no, Canada will not participate in the star wars talks, the talks are off?

• (1445)

Hon. David Pratt (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will go back to the point mentioned probably about a month ago in terms of that \$1 trillion figure that the NDP was using. The U.S. Missile Defense Agency is spending money at a rate of about \$9 billion per year. Simple arithmetic dictates that at that level of expenditure it would take over a century to spend \$1 trillion. I think the facts speak for themselves.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Privy Council minister. The government finally admits it was wrong for 10 years and whistleblowing legislation is coming because it has been caught and shamed into action, but will the consequences for wrongdoing be powerful enough to change Liberal bad habits? Will the government give up internal controls and have its new system report to Parliament instead of a minister?

Hon. Denis Coderre (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Minister responsible for the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I recall it right, that member of Parliament voted against the whistleblowing bill in committee, but that is another issue. I would say this. Let us all keep our powder dry. After question period I will table the bill and then we will expand upon it.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I recall that it was the opposition that tabled the first bill.

Joanna Gualtieri was a whistleblower in the Department of Foreign Affairs. Is the government now going to apologize for its abuse of this faithful public servant? Will whistleblowers like her be able to go to the courts if the proposed system fails them?

Hon. Denis Coderre (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Minister responsible for the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am very proud to be with this government because our Prime Minister, a man of vision, put forward an action plan and today we will deliver. We walked the talk. The member should be applauding what the government is doing right now. We will deposit this after question period. Not only will we be able to address whistleblowing but because we feel that members of Parliament should all be part of that process, they will pretty pleased about what I will announce today.

*Oral Questions***SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of typos, the President of the Treasury Board stood in the House one day and waved a list of sponsorship grants around as proof that they are open and transparent, but the problem is that when we called the people who got the grants, they did not get the same amount of money that is listed in this book. It is full of typos.

I would like to know when we can expect the government to table a corrected version of every single grant, with every single detail, and what Liberal got the commission.

Hon. Stephen Owen (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the finance minister has mentioned, we are in the middle of a series of processes unparalleled, I think, in the modern history of this country in terms of getting to the bottom of the circumstances around the sponsorship grants.

If any members opposite have any evidence that money that was said to be paid was not paid, then they should bring it forward through one of the processes and, particularly if they are alleging criminal activity, to the RCMP's attention. That is where these processes should be carried forward, not through wild accusations in the House.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as for wild accusations, I have proof and I would like to table it. I would like the minister to look at it. The minister should pick up his own chart. It says for the Downtown Truro Partnership, \$5,000, and here is a cheque stub for \$3,625. Where did the money go? Why did he keep this money from Truro?

Hon. Stephen Owen (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the process which the hon. member opposite was deriding earlier is the very reason why we have this in place: so this sort of information can be brought forward. Let us see then what went to commissions, what went to promotional activities, and what was misappropriated, if possible. That will go to the police. We look forward to the hon. member bringing the information forward so that we can get to the bottom of these issues together.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just announced \$680 million for cattle farmers, but this assistance excludes cull cows, which is a problem mainly in Quebec.

How can the government announce such substantial assistance without any help for Quebec farmers faced with the cull problem?

• (1450)

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Eyking (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Agri-Food), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question. The cull cow program is in process and taking place now. We are getting all the inventory of all the animals across this country and we are going to start rolling out the cheques. I also would like to tell the hon. member that this \$1

billion program we announced today will also have money in it for dairy farmers.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary just talked about a \$1 billion program, but on television the sum announced was \$680 million. It would be nice to get the facts straight.

Quebec's farmers have already denounced the help that is currently available, since they can only get compensation for two-thirds of the animals they slaughter.

How does the government explain to farmers that it did not deign to improve assistance for cull, when these farmers are in an extremely difficult situation? Is this government trying to say that Quebec farmers do not count?

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Eyking (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Agri-Food), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec farmers do count. They produce the most dairy products in this country. We are going to be there to help them with the cull cow program. We are going to be there for them. This \$680 million is for beef producers only. There is \$1 billion altogether but it is for other farmers besides dairy and beef.

* * *

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week a whopping 278 charges were laid in the case of an Immigration and Refugee Board judge who put entry to Canada up for sale as part of an organized crime bribery scheme. The judge was a Liberal patronage appointee with close ties to a Liberal cabinet minister.

Just one day before charges were laid, the Liberals announced cosmetic changes to the IRB appointment process, yet this IRB corruption was well known for more than a year. Was last week's announcement not just a cynical Liberal attempt at damage control?

Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. Clearly since 1989 when the IRB was set up, it has been used by both Conservatives and Liberals as a point for patronage. That ended on March 16. I announced a variety of changes to the system. The system will be merit based. I look forward to any suggestions the member has as to how we can even strengthen that process.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure Canadians that the next Conservative government is going to clean up this patronage mess.

Last week's announcement was little more than the Liberals' 1995 system recycled. The minister and people appointed by the minister will still run the show. Parliament is still sidelined, except to review the minister's choice for head of the IRB, something the government can do anyway. The government has just reappointed eight IRB judges under the old rules.

If the new changes are really so good, why were they not brought in before Liberal patronage crimes came home to roost?

Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the information of the hon. member, we started using what they call an enhanced skills set process some time ago and I have been looking forward to making this announcement for at least the last two months.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, Mr. Doudou Diène, the United Nations special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, reported on his visits over the past two years to Canada, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago.

My question is for Canada's minister of multiculturalism. How is this government addressing the issues on Canada that were raised by the special rapporteur?

Hon. Jean Augustine (Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada welcomes the report of the special rapporteur and we will give special consideration to its recommendations and its conclusions.

Many of the issues that the special rapporteur raised are not unknown to us and are no surprise to us, because we know that we have work to do in Canadian society through the multiculturalism program, which is designed to address those issues. Combatting racism remains a priority of the government and of all Canadians. Therefore, my top priority is an action plan against racism.

* * *

• (1455)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just like Jean Chrétien, the present temporary Prime Minister is failing to provide adequate funding to sustain our military. In December 2003 at DND headquarters, he said, and I quote, "If you send troops abroad you should send them with the best equipment".

Yet Canada's army, navy and air force are facing a funding shortfall of up to half a billion dollars just to meet basic day to day requirements. How much money can our hard-pressed, overextended military expect in tomorrow's budget?

Hon. David Pratt (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the budget, so I cannot answer the hon. member's question, but I can say to him very clearly that the throne

speech indicated we would provide the training and equipment necessary for the Canadian Forces.

We are also in the process of doing an international policy review which covers defence and which will provide us with a strategic plan to move forward. I am looking forward to the results of that strategic plan because I think it is going to be vital for our investment plan for the forces in the future. Having said that, I will say as well it is important to keep in mind that we are proceeding on a number of important projects.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for a government that is trying so desperately to distance itself from Jean Chrétien, I do not know why this minister and this government keep re-announcing long overdue commitments that were made by the Chrétien administration last fall.

When he was chairman of the defence committee the minister said, and I quote, "...what is critically needed at this point is increases to that base budget so that funding will be sustained over the years to come".

Now that he is minister, why has he failed so miserably to convince the Prime Minister to keep his promise to provide sufficient funds for our troops?

Hon. David Pratt (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we have the opposition jumping to outlandish conclusions. The sorts of statements that I made as chairman of the defence committee are completely consistent with the statements that I have made as defence minister.

The important point to keep in mind here is as well that when I was chair of the defence committee I indicated very clearly the need for a new white paper, and the hon. member is a member of a party that supported the defence committee's report with respect to the need for a strategic plan. The hon. member cannot have it both ways.

* * *

[Translation]

WORLD WATER DAY

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Canada is the only one out of the 53 member states of the Commission on Human Rights to speak out against the recognition of water as an essential human right.

How can Canada maintain that attitude when, today, World Water Day, four organizations, including Development and Peace, have tabled a petition bearing the signatures of 177,000 people in Quebec and Canada who denounce the government's refusal to recognize access to water as an essential human right?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we examine all proposals from the Commission on Human Rights. It is very important to know what social and economic rights people have.

But, as for everyone having a right to water, we must acknowledge that we are neighbours with a country that has its own ideas about access to water. It is Canada's role to examine this very important concept of international law in conjunction with other states. We must work together with the international community to ensure this has an actual impact and does not remain mere rhetoric, as our colleague would have it.

* * *

[English]

LIBERTY MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Financial Institutions.

Recently my constituents, Louise Brenneman, Fred Gaskin and Bob Sanders of the Canadian Association of Mutual Policyholders, expressed grave concerns about the protection of mutual policyholders' rights and entitlements with regard to the proposed sale of Liberty Mutual's insurance business.

What steps are being taken by the government to protect the rights of the 350,000-plus Canadian policyholders?

• (1500)

Hon. Denis Paradis (Minister of State (Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions has received an application regarding the transfer of Liberty Mutual's insurance business. The proposed transfer will require the approval of the Minister of Finance.

Let me add that the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions in the assessment of the proposed transfer will analyze and will take into account the impact on Canadian policyholders.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the foreign affairs minister.

The European Union has condemned the killing of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin as an extra-judicial killing. It said that in this case, the condemnation has to be even stronger than usual.

Is that also the position of the Government of Canada and if so, what action is Canada intending beyond condemnation?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize entirely the right of Israel to take steps to protect itself and its citizens against acts of terrorism. But we have condemned the death of Sheikh Yassin because, in our view, this is a matter that is contrary to international legal obligations on behalf of the state of Israel and will contribute to instability in the area and will make peace, which we all work for so hard, more difficult to achieve.

We call upon all parties to return to the road map. We call upon a return to a concept of peace in the area. We ask for restraint on behalf of all parties in this difficult time.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

RAI INTERNATIONAL

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on April 7, 2003, the Italian-Canadian community made a request to the CRTC to obtain a broadcast licence for RAI International, an Italian public television channel for Italian communities abroad, which is available in 238 countries. According to Giovanni Rapona, the project's promoter, the delay in the CRTC's decision can be attributed to an influential member of cabinet who would like to see this issue postponed until after the federal election.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell us whether the lack of a decision by the CRTC is linked to lobbying efforts by one of her colleagues?

Hon. Héléne Scherrer (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that, before a foreign broadcaster such as RAI International can be distributed in Canada by cable or satellite, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission must first give its approval. After examining all the briefs submitted on such proposals, the CRTC will make its decision at an appropriate time.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of 11 boys and girls, the Children's Miracle Network 2004 Champions from across the country. These youngsters have overcome life-threatening illnesses or injuries and have been chosen to represent all of the children who are treated annually by the Children's Miracle Network hospitals and foundations across Canada.

[Translation]

These remarkable young people are real champions who have overcome some huge obstacles in order to be with us today.

I invite you to meet them in Room 216-N for a reception after oral question period.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[English]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that Mr. John Reynolds, member for the electoral district of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, has been appointed member of the Board of Internal Economy, replacing Mr. Loyola Hearn, member for the electoral district of St. John's West, for the purposes and under the provisions of an Act to Amend the Parliament of Canada Act, Chapter 32, Statutes of Canada 1997.

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health during question period stated that my party did not have a website. I would like to inform him, and to make sure all Canadians are not misled, that we do. It is conservative.ca.

Speaker's Ruling

I can understand how he made the mistake because the other day I punched in Groupaction on the computer and up popped the Liberal Party of Canada.

• (1505)

The Speaker: The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast I note is the new House leader for the Conservative Party. I am sure he knows that this seems to be more of a debate rather than a genuine point of order.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has given the Chair notice of a question of privilege.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise on a matter of parliamentary privilege. It is my request that the House hold Mr. Alfonso Gagliano in prima facie contempt of Parliament.

Mr. Gagliano testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts on March 18 and 19 of this year. During the course of his testimony Mr. Gagliano repeatedly evaded committee members' questions, refused to give complete accounts of events to which previous witnesses had testified and routinely made statements that can only be described as inaccurate.

The committee chair, the hon. member for St. Albert, reads the following statement to all witnesses prior to testimony, that:

—the refusal to answer questions or failure to reply truthfully may give rise to a charge of contempt of the House, whether the witness has been sworn in or not.

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, despite any other reservations I have about her point of order, is referring to hon. members by name rather than constituency. I think she said the name of a member. I urge her to make sure she does not do that.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, I referred to the hon. member for St. Albert and indicated that he reads the following statement to all witnesses prior to testimony:

—the refusal to answer questions or failure to reply truthfully may give rise to a charge of contempt of the House, whether the witness has been sworn in or not. In addition, witnesses who lie under oath may be charged with perjury.

That is on page 862 of Marleau and Montpetit, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*.

In Mr. Gagliano's opening statement he said:

First of all, and please bear with me as I explain to you what a minister does in our system and what he does not do, a minister does not run his department. He has neither the time nor the freedom to do so.

I am certain the ministers opposite will agree with me when I say that the statement I have just read is just as misleading as it is false. This is but one example of the type of declaration Mr. Gagliano insisted on presenting our committee with.

In response to a question I asked on March 18 requesting the former minister to provide us with names of members of his staff who were involved in the operation of the sponsorship program, Mr.

Gagliano gave no response. Instead, he stated that he would need to question his former chief of staff.

The next day, March 19, Mr. Gagliano indicated in response to a question from the hon. member for Calgary—Nose Hill that he in fact had been in contact with his former chief of staff.

Over the course of two days, Mr. Gagliano provided a series of strategic answers, most of which served to prevent me and my fellow committee members from truly being able to investigate and proffer solutions into the ongoing sponsorship scandal.

While I know, Mr. Speaker, that you often refer matters of this nature back to committee, I respectfully submit that this is a question which must be brought before the whole House. Mr. Gagliano's refusal to fully answer the committee members' questions is an affront to the entire parliamentary process and it is my opinion that Mr. Gagliano be found in contempt of the House.

Mr. Speaker, should you rule in my favour, I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion and reference to the committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member I am sure has arguments to advance, but I think she knows, as I do, that what she needs to do is advance these arguments in committee. It is in the committee where the answers were given. It is acting on a committee report that the House could act, but it is not for the Speaker to determine the value or merits of questions and answers given in a committee until the committee has reported to the House and requested some kind of ruling from the Chair.

The hon. member can raise the matter in committee. The committee can decide whether the answers constitute contempt of the committee, and then make a report to the House. If the House wishes to find contempt of the House based on the report, that is not a problem. The House is free to do that. However, I do not think it is legitimate at this point for the House to make a determination when the committee is still hearing evidence, when it is still considering the matter and when it could consider the complaint raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre in the committee itself.

I would invite her to take her argument there for the time being, until we have a report from that committee.

MAIN ESTIMATES—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on March 10 by the hon. member for St. John's West concerning the format of the main estimates for 2004-05.

I would like to thank the hon. member for St. John's West for having raised this important matter and I would also like to thank the hon. President of the Treasury Board, the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough and the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville for their contributions on this point.

In raising the form in which the main estimates 2004-05 were tabled in the House, the hon. member for St. John's West asserted that by its own omission the government had tabled estimates which did not represent its real spending plans for the coming fiscal year. He made reference to a media release issued on February 24, 2004 which stated:

Speaker's Ruling

Due to the extent of the machinery of government changes announced in December 2003, it is the intention of the Government to table a revised set of Main Estimates later during the 2004-2005 fiscal year. This will allow new and restructured organizations sufficient time to finalize resource discussions as well as to develop their plans and priorities in time for Parliament to consider appropriation bills to authorize final spending. At the same time, it will allow the Government to seek additional spending authority for expenditures that were not sufficiently known in time for the Main Estimates and which are normally sought from Parliament through Supplementary Estimates later during the fiscal year.

In the view of the member for St. John's West, these statements represent an admission by the government that the main estimates, tabled on February 24, 2004, do not reflect the government's real spending plans and hence are invalid. He claimed, therefore, that committees to which the estimates have been referred will be unable accurately to assess the government's request for funds and cannot properly carry out what all members recognize as one of their most fundamental duties.

● (1510)

[Translation]

The President of Treasury Board pointed out that the government has an obligation under the Standing Orders to present the Main Estimates to the House by no later than March 1 each year. This obligation is set out in Standing Order 81(4) which reads:

In every session the main estimates to cover the incoming fiscal year for every department of government shall be deemed referred to standing committees on or before March 1 of the then expiring fiscal year. Each such committee shall consider and shall report, or shall be deemed to have reported, the same back to the House not later than May 31 of the then current fiscal year.

[English]

He indicated that the main estimates were tabled in their current form in order to comply with that requirement in the standing orders. He also stated that, in addition to presenting the main estimates in their current form, the government had also provided additional information concerning its reorganization plans and its intention to present revised spending estimates following legislative approval of that reorganization.

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville pointed out that Standing Orders 81(4)(a) and (b) give the leader of the official opposition the responsibility both for selecting a set of estimates to receive extended study in committee and, in consultation with the other opposition leaders, to designate two sets of estimates for consideration in committee of the whole. He indicated that it would be difficult for the Leader of the Opposition to carry out these responsibilities if he were forced to base his decisions on estimates that are only provisional.

When this matter was raised, I undertook to examine the records of the House in order to ascertain what our practice had been during previous government reorganizations. I have done that and will outline for the House the results of my inquiries. First, however, I think it may be useful to set out two facts concerning our procedures with respect to the study of estimates.

First, as the President of the Treasury Board has pointed out, the requirement that the main estimates be tabled by March 1 each year is an obligation placed on the government by the House. There is an additional requirement that the government may request funds only for programs and activities that have already received parliamentary approval. It may not present in the estimates, requests for

departments, agencies or activities which have not yet been granted the appropriate legislative authority by Parliament. Mr. Speaker Jerome, in a ruling given on this point, stated, and I quote from the Journals of March 22, 1977, page 607:

—(It is my view that the government receives from Parliament the authority to act through the passage of legislation and receives the money to finance such authorized action through the passage by Parliament of an appropriation act. A supply item in my opinion ought not, therefore, to be used to obtain authority which is the proper subject of legislation;...

● (1515)

[Translation]

The President of Treasury Board has indicated that the government intends to introduce legislation related to the division of assets and responsibilities among departments. No such legislation is yet before the House and the House has therefore not had the opportunity either to approve or reject the government's proposals. It would be unacceptable for those potential charges to be anticipated in the Main Estimates now before committees of the House.

[English]

The second point I wish to make is perhaps elementary, but it is pertinent to the issue before us. The main spending estimates for a given fiscal year are just that: estimates. Our rules recognize this fact by explicitly providing for the tabling and consideration of supplementary estimates throughout the fiscal year.

All hon. members understand that it is impossible to predict months in advance the exact amounts and destination of all government expenditures during the year to come. Nor would the House wish to deprive the government of the flexibility it may require to respond in the best interests of Canadians to emerging circumstances. At the same time, any changes to the amounts or the destination of funds which may be required over the course of the fiscal year must be submitted to the House for its approval.

I would now like to turn briefly to past practice with respect to changes to government organization. In 1983 the government introduced legislation, the Government Organization Act, 1983, which had as part of its purpose to replace the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce with the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion.

The main estimates tabled on February 22, 1983, and I refer to the Journals of that same date, at page 5628, contained votes under the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Although the government introduced legislation to replace that department on May 5, and that was Bill C-152, the Government Organization Act, 1983, the House nevertheless approved the main estimates without reference to the new department on June 14, 1983. I refer the hon. member to the Journals for that same date, at pages 6008 to 6028.

In another case, in 1978, as part of its reorganization, the government sought legislative approval for the creation of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. In that instance, the government presented legislation to reorganize government departments on December 20, 1978, and that was Bill C-35, the Government Organization Act, 1979. I refer to the Journals of that same date, at page 274. I think hon. members will agree that the tabling of such a bill represents a clear intention to modify the administrative structure of the government.

Routine Proceedings

Nevertheless, the main estimates for 1979-80, tabled two months later on February 19, 1979, contained no reference to a Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The estimates for fisheries programs remained under the Department of the Environment, which continued to be responsible for them until the Government Reorganization Act, 1979 came into force.

[Translation]

My examination of the records of the House found no deviation from this practice. The Main Estimates reflect the existing structure of government at the time that they are presented to the House.

[English]

I must conclude then, that the form of the main estimates 2004-05 not only respects the requirement of the Standing Orders and the principles set out by Mr. Speaker Jerome, but also conforms with what has been the practice of the House during previous reorganization exercises.

I therefore rule that there does not exist a prima facie breach of privilege in the present case.

I would like once again to thank the hon. member for St. John's West for raising this matter. Given the renewed importance that the scrutiny of the estimates has taken on both sides of the House, his close attention to questions of this kind is of benefit to all hon. members.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 240 petitions.

* * *

● (1520)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVANTS DISCLOSURE PROTECTION ACT

Hon. Denis Coderre (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Minister responsible for la Francophonie and Minister responsible for the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-25, an act to establish a procedure for the disclosure of wrongdoings in the public sector, including the protection of persons who disclose the wrongdoings.

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

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr.

Speaker, I very much appreciate having this opportunity to address the House on a subject that directly affects every Canadian: our agriculture industry.

Starting with the farmer who produces our food right up to Canadians and others who consume what our farmers produce, food and its production deserve our highest attention.

From a consumer point of view, we want an industry that produces safe food of the highest quality and in a manner that respects the environment. From a producer point of view, we want to be able to satisfy those demands while running a profitable business, a business I might add that contributes to an industry worth over 8% of Canada's GDP.

Keeping agriculture strong in Canada has to be and is a government responsibility. Agriculture, unlike other industries, is subject to forces beyond its control that can have a devastating effect on production and therefore on the health of the industry.

We have recently gone through a few years of severe drought in the west. There are still pockets where drought conditions prevail. The last year has seen the BSE situation severely affect our cattle industry. In addition, in the normal course of running a farm operation, responding to the demands of consumers and the markets means higher input costs.

To take the last point first, I remind my colleagues that the government, working with the provinces and territories and the industry, is in the process of implementing the agriculture policy framework. The programs rolling out across Canada are designed to assist Canadian producers to keep our industry number one at producing what consumers want. That is the best way to strengthen anyone's bottom line.

In the meantime, as I mentioned earlier, there are always unforeseen calamities that have to be dealt with as they arise. That is when we have to be ready to provide financial assistance. The new agriculture policy includes a provision for long term business risk management, one that is fair for producers and fair for Canadian taxpayers.

We are in the process of making the switch from previous ad hoc assistance programs to programs that can deal more efficiently with programs over the long term.

However, recognizing the very difficult circumstances producers are now facing, they need interim assistance until they can take full advantage of these new programs. That is why just a few short hours ago the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food announced almost \$1 billion in new funding to assist producers at this difficult time.

Routine Proceedings

The transitional industry support program has two components. The first will provide \$680 million directly to producers of cattle and other ruminants who have faced prolonged closure of the Canada-U.S. border, which was related to two North American cases of BSE. The cattle portion of the investment will involve direct payments to cattle producers of \$80 per eligible bovine animal on inventory as of December 31, 2003. This includes dairy heifers but excludes mature bulls and cows.

The second component provides general transition payments totalling \$250 million to producers of all eligible commodities, including the cattle industry across Canada. This funding will be delivered as a direct payment to producers based on their past income information and will act as a bridge to the new Canadian agriculture income stabilization program. I will say a bit more about this program in a few moments.

This morning's announcement also included \$65 million to cover the federal government's share of the shortfall for the 2002 claim year under the Canadian farm income program. This is in addition to the \$435 million already allocated by the federal government, and will enable the program to respond to the record number of claims in 2002.

This latest investment should not come as any surprise because it is but one step in a series of measures the government has taken to respond to an industry that has been hit hard in the past couple of years.

Let me just remind my hon. colleagues of some recent measures that have helped the industry. During 2003, producers received almost \$5 billion in financial assistance from governments. This includes over \$3 billion through federal-provincial cost shared programs such as crop insurance, the net income stabilization account and the Canada farm income program. The federal-provincial BSE recovery program, which delivered some \$426 million to cattle producers, and the federal funding of \$445 million to help producers make the transition to new programs like CAIS were also part of this record amount of assistance.

We have also implemented the cull animal program which, with provincial participation, could see up to \$200 million paid out to producers this year. With respect to this program, we removed the sale for slaughter requirements allowing producers to access funds even sooner. In addition, we moved the original deadline back to March 12, 2004, so that even more producers could register their herds to benefit from the program.

• (1525)

Producers are now in the process of signing up for the Canadian agricultural income stabilization program, or CAISP. At this crucial time, they will be able to take advantage of the enhanced disaster coverage the program offers.

CAISP provides producers with protection from small and large declines in income, including disaster situations, such as the ones farmers are undergoing at the moment. Interim payments are now going out under CAISP and full payments will be going out beginning this summer.

With CAISP, for the first time ever, Canadian farmers will have permanent funding for disaster coverage. This allows the industry to

know in advance what the support will be and to better plan for the future.

At the same time, we are working to make CAISP better. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food announced in February that we would be giving some more breathing room to producers by rolling back the deposit deadline to December 31 of this year. Farmers also now have until April 30 to select a protection level for both the 2003 and 2004 production years.

These changes apply to those provinces where CAISP is delivered federally. They are made with the expectation that all provinces will sign on to some new features that we are proposing to CAISP, namely coverage of negative margins, higher caps and simplified deposit.

I can assure the House that the government is fully committed to ensuring that CAISP and all programs under the agricultural policy framework continue to meet farmers' needs.

An annual review will look at business risk management programming and all other facets of the new policy framework.

Business risk management programming takes on particular significance at this time of financial hardship, but work continues around other chapters of the agricultural policy framework. Let me just mention, for example, a new initiative under the renewal chapter that will help Canadian producers capture opportunity and plan the future of their businesses.

Under specialized business planning services, a federal-provincial partnership, farmers can access funds to help pay for the services of a business planning professional to prepare detailed farm business plans focused on diversification, marketing, human resources, expansion, risk management or succession. Individual farmers can qualify for up to 50% of the eligible costs up to \$8,000.

Financial assistance provided by the government to producers is essential, but the government's role goes much further than payouts.

We have seen this clearly with the current BSE situation that has kept borders closed to our beef and cattle. This is the most pressing trade issue facing our industry, and strenuous efforts have been made to get borders reopened to cattle and other affected animals because this affects more than cattle. It affects sheep, deer, llamas, alpacas and others.

Our efforts are bearing fruit. Since last May, a number of countries have moved to rescind some or all of their temporary measures, but clearly more must be done, and we are committed to doing everything necessary to get our trade relationships back on track.

Routine Proceedings

Canada will continue to push for the trade of virtually all live cattle. We are also pressing for a full resumption of trade for other ruminants, including sheep, goats, cervids and camelids.

I share the optimism of my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, that the Americans will move soon to open their border to live animals. The BSE risk in Canada is exactly the same as in the United States and we have both taken equivalent measures to mitigate the risk for both human and animal health.

This argument has been carried south by a whole raft of people, starting with the Prime Minister and on down to the officials level. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food will be in Washington, D.C. the day after tomorrow to meet with U.S. Secretary Veneman. I do not think we have to ponder very hard to know exactly what message he will be conveying to her.

Beyond the work we are doing with our trading partners to resolve this particular situation, there is Canada's participation in the agricultural negotiations at the WTO. Throughout the negotiations—and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food was able to reiterate this message at a recent Cairns Group meeting in Costa Rica—Canada has stressed that a balanced, rules-based approach to the negotiations is the best way forward.

We continue to press for more movement on the question of cuts to trade distorting domestic subsidies and that the United States and the European Union need to send clear signals that they are willing to do more on this front.

I can assure the House and all Canadians that our commitment to moving forward on talks is as strong as it has ever been.

As the talks continue in Geneva, the Government of Canada and our trade team will continue to work with industry stakeholders to achieve a deal that is in the best interests of Canadian farmers.

Our efforts on behalf of Canada's agriculture industry, whether they involve financial assistance or programming or negotiations, must be made with the best interests of the industry at heart. Our level of dedication and commitment to the industry can be no less than the dedication and commitment shown by farmers across this land who carry on a tradition of excellence that all Canadians take pride in.

Our farmers set a high standard and I am proud to say that this government is living up to it.

• (1530)

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to reply to the minister's speech on what happened earlier today.

When I saw the photo op happening out in Lethbridge I thought it was very fitting that when the Prime Minister stepped up to the mic to begin speaking all the cattle behind him moved back. They seemed to sense what was coming.

It was quite a thing watching all those Liberal wannabes and a few who tried and were burned in the nomination process and so on, trying to somehow come to grips with ignoring the problem for 10 months, not really knowing what to do.

What have the Liberals done to date? They have made announcement after announcement. They have pledged cash that they have never delivered. They have talked about working with our trading partners but, of course, are afraid to go there because of a few things that have been said and done over the last little while.

It is great to see money being allocated to agriculture. It is the third largest contributor to the GDP in the country and it needs to be backstopped at this time. They are under severe stress and strain. However the government has just not been up to the task. It has fallen far short.

We finally get the hint that an election is in the air when the government starts to address agriculture. It ignores it always between election points. When we start to see it come around and talk about backstopping agriculture, what a great thing it is for the country and it talks about the primary producers of our safe, secure food, we know that an election is not too far off.

Members can call me a cynic but as a farmer I have seen it happen year after year and election term after election term.

Let us analyze what the Liberals have announced in the last little while or maybe we will start with what they announced but have never been able to deliver. We have been seized at the agricultural committee with going after somebody who took all the money. The Liberals announced all the cash going out to producers and so on but none of it got there. Somebody had to rip it off and those guys are the kings of rip-offs. They understand that concept so right away they tell us that somebody took advantage. Where did the money go?

When we had the agricultural bureaucrats before us at committee they told us that of the \$5 billion the Liberals said went into agriculture last year, just over \$1 billion actually went anywhere. The other \$4 billion is still sitting in somebody's departmental allowance over there. That is the guy who is hanging on to the cash, not the packers, the producers or the feedlots. None of those folks who really needed it got it.

They announced another \$50 million to clean out the freezers of the packers but even the Agriculture Canada numbers on that said that only \$9.9 million of that went out, less than 20%.

We cannot say that the packers ripped us off. Sure they are enjoying some profits at this point but they certainly had none up until now. The government's meddling really did not help.

We saw a lot of the farm groups. The finance minister stood up and said that the head of the CFA was there. Just a minute. He is a Liberal nominee who did not make it. He talked about the beef export federation guy who was there, Ted Haney. Wonderful. He is going to run in Calgary. That is a suicide mission for a Liberal, and I welcome him to it.

Routine Proceedings

I have little or no respect for those gentlemen any more in that they are not representing their farm groups because the farmers they supposedly represent call my office to say that they do not agree with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association on this issue. It says that it has 90,000 members. It is because it gets my check-off every time I sell an animal. It is not because I joined up.

There are not a lot of folks out there who belong to these organizations. Members should try to look for an actual list. It is probably about as secure as the Liberal one in a lot of these contested nominations.

There are problems with all of these announcements. Somehow the message gets out in the media in Toronto and to consumers across the country that all this big money is going into agriculture. There is not a farmer or rancher out there who has benefited from any of this. It just has not gone where it was supposed to go.

In the new announcement today the government talked about \$65 million to top up CFIP. That is a 2002 program to cover the 2001-02 bad year we had out there. That program was announced two to three years ago and the government is just now sending out the money.

It is no wonder the banks and financial institutions are getting a little shaky. They cannot count on the government to deliver what it promised so it is finally topping that up. That is good news. That should have been done two years ago. It never should have been delayed.

There was the \$250 million transition to the CAIS program. It is supposed to be workable in the fall of 2004. That sucker was supposed to be up and workable in April 2003. We are almost coming up to a year past on that one.

The \$1.1 billion allocated to the APF for 2003 is still sitting on the shelves over there, so I am sure that some of that money is being recycled into this announcement.

• (1535)

The Liberals talk about \$5 billion going out. It never went anywhere. If we were to look at the final numbers for 2003 we would see negative \$13 million income for agriculture; all commodities, all sectors coast to coast. They lost \$13 million and they supposedly put in \$5 billion but it did not get out of the benches. That is the problem. Even the agriculture bureaucrats say "that only \$1 billion left". Is it creative accounting over there? Yes, at best.

This transition to the fall of 2004 is an advance on an advance. Someone will claw that back. It will come out of the money that was allocated in 2003-04, which is already a year out of date. A lot of my guys out there are starving for cash. What is hurting the whole agriculture enterprise is cashflow. This will not necessarily help, although I hope it does. I hope I am proven wrong that I am a cynic because I really hope it helps. I have farmer after farmer calling me day after day saying that they are done, that they cannot do it this year.

The government says that it can get some cheques out in April. How big will they be? We do not know. Who will qualify? We do not know. Until those details are published along with this, this is just another announcement long on political rhetoric and really short on details.

There are problems with all of these things. The federal component of crop insurance last year was \$194 million. Saskatchewan, as a province, has a deficit in crop insurance of \$500 million. We are a long way apart. The federal government is not paying its fair share, sort of like health care. The premiums in Saskatchewan are going up 30% on average and the coverage is going down 4% to 5% because the cashflow is not there. The federal commitment is not there. It is not sustainable.

We are seeing some announcements here that are tied to an upcoming election. It has very little to do with backstopping an industry in crisis from coast to coast. Members can call me a cynic, but I think it is political opportunism over on that side and I am really sorry to say that it will probably not help my producers who need it in a desperate way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would call the announcement by the minister very disappointing, because I think it is electoral manoeuvring. For many weeks now, agricultural producers, particularly those in Quebec, have been asking the federal government for substantial assistance that would enable them to get out of this black hole.

We must consider the importance of this industry in Canada. It represents 8% of the GDP. It involves men and women who make a living by farming and raise their children on the income generated by the land. Thus, it is very important.

Once again, the Liberal government has missed the target, especially in Quebec. Why? It is the same thing with regard to employment insurance. Programs are levelled horizontally, have very little effect in any region, and cause thousands of jobs to be lost. The same is true in the softwood lumber crisis. Once again, here is a program that has missed its target and is causing job losses in the regions of Quebec as well.

According to the minister, this is a \$1 billion program, while the figures add up to \$680 million. This sum will help cattle producers to survive but not to improve their lot or make up for losses. It will only enable them to survive.

Worse yet, according to Statistics Canada data on herds, Quebec will probably receive only 7.5% of this money, which is roughly \$50 million and not nearly enough. However, the Prairies should receive nearly half a billion dollars, with \$280 million going to Alberta alone.

The Liberal government has not improved its assistance for producers of cull, which is very important in Quebec. Furthermore, that was one of the major things Quebec had expected from such a plan.

Today, the announcement was indeed substantial for cattle farmers in western Canada. However, the problem is that Quebec dairy farmers are victims of the mad cow crisis and are not receiving a dime from the government today.

Routine Proceedings

The existing program compensates only up to \$80 a head of cull and covers roughly only a quarter of the estimated loss. This assistance should have been substantially increased to reach a reasonable level.

In addition, the program in place covers only 16% of the herd, while roughly 25% of the animals become cull each year and are sent to slaughter. In other words, only two-thirds of the animals are covered by protection that is already insufficient.

Quebec farmers who are victims of the discovery of mad cow in Alberta see farmers in the west being helped today by the federal government, yet they are not receiving reasonable compensation.

If Quebec were sovereign and had all its tax points, we could decide for ourselves the best way to support our farmers. Unfortunately, our taxes for the most part come from Ottawa. We have to fight to use our money the way we see fit and in a way that best suits our specific needs.

Farmers in Quebec never would have been penalized by the mad cow crisis that started in Alberta if Quebec had been sovereign, since that would have been a problem outside Quebec. In addition, farmers would be able to rely on their government, the Government of Quebec, to provide them with adequate support, if necessary.

Today Quebec farmers must be saying that the federal government does not serve them very well and that it must extend its assistance to include cull, since it has a duty to help Quebec farmers too.

• (1540)

[*English*]

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today on this important issue. For our part, we in this party believe in criticism of the government on programs when criticism is due and praise when it is warranted.

Notwithstanding that there are a lot of questions about the program that has been unveiled today, on balance it is praiseworthy and a step in the right direction for farmers who have been beleaguered in this country for far too many years.

What is significant about this program, as I understand it, is that it is not a 60:40 program. Let me explain what I mean by that. For the past 10 years, the Chrétien government had insisted that because there was a joint jurisdiction in agriculture between the provinces and the territories as well as the federal government, all of the programming had to be paid 40% by the provinces and territories and 60% by the government.

This was even when the issue was strictly on trade related items. As we know, provincial governments do not sit at the table when they are negotiating trade deals. We always thought it was a canard. It was an unsustainable argument. What is particularly encouraging, as I understand today's announcement, is that it will not be requiring the provincial governments to pony up 40% of the money that will flow to the farmers, particularly those in the cattle industry.

When we think of provinces like Saskatchewan, which has 40% of the arable land in this country, or the neighbouring Province of Manitoba, both of them have a large cattle herd and a small tax base. Both of them have indicated that if it were required, if 40% of the

money were required from provincial governments, that they would not be in a position to pay their farmers or enter the program.

This is definitely a step in the right direction and welcome news for an industry that has been devastated since the border closed as a result of the single case of BSE that was discovered in Alberta on May 20, 2003.

On the 60:40 program, I hope that this is a signal that the government has backed away because previous governments had never taken this idea of joint jurisdiction and therefore 60:40 funding seriously. It was only when the previous government of Mr. Chrétien brought in those programs and insisted on it for more than a decade. We certainly hope it is a signal of improvements to come.

My colleague from Winnipeg North Centre said it is clear that farmers no longer pray simply for rain; they also pray for elections. To that extent I agree with the member from the Conservative Party who was noting the same point. With the federal election in the offing, all of a sudden the government is doing something for farmers whom they largely ignored, not just for the past couple of years as the statement said, but indeed for a long time before that.

The chair of the Treasury Board noted in his comments that the government wanted the border re-opened to live cattle exports as quickly as possible. I agree with that, but would qualify it by saying in the very short term. I think it is totally unsustainable that we should be shipping live cattle to packing plants in the United States instead of doing the slaughtering, and producing the boneless and boxed meat here in Canada and providing decent jobs for Canadians in the meat packing industry. It is akin to shipping raw logs to Japan or elsewhere in the world and buying back finished lumber. It is a crazy system.

The Canadian cattle industry is far too integrated with its American counterpart. We need to have some spaces in our togetherness. We need to do things a little bit differently.

• (1545)

We ought to be looking at eliminating bovine growth hormone and eliminating all animal feed to all animals, not just to ruminants in order that we can ship products to other countries that now do not take our products.

However, that is a debate for another day. Overall, this caucus is pleased with the announcement of today and particularly the fact that the provinces would not have to pony up that money. We hope that is a sign of future things to come.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-494, an act to amend the Criminal Code (child pornography, child prostitution and child corruption).

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Saint-Jean for his support of this bill to amend the Criminal Code to provide for a minimum punishment of imprisonment for offences relating to child pornography, to child prostitution or to child corruption. Our children are, of course, our most precious asset. They are also extremely vulnerable.

What I want with this bill is for the legislators in this House to send a very clear message to the judiciary indicating that they must be extremely severe in sentencing those who prey on children.

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

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 7, 14, 15, 16, 23, 24, 26, 34, 35, 41 and 44.

[Text]

Question No. 7—**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:**

With respect to Auditor General Sheila Fraser's statement in her letter of November 6, 2003: "Earlier this year I advised the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts that our Office will consider a value-for-money audit on the firearms program when the program has been operating at a steady state, which Justice Canada has indicated could take three or four years." (a) how long will it take and how much will it cost to fully implement the firearms program; (b) how much will it cost to maintain the program every year after it is fully implemented; (c) how much will the direct and indirect costs be for all government departments and agencies; (d) how much will all transfers to the provinces and municipalities cost; (e) how much will the contracts with private companies cost; (f) how much will all grants and contributions cost; (g) what are the "major additional costs" identified by the Auditor General; namely compliance costs and enforcement costs, up to this date and what will they be in the future; and (h) what have been and will be the costs to the economy?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): With almost 2 million Canadians licensed to own firearms and almost 7 million firearms registered, the bulk of the initial program set-up has been accomplished. As reported in the Department of Justice's 2002-03 performance report, total federal government program costs to March 31, 2003, were \$814 million. Approved Canada Firearms Centre funding for the current fiscal year which will end March 31, 2004, is \$116 million. Costs of other government departments will be accumulated and reported as part of the CAFCS's 2003-04 performance report.

The Government is committed to delivering the firearms program so that it can continue to meet its important public safety objectives in the most cost-effective manner.

Question No. 14—**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:**

William V. Baker, Commissioner of Firearms, testified before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on October 23, 2003 that the gun registry provides "a tool for police to trace firearms", that "it does help police solve crimes and we do have incidents of this by being able to trace the origin of the firearm recovered from a crime scene", and that police are "...using that information to help them, but it can help enforce a court order."; since the government has been registering firearms since 1934: (a) what is the total number of attempted firearms traces; (b) what is the total number of successful firearms traces; (c) what is the total number of crimes that were solved as a result of these successful traces; (d) what is the total number of court orders enforced using the information from the gun registry;

and (e) what is the total number of registered and unregistered firearms seized as a result of the enforcement of these court orders?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): The national firearms tracing program was initiated in 1974, in cooperation with the U.S. alcohol, tobacco and firearms, ATF, tracing center. The primary goal of the program is to contribute to keeping Canadians safe and secure by providing necessary information to law enforcement authorities on firearms seized in the course of criminal investigations. Assistance is also provided to and by the U.S. ATF tracing center.

In implementing the program, the national firearms tracing unit was established. The unit currently consists of three RCMP regular members and remains an integral part of Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, CISC.

The national firearms tracing unit assists investigators in identifying owners of firearms and provides further information to police agencies regarding unregistered firearms such as: point of origin, name of retailer, name of purchaser.

In regard to a) in 2003, the national firearms tracing unit received 8,726 firearms tracing requests: 7,001 from Canadian law enforcement agencies; 1,471 from the U.S.; and 254 from international agencies. In 2004, up to February 13, the national firearms tracing unit received 1,717 tracing requests: 1,600 from Canadian law enforcement agencies; 99 from the U.S., and 18 from international agencies.

In regard to b) according to the national firearms tracing unit, there were 4,908 successful firearms traces made from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003. Successful is defined as law enforcement authorities being provided with information on the firearm's history to assist in their investigations. Firearms without serial number, caliber or make cannot be traced.

In regard to c), d) and e) the national firearms tracing unit provides an operational service to law enforcement authorities, domestic and international. Follow-up information as to the use of a firearm trace result is not required by the unit; therefore CISC has no statistics for these questions. There is no agency in Canada, not even Statistics Canada, that can provide this type of information. The information would need to be collected by reviewing all files from all law enforcement agencies in the country who request a trace, which would be extremely labour intensive.

Question No. 15—**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:**

On February 16, 1995, Justice Minister Allan Rock stated in the House of Commons (Hansard, page 9708), "Registration will assist us to deal with the scourge of domestic violence." For each year since 1995: (a) what is the total number of domestic homicides; (b) what is the total number of domestic homicides committed with firearms, by type of firearm and whether the firearm was registered or not; (c) how many of the suspected murderers were licensed to own firearms; and (d) in each case in which the homicide was committed with a registered firearm, why did the gun registry fail to prevent the murder?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): The Canadian firearms program is an important element of the federal government's overall public safety efforts. The deadline for the licensing of individuals passed on December 31, 2000, and the deadline for the registration of firearms passed on December 31, 2002. The program is now beginning to enter the full implementation ongoing operations phase. Nonetheless, since 1998 more than 12,000 firearms licences have been refused or revoked in view of public safety concerns and to respond to the potential for violence or injury.

The government is committed to delivering the firearms program so that it can continue to meet its important public safety objectives in the most cost effective manner.

Question No. 16—Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:

—Given that the government has required the mandatory registration of handguns since 1934, how does it justify its past, current and planned spending on a long-gun registry when Statistics Canada's Annual Homicide Reports for 2000 (Table 6, page 9) and 2002 (Table 8, page 16) show that the use of handguns in firearm homicides has been steadily increasing from 26.9% in 1974 to 63.6% in 2002, and that, conversely, firearm homicides with rifles and shotguns, which only started to be registered on December 1, 1998, dropped steadily from 65.8% to 24.8% over the same 28-year period?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): The Canadian firearms program is one of the key contributors to the government's goal of enhancing public safety and security for Canadians.

On February 21, 2003, the Minister of Justice, together with the Solicitor General of Canada, announced an action plan to improve management, enhance service delivery, and increase transparency and accountability. The program's action plan is being implemented successfully by the firearms centre. There have been important improvements in program efficiency and management over the past year. We are building on these improvements.

The government remains committed to delivering this important public safety program in the most cost effective manner possible.

Question No. 23—Ms. Libby Davies:

Do Canada and the United States have a fishing treaty and, if so, what are the relevant details?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Canada has a long history of fishing treaties with the United States, dating back to Empire Treaties that were negotiated on Canada's behalf by Great Britain. These include agreements such as the 1912 agreement between the United Kingdom and the United States respecting the North Atlantic fisheries, which prescribed the method of promulgating fisheries regulations and the delimitation of certain bays on Canada's east coast.

Aside from historic treaties, Canada currently has seven bilateral fishing treaties with the United States, which are as follows:

Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America on Pacific hake/whiting: This recently negotiated agreement was signed by Canada and the United States on November 21, 2003, in Seattle, Washington, but is not yet in force. It prescribes the formation of scientific and management

committees for the purpose of determining the total allowable catch of Pacific hake/whiting and the respective harvest quotas for Canada and the United States.

Agreement between the Government of Canada and Government of the United States of America on fisheries enforcement: This treaty was signed on September 26, 1990, in Ottawa, Canada and entered into force on December 16, 1991. It aims to improve the enforcement of fisheries laws and regulations within both countries' respective internal waters, territorial seas and 200-mile zone.

Treaty between the Government of Canada and Government of the United States of America concerning Pacific salmon: The Pacific salmon treaty was signed in Ottawa, Canada, on January 28, 1985, and came into force on March 18, 1985. The treaty obliges Canada and the United States to conduct fisheries so as to provide for optimum production and equitable of salmon stocks and establishes the Pacific salmon commission, a body that directs the joint management of transboundary Pacific salmon stocks and works for the protection and management of Pacific salmon runs. The treaty also includes four annexes, creating fishery panel committees and fishery regimes to regulate fisheries activities in the regions specified by the treaty, and a memorandum of understanding which provides for each country to receive benefits equivalent to the production of salmon originating in its waters. Also, an agreement respecting Yukon River salmon was reached in 2002 and incorporated as chapter 8 of the Pacific salmon agreement.

Treaty between the Government of Canada and Government of the United States of America on Pacific coast albacore tuna vessels and port privileges: This Treaty was signed in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. on May 26, 1981, and came into force on July 29, 1981. It was amended in 1997. The treaty allows each party to engage in fishing for albacore tuna in waters under the jurisdiction of the other party that are seaward of the territorial seas, and to land, transship or sell their catches in specific ports of the other party. An amendment to this treaty was recently negotiated, but is not yet in force, which provides for annual consultation between the parties on albacore tuna stocks and limitations on the amount of fishing by each party's vessels in the waters of the other party.

Convention on Great Lakes fisheries between Canada and the United States of America: This convention was signed on September 10, 1954 in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. and entered into force on October 11, 1955. The convention addresses the decline in productivity of some of the Great Lakes fisheries and seeks to prevent further serious damage to some of these fisheries caused by the parasitic sea lamprey. The convention provides for the establishment of the Great Lakes fishery commission to co-ordinate and implement effective research, conservation and management programs.

Convention between Canada and the United States of America for the preservation of the halibut fishery of the northern Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea: This treaty was signed on March 2, 1953, in Ottawa, Canada, and entered into force on October 28, 1953. The treaty continued the international Pacific halibut commission (the origin of which was the 1923 convention for the preservation of the halibut fisheries of the northern Pacific Ocean), a body that conducts stock assessments of, and performs biological research on, Pacific halibut.

Routine Proceedings

Exchange of notes (March 4 and April 30, 1948) between Canada and the United States of America regarding sanitary practices in the shellfish industries and related matters: This agreement was made by an exchange of notes on March 4, 1948, and April 30, 1948, and came into force on April 30, 1948. It aims to improve sanitary practices in the shellfish industries of Canada and the United States and to facilitate the exchange of information with reference to endorsement of shellfish certifications.

Question No. 24—Ms. Libby Davies:

What would be the penalty to the government for cancellation of its contract with Lockheed Martin for the conducting of the Canadian census of 2006 by Statistics Canada?

Hon. Stephen Owen (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): The current contract does not contain a provision for a penalty per se for cancellation. However, there are two possible scenarios for cancelling the current contract with Lockheed Martin Canada: 1) Terminating the contract for convenience; and 2) Exercising the contract's Exit Plan—Off Ramp. The main intent of the Exit Plan is to provide for a transition, logically after the Census Test in 2004, in the event that Canada decides not to proceed with contracting with Lockheed Martin Canada for the subsequent systems development, hardware procurement, printing and follow-on operations contract. The costs resulting from this scenario would be dependent upon how Canada wanted to move forward. The options are: for Statistics Canada to operate the system developed by the contractor, expected in March 2006, or to totally abandon the developed system.

PWGSC has been advised by Statistics Canada that if the contract were to be cancelled now, it would not be possible for Statistics Canada to deliver a full comprehensive census. Statistics Canada might only be able to collect basic demographic information and only provide population estimates required for the fiscal transfer program. The agency could not provide the information needed by a number of statutes and regulations (Canada pension plan, official languages, multiculturalism, employment equity regulations, etc.) that require a comprehensive census. Statistics Canada is exploring the possibility of re-scoping the contract with Lockheed Martin Canada following the census test. The proposed re-scoping of the contract would permit a comprehensive census to be delivered as well as ensuring that Statistics Canada alone would process the completed questionnaires.

Should Canada terminate the current contract for convenience, the contractor would be entitled to be paid the cost for all completed and partially completed work and capital expenditures, as well as all cost of the termination of the contract including the cancellation of obligations incurred by the contractor. The actual cost would be dependent upon when the contract was terminated and could be as much as the cost to complete the contract. The cost to terminate the current contract could reach \$12-15 million.

Question No. 26—Mr. Gilles Duceppe:

With respect to HRDC's payment of grants and subsidies, in the 75 ridings in Quebec, for fiscal years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, can the government provide the following information: (a) the name of the recipient organization; (b) the date; (c) the amount; (d) the name of the program; and (e) the federal riding of the recipient organization?

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): The data concerning the grants and contributions payments for all of the constituencies, as of fiscal year 1997-98, is available on-line, at the following addresses: 1997-98/1998-99/1999-2000: http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/dept/reports/2_lmya.shtml; 2000-01: http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/dept/reports/pay-paie/00-01/note_00-01.shtml; 2001-02: http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/dept/reports/pay-paie/01-02/note_01-02.shtml; 2002-03: http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/dept/reports/pay-paie/02-03/note_02-03.shtml

Data related to fiscal year 2003-04 will be available after the tabling of the Public Accounts of Canada in November 2004.

Question No. 34—Mr. Rob Merrifield:

With regard to Parks Canada's attempts to close the Jasper and Banff airstrips, what is the total accumulated cost to the Crown of the court proceedings in this matter?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): The cost to the Crown for court proceedings related to Parks Canada's attempts to close the Jasper and Banff airstrips is \$26,725.07.

Question No. 35—Mr. Rob Merrifield:

With regard to natural health products: (a) on what legal grounds are federal government officials prohibiting the importation of natural health products from the United States; and (b) can the government prohibit the importation of foods or natural health products from the United States or Mexico under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and, if so, what are the relevant provisions of NAFTA?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): As of January 1, 2004, the natural health products regulations came into force and apply to all natural health products, NHPs. The regulations set out the requirements for the importation of NHPs. Sections A.01.040 to A.01.044 of the food and drug regulations that govern importation are incorporated in the regulations.

In accordance with section 100 of the natural health products regulations, the importation of natural health products, NHPs, that are in violation of the regulations or the Food and Drugs Act are prohibited. These products cannot be sold or imported in Canada.

According to section A.01.044 of the food and drugs regulations, a natural health product that is in violation may be imported if relabelling or modifying of the natural health product would be in conformity with the regulations or the Food and Drugs Act to allow for lawful sale in Canada. Importers using this provision must: a) notify the Health Products Food Branch Inspectorate, HPFBI, of the proposed importation; and b) relabel or modify the natural health product as necessary for lawful sale in Canada within three months after the importation or period of time specified by Health Canada.

Also, according to Health Canada's importation of human use drugs for personal use enforcement directive, individuals may seek drugs for personal use up to three months.

Routine Proceedings

The Natural Health Products Directorate has consulted with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, DFAIT, and the World Trade Organization, WTO, on technical barriers to trade with NAFTA. In addressing foreign trade issues, domestic and imported NHPs are treated equally to ensure a level playing field under the regulations with respect to product license, site license and good manufacturing practices, GMPs, requirements.

Provisions in international agreements on importation of unauthorized products are consistent with the respective requirements under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT, and NAFTA.

Question No. 41—**Mr. John Duncan:**

For the fiscal year 2002-2003, what is the detailed breakdown of the government funds allocated to the Indian Taxation Advisory Board?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): For fiscal year 2002-03 the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, DIAND, based on approved budgets and work plans, has provided funding to the Indian taxation advisory board, ITAB, as outlined in the attached chart:

ACTIVITY	ALLOCATION (\$)	DETAILS
Annual Core Funding Agreement	1,734,178	—support to first nations exercising real property taxation and those working to develop tax laws; including review of all draft initial and annual property tax by-laws and providing recommendations to the minister; providing training and software for local tax administration; negotiating multi-party tax agreements, for example, CEPA; and dispute resolution services.
First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act - Institutional Development	1,500,000	—providing tax policy advice to DIAND and technical input to the drafting of Bill C-19; —assess legal issues associated with migration of the first nations tax system —consulting with first nations and taxpayers on the development of the bill —developing draft business plans to support implementation of a strengthened tax system
Fiscal and Statistical Management Act - Regulations Development	484,000	—consult with DIAND and other partners to advance regulations stemming from Bill C-19 —draft regulations include: procedures for by-law enforcement, property assessment appeals, and the assignment of rights and interests in reserve lands
Health Services Research	11,342	—development of a first nations-related research proposal pursuant to the World Health Organization, WHO, report on “Macroeconomic: Investing in Health for Economic Development”
Provincial/Territorial Social Services Delivery Mechanisms	61,821	—surveying variations in social services delivery arrangements from province to province and across the territories relative to DIAND service delivery policy
First Nations Interest-Based Mutual Gains Workshop	27,000	—information sharing sessions with taxing first nations, and broad discussions on topics such as alternative dispute mechanisms
TOTAL	3,818,341	

The annual audit of ITAB's financial statements, dated May 23, 2003, confirms that expenditures were in accordance with amounts given above.

Question No. 44—**Mr. Gerald Keddy:**

With regard to the Minister of Finance's statement in the House of Commons of Wednesday, February 4, 2004, will the government allow Nova Scotia woodlot owners to defer their income tax at 10 percent per year over the next ten years on the short-term salvage profit resulting from Hurricane Juan?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): The Government of Canada is continuing to assess whether it would be appropriate to target assistance specifically to woodlot owners through the tax system or other mechanisms.

As well, the Government of Canada has already begun to assist individuals and businesses affected by hurricane Juan. On October 20, 2003, the Government of Canada announced that it would provide financial assistance under the disaster financial assistance arrangements, DFAA, to the provinces of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Under the DFAA, the Government of Canada cost-shares with provinces eligible expenses incurred to repair the damage from a disaster. Provinces choose how to direct assistance to disaster victims through their programs and the Government of Canada makes payments to the provinces for a portion of the expense of those programs. On March 4, 2004, the hon. Geoff Regan, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, on behalf of the hon. Anne McLellan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, announced \$8 million in payments to the Province of Nova Scotia under the DFAA. These payments include \$4 million for the flooding which affected much of mainland Nova Scotia in spring of 2003 and \$4 million for the effects of hurricane Juan in September 2003.

* * *

● (1550)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 18, 19, 21, 25, 28, 29 and 31 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

[Text]

Question No. 3—Mr. Guy St-Julien:

Regarding the calculation of annual housing subsidies for the Cree of Eeyou Istchee—James Bay, Quebec, will the department: (a) review together with the Grand Council of the Cree, with full disclosure, and, if necessary, increase these subsidies; and (b) adjust payments for any arrears identified by the above-mentioned review?

Return tabled.

Question No. 4—Mr. Guy St-Julien:

In view of the fact that the Assembly of First Nations has recently announced that it plans to assume responsibility for the Indian Housing Program, will the Minister commit: (a) not to transfer any part of the housing program until a proper and complete assessment of housing needs is carried out in all First Nations communities; (b) to increase, in the interim, the subsidies to First Nations communities and to the Cree of Eeyou Istchee—James Bay; and (c) to adjust the amount of the subsidy once the survey of needs is complete?

Return tabled.

Question No. 8—Mr. John Williams:

With regard to performance pay for public servants in the Executive (EX) category and the Deputy Minister (DM) category in fiscal year 2002-2003: (a) for each department, agency or Crown corporation, how many employees received performance pay, broken down by EX category (e.g. EX-1, EX-2, etc.); (b) for each department, agency or Crown corporation, how many employees are there in each EX category; (c) for each department, agency or Crown corporation, how many employees received performance pay, broken down by DM category (i.e. DM-1, DM-2, etc.); (d) for each department, agency or Crown corporation, how many employees are there in each DM category; and (e) for each department, agency or Crown corporation, what was the total amount paid out in performance pay?

Return tabled.

Question No. 10—Mr. John Williams:

With regard to the rubric "Losses of Public Property Due to an Offence or Other Illegal Act" for the Department of National Defence as listed on page 3.25 of Volume II, Part II of the Public Accounts of Canada 2002-2003, and the following cases of theft: i) 5,532 cases of "theft of military kit" totalling \$208,538; ii) 1 case of "theft of transportation equipment" totalling \$206; iii) 2 cases of "theft of machinery" totalling \$7,195; iv) 8 cases of "theft of telecommunication equipment" totalling \$4,297; v) 22 cases of "theft of electronic equipment" totalling \$18,879; vi) 18 cases of "theft of technical equipment" totalling \$32,863; vii) 4 cases of "theft of tools" totalling \$4,898; viii) 5 cases of "theft of weapons" totalling \$1,146; ix) 1,013 cases of "theft of military specific equipment" totalling \$38,520; x) 33 cases of "theft of non-military specific equipment" totalling \$14,762; (a) what was stolen in each individual case; (b) what was the value of each individual item; (c) where was the location of the theft; and (d) were there any charges laid in the case?

Return tabled.

Question No. 12—Mr. John Cummins:

With regard to the use of the risk management of the antimalarial drug mefloquine by Health Canada and the Department of National Defence: (a) what antimalarial drugs have been administered to Canadian Forces personnel, giving the deployment and the number of personnel involved for each of the years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003; (b) is the administration of antimalarial drug always recorded in each soldier's medical record, (if not, indicate each time that its use was not recorded in each soldier's medical record and why); (c) has any soldier ever complained that the fact he was taking an antimalarial drug was not recorded in his medical record or the manner in which it was recorded; (d) name the adverse events involving Canadian Forces personnel that have been reported by year and by deployment; (e) how does the Canadian Forces document anti-malaria prophylaxis; (f) how many Canadian Forces members deployed abroad have committed suicide in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 (i) during the mission, (ii) following the mission, (iii) of these how many had been at some time administered mefloquine; (g) what adverse events were reported to Health Canada in each of the years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003; (h) name or describe each adverse event as recorded by Health Canada in each of the years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003; (i) how many of each of these adverse events were recorded by Health Canada in each of the years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003; and (j) which of the

adverse events reported to Health Canada in each of the years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 involved persons who had been administered the drug while in the Canadian Forces?

Return tabled.

Question No. 18—Mr. James Rajotte:

Since 2003, what grants, contributions, contracts, and/or loan guarantees made either through a crown corporation, department and/or agency of the government were received by the holdings of any the various versions of the "blind trust" of the Prime Minister, specifying the dollar amount, date made, reasons for funding/statement of work, and the present status of the grants, contribution and/or loan guarantee (whether repaid, partially repaid or unpaid) or in the case of the contract, whether the contract was fulfilled, and how it was tendered?

Return tabled.

Question No. 19—Mr. James Rajotte:

Since 1993, what sub-contracts made either through a crown corporation, department and/or agency of the government were received by the holdings of any the various versions of the "blind trust" of the Prime Minister, specifying the dollar amount, date made, statement of work, whether the contract was fulfilled, and how it was tendered?

Return tabled.

Question No. 21—Mr. James Rajotte:

Since 1993, and for each fiscal year since, with respect to advance tax rulings made by the government: (a) what departments make advance tax rulings; (b) which departments make policy on advance tax rulings; (c) what advance tax rulings were made as a result of a submission by the holdings of the "blind trust" of the Prime Minister; (d) what was the name of the company; (e) what was the value of the tax ruling; (f) did these ruling involve countries other than Canada; and (g) was there any correspondence between the Minister of Finance and/or anyone in his office concerning these rulings?

Return tabled.

Question No. 25—Mr. Pat Martin:

Pertaining to the recusal process for the Prime Minister by the Ethics Counsellor and put into place December 12, 2003, considering the current activities of Canada Steamship Lines and its holdings, in what specific matters involving which companies and holdings is the Prime Minister required to recuse himself to prevent a perceived or actual conflict of interest as outlined in the Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment Code for Public Office Holders?

Return tabled.

Question No. 28—Mr. Loyola Hearn:

How many times did the Finance Minister correspond with the Big Six Banks, (BMO Financial Group, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, National Bank of Canada, Royal Bank of Canada Financial Group, Bank of Nova Scotia and Toronto Dominion Bank Financial Group) and/or the small business loans branch at Industry Canada related to the Small Business Loans Act program, between 1997 to 2002, and of these exchanges, how many were related to individual loans, what companies were involved, and what was the value of each loan, its purpose, and its date?

Return tabled.

Question No. 29—Mr. Loyola Hearn:

How many times did the Finance Minister correspond with the Export Development Corporation between 1997 to 2002, and of these exchanges, how many were related to individual loans, what companies were involved, and what was the value of each loan, its purpose and its date?

Return tabled.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 31—Mr. Loyola Hearn:**

How many times did the Finance Minister correspond with the Business Development Bank of Canada between 1997 to 2002, and of these exchanges, how many were related to individual loans, what companies were involved, and what was the value of each loan, its purpose and its date?

Return tabled.

* * *

[English]

STARRED QUESTIONS

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Starred Questions Nos. 1, 2, 5, 32 and 33. I ask that the answers to Questions Nos. 1, 2, 5, 32 and 33 be printed in *Hansard* as if read.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

***Question No. 1—Mr. Guy St-Julien:**

Further to the filing by the Cree of Eeyou Istchee—James Bay, Quebec, under the dispute resolution provision of their 1995 Agreement with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs for the ongoing subsidization of the cost of operating the Cree local governments under the Cree/Naskapi of Quebec Act, of a request to have a panel created to adjudicate the renewal of the terms of the agreement, when will the minister appoint his nominee to this panel?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Jim McCarthy has been appointed as Canada's representative. Furthermore, the parties have agreed to appoint Justice Réjean Paul as the third panel member and its chair. Justice Paul intends to have an initial meeting with the parties in late March 2004. This panel must review the Cree complaint and submit recommendations to each party, pursuant to the provisions of the 1995 agreement between Canada and the James Bay Cree.

***Question No. 2—Mr. Guy St-Julien:**

With regard to the 1995 agreement with the Cree of Eeyou Istchee—James Bay, Quebec on operations and maintenance funding: (a) when will the minister honour his undertakings regarding the implementation of this agreement; (b) what measures does the minister intend to take to satisfy the financial obligations set forth in the agreement?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): The 1995 agreement with the Cree provided that Canada would allocate annual subsidies for operation of the Cree local governments under the Cree-Naskapi of Québec Act and this has been done since 1995 according to the agreement provisions. This agreement expired in 2001 but Canada has continued to provide the annual subsidies according to the terms of that agreement. Renewing the agreement was delayed in the last few years due to other negotiations and the extent of the new financial demands from the Cree, but the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will make this renewal a priority during 2004-2005.

***Question No. 5—Mr. Bill Casey:**

With respect to the transit of HMCS Victoria from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the reports of heat-related problems: (a) why did the engine room experience such high temperatures; (b) was the high temperature in the engine room related to environmental conditions; (c) was the submarine on the surface or was it submerged during these extreme heat readings in the engine room; (d) are the heat-related issues

a fleet-wide problem; (e) was the crew of HMCS Victoria ever in danger because of these high engine room temperatures; (f) what additional cooling equipment is required to allow the Victoria-class submarine to operate in tropical waters; and (g) what is the estimated cost to rectify extreme heat build-up in the engine rooms of the Victoria class submarines so that they can operate in warmer climates?

Hon. David Pratt (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): The answer is as follows: a) The engine room in the Victoria class submarines contains large diesel engines that operate, when required, in a confined space that receives minimal cooling air. Like all the machinery rooms in Canadian warships operating under tropical conditions, the peak temperatures were uncomfortable. Submarines pose the greatest challenge in this regard, since, by design, they do not have regular access to outside air. For this reason, along with most modern machinery spaces, the Victoria class submarines have an automated engine room and the need for the continuous presence of engine room operators is limited.

b) This was the Canadian Navy's first experience of operating a Victoria class submarine under tropical conditions. The data collected to date suggests that the environmental conditions, tropical or temperate, do not significantly influence the engine room temperature since the majority of outside air introduced to the space is devoted to supporting combustion in the diesel engines. Thus, the cooling and heating effects of outside air is limited.

c) The highest temperatures were recorded in the tropical environment immediately after the diesel engines were stopped and the submarine dived to its operational depth. The peak temperatures were also recorded in the highest part of the compartment adjacent to the hot engine exhaust manifold.

d) The temperatures experienced within the engine room in tropical conditions are not unique to the Victoria class submarines. They are consistent with temperature levels experienced in many diesel-electric submarine engine rooms.

e) Safety of the crew was of paramount importance for the commanding officer and crew exposure to the engine room temperatures was managed by the submarine's physician assistant. There were no heat stress related injuries during the transit.

f) The transit demonstrated that, although at times uncomfortable, the Victoria class submarines can safely operate in a tropical environment. The Navy will continue to examine options for improving localized equipment cooling, air conditioning, and living conditions within the submarines as future deployments may include operations in tropical areas of the world.

g) Since the engine room is automated, it is not a priority for major modifications to reduce the temperature under either temperate or tropical conditions. Options for improving the comfort in the accommodation spaces and operating stations are currently being considered. Working conditions in the engine room will be monitored and the crew's exposure to high temperatures will be managed in the same manner applied to many of our Canadian Forces members serving around the globe under similar conditions.

*Supply****Question No. 32—Mr. Bill Casey:**

With regard to the refit that HMCS Preserver is currently undergoing: (a) how long will it take to complete the refit; (b) when do the Canadian Armed Forces expect HMCS Preserver to begin operations again; (c) what is the total cost for the repainting, valve work, mechanical inspections and other associated work; and (d) does the government plan to replace all of Canada's logistic re-supply vessels and, if so, what is the expected cost to taxpayers?

Hon. David Pratt (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): The answer is as follows: a) The contract refit commenced on January 6 and is scheduled to be complete on November 19, 2004. When the Preserver returns to the Navy, an additional 8 weeks will be required for Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott to complete work related to the ship's systems.

b) Following refit and fleet maintenance work, the Preserver will begin a technical readiness program to evaluate the ship's major systems. It is anticipated that the ship and crew will be worked up to high readiness status, capable of full operational deployment, as early as August 2005.

c) Halifax Shipyard was awarded a contract for \$17,958,179.27 (HST included). Due to a work arising of \$45,429.73, HST included, the current value of the contract is \$18,003,609, HST included. Note: The contract includes provisions to open and inspect equipment. Should these inspections reveal requirements for additional work, the work would be considered a "work arising" to the original contract. Based on previous refits, "work arisings" represent between 30 and 35 percent of the value of the contract, a potential \$5.4 million - \$6.3 million increase to costs of known work.

d) The Government has not yet taken a decision regarding the replacement of Canada's logistic re-supply vessels.

***Question No. 33—Mr. John Herron:**

With regard to the Finance Department's regulations on employee stock purchase plans, are individuals participating in these programs charged income on the value of the shares they purchase, and, if so, what is the rationale?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): When an individual acquires a share under an employee stock purchase plan, and pays less for the share than would an ordinary investor acquiring an identical share at the same time on the open market, the Income Tax Act treats the difference as a taxable employment benefit.

The fact that an individual acquires company shares under an employee stock purchase plan at a discount is clearly a benefit that the individual enjoys by virtue of his or her employment status. The taxation of such benefits ensures that the tax system treats all financial benefits received by virtue of one's employment—whether paid in cash or in some other form—on a fair and equitable basis.

[*English*]

Hon. Roger Gallaway: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(b) to inform the House that the matter of the failure of the ministry to respond to Petition No. 3730014 is deemed referred to the Standing

Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 39(5) to inform the House that the matter of the failure of the ministry to respond to the following questions on the Order Paper is deemed referred to several standing committees of the House as follows: Question No. 6, standing in the name of the hon. member for Yellowhead to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts; Question No. 9, standing in the name of the hon. member for St. Albert to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates; and Question No. 20, standing in the name of the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

[*Translation*]

I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statement, government orders will be extended by 27 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam had the floor before question period. The hon. member has two minutes remaining in the time allotted for his remarks.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been investing wisely, but the return is only two minutes of my time. I also have to mention that when I first began speaking before question period, I failed to let the House know that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Calgary—Nose Hill.

In summation, the reason those of us in the official opposition put forward this motion is that the vast majority of Canadians are very much disappointed by the incumbent Prime Minister, his lack of a legislative agenda and the lack of any kind of direction for this country.

This country really does face some dynamic and important concerns and problems as we go ahead. We have some serious concerns with regard to infrastructure, housing, our armed forces, agriculture, trade, relations with the United States, relations with Europe, national defence, immigration, all sorts of issues. We have some profound public policy questions but instead, what do we see? In his first 100 days, we see the Prime Minister having photo ops with a piece of paper called Flat Mark. We see him doing photo ops in Lethbridge, Alberta with failed Liberal candidates. We see him doing all kinds of things rather than putting forward a substantive legislative agenda for a complicated G-8 nation facing serious struggles with urbanization, internationalism, globalization and an economy that is not nearly as strong as it should be for a country whose citizens are paying the taxes that they are.

Supply

With all that in mind, I am proud to stand with the new Conservative Party, with the new leader that we elected this past weekend, to provide Canadians with a new vision for a new agenda for this country. It is one that is based on the principles of lower taxes, less government, more freedom, democratic and parliamentary reform, and respecting the rights and powers of individuals to have more control over their lives. That is what the new Conservative Party is about. That is what our leader is about. That is what we will be presenting to Canadians in the next campaign as opposite to the tired, old, corrupt agenda of the Liberal Party of Canada and we are proud to do so.

With that, I am prepared to take any questions, should there be any.

• (1555)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I notice that the motion before us today from the Conservative Party talks about the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence. The member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam earlier took some issue with the member for Windsor—St. Clair, that somehow we were suggesting that all Conservative members along with the Liberal members could fess up, could own up to a long list of corruption. I think he pointed out that he was only seven years old when Mr. Mulroney was prime minister. I do not think there was a suggestion that all Conservative members belonged in that club. I would suggest that if he took the time to read a very good book, *On The Take* by Stevie Cameron, he would actually see a very interesting list of some of his predecessors.

There is actually a very interesting common thread between the Liberals and the old and the new Conservative Party and the old and the new Liberals. That is the very strong theme of cronyism that they share of having their friends and trading them back and forth and the corporate lobbyists.

I appreciate the comments of the hon. member, but I think he might want to do a little more historical reading to see the fine tradition that he and his party come from.

Mr. James Moore: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that if I am looking for some factual data and concrete analysis of Canadian politics and certainly with regard to numbers, Stevie Cameron will not be the first point of information that I will search.

What Canadians are looking at is the Auditor General's report tabled just a few weeks ago which highlighted an astonishing level of corruption that has been described as shocking. In fact, Michael Bliss, a professor of history at the University of Toronto, hardly a bastion of right wing conservatism, has said that this is the most corrupt government in Canadian history. This indeed says a lot, given some of the scandals that we have seen in this country, given some of the scandals we have seen with provincial governments, both NDP and in past history some Progressive Conservative governments and in fact some Liberal governments.

The point that I was making for my colleague from Vancouver East was that it is not responsible to say that all people, because they happen to pay \$10 and belong to a certain political party, are corrupt. I believe the NDP just passed 100,000 members nationally, something they are very proud of. The new Conservative Party has well over 250,000 members. The Liberal Party I believe has

close to 400,000 members. It is certainly not fair to say that therefore all of the people who are members of all of those parties, because they happen to identify with that ideology, are corrupt.

However, it is certainly responsible of the House to demand accountability. That is what the new Conservative Party is going to do. That is what we have been doing for the past couple of months. In fact it is what we have been doing for the past 10 years in practice as the official opposition.

In the next campaign the Canadian public will have, as I have said, a very simple, straightforward and clear choice. They can have the status quo Liberal government described as the most corrupt government in Canadian history that is spending more money than any government before in Canadian history, or they can vote for a new generation of leadership and a new national Conservative Party that is providing a new vision based on lower taxes, less government, more freedom, personal responsibility, strong national defence and a strong reform of our democratic system. Those are the choices in the coming campaign and I am proud to stand with this party.

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remember back in 1997 when I first came to the House, there was a situation where a Liberal fundraiser named Pierre Corbeil got hold of a list of companies that were receiving grants. He was basically shaking them down for cash saying "If you do not give \$10,000 to the Liberal Party of Canada, you are going to lose your grant". He was charged and convicted on four counts of influence peddling. I think what we saw at that point in 1997 was the tip of the iceberg, as it were.

I was wondering if my colleague might want to comment on the beginning of that scandal and the continuation of it as it has been culminating and growing every single day.

Mr. James Moore: Mr. Speaker, certainly if we look at the Auditor General's reports going back to Denis Desautels and even before that, and compare them to Sheila Fraser's report, there is an appearance that the Liberal Party has clearly learned nothing from the scandals of the past.

In closing, I did want to mention on the record that my colleague from Dewdney—Alouette has declared that he will not be running for re-election. I just wanted to say on the record that I am proud to call him a friend. He has been a fantastic member of Parliament. He is a fine gentleman and he has done a great job representing the riding immediately neighbouring mine. He will be sorely missed in the House and I think we are all proud to call him a friend.

• (1600)

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read again for those who may have just joined the debate this afternoon the motion that we are debating. It is an opposition motion put forward by my own party, the Conservative Party of Canada. The motion reads as follows:

Supply

That, given the lack of new legislation introduced by the Liberal government during the Third Session of this Parliament, this House recognize that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence, and has accordingly lost the confidence of this House.

First, I would like to address the issue that the government lacks any new legislation. Only six days after we resumed sitting in this new session of Parliament the government brought in closure. It cut off all debate. Why did it cut off all debate? It wanted to bring back wholesale all the legislation that had already been in place when Parliament adjourned in November. This is in spite of the fact that we had a new Prime Minister. This is in spite of the fact that the new Prime Minister had spent not months, but years of his life travelling the country talking about how much better it was going to be once he led the Liberal Party.

The Prime Minister spent years talking about what he was going to do, yet his first move was to bring back exactly the same discredited, in many cases fatally flawed, legislation that we had already been talking about for months and months. Not only did he bring back this legislation, but he brought it back with the hammer of closure. Imagine that. So devoid of ideas was the so-called new Liberal Prime Minister that he just had to fight and finally impose on Parliament the old agenda, the agenda brought in in this way in spite of his promises of correcting what he called the democratic deficit. What could possibly be democratic about forcing Parliament to simply regurgitate the old agenda?

At the end of February, about a month after the so-called new Prime Minister came into office, on the *Maclean's* magazine website appeared the following information:

Last week every deputy minister in Ottawa was given an astonishing assignment.

The lead civil servant in charge of every government department was given two weeks to deliver a 10 page memo outlining new ideas for government—"with an emphasis on thinking outside the box"...for delivery within two weeks.

This government-wide brainstorm represents [the Prime Minister's] response to what every pundit in town has noticed in the past week: If the sponsorship scandal does force an election delay then this government is dangerously out of luck because it is devoid of a governing agenda.

But there may be a delay, which means that the...government may actually have to govern. Hence the demand for revolutionary thinking across the government, with the ludicrously short deadline.

That is from our national affairs magazine, *Maclean's*, talking about how desperate the government is, putting the boots to deputy ministers in the departments to try to scramble to come up with something, anything new, anything that could allow the Liberals to keep going until they feel it is safe to call an election. How disgusting. How despicable.

• (1605)

Our motion also talks about the Liberal mismanagement, corruption and incompetence. I just want to mention a few examples. If we look at every department of the government, there is enormous mismanagement, corruption and incompetence. It is on the record. It is not some figment of the imagination.

For example, in the environment portfolio, the Auditor General has pointed to over 100 toxic waste sites that have been sitting there fouling and polluting the wonderful Canadian land for decades. The Liberal government has done nothing, in a whole decade, to clean up over 100 toxic waste sites.

Then we can look at finance and see the vendetta against François Beaudoin of the Business Development Bank. Why? Because he dared to say "I know the prime minister wants to give his friend a loan, but it is a bad loan. We should not do it". For doing his job of protecting the money of Canadians, he was hounded and his reputation was tattered. In fact a judge said that the government appointees tried to destroy this man's career.

Then we have fisheries and oceans. We know about the devastation of the fish stocks under the incredibly incompetent mismanagement of the government.

In foreign affairs we have all the questions about why so many CIDA grants seem to go to corrupt foreign governments instead of to the people they are supposed to help.

In health we had the millions stolen from the Virginia Fontaine foundation, and all the fraud in that whole thing, including a deputy minister.

In heritage we had this big flag giveaway. It was supposed to cost \$6 million. The figure now is \$45 million, 6 or 7 times as much as the government originally told us it was.

Speaking of that, what about the gun registry? It was supposed to be \$2 million. Now we hear it could be \$2 billion, over 1,000 times as much. Is that what we can expect of that government?

Then we have immigration, my portfolio. We have a court of this land saying that the immigration minister and department misled Parliament. That is a court finding. That is not some accusation by a suspicious opposition. That is a finding of our courts.

Just last week 278 criminal charges were brought against someone whom the Liberals appointed, a patronage appointment connected with a Liberal cabinet minister, a judge of the Immigration and Refugee Board, for taking bribes to let people into Canada who would not have got in otherwise.

What kind of government are they running over there? That is why we brought forward this motion of non-confidence.

Then of course there is the missing money in defence: \$160 million that went to subcontracts for computers, and apparently no one knows where the money is.

Of course the one we are keeping an eye on, the one the public is watching the most this week, is the sponsorship program, where \$250 million was put out the door with very little paperwork, very little accounting and very little program description. It turns out, according to the Auditor General, that \$100 million of it went out for no work at all. I guess it was commissions, or "just because".

It reminds me of four years ago when we talked about the HRDC billion dollar boondoggle. According to another audit, \$1 billion in program spending went out the door, with no financial tracking or controls over 97% of it.

Now we have this sponsorship scandal. Here is what one of our key political commentators in this city had to say about it:

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The allegation is that senior political figures used the ad agencies to launder money so, for example, the wife of a senior politician goes shopping in downtown Montreal, buying very expensive clothes, and a person from the ad agency goes along with a Visa card and goes 'click' 'click' and it gets charged back to the advertising agency and gets charged back to the Government of Canada...

With all these things in front of the public, with all this wide range of mismanagement, with all this absolute poverty, of ideas for bringing Canada forward into the 21st century, this motion of non-confidence fully deserves the support of the House. I hope that even Liberals will hang their heads in shame and vote non-confidence so we can get on with it and give Canada the kind of future it deserves.

● (1610)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Nose Hill for her speech and for the opportunity to speak about the issues that are facing our country, the issues that are grieving our country today. When we turn our television sets on and see parliamentary committees discussing the issues of the sponsorship scandal, it is a sad day in Canadian history.

I would like to ask the member from Nose Hill a question about ministerial accountability. One thing that grieved me the most, as I watched the former minister of public works, Alfonso Gagliano, speak at committee, was when he talked about not having control of his department. He was unable to realize that as a minister there were certain responsibilities that went with the post.

Could the member from Nose Hill tell us how we change the system? How do we put in place safeguards? How do we allow the public to know and to have confidence that the government is indeed wisely watching over the affairs of the nation?

I have one other question which the member might answer. I was not here in the House shortly after the 1993 election, but it is my understanding that the government got rid of many of the safeguards that departments had. That is they were changed so there were no watchdogs within departments to ensure things were going along in an ethical manner. I would pose that question for the member.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, on the matter of ministerial responsibility, last week we had the most amazing, shocking and disgusting display by a former minister of the Crown who actually told Parliament in a committee meeting, "I didn't run my department. I didn't know what was going on. I'm not responsible".

Canadians do not buy that. They know very well that ministers are hugely responsible. For example, we know that every minister for ACOA spends most of the ACOA funds in his own riding. That is not coincidence. That is not because the minister does not have anything to say. It is because ministers do call the shots, and for government to try to pretend otherwise is just ludicrous, sad and despicable.

The first thing that a Conservative government would do would be to state very clearly that the buck would stop with the minister. If there is wrongdoing in the department, the minister will be held accountable.

By the way, that is the way it was in the former Conservative government. It gets a bad rap, but how many ministers resigned from that government when they were found to not be handling affairs in a

way that the public thought was appropriate? How many ministers resigned from this government? None, not a one, in spite of all the things I just talked about in my speech, so that would restore trust.

We need to restore trust by making the office of the ethics counsellor fully, completely and totally independent, not what government members are now suggesting. Theirs is not independence at all. The Prime Minister would still call the shots.

We need to have a fully independent Chief Actuary of Canada who would oversee programs like the Canada pension plan and the health insurance plan.

I would end by saying the following. If we cannot trust the government to guard the public purse, to put a stop to fraud, to have an absence of deep corruption and if we cannot trust the government with our money, then we cannot trust it with health care, the environment or to help cities in a way that it should. If a government cannot be trusted with our money, neither can it be trusted with the other important things in our lives.

● (1615)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think the Conservative Party member is trying to go some distance to differentiate her party from the so-called new Liberal Party, but on many issues there is really no difference at all whether it is like trying to put off a decision on equality for same-sex marriage, or \$100 billion in tax cuts or supporting the government on national missile defence. What is the difference in terms of what the so-called new Conservative Party has to offer? It seems to me that the agendas have merged and blended. Therefore, the choice for Canadians from that point of view is not clear at all.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, I understand an election is coming, and I understand that the New Democratic Party wants to make yards at the expense of the Conservative Party. We all do these things.

The fact of the matter is that two days ago this party chose a leader. We will be putting forward an agenda. It is pretty hard for the member, with all the will in the world, over there to criticize an agenda that has not been put forward yet.

Hon. Art Eggleton (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for York South—Weston.

Today is the first sitting of the House since the Conservative Party chose its leader on the weekend. I hesitate to use the words new leader because he is the same leader that the Alliance Party had. In fact this completes the takeover by the Canadian Alliance, formerly the Reform Party. It completes the takeover of the word conservative.

What has that party done the first day in the House after its convention? It has put forward a motion asking the House to recognize that the current government is not new. It is asking the House to indicate that it has no confidence in the government.

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The Conservative Party's time would have been spent far more usefully, this first day back after its convention, if it had put something positive forward in the House, something that would have indicated its vision for Canada, something that would have indicated what changes it would like to make and what policies it would like to see brought forward for the benefit of Canadians.

Instead, what do we have today? We have a motion before us that simply says the current government is not new. That is silly. It is the same party, but it is a new government. What is the point of spending a whole day debating that? What is the point of spending a whole day debating whether the House has confidence in the government? The Conservative Party well knows the composition of membership in the House. The majority of people here are Liberals and will vote confidence in their own party. Conservative members know that. Why are they wasting this whole day?

We are not hearing any positive contribution from those members. They are not telling Canadians what they stand for. What we are hearing is petty rhetoric and a lot of mud slinging. It is very cheap politics that we are getting in support of their motion in the House today, and that is regrettable. Those members have wasted a lot of taxpayers' time. They have wasted a lot of time for Canadians when they could have been talking something more positive, that is if they have something more positive to put forward in terms of how they see Canada in the future, which might be different from what we as Liberals see.

The motion states that we have not put new legislation before the House. The House has been in session for about 6 or 7 weeks now and has in fact passed 12 bills. It has passed legislation dealing with a wide range of issues important to Canadians. We should not belittle that. That is what the House is here to do. We are here to try to improve the conditions under which Canadians live. Twelve bills inside of seven weeks is a pretty good record, but it does not stop there.

New legislation will be coming forward. One piece of legislation, with respect to a promise made by the Prime Minister to protect whistleblowers, was introduced today. He promised that legislation would be introduced by March 31 and today is March 22.

Not everything finds its way into legislation. The government has a wide range of responsibilities to Canadians to act on matters of urgency. One of them was today. It may not be legislation in the current sense, but I am sure it will get into the finance bill. The government announced today almost \$1 billion to the agricultural industry, particularly beef producers. This is a big boost to that industry at a very tough time. That is an important thing for the government to do, and it has spent the time to do it. It may not be what those members call new legislation, but it is part of the government's responsibilities.

The government's responsibilities with respect to the sponsorship program have been quite clear. The Prime Minister acted very swiftly on the report of the Auditor General. He acted very swiftly by appointing Mr. Justice Gomery to hold a public inquiry to look into the matter. We keep hearing about the work of the public accounts committee day in and day out. The Prime Minister also appointed a special counsel with a mandate to pursue all possible avenues for financial recovery.

● (1620)

I know that people across the country are upset about what has happened here, but the Prime Minister has moved very quickly and very decisively in action on that matter. This again shows that the government wants to correct this problem and to get on with the business of government, to get on with the issues that need to be dealt with, the issues that in fact were part of the active agenda that was promoted in the Speech from the Throne.

The Speech from the Throne on February 2 outlined a very ambitious agenda in many different areas. For example, on the issue that most Canadians feel is number one, health, some \$2 billion in health care transfers to the provinces was confirmed. Two billion dollars goes a long way when we consider the other money that over the last few years has been transferred to help improve the health care system. That is going to help a lot.

On top of that was the announcement that there would be a new Canadian public health agency established, with a new chief public health officer. It would be something along the lines of the CDC in Atlanta, perhaps. This kind of operation that focuses on public health would help overcome some of the problems and would put us on a very positive course for being able to handle anything like SARS or any other public health disaster that may be inflicted upon us. That is going to involve legislation and that will involve the action of the government, so I do not understand why the opposition is trying to get away with the argument that there is nothing new.

On aboriginal Canadians, the Prime Minister made it clear that we are going work with first nations to improve governance in their communities. We are not going to just foist something upon them; we will work with them to create it. This will expand our successful urban aboriginal strategy. In my case, in Toronto there are many people of the first nations and the urban strategy is very vital to us. I know that people at times seem to be focused on what happens on reserves, but there are more of our aboriginal people living in cities and facing many very tough challenges. That was outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

The care of our children is another area. Part of that is accelerating initiatives for more quality child care spaces. In Toronto we badly need child care spaces to help families in which both parents are working. We need quality child care and quality early childhood education. Those are all important parts of helping our children. Our children are our most important asset, as has been said on many occasions. They are the investment in the future. Quality child care was announced in the Speech from the Throne. This is again another new direction.

Creating opportunities for Canadians with disabilities was also touched upon, particularly in regard to improving the fairness of the tax system for persons with disabilities and their supporting families.

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The democratic deficit, as it is often called, was addressed extensively. The Prime Minister has been very committed to making the House work better for all Canadians and making all of us an important part of the decision making. This is as opposed to having it all concentrated in the Prime Minister's office or all concentrated in the cabinet. It is important that we all be part of it.

Addressing this not only will benefit the people on the Liberal side of the House, but it will benefit the people on the opposition side of the House as well and it will strengthen our committee structure. It also will strengthen our say in who gets appointed to the Supreme Court or many other different boards and commissions, and there will be a greater opportunity to scrutinize the estimates, the budgets and the programs of different departments. Those things are all important as well.

Finally, there is the new deal for cities or the new deal for communities, something I as a former mayor of Toronto am very interested in. We announced in the throne speech that in fact the GST was being waived on municipal purchases. This creates some \$7 billion over 10 years. We announced that infrastructure was going to be expedited and that more would be done in terms of transit and housing. I hope we will hear more about that in tomorrow's budget speech.

It is wrong to say that the government has not introduced new legislation or has not brought about new work. It is wrong to say that the House has lost confidence. It is a waste of time to go through that kind of endeavour. We would have been far better to have heard from the Conservatives what positive contribution they want to make. All they wanted to do today was sling more mud and engage in petty politics.

• (1625)

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hear what the hon. member across the way says about wanting to engage in supposedly serious debate about serious issues, but I hope he understands the frustration on this side.

The reason we on this side have lost confidence in the government is that we have brought forward a litany of motions, even in recent history over the last two or three years, and either they get short shrift from the government or, even when passed in the House, they get completely ignored. For example, when the member for Wild Rose brings forward a motion dealing with child pornography, the House passes it unanimously and the government completely ignores it.

He mentioned the case when John Nunziata brought forward the motion to abolish section 745 of the Criminal Code, the faint hope clause for first degree murder. It passed. The government ignored it.

When we brought forward a motion to create an independent ethics commissioner, the current Prime Minister and everyone on the other side voted against it.

When we brought forward motions on free votes, the government voted against us and said it was preposterous, that we could not have that.

When the government said just recently that it is going to have a whole new package to address the democratic deficit, the very first

question I asked the House leader in the procedure and house affairs committee was, just as one example, whether the Liberals would allow their members to vote freely on the abolition of the gun registry, the billion dollar waste of money. His response was no, they could not vote against that because that has already been passed.

Is it any wonder that we have lost confidence in the government? I think Canadians have too. It does not matter what we pass here. The meaningful—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member for York Centre.

Hon. Art Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, there are resolutions passed in the House, but it does not necessarily mean they are being ignored by the government. The government may not agree. The government may examine these resolutions.

In fact, some of the resolutions that I believe the hon. member is talking about are ones that ask the government to "consider". The government does consider many of these issues but may not agree with the direction that some hon. members in the opposition want to take things in. We think they are a little too far out there, the Alliance or the Conservatives, whatever they are called, in many of the positions they take.

The ethics counsellor, okay, they were promoting that. They can take a bow because we had put it into legislation. I think it is something that we all agree is absolutely necessary and this Prime Minister gave it a priority that we would do it.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one has to admit that we have a bit of a strange situation. On the one hand we have a motion from the official opposition saying that the government has lost the confidence of the House. That usually implies that we would go to an election, yet we heard today, as we have on other days, that the Leader of the Opposition does not want an election. He actually wants to wait until the fall; I saw a quote from him in the paper today. It is a bit strange.

Then we have the government side arguing that there really is a full agenda. I think the member for York Centre made a valiant attempt to put out the agenda, but one has to admit it is pretty thin. Other than what we have dealt with already, what else is there? Nothing else is coming forward.

Our point of view is that we should get into the election and let the Canadian people decide what their confidence is.

• (1630)

Hon. Art Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is thin. Again I do not think there is recognition of the fact that everything that is done as an initiative of this government does not necessarily find its way into legislation. A lot of it does. There was one piece of legislation introduced today on whistleblowing, a very needed piece of legislation. I mentioned the ethics counsellor. There have been some 12 bills in 7 weeks, so there is work being done.

The government's announcement on the agricultural program today and many other announcements show that the government is working. The government has been working day in and day out since it came into power on December 12. There are various committees doing various activities to improve the quality of life for Canadians.

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is widely recognized in the House that confidence motions usually occur as a result of financial questions. Ironically, they usually come as a result of a budget.

However, the opposition has chosen to pre-empt the budget debate by moving this motion of non-confidence, not pre-empting it in the terms that we will not have a budget or a budget presented or a debate but focusing attention at this particular time on this motion of non-confidence.

One would ask what the motivation of the opposition is, keeping in mind that it is using its time today, opposition time, to move non-confidence in this manner on the basis that the government is not introducing new legislation. That is the basis on which the opposition is moving non-confidence and, further, "that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement", et cetera.

It is ironic that the opposition is really wasting its opportunity to do that which really should be done in terms of engaging a constructive debate on those issues that are in fact related to a budget. Members of the opposition are doing it at a time which is on the cusp of a presentation that will take place very soon.

Again, without being disingenuous, it seems fair to ask why the opposition is squandering this precious time rather than focusing on questions of substance related to such things as international relations, health care, the present role of the UN with respect to the Middle East emergency, employment, or the economic state of the nation. The opposition chooses to continue to emphasize all that is negative, as implied in its motion.

In my time, let me put forward on behalf of Canadians an attempt to seek possible explanations for what appears to be a rather extreme obfuscation on the part of the opposition in dealing with substantive issues.

First of all, and most important on the eve of this budget presentation, why would the opposition not set the stage for debate on the budget? In other words, why would it not take the bull by the horns, to use an agricultural analogy, and focus attention from that kind of a point of view?

The reason could be that in the Speech from the Throne, which we have debated in the last few weeks, the opposition knows that the government has struck a resonant chord with Canadians and that in fact this resonant chord will be followed by a keen debate on the budget and will deal with the vigorous leadership that the government is taking in terms of international relations and a new environmental legacy and so on.

In fact, when we look at the throne speech, as my colleague has pointed out, we see there that we talk about those substantive issues: a healthy Canada, aboriginal Canadians and the issues related to them, a case for our children, opportunities for Canadians with disabilities, and a new deal for communities. What has the

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opposition offered up so far in that kind of debate? Opposition members have talked about corruption, a new generation based on reform of the democratic system, lower taxes and individuals taking more of the responsibility to look after themselves.

Is this the new vision? Charitably, it appears to this member that if the opposition wishes to engage in this type of navel-gazing concerning whether its government is old or new, it should really at the very least place its own vision, old or new, under that kind of microscope. In addition, it appears to me that when we talk about this vision, we should discuss the opposition's predilection toward the issue of corruption because it has said that is why there should be a discussion here with respect to non-confidence.

● (1635)

It must be obvious that without alternative policies and vision, the best defence is a good offence, but I would suggest that when we continue to talk about the corruption in the context that the opposition has, Canadians will find that tactic offensive.

The response to the Auditor General's report in the fullness of time will establish what the facts are with respect to all of the events that took place and what really is the truth.

What is the opposition afraid of that it would be so desperate to apply such tactics? Is the opposition afraid that the upcoming budget will implement a vision of Canada and hope for Canadians young and old that will convince them that the Liberal Party and its proven leader offer the only alternative to compassionate and progressive politics in a fragile world and society?

More serious is the old political sleight of hand, "Keep your eyes on the government because you can trust us", without a vision and with the same shop worn kind of policies that appear to be put forward. Is that the kind of politics that we are actually playing here with respect to this use of time by the opposition?

I believe Canadians want to see us getting on with their business. They want to see us dealing with the substantive issues of these times.

There is a huge amount of turbulence out in the communities. People are concerned about criminal activity in their communities. People are concerned about the quality of their health care system and nursing care system. People have talked with their elected members about the future of employment, of growth and of competitiveness of their communities as compared to communities offshore. The people in my community have asked me what our policies are with respect to the environment. They want to know how we will assist the cities and communities to come to grips with the issues related to quality of environmental life and quality of social life. Those are the substantive issues that the throne speech dealt with and that the budget will deal with.

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With this precious time and in parliamentary tradition, this is the opportunity for the opposition members to raise those questions. At a time when a budget will be presented by the government, it would seem that the opposition members, who seem intent on demonstrating to Canadians that the heart of their party and the capacity of their party is in the right place, would be using this time not to try to, in a sleight of hand way, direct attention away from the substantive issues of Canadians but to be using this time to set the stage for that debate. I can only say that the fact they have not is that they do not realize the great opportunity they have missed and one that will be picked up by the government in the presentation of the budget.

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish my Liberal friends would shred the spin sheet that they have had on their desks for the last 10 years about what the opposition should be talking about. "If only the opposition would talk about this, that and the other thing; if only they would talk about what we want them to talk about".

When the governing party crosses over in the next little while and becomes the opposition party, when it has an opposition day I can guarantee we will not have that spin sheet on our desks and its members can talk about whatever they want to talk about.

It comes down to a matter of trust. At the heart of the issue in this debate today is a matter of trust and the government has lost the trust of Canadians. If the government does not have the trust of the people, all the well-intentioned programs and promises that have been in throne speech after throne speech and red book after red book do not mean a thing. If the governing party is squandering taxpayer dollars and, worse than that, funnelling them off to its friends, how can Canadians trust it to do anything? That is what this debate is about today.

• (1640)

Mr. Alan Tonks: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear a question in that but I can assure the member that, first, I do not have a spin sheet in front of me, and second, the government is always a matter of trust. However the matters of trust will be dealt with in terms of the process that has been laid out by the Prime Minister with respect to the most recent accusations, allegations and situations that have arisen from the sponsorship program.

However a matter of trust is also a matter of balance; to talk about matters of trust on the one hand that are constants in our political and community lives, but also to talk about the other things that go on in our community life. Those are the issues that the government has been attempting to talk about and there has been no offering up, I would humbly suggest, of alternatives to that total setting of the stage so that we can be judged, not only on how we have been the custodians of the public trust but how we have taken the initiative to put forward the higher public interest in balance to all of those expectations that the public has a right to expect from us.

I would suggest that what we are attempting to present is that the government is attempting to meet the total trust and the development of policy with and for Canadians.

Hon. Brenda Chamberlain (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment for the Conservative member of Parliament.

He asked why we did not talk about something that was different. The reality is that Canadians want us to talk about things like health care. They want us to talk about agriculture. They want to talk about BSE. They want to talk about infrastructure.

The reality is that the Reform member should talk about what Canadians want us to talk about. That is what the Reform member should be doing.

Mr. Alan Tonks: Mr. Speaker, I agree that both sides of the House should be charged with the responsibility of bringing those issues to the floor of the House of Commons. The public is in a turbulent and volatile state and it is looking for guidance and leadership; the charts that allow us to steer our way through the competitive global waters.

There is no question that Canadians are looking for both sides of the House to be searching out, with good procedures and respect, differing points of view. There is no question in my mind that if we set the stage that way, in the matter that I have talked about in terms of using our time in a constructive way, we will achieve a higher degree of trust on both sides of the House and Canadians will be better served.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to enter in the debate today. I will be sharing my time today.

Canadians have seen the obvious. They have seen what we have called the culture of corruption. The Auditor General has called it appalling, shocking, incredible and unbelievable. That is the list of problems that seems to chronically plague the Liberal government, and has since the new Prime Minister has taken over. Today we are highlighting that. We are showing what is obvious.

I think the government has lost the confidence of Canadians. My guess is that the Liberals will rally around the Liberal flag here today and support the government, but the truth is in what they have been hearing at home.

The newspapers have quoted Liberal after Liberal saying what they are hearing at home. Many have said that even their own sisters will not vote for them and that their mothers are wondering whether they are corrupt. It has become clear that people have lost faith in the Liberal government. Everywhere I go I hear the same thing.

The motion also points out that the government lacks anything new. Corruption is not new but we have certainly been made aware of it in a new revelatory way. What we have also seen is that the government seemingly has no idea of where it wants to go. The government would like us to believe that it is a new government. On December 12 a new Prime Minister came in and therefore all things old were made new again but it is clear from the government's legislative package that nothing is new.

Today the Liberals are pretty excited because they finally tabled new legislation, the whistleblower act. They have only been promising it for 11 years. However everyone in the civil service says that unless there is a culture change over there, the whistleblowing legislation by itself will not help. To date, anyone who sticks his or her head out of the gopher hole, it is like the whack a gopher thing at a fair; the poor little civil servant creeps up, sticks his or her head out to see what is out there and some guy whaps his or her head right flat. The culture has to change. We have to create something new, but the whistleblowing legislation, which is the one and only real significant thing they have brought forward 11 years late, will hardly do it.

I would like to respond to a couple of comments that I heard from the Liberals. This was from their cheat sheet on how to oppose the new Conservative Party when one gets into this debate and they are asking who knows what the Conservatives stand for. It is not hard to figure out what we stand for. Basically, almost anything that the Liberals stand for we stand against. It is almost that bad in this place now.

Let me give a brief rundown of the things that should have been in this supposedly new government's package.

For example, 100 days ago, or on December 12 when the Liberals first came in, why did they not check on the compensation package for the people and communities affected by the softwood lumber disaster? The only thing the government has done so far is spend \$55 million of the compensation due to the softwood industry on creating a new bureaucracy and hiring new bureaucrats. In British Columbia, where this is the biggest problem, no money has been sent yet to the people and the communities that really need it.

Anything the Liberals could have done over the last 100 days on that front would have been much appreciated by the people in B.C. and the people in my neck of the woods, like Boston Bar, Lillooet, Hope, Pemberton and those areas. People who have put in applications are being told that their applications have been hung up in the bureaucracy and that if they do not starve to death in the meantime, one day those applications might be approved.

The government might have actually come up with a BSE compensation package before today. The Liberals have almost enough in the compensation package now that if the farmers survived this long they could have almost fed their cows for half of the time between the time this government came in and now, or, I guess, kept their cows alive.

● (1645)

The government waited months to do this job and it has yet to do it properly. I remind people that the government still has not got a single cent into the hands of farmers. That is why we have lost confidence in the government. The Liberals say the right things in the throne speech and they do not deliver.

How about democratic reform? The Liberals say they will change the democratic deficit, which they created by the way, that the democratic deficit is creating a crisis of confidence in the country. My party has put forward motions such as the creation of an independent ethics commissioner. The government voted it down. We put forward a motion which said that the defeat of a government

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bill does not mean the defeat of a government, that it means the defeat only of that particular motion. The government voted against that in order to make sure that iron will is imposed.

When the House leader came to committee I asked him whether on the supplementary estimates he would allow the government members to vote against more money for the gun registry, which is somewhere between \$1 billion and \$2 billion now. He said no, that actually they would have to vote in favour of it because if they have approved it, they have to fund it. In other words, they could not vote against it. There is no free vote over there. They have to do as they are told and vote as the whip and the House leader tell them to.

Every time we bring forward motions to address these issues, the government votes them down. Once in a while we would think a breath of fresh air would blow through this cavernous chamber.

The member for Wild Rose brought forward a motion to do away with child pornography and all the frivolous defences that people put forward on the child pornography file. The Liberals could see a vote getter when it is laid in front of them so they voted in favour of the motion by the member for Wild Rose. What happened in the following days is that they could not actually do that. They brought in other legislation that continues the frivolous defences that will keep child pornography on the streets, on the Internet and available to Canadians. It is a shame. They do it time and again.

My party brought forward a motion that we should transfer gas tax revenues to the municipalities. It has been our policy for 10 years. We actually used the wording from a speech that the Prime Minister gave to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. We took the exact words of his speech, brought them into the House and said we would take him at his word. We brought forward the motion and we voted on it. It passed nearly unanimously. It passed with an overwhelming majority.

The next day my party asked in the House, now that the House had passed judgment on the motion, surely the government would move ahead. The response that came from the government was "Well, we are considering this now and we will talk about it". Actually, the government has no intention. It was not mentioned in the throne speech. It will not be in the budget tomorrow. I make a prediction here today that the gas tax revenue will not be handed over to the municipalities as the House has decreed and as the Prime Minister has promised.

Is it any wonder that we have a motion today saying that we have lost confidence in the government. How often do we have to go to the well and put forward substantive motion after substantive motion on agriculture, on softwood lumber, on foreign policy, on more funding for our military, on a proper environmental policy, on changes to the democratic system? Over and over again we have put forward detailed policy initiatives. We have been accused of being too policy oriented. Apparently we have too many policy wonks over here. It is a scary thing over there that people actually have policy.

We have put forward the policy. The distressful thing for Canadians is that even when it passes in the House they say "Sure it has been brought forward and sure it passed, but with the government, it does not seem to make any difference".

Supply

That is why I have lost confidence in the government. It does not seem to understand that Parliament should be paramount, that Parliament should reign supreme. What is passed in this place, what is agreed to in this place, the government should take as its marching orders. Not all good ideas come from this side of the House, and certainly not all of them come from that side.

•(1650)

A culture of corruption has infested the government and has stalled it in its work. It cannot come forward with decent and new legislation of any sort that seems worthwhile. Therefore, quite properly, members of the House tonight when voting on this supply day motion should vote in favour of a vote against the government, vote non-confidence in the government. Let us get that passed because that is the truth. That is what Canadians are after.

Hon. Brenda Chamberlain (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to bring the hon. member back to where he started in his speech. To quote him, he said "We stand for: anything the Liberals stand for, we stand against". That is true, and I want to say something that he did not mention in his speech.

The member did not talk about the fact that his party was in favour of going to war. That is an important thing to talk about. His party would have sent my sons and other Canadians' sons and daughters into battle and into a situation where we could not have won. No one has won out of that. It is important that the Reform-Conservative Party talk about the fact that it was for going to war. Those members should come clean and talk to the Canadian people and tell them that, because believe me, in the next election the Canadian people are going to want to talk about the stand they took, and it is a terrible stand.

•(1655)

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, of course when I said we were against everything the Liberals stood for, I was just in rhetorical flight, which I say is not a bad starting point, generally speaking. I really do believe that.

What was the truth about how that whole so-called debate about what our position should be vis-à-vis the Americans in the war in Iraq? Here is how it evolved, in case the member is guilty of selective memory. The government would not bring a motion to the House. The prime minister did not have the guts to bring a motion to the House. He stood there and said that actually it was too difficult for us to debate, that it was too difficult a thing to even discuss among ourselves, that in fact, Canada would not even make a recommendation to the Security Council. What he would say was that Canada was paralyzed, that we would have to do whatever Germany and France told us to do, because we could not have a debate or a vote. That was disgusting in my opinion.

Rather than call the Americans "bastards", which is what happened on that side, rather than call them names, as they did over there, what we said was we should engage the Americans in a debate. Certainly we should have had a debate in this place. There would have been nothing wrong with saying that we support our allies, that we wanted to see Saddam Hussein's government toppled. They could not even say that over there. Then we could have said what we should have done about that.

That would have been an interesting and useful debate in which we could have concluded, as we did in Afghanistan, to send in some troops. We could have said we would help with logistical support. We might have just wished them well. I do not know what we would have done, but the debate should have been in this place and not in the backrooms of the Prime Minister's Office, hiding behind his desk, afraid to confront the issue and tell Canadians even where he really stood on it.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know I do not have much time but I will play a word game with the hon. member. I have two lists of adjectives. List number one is: democratic, honest, accountable, responsible. List number two is: undemocratic, dishonest, unaccountable, irresponsible. Which one of the two lists does the member think would be the best one for a government to follow and how are the Liberals faring up to that list?

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, of course most Canadians want honest, accountable, open, transparent government. It is interesting that the government in its first 100 days of office has failed on all counts. It has dropped 17% in the polls in Quebec and a dozen points in the rest of the country. It did that in a week.

I often wonder, when the government drafts legislation, as I heard earlier today how it was going to make Indian bands more accountable, transparent, honest and upfront, what must the Indian bands think when they get this lecture from the Liberal Party? They must wonder exactly how they are supposed to conduct themselves. Would the government have them have no paper trail, no accountability? Would it like the chiefs to just shrug their shoulders and say it is not their job? Should they pin the blame on an anonymous person? The only thing I can say is that at least the aboriginal people would not be able to recall their ambassador to Denmark. Why would the Indian leaders and the aboriginal people in this country take a lecture from the Liberal government on honest, open and accountable government? That would be the day.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Fraser Valley for sharing his time with me today. He provided some fodder for the member for Guelph—Wellington to ask her question. She provided me with some fodder to speak in this debate when earlier, in asking a question of one of her own colleagues, she asked would people not rather hear us talking about and she listed things such as health care, education and whatever, than doing what we are doing here today?

The member represents an area which has become very quickly a very solid Conservative area and she should be very much aware of that. Let me say to her that people across the country are sick and tired of listening to the government talking about these issues. What they want to hear in the House is some solid debate that leads to decision making.

Supply

We are supposed to flesh out ideas here to provide the type of debate that stimulates government into making not just decisions but right and proper decisions. There should be debate that holds it accountable. For a long time the government got away with it, but that day has ended. No more will the government members opposite get away with it after a few days, weeks, months, or perhaps even a year and a half, because they will probably try to hold on now with their fingernails. We will probably have to drag them out of here as we had to do with the Liberal government in Newfoundland. When it realized it was going to lose, it held on in order to get every last ounce of benefit it could out of what is provided by the people of the country.

What has the government done about resource development? We see resource rich provinces as they develop their resources looking at empty purses because of the clawbacks of the government. What about the equalization formula that it has set? It is so idiotic that no one benefits. What about the health care system? It talks about the \$2 billion. For five years it promised a couple of billion dollars to health care. By the time the provinces get it, it is going to mean very little. In fact, all of the provinces ended up with less money than they had originally because of the effect on the equalization program.

In the health care system, one area that has been neglected is research. We could say the same for fisheries. Because of the total lack of research, we do not know what is going on and because we do not know what is going on, we waste a tremendous amount of money.

Imagine how much money could have been saved in the House by the government if it had done more research into amnesia. Many of the members over there on the government side have amnesia. They cannot remember what happened and because they cannot remember what happened, they have consistently spent more and more and more of taxpayers' dollars without any accountability.

On forestry, it has already been mentioned the mess the government made of the softwood lumber deal. I remember standing here. We were together on that issue. I remember my colleagues around me talking to the then minister responsible. We said that the softwood lumber agreement would soon run out and asked when would we have a new agreement. Day after day the minister kept saying "Don't worry, be happy. We have never lost an argument before the World Trade Organization. We are protected. We have no problems". The time came for the agreement to end and the agreement ran out. What happened? History of course will write that Canadians got shafted from coast to coast. The softwood lumber issue has been a fiasco.

● (1700)

When it comes to managing our fishery, there has not been any management. The funny thing about it is this past week the new rookie Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, who would not know a cod fish from a McDonald's burger, came to Newfoundland and promised all kinds of new money. He promised money for aerial surveillance and he promised money to put more boats on the water so we could have greater surveillance on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks, the Flemish Cap, and within our own waters, within the 200 mile limit.

More surveillance means one thing, and it gives us great consolation. It means we can now issue more citations to foreigners. One might ask, what is a citation? It is something like a warning ticket. Whenever one meets a friendly Mountie on the highway, and everyone is in a good mood and not too many people are around, instead of giving the speeding ticket, he gives a warning ticket which basically says, "Be a good little boy or girl, slow down and drive safely", which we should do anyway. We have been doing year after year.

In the past 10 years alone the Government of Canada, through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and perhaps even National Defence, has issued approximately 300 citations to foreigners because they have been blatantly abusing the rules. We have to understand that out on the high seas, in the NAFO-regulated zone and within our own waters, we probably only have one vessel at a time, and for many periods no vessels. For months last year we had our coast guard boats tied up because the government would not give it enough money to put fuel in them boats. The people on the boats and the people involved in the coast guard could not go out and do the job they wanted to do. We have great people in the coast guard.

When they would catch somebody breaking the rules, blatantly fishing species under moratorium, blatantly fishing inside the 200 mile limit, blatantly overfishing, blatantly using gear types that were illegal, they would issue a citation, send the boats home and get the country of ownership to deal with the boat. Do we know what happens? I do not know and the government does not know because we have asked. What happened to the 300 citations and how many of them were punished? The government does not know. It has done research, but it does not know because when it sends them back home, nobody comes back and tells it what has happened.

We are now going to put out more boats and more planes. We have tremendous aerial surveillance in the country. A company from Newfoundland and Labrador actually does the work, top of the line, the best in the world. I am prejudiced, but it is true that it is the best in the world. It can do its job by spotting blatant abuses, but the government has to follow up and take action. There has been no action, none whatsoever. Nothing has been done except issuing citations, and now we are going to issue more citations.

Getting back to the member for Guelph—Wellington, do the people of Canada want us to talk more here? No, they do not. They want us to perform. They want to see some action. We have a reactionary government that has been throwing money at the issues across the country.

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The Prime Minister today was in Alberta and announced \$1 billion for BSE. It is two years too late and a billion dollars too short. The Prime Minister has been running around the country throwing out money like Santa Claus on Christmas Eve, like giving out candy on Hallowe'en; trick or treat. It does not matter how the Prime Minister treats the people of the country over the next few weeks leading up to the election. The people of Canada are going to play a trick on the Prime Minister and members opposite, one that they will remember for a long time. We will get away from talking about things in this chamber, and start doing things that need to be done for the people of this great country.

● (1705)

Hon. Brenda Chamberlain (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has said that the Liberal government has not put money into research and development. I want to speak about my experience in my area, involving the University of Guelph.

In the last three years the University of Guelph has received \$151 million for research and development purposes. I would agree with the member that more money is needed. However, the reality is a lot of money has gone into this field that is important for Canadians and for us to operate in a world market. I want to correct the record when he said that the government had not invested. It has and it has invested very wisely.

In case the hon. member does not know, the University of Guelph is an extremely fine university. I would say it is a leader in Canada. It has had a lot of new technologies. It has developed a lot of processes and purposes that have gone worldwide and have made Canada a leader. It cannot happen without government investing in this kind of thing. Maybe the hon. member did not know the facts, but it is important to understand that this is happening all across Canada and in ridings such as mine.

I do not know if the member really understood what was happening across Canada, but I would like to correct the record.

● (1710)

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Madam Speaker, I am familiar with Guelph and Guelph—Wellington. I have probably spoken there over the last three or four years, more often than she has herself. I am quite familiar with the students from Guelph who will be involved in the upcoming campaign, and that is a warning to the member, not a hint of help for her.

Let us look at the big picture of education. We can invest all the money we like, but we need proper planning and proper consultation. We see the government every now and then get an idea and throw out dollars. A lot of people at Memorial University back home in Newfoundland and Labrador, as I am sure there are a lot of people at Guelph University, are looking for money that will be well spent. I have no doubt it has been well spent, but it is a minuscule amount compared to what is needed.

The government is starting to listen to some of the things we have said on this side of the House. We do not care who delivers as long as somebody delivers. We must invest in our youth.

We have two choices in the country. We can invest early and educate our young people so they become contributing members of society, putting in for the rest of their lives. Or we can wait and react down the road, which is exactly what the government has been doing, and pay a heavy price. Instead of having a contributing population, we have a population depending on the state. Our population has not been given the opportunity, because of socio-economic status or the geography involved, to get the education it wishes. That is where government should show leadership. Consequently, we would have a contributing population that would make this a better country rather than having a population living off the people of the country. It is a no-brainer.

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for St. John's West as our new fisheries critic. I would like to ask him a question with regard to a fisheries issue.

Some time ago the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, of which the member for St. John's West was also a member, tabled a report in the House to the previous fisheries minister regarding custodial management over the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap. That report was rejected out of hand by the minister. In fact he admitted several days later that he had not even read it. With regard to the democratic deficit, that really points to the type of issues we are trying to deal with and the problems we are having in trying to deal with them. It reminds me of the recent response from Mr. Gagliano to the committee, where he has been on the hot seat for the last couple of days.

I would like to ask the member about his—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): The hon. member for St. John's West in response.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is dead on in what he says. The committee presented a report to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who rejected it without reading it. He did not have a clue what was in it, just like Mr. Gagliano, and rejected it.

He also rejected a unanimous report that was presented to him recommending that the government take custodial management over the nose and tail of the Flemish Cap. This was a report by an all party committee from Newfoundland and Labrador, including members of Parliament and Senators. Our report, including all members of the House, was also unanimous. What did the minister do? He rejected it even without reading it, and we are seeing the same thing.

Let me tell members something funny. Wednesday evening we will be voting on a motion asking the House to support the Government of Canada taking custodial management of the fish stocks on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap, our continental shelf which extends beyond the 200 mile limit. Is the government concerned about it?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans today sent a letter to every member in the House, not just to his own people, asking us to vote against it because the government had other plans. The other plans, and he even outlined them, are to do what we have done for years and years: go cap in hand, get no results and others will go off with our fish while we sit here with empty plants, empty boats and people headed out of the country. That is not the way the government members over here will operate once we move across the way.

• (1715)

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate. I am not so sure that as a government member I am as sanguine and content with the subject of the motion, but as all opposition motions are, they attempt to hold the government to account, and we on this side of the House attempt to respond.

The opposition would like to have us believe that Canadians have lost confidence in the legislative agenda of the government. The fact is that the government has the full support of Canadians on a number of legislative items now before Parliament. Let us talk about these, particularly measures aimed at protecting the rights and security of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Since the beginning of this session, a number of important bills have been debated in this House. I believe it would be worthwhile to examine them closely.

[*English*]

I will start with a bill that I believe is of huge importance in protecting our children: Bill C-12, an act to amend the Criminal Code in regard to the protection of children and other vulnerable persons. It is currently at third reading stage before the House. It proposes reforms in five key areas. It strengthens the provisions against child pornography. It protects youth against sexual exploitation. It increases the maximum penalties for specific offences committed against children. It facilitates the testimony of child victims and witnesses and other vulnerable persons. It modernizes the criminal law through the creation of the offence of voyeurism.

The bill has been crafted to bring to our children better protection against abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation. Canadians are well aware of the gravity of the issue of child pornography. Even though Canada currently has on the books some of the toughest legislation to combat child pornography, Bill C-12 proposes to go even further by directly responding to concerns flowing from the child pornography case involving the accused John Robin Sharpe.

This is a case wherein the courts convicted Mr. Sharpe of possession of child pornographic photographs. He was, however, acquitted on the one charge of possession of written materials for the purpose of distribution or sale. Even though the court found these stories morally repugnant, Mr. Sharpe was acquitted of this charge because they did not meet the existing definition of written child pornography, that is, they did not advocate or counsel unlawful sexual activity with children.

Bill C-12 directly responds to this concern and proposes several changes to the Criminal Code to broaden the existing definition of

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written child pornography. It proposes to prohibit written materials, such as those authored by Mr. Sharpe, that describe unlawful sexual activity with children where these written descriptions are the dominant characteristic of the material and are written for a sexual purpose.

To the concern expressed by some Canadians that some people could circumvent the law by demonstrating the artistic merit of pornographic material, the bill includes a different test that draws on the wisdom of the Supreme Court of Canada. It proposes only one defence, the defence of public good, which involves a two-step inquiry. Does the material or act serve the public good? If not, there would be no defence. If it does, then an additional second question is asked: Does it go beyond what serves the public good? In other words, if the risk of harm to society posed by such material outweighs the benefit that it offers to society, then no defence would be available even if it had artistic merit or educational, scientific, medical or other value.

The government has as well clarified the notion of public good defence, including its legal interpretation. As amended, Bill C-12 now defines the public good as including acts or material that are necessary or advantageous to the administration of justice or the pursuit of science, medicine, education or art. This new, inclusive definition closely models the language of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Sharpe case, thereby strengthening subsequent reliance upon this judgment to assist with the interpretation and application of the public good defence.

The government also recognizes that we must do better in protecting youth against sexual exploitation by those who would prey on their vulnerability in other ways. Therefore, Bill C-12 also amends the law in order to allow a court to infer that a sexual relationship is exploitive, having regard to the circumstances and nature of the relationship itself. Essentially, this provision would remove the right to consent of a person aged 14 to 17 years of age, allowing for the conviction of the exploiter even where the young person actually had given the consent.

• (1720)

An additional fourth factor has been added to the list of factors that are considered in law, namely, the actual age of the young person. This more clearly indicates that the court must consider this factor as well as the age differential between the two parties, the young person and the older person. Up to now it was assumed the court would take note of the actual age of the young person. It appears that the court simply accepted this age as a given and extrapolated from that to look at the age of the other person. Now the court must consider the age of the young person who is alleged to have been exploited.

Bill C-12 also proposes important reforms to facilitate the testimony of child witnesses and victims and other vulnerable persons. Although this part of the bill has received less attention, it has been largely well received and was developed in close consultation with the professional community that works with child victims.

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Bill C-12 also proposes to create a new voyeurism offence to better protect privacy of Canadians. It would prohibit secret observation by any means or recording in specific situations where there was a reasonable expectation of privacy, for example, when the person observed or recorded is in a place where a person is expected to be in a state of nudity or engaged in sexual activity, as in a bedroom, a bathroom or a change room, or when the observation or recording is done for a sexual purpose.

Bill C-12 would also prohibit the publication or distribution of any recording made as a result of an act of voyeurism. It would also enable the seizure of copies of any such recordings to prevent them from being distributed or sold, as well as for the deletion of electronic copies of these recordings from computer systems, including the Internet.

Bill C-12 is an important bill, one that the opposition and all members of the House should support and bring into law as quickly as possible. One might ask, then, why is the opposition intentionally opposing its passage? Why is it now putting up roadblocks? Why has it introduced what we call a hoist amendment at third reading? Perhaps members opposite will have a comment on that at the end of my remarks. The bill is aimed at protecting vulnerable persons and is, I suggest, too important to be the object of political games here in the House. I call upon the opposition to stop its tactics and pass the bill.

A second important justice bill currently before the House is Bill C-10, which is the bill to amend the Contraventions Act and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. This is another important piece of legislation. Regrettably, however, it is another bill for which the opposition has introduced a hoist motion at third reading in an attempt to prevent the bill from becoming law.

Canadians do not agree with the opposition. I suppose it is fair to say there may be Canadians out there who do agree with the opposition, but I, sitting on this side of the House, believe that the vast majority of Canadians agree with the intent of the bill.

The government committed itself in 2003 in the Speech from the Throne to act on the results of parliamentary consultations with Canadians on options for changes to our drug laws, including adjusting the penalties for possession of small amounts of marijuana. On May 27, 2003, the government introduced a bill that delivers on that commitment. I know; I worked on the House committee that worked very hard for a number of months, indeed, over a year, on this issue.

Presently under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the offence of possession of 30 grams or less of marijuana or one gram or less of cannabis resin is punishable by up to six months' imprisonment and/or a fine of \$1,000. Very recently, two parliamentary committees—we have mentioned them here—examined the question of the use of drugs. The House of Commons Special Committee on Non-Medical Use of Drugs and the Special Senate Committee on Illegal Drugs conducted thorough research and held numerous public hearings on the legislative provisions dealing with all drugs. Both committees concluded that changes to the legal scheme regulating these drugs were necessary.

●(1725)

Astonishing data emanate from recent research. Just to give a round number, about 100,000 Canadians use cannabis on a daily basis. Approximately 23% of Canadians have used cannabis at least once in their lifetime in spite of the fact that it is a criminal offence to possess this substance. In the last five years, cannabis offences have increased by more than 50%.

Canadians would like to see a reduction in the negative social impact of a criminal conviction. The opposition does not see it that way. I believe the opposition is out of step and out of touch with Canadians on this.

Canadians have also expressed concern over the unfair and unequal application of the law across the country. Police and court activity in respect of the possession offence varies considerably from region to region across Canada. In large urban areas, offenders often receive no more than a verbal warning, and if charged and tried will likely receive either a conditional or absolute discharge. In other parts of Canada, however, for the same offence an offender is more likely to be charged and, if convicted, to receive a fine and possibly a more serious penalty.

Based on these facts, it has been the commitment of this government to reform our legislation dealing with cannabis. The government has a responsibility to Canadians to adapt and address these current concerns. With this proposed legislation, our drug law would be reformed so as to reflect the Canadian reality.

The objectives of the bill are: to discourage the use of cannabis; to reduce the discrepancy in the enforcement of the law concerning the possession of small amounts; to improve law enforcement by peace officers; to modernize the law so that it better reflects the views of Canadians on consuming cannabis; to reduce the adverse consequences of a conviction for this activity; to maintain the crime status of possession of cannabis; and to combat large commercial cannabis grow operations. The bill contains large increases in penalties upon conviction for being associated with promoting or using these cannabis grow operations.

I have to point out as well that cannabis is one of a large and even a huge number of drugs that have been and are being used in our communities. The drugs being used vary. They include prescription drugs. OxyContin is one that has often been named as a culprit. It is a drug that is abused, over-prescribed and diverted from prescription use into illegal street use. I believe I recall that in one Atlantic Canadian city the street drug of choice was not cocaine or heroin but OxyContin, which of course is available at drugstores.

We all know that we have a serious drug issue, not just in urban Canada but across the whole breadth of our Canadian society. We must continue to take steps to educate and to deal with this. Not only do we have diversion from prescription use, but we have the old standbys. I do not want to pretend that it is just another routine drug description, but we have heroin making its way up and down the marketplace. We have cocaine and crack cocaine and we have all the other drugs which people have heard about and read about in their papers.

• (1730)

Among all those drugs, alcohol appears to be the drug that causes the greatest harm to Canadians, followed in close order, I believe, by nicotine. Tobacco is a bad one and extremely costly. We then get into heroin and cocaine, and we work down the list of addictions, and the cost to society.

This is my own view but I look at the overall picture, I regard cannabis as a bit of piker in the list of drugs that harm Canadian society. It is still a drug and it is still abused but it is not a drug that has a huge swath of addiction nor the broken lives and deaths that are associated with other drugs. I include alcohol in the deaths, broken families and ruined lives. While cannabis and marijuana use is an issue, and I will even rank it as an important issue, it is not the killer or as addictive as are all these other drugs.

As a country I suggest we have to focus on where the real harms are first. We will include all the drugs, including cannabis, but we must focus on where the real harms lay.

In conclusion, even though the opposition members do not like all of the government's agenda, I call upon them to please stop delaying passage of the bills to which I have referred today. This is social justice legislation that is of real importance. I call upon the opposition members to join with those members of the House who will vote yea in passage of these two important bills.

• (1735)

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my 20 minutes with the member for Cumberland—Colchester. I look forward to hearing from him a little later.

I am concerned when I see a distinct lack of enthusiasm on the government side. It seems as though the government is deflated and has no energy. It does not seem to have any enthusiasm for doing its job.

The last speech was a good example of someone who seems to be apologizing for the government rather than coming forward with initiatives. The government is blaming us for the fact that it is paralyzed. I do not think that is fair and I do not think that is the case.

The government has been in power 100 days now but is basically a rehash of the old Chrétien government. It cannot get moving. We saw more of that today in Lethbridge.

It was interesting to watch the photo op in Lethbridge where so many cabinet ministers were trying to prop up the Liberal candidate and trying to get him elected in Lethbridge when he has no chance. The member of the Conservative Party who serves in Lethbridge is extremely well respected and has done an excellent job. After having

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spent the last year working on the agriculture file, the member knows it inside out. He has spent many hours trying to make BSE an issue that the government would pay attention to and did a tremendous job on that.

It was somewhat embarrassing today to watch the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the agriculture minister and the Liberal candidate trying to convince farmers that the \$600 million that was finally being committed to the problem after 300 days will change the fortunes of western Canada.

I know our member on the Conservative side here, who worked hard on this file over the last year, was glad to see the money going out to producers, but earlier today he wanted to know why it took so long. One reason that it took so long has to do with our motion. I want to read the motion in sections and comment a little on each section if I have the time. It begins:

That, given the lack of new legislation introduced by the Liberal government during the Third Session of this Parliament—

I want to talk about that a bit. It is interesting to note that out of the 23 pieces of legislation that the present government introduced, 21 of those were rehashed from the Chrétien government. The vast majority of the bills introduced by the present government are nothing but reintroductions of the Chrétien legacy legislation.

Up until last week the only new legislation was the customs tariff bill and a bill apparently dealing with MP health benefits. We have another one today in which again the government has refused to take the action that is needed to deal with the issues. The government brings in half bills and then, as we heard a little earlier, it complains about the fact that we do not like them. If the government would show some leadership we would be a lot more supportive.

I want to point out that no new legislation is being brought forth by the government. It basically has stopped. Last week we called it paralysis by analysis. The government sits and is not able to bring forward the legislation that the country needs.

The second part of the motion today reads:

...this House recognize that the current government is not new—

It is important to point out that the government is a continuation of what happened before. In fact, not only is the majority of the cabinet old Chrétien ministers, but many of the promises and actions are ones that have been carried out by the present Prime Minister. In fact, many of the actions highlighted by him, where he said that he would change the culture in Ottawa, are rehashed, reheated promises from as far back as 1993. We think that if those folks were serious about dealing with issues they perhaps could have done something about them in the last 11 years.

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The government included things from 1993: a greater role for MPs, an independent ethics commissioner, a parliamentary review of appointments. All of those were prominent parts of the 1993 red book but we have yet to see any of those things happen.

After 11 years I would ask why anyone would take the government's promises seriously. Actually, the Prime Minister has voted against some of the things that he claims he stands for. We know he voted against the independent ethics commissioner. He voted against expanding access to information legislation to cover crown corporations. He actually voted against that twice.

That is a disturbing thing. It is particularly disturbing for someone such as myself who is involved with agriculture and would love to see that legislation extended to the Canadian Wheat Board. Many farmers and producers would like to see what has been going on behind the scenes in the Canadian Wheat Board.

● (1740)

The Prime Minister voted against legislation that would have allowed Canadians to find out what goes on in their government. He just keeps reiterating that he will do what he said he will do but the records just do not bear that out. That was the second part of the motion.

The third part of the motion reads:

...that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence—

We have talked about corruption and incompetence in the House before and we are back again. It seems like it never ends. As the leader of the official opposition said today, he asked questions about these issues two years ago when he first came to the House of Commons. He came back today on his first day as the leader of our new party and he is asking many of those same questions again.

I wanted to point out the fact that the government is not only not new but it does not seem to be all that interested. In fact, it is difficult to even get the Prime Minister into the House to answer questions. He is out doing photo ops across the country. He is usually not here but when he is here he is really not here either because on February 25 he sat through question period but never got off his rear end once to answer a question. The opposition sees that as an insult, not only to us but to the Canadian people, that he would not show enough interest to stand and answer the questions that Canadians are asking us to ask the government.

There are so many broken promises and the government has only been in power for 100 days. The Prime Minister spoke about changing things in so many ways but unfortunately none of that has happened. I just want to give a couple of examples. He promised that he would increase the representation of women in the cabinet. Of course we know that he added one more woman to cabinet. I do not know if we can call that an increase in representation.

He promised greater representation for the west but he actually has one less minister from the west than he had before. Today, while we see him taking advantage of the photo opportunities in western Canada, in reality he is listening less to the west than he ever has. The members that he has in his cabinet from the west are seen in western Canada as being ineffective. We know that they come down here and they carry the Liberal members' message back to our

people. They do not carry western Canadians' message down here and make it heard. That has been extremely disappointing. One of the reasons that I am involved in political life is that the member who is responsible for our province fails to represent the interests of his province to his party down here.

The Prime Minister promised to address the democratic deficit. That lasted about five days, because on the sixth day his government invoked closure to cut off debate. A little earlier we heard one member suggest that the government should do that again, that it should cut off debate, cut off the opposition so that it cannot continue to debate bills and to make issues that are important to Canadians a priority.

One of the things that disappointed me the most happened last year. We saw such a commitment, supposedly, by the government to share part of the gas tax with the municipalities. For a couple of weeks that was a huge issue. At the time the present Prime Minister was not the prime minister and he was making a big deal about it. Of course, as we saw in the throne speech, the government will not follow through with that at all. It has been a disappointment for many folks and we just wish the government would do a better job.

I want to talk a little about some of the scandals we have had to face with the present government in place. I actually will give some credit to *Time Magazine* because it has a good chronology of the scandals in its February 23 article. It talks about one of the initial ones which began with Shawinigate. With only one minute left I will have to race through this. I will just go through the list of headings: the job fund boondoggle in January, 2000; Gagliano under fire in March 2000; the fuel rebate disaster in December 2001; the ACOA disaster in December 2001; a missing report that just somehow disappeared in March 2002; accusations of patronage that took place in 2002. That is only halfway to where we are at right now. There was the breaking of the rules that was talked about in May 2002. We had MacAulay's resignation in October 2002, in which my colleague from Crowfoot played a tremendous role bringing that scandal to light. We have the gun registry fiasco that has gone on for years. We have the expense accounts of the privacy commissioner that were of such interest a few months ago where he had spent \$380,000 on travel and hospitality in just two years. We had the Air Irving incident and now we have the sponsorship report that came back in 2004.

The list goes on and on but I see I have run out of time. However that is a quick list of why Canadians do not trust the government, why they think that we need a change and why we look forward to forming the next Government of Canada.

● (1745)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from Cypress Hills—Grasslands on his speech.

I want to draw attention to an editorial that was in one of the papers this past week leading up to the Conservative Party leadership. One of the things it stated was that Canadians as a whole are lacking leadership at this time and do not see adequate leadership in the government. They see a Prime Minister who before becoming Prime Minister had envied the position for so long it would appear that more of an attempt was being made to take over that party's leadership than knowing what was going on in his own department. I think our country is paying the price because of it.

One of the things the editorial said was that taxpayers expect their political leaders to make decisions based on a sense of right and wrong. We have had an instance in committee where a cabinet minister stood up and said, "I had no idea as to what was going on in my department. I was not in control of my department. I am not to blame. Do not look at me. It was not my fault".

My colleague from Cypress Hills—Grasslands talked about the leadership that this country needs, leadership in the party that governs and what he believes are the important things in that leadership. He ran out of time on what he wanted to say regarding some of the different scandals that are facing the government. Maybe he could tell us a little of what the government in power should do to change the system to make sure that Canadians have confidence in their government, confidence in the cabinet and confidence in those people who are to be in control of their departments.

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the Prime Minister tried so hard for so long to take over the government and then, once he got there, he has been so ineffective and has done so little. It is important, as my colleague said, that decisions need to be made on the basis of right and wrong and leadership needs to be shown.

It has been disheartening, I guess is the word we could use, to hear Liberal cabinet ministers when testifying saying "I did not know what was going on in my department. It is not my responsibility. Do not blame me. I do not know who you should blame, but do not blame me". Interestingly enough, that is a defence that not only Gagliano has used, but the Prime Minister has also used that same defence. That really is disappointing because we know now that his staffers were involved early on in choosing companies that would be given advertising contracts. We know they were his closest staffers. Speaking in terms of "our" and "us" in their correspondence representing the minister, we are talking about the fact that they knew those companies were being chosen.

We know they were also involved in adjusting contracts. We know there was a contract that was moved up by \$1 million just so one of the advertising companies could get a \$170,000 commission and that the minister's staff was involved in that.

It has been interesting because I thought there would be some serious work done here and instead all we have seen is delay. My colleague asked about some specific things that we could do. I am going to talk about some of the things that have been delayed by the Prime Minister. I think if we would move on those, then we would be able to get something done here.

One of the things was same sex marriage. The government does not want to address that issue, so it has moved it into the Supreme Court. It is going to hold off on the reference to the Supreme Court

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until sometime in the fall so it does not have to deal with it before the election. Show some leadership and deal with the issue.

The second one is the Arar inquiry. We know the story of the gentleman who was imprisoned, came back to Canada and is trying to get some justice here. What did the government do? It announced one more inquiry and put things off one more time, "Let us get through the election. Hopefully we will not have to answer the questions and maybe we never will".

The third thing was the question about the CSL contract discrepancies. We came forward and asked what kind of contract CSL had. That is the Prime Minister's former company. We were given one figure and then we found out that it was hundreds and thousands times bigger than that, up to \$161 million in grants that his company received. We did not get that information directly.

Today we heard one of my colleagues talk about the fact that documents submitted by the head of the Treasury Board are not accurate. When we go through them we find what groups actually got for sponsorship money and it does not match up with the cheques that were paid out. We want to know where that money went. The government could move quickly on that. We think it knows because it has had a couple of years already. We saw it sit with the former public works minister for a long time and nothing happened on that file. We know that some of these things could be done immediately.

There are other things, too, such as a review of the gun registry. How much more money are we going to waste on the gun registry?

● (1750)

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in this debate. I want to reiterate the motion:

That, given the lack of new legislation introduced by the Liberal government during the Third Session of this Parliament, this House recognize that the current government is not new, but rather one that is intricately linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence, and has accordingly lost the confidence of this House.

That is quite a statement to make about a government. The evidence is very clear. It is interesting that today we were talking about some of the sponsorship scandal grants. There are pages and pages of them, and the government says, "Well, that is the old government. That is the Chrétien government. That is not us".

This list was given to us by the current President of the Treasury Board and it is not right. It is deceptive. It does not give us the right information. It says that organizations and events received a certain amount of money and they did not receive that amount of money. They received substantially less. Today we were able to prove that in the House. The minister said, "Give us proof". We have the proof right here.

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We have a copy of the amounts that are supposed to be issued and then we have the cheques which are for much less. Where did the rest of the money go? That is a list of about 500 sponsorship grants. There is another one showing 721 grants. In it there is four contributions to the Bluenose Trust. One is for \$2.3 million. The Bluenose Trust said it only got \$359,000. Where did the almost \$2 million go?

This is not the old Chrétien government. This is the new government. It says it is new but really they are the exact same people. They will not answer the questions. The Prime Minister stood and said, "I am mad as hell and I want to get to the bottom of it".

All they have to do is give us the answers. This is part of the process. They pretend that the House of Commons is not part of the process, but it is. We ask specific questions and they say, "If you have information or evidence, table it". They have all the information. They have all the grant information. They know where all the graft went. They know where all the commissions went.

Today I raised an issue about a tulip festival in Truro, Nova Scotia. It says right here in the government document that was tabled that it got \$5,000. The cheque stub is for \$3,625. Where did the rest of the money go? It is not a big grant, but it is a lot of money to the tulip festival.

Then, if we go to this list of grants, there are three more tulip festivals listed, but these are not for \$3,000 like the one in Nova Scotia. This is a tulip festival for \$310,000. This is through the Gosselin Communications Liberal advertising firm. There is another one for \$172,000. This one went through Groupaction so we know it is legitimate and certainly all the money went to that tulip festival.

Here we are in Nova Scotia trying to get \$5,000 and we cannot get it. They slice it back and give a third of it to some advertising agency, but they give tulip festivals that are sponsored by Gosselin Communications or Groupaction \$310,000, \$172,000, \$194,000. This is crazy.

I wish every Canadian would go to the Public Works website and just look up under "Communications, sponsorship update" and go through this. It will make them sick the amount of money that went out.

Here is one that I like for Y2K, Groupaction, \$1,276,000 and Y2K never even happened. My all-time favourite is number 699. It just states that for unforeseen events, paid to Groupaction, \$200,000 even, just for unforeseen events.

Here we are trying to sponsor a community event like a tulip festival in Truro and we cannot get \$5,000, but Groupaction puts a bill in for unforeseen events, whatever they are, and gets \$200,000 of taxpayers' money. It does not even have to say what it is for. It does not have to say what it did with it. It just put its hand out and the Liberals truck it over in a wheelbarrow. It is disgraceful.

Again, I recommend that Canadians go to the Public Works website, go to Communications and go to the sponsorship update. It is absolutely disgraceful. There are pages and pages of them. Every time I look, I find more information and there are more grants.

The minister says, "We are going to do all 721 grants". Well that is just one little package of grants. The President of the Treasury Board issued this package of grants. There are grants everywhere. There are more lists. These are just two lists and there are about 1,200 grants here.

• (1755)

The Minister of Public Works said that he is going to analyze 721 of them. He should analyze every single one of them, find out where every single cent went, who got the commissions, what Liberal advertising agencies got the commissions on all these grants. Every single one should be analyzed, not just a select few. The government should stand up. It has all this information. It has all the records. It can answer these questions.

The Prime Minister stands up and says that he is mad as hell and he is going to get to the bottom of it. There is no trouble getting to the bottom of it. All the government has to do is open the files, look to see what happened and report to the House what happened. However, it is not taking any responsibility. Nobody is taking responsibility. The government is getting to be a laughing stock. It is making a laughing stock out of the House of Commons, because when we ask questions about these sponsorship grants the Liberals say that is what the committee is for and they wish it would hurry up and do its job.

This is part of the system and the Liberals are neglecting it. They are refusing to answer any questions. They are hiding behind all these committees and solicitors and everything they have set up to cover it. It is certainly the same old government. It is the same people. There is nothing new. Even today, it is the new government hiding what the old government did. We are asking the Liberals today to produce a new list of every grant, all the commissions paid to the Liberal advertising agencies, wherever they are, in every single detail. I will be surprised if we get that. This information was given to us by the new government. It is the same old information and it is wrong and deceptive and it deceives the House.

There is a little headline here, "Where did the money go?" That is a good question. It should be, "Where did your money go?" not "Where did the money go?" That should be the headline to every single Canadian and every single Canadian should know where their money went. The government could answer those questions but it will not. It is the same as the gun registry, \$1 billion here, \$1 billion there. Who knows, is it \$1 billion? Is it \$2 billion? I do not know what it is and probably nobody does.

How could one spend a thousand million dollars on setting up a database with a bunch of computers? I do not want to over simplify it, but that is basically what the government had to do. It had to set up a computer database and write in firearms. How could it possibly spend a thousand million dollars? Now there is speculation it is two thousand million dollars. Anyway we look at it, there is no sense to this. There is no explanation. The Auditor General said she could not even figure it out. There is no way of knowing how the government spent the money. All she knows is that the entries are there where the cash went out. There is no accountability. There is no management. There is no responsibility for anything.

Now there is this fiasco where the former minister of public works, Mr. Gagliano, stood up and say that he is not responsible for his department, that we cannot expect a minister to be responsible for his department. My goodness, what a stupid concept. How could someone expect a minister to be responsible for his department? Then the deputy minister came and said that he is not responsible. No one is responsible.

We have been at this now for weeks and we have not seen one shred of evidence. We have not seen one person stand up and say, "We are accountable. We are sorry. We made a mistake. We did not do it right, but we will do it right". They will not say that. They just say, "No, it is not me. It is not my department. Well, it is my department but I am not responsible". It is incredible that nobody is taking responsibility.

Now there is a switch in tactics. It is going from the new government to the old government tactics because this weekend we heard the Minister of Canadian Heritage say that it was no big deal, it is just another file and it is just the way they do it. How can a minister say that? It is not just one file. It is hundreds of files and probably thousands of files and they are right here and every single one of them deserves to be investigated. It is not the way things should be done.

I will say one thing. We have a new leader in our party. When we go into the election, it is going to be about ethics and nobody is going to be able to point to our leader and say that this man will waste our money, because he will not. Nobody will be able to point to him and say that this man will steal our money, because he will not. Every Canadian will know it. The Liberals are not going to be able to say that because everybody knows the Liberals will take their money and they will spread it around. They will waste it. They will squander it. They will give it to their friends and do whatever they want to do because they think they own the country and they run it.

● (1800)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is right. There is a new leader in the House. The new leader is on this side of the House and has a very exciting agenda that we have been able to talk about all day. The motion sort of backfired. On the other side of the House there is the same old leader and the same questions that have been answered long ago.

I would like the member to show us that there is actually something new over there. We have outlined all day what is over here and it is a very exciting agenda with childhood development, health care, first nations government, quality daycare spaces, new

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deals for municipalities in GST rebates, the Great Lakes sustainability fund and the Windsor border crossing. We have outlined it all day.

My question for the member is, I would like him to name one policy that the new party has adopted that is not an Alliance policy. Everything is identical to what it was before. There is absolutely nothing new. It is the same leader and the same policies. I have a great deal of respect for the member. He is a very thoughtful member. I would like to know one policy that the new party has adopted from the old Conservative Party that would suggest to me that it is not just the same old Alliance party. I would just like one shred of evidence.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): The question is not relevant to the debate. If the member chooses to answer it, he may.

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, I have an answer anyway.

When he began his comments, the member said that his party had a new agenda and a new approach, and that is what the Prime Minister said. He said he was going to have a new agenda. He was going to empower parliamentarians and give them new authority.

First of all, the Prime Minister forced closure on a bill that would change the boundaries of my electoral district. He is going to cause so much confusion just so we can accommodate the Liberal election agenda. There are 38 ridings in this country whose names will be changed as of April 1 because of legislation the government forced through by using closure.

Contrary to what the Prime Minister promised, members of Parliament did not have a chance to debate the legislation. The name of my riding would change from Cumberland—Colchester to North Nova.

There is another government bill right behind that one that would change my riding name again, probably September 1, depending on when the bill goes through. That bill would change the name of my riding to Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley.

All this is being done to accommodate the Liberal election platform. It means new election maps and new election lists. It needs all kinds of paraphernalia for 38 ridings in the country. The only reason for all this confusion is to accommodate the Liberal election agenda. It is an entire waste of money.

If the election were called today, my riding would be Cumberland—Colchester. If it were called during the first week of April, it would be North Nova. If the election were called during the first week of September, my riding would be Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley.

My riding is just one of 38 that would have to go through that shemuzzle because the Liberals want to force an early election because they are scared to delay it. They know that these tonnes of files will prove that they have been very careless with taxpayers' money and that decision will come back to haunt them.

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Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Mississauga festival in my riding applied for a grant under the sponsorship program. I believe some \$75,000 was approved, but it did not get \$75,000. It received half of that amount. The reason was because of reporting requirements under the contract. The rest of the money would not be forthcoming until such time as the festival filed all the necessary documentation and demonstrated that it had executed the program it applied for in the first place.

I am pretty sure that the pile of paper the member has been waving around are the applications that were approved in terms of the amount groups were eligible to receive, subject to them executing the program that was applied for and demonstrating that it was in accordance with the rules of the sponsorship program. As a consequence, I would fully expect that very few of the sponsorship applicants ever received the total amount they applied for simply because they were subject to post-audit accountability within the department.

Therefore, it is very clear that one cannot look at a cheque stub and say it does not equal the total amount applied for. The difference between \$5,000 and \$4,000 is \$1,000, so therefore that \$1,000 must have disappeared somehow. The money was never dispersed. How can it be lost if it was not dispersed?

The member is talking about things he really does not understand or does not know. The member is simply suggesting that somehow the list that he has is money that should have been paid out but was not paid out, and he wants to know why not. The fact that there was not that much shows there was—

• (1805)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): In response, the member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, on the contrary, I usually do not know what I am talking about, but in this case, I know exactly what I am talking about.

This information was provided by the President of the Treasury Board and it says that this money was paid out. The President of the Treasury Board said the funds were received. The papers say \$5,000 for downtown Truro partnership, but the cheque was for \$3,625. What I am saying is that the current President of the Treasury Board misled the House of Commons.

The Minister of Public Works and Government Services acknowledged that a cheque was written for \$2.3 million to the Bluenose foundation. The minister acknowledged that the government wrote a cheque for \$2.3 million, but does not know what happened to it. That was only in 1997-98, five or six years ago.

The hon. member said there was post-audit accountability. The government did not have a clue about this lost \$2 million until we raised it in the House. The government wrote a cheque for \$2.3 million but did not pay any attention to it. A Liberal advertising organization appears to have taken 85% of the cheque that was written.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Kitchener Centre.

I note that the member for Etobicoke North is in the House and I cannot help but reflect on a comment that he made last week on national television about the performance of the government over the last 10 years in terms of its fiscal discipline. I call it sometimes a fiscal obsession. We have paid off some \$46 billion in debt which is a savings of over \$3 billion annually. By eliminating that deficit, there is a savings to Canadian taxpayers in interest payments of \$115 million a day.

I am not particularly proud of that because I tend to be a little more left of centre. I would have preferred to have a little bit of that money invested in some of those other areas where we have people in pain. I want to bring this up because I want to illustrate the point that when a government's record is analyzed, we cannot just take one piece of a multi-trillion dollar budget over 10 years.

In regard to this so-called sponsorship scandal, I have listened in committee and I have heard over the last few weeks a series of misstatements that are so shameful to the House of Commons. I find it, quite frankly, hypocritical.

First of all, I want to make the statement to all Canadians that we had, in this hundred million dollars of contracts over five years, some stained contracts. There were some areas where there has been mismanagement.

The former minister of public works, Mr. Gagliano, acknowledged that last week in front of our committee and said he ordered an audit. When the audit said there were administrative mistakes and errors, he asked if he should bring in the police. He was told no, that these were administrative mistakes. He then ordered a 37 point program to begin the process of correcting this mismanagement on some of these files.

What drives me crazy is the hypocrisy of those members of Parliament and those members in the media that know \$100 million did not go out the back door. The Auditor General acknowledged that the \$100 million was made up of three components. There were \$60 million in commissions to the advertising agencies. I checked with the advertising council of Canada and those are the industry's standard rates for advertising agencies. We cannot expect advertising agencies to get paid nothing. The standard rate is 17%. Now if there were agencies that on some jobs double-dipped, they should be punished, but they are still entitled to a basic fee.

We had \$84 million in production costs on 2,000 special events across Canada. Only 60% of them were in Quebec. What drives me nuts is the way people are casting aspersions on the fact that all of this happened in Quebec. It did not because 40% of this work was done across the country.

• (1810)

I want to be very specific in my remarks because last week in committee a member of the New Democratic Party said that in the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg, where it said on our list that \$2.2 million went to the Pan Am games, the organizers only received \$600,000, and the balance went missing. That is not the truth.

That happened to be one project out of the 2,000 with which I had some familiarity. There was a 10,000 square foot exhibit celebrating the ingenuity of Canadians and \$1.2 million of that money went to the design, manufacture and presentation of that exhibit for the period of the Pan Am games.

The opposition said that it went missing. I am telling all members, even members on my own side of the House, that we must stop the hypocrisy here. There were a lot of production costs in those 2,000 events across Canada over five years. We should punish the stained and bring in the police for those who tried to rip off the system, but we should not stain the entire sponsorship program.

I was involved in some of those projects. We looked after a family farm tribute and we used sponsorship money. It helped trigger the government to get an extra \$1 billion for farmers six months ahead of schedule. We used some of the money for the Pope's visit on World Youth Day in Toronto. There was nothing wrong with that. We bought pilgrims bags that the prisoners of this country made. We used some of that money for the Rolling Stones for production costs. The money never went missing.

It is really shameful that before we cast aspersions and condemn people, we do not take a look at the production costs of every single one of those 1,987 projects, because surely to goodness people would admit that in 1,987 projects over five years there had to be production costs.

We saw the signs. Hon. members may not agree that we should be supporting CFL, lacrosse, tulip festivals or francophone games. They may not agree with it, but if they went to every one of those events, they would see that there was signage. They would see that there were all kinds of services and the Government of Canada presence was there.

Before we condemn people, before we say \$100 million went out the back door, which is a lie, we should ensure that we get all those production costs and separate the real solid value for money production costs, and the real solid industry standard commissions from those that are stained. My prediction is that when this is all over, yes, there will be stain, but this will go from \$100 million out the back door to probably less than \$10 million.

I am not condoning in any way, shape or form anybody ripping off the Government of Canada of \$10 million over five years, but this notion that we perpetrate and promote \$100 million out the back door on production costs of 1,987 events is a sham. We should stop it and get it back on the right track.

● (1815)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am amused by this speech. It is a whole bunch of huff-and-puff trying to defend the indefensible. There are areas of corruption here that are so great they totally neutralize any positive effects the program could have had. It just so happens that when we get that kind of activity in a program, it destroys the value of the whole program.

Besides that, I will tell this member that in Edmonton, which used the sponsorship program to produce those funny little balloons that are banged together and handed out at football games, I had way more complaints about the waste of government money in doing that. In fact, that is the only response I had to it from constituents. I

Supply

did not have a single person say to me that they were so glad the Government of Canada did that and it made them feel so good about their country. Not one person said that. I asked some people. They said no, that those things were useless, and they asked why we were wasting the money on them.

So even though some of it, as the member said, did not have any of this taint to it, it still was a mostly useless program. If we want to build unity in the country, what we need to do is to run the government in such a way that it is beyond reproach and taxpayers know that their money is being well spent and well managed. That is how we build unity, not through these phoney programs.

Mr. Dennis Mills: Madam Speaker, I respect the member's views on that particular bit of sponsorship. It may not have met the objective, but I have never yet met a businessman or anyone who has run a perfect organization. As for the notion that people sit around here and think that everything we touch is going to be perfection, I think it is bogus. I think it is hypocritical. I think it is hypocritical of the opposition to try to cast aspersions and make a point of saying \$100 million went out the back door when it knows darn well that never happened.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madame Speaker, I think that our Liberal colleague has just absurdly proven that it is essential to vote in favour of the motion presented by the opposition today.

We are talking about a loss of confidence. Is it justifiable to defend a system that allowed expenditures to be made to enhance visibility, give disproportionate percentages to sponsorship agencies and funnel monies to the Liberal Party of Canada, all in a highly organized manner? Is this acceptable?

I ask my colleague another question. Is it also acceptable that no one is responsible for anything? Mr. Gagliano, who was then Minister of Public Works and Government Services, is not responsible for anything. Mr. Chrétien, who was then Prime Minister, said that he had answered 200 questions. For ten years, the current Prime Minister, who was finance minister at the time, got budgets passed which contained secret funds for national unity, and no one was the wiser.

Does my Liberal colleague not realize that the public is fed up with the actions of this Liberal government, which is behaving essentially the same as if it owned a company, when it has a country to run?

● (1820)

Mr. Dennis Mills: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question by the hon. member for the separatist party.

*Supply**[English]*

The people in my community would never ever support people ripping off the government, or stained contracts, nor would any part of this country, but this party, the Bloc Québécois, has one mission in mind: to separate this country, to destroy this country. If other people in this chamber or in other parts of the country have a better way of promoting the federal presence or pulling the country together than all of the various ideas that we used to keep the country together, then they should bring them forward.

The fact of the matter is that what we did over the last three or four years brought the country together. We have to look at the numbers. We have to look at the record. We now have a federalist government sitting in the province of Quebec under the leadership of Jean Charest.

Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak on the opposition day motion, because the drafting and passing of legislation, as important as it is to the House, Canadians and Canada, is not the full measure of government action.

The world matters increasingly to Canada and to Canadians. Canadians look to their government not simply to legislate but also to define Canada's role in an increasingly complex international environment.

Globalization internationalizes every aspect of Canadian life. We are part of a global community where interdependence is increasing. We have gained enormously from this aspect of our economy. Our society is becoming one of the most diverse in the world. We are building something new in Canada, constructed from the contributions of individuals and communities right around the globe and from the unique way in which we sustain and celebrate our increasingly rich heritage.

For centuries our economy was based on trade and it has expanded and strengthened as we have pursued new frameworks for a more open, economic relationship not only within North America but indeed throughout the world. Today our prosperity depends not just on trade but also on investment in Canada from abroad as well as Canadians investing in other countries.

It depends as well on the free international exchange of ideas in science and technology, on the wealth of our cultural ties and on links among educational institutions as well as student exchange programs. And we can never forget the engine of tourism.

Canadians have seized the opportunities offered by this more open world to take their creative impulses, their innovation and entrepreneurship to global heights. Our security, too, has benefited from an international framework founded on the rule of law as enshrined in the United Nations charter and given effect through our alliances with the U.S. as well as our European partners.

Canada has a tremendous record of achievement in advancing our own and global security by building and innovating international architecture. I think of the Ottawa treaty on banning anti-personnel landmines as a great illustration of how we took an idea that came from the NGOs and lifted it onto the world stage. Indeed, we have seen it reverberate around the world.

Finally, our identity has been powerfully shaped by the distinct role that Canadians have played internationally. We are peace-keepers. We are humanitarians. We are known as champions of human rights and human dignity as well as human security. For decades we have been one of the world's great activist countries, recognizing that in order to be the kind of country that we want to be at home we must do our fair share, and as a matter of fact even more, in the global community.

Not only does the world increasingly matter to Canada, Canada and what it stands for increasingly matter to a world that is changing rapidly and in very many ways is becoming a very uncertain place. The global village that Canadian Marshall McLuhan wrote about 40 years ago is today a reality, and in a village there are both advantages and disadvantages of this increased proximity. Although the global economy has grown and hundreds of millions have been able to leave poverty behind, many remain, and the inequity is even more stark.

There are new vulnerabilities, some reflecting the dark side of global interdependence or the reaction to this interdependence. Terrorism is one such reaction. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is another. Trafficking in people from impoverished to rich countries is another. We have the issue of global warming and the destruction of global fisheries. These are all examples of problems without borders.

In Canada we have experienced the effects of SARS, a new disease that moved with the speed of globalized public travelling by merely having a Canadian who was visiting a foreign country get on a jet and come back home.

Clearly no one country can manage all the consequences of an interdependent world. No single state can shape the international environment according to its own plan. No country can afford to simply withdraw from the world.

●(1825)

This new interdependence can only be managed with an interdependent way, a new approach. Countries must work together and their leaders must take responsibility for doing so. Our international institutions and practices, many designed for a simpler context at the end of the second world war, are showing their age. We need to be a part of this renewal. We will need to find creative, practical ways to tackle the emerging issues and to include more voices from all regions of the globe.

This is a responsibility which Canada will proudly take on, maintaining its great tradition of strong and effective international engagement. Few other countries have had such an important stake in ensuring not only that they stay abreast of change but that they are actually at the forefront of managing and shaping this evolution.

That is why the government is committed to a comprehensive modernization of our international policies and a strengthening of our capacity to act and to remain as a catalyst to international change. We will ensure that Canada has the means to retain and enhance its place of pride and influence internationally.

We have launched this renewal through a series of decisions, among them introducing new legislation to help combat the HIV-AIDS plague as well as tuberculosis, malaria and the other epidemics that are devastating Africa. Bill C-9 will facilitate developing countries' access to pharmaceuticals crucial to combatting these diseases.

We have also committed no less than 5% of our research and development dollars for knowledge based assistance to developing countries. We have committed to the implementation under the UNDP's report on helping establishing private sector growth in developing countries, including, through the project with the UNDP, a creative private sector link between developed and developing worlds and a local enterprise sector in Bangladesh.

We have invested in the capacity of our armed forces through a new armoured vehicle and helicopter acquisition. We have committed to establishing the Canada Corps, which will assist Canadians in playing an important part in building democratic good governance abroad. We are sending our forces and other assistance to help Haiti restore the rule of law, democracy and prosperity. We are strengthening our commitment to multilateralism, including through a visit with the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He was our first foreign dignitary to visit. He came so that we could discuss how we could help the UN meet its new challenges.

Finally, we have also begun a comprehensive international policy review. It is the first in almost a decade. It will take a new approach, for the first time undertaking a fully integrated examination of all of our international goals as well as what the instruments are that we need in order to achieve these. It will seek to identify better ways for development assistance and promotion of good governance. I can say that throughout my environmental work in all of the international fora I have been in, good governance continues to be a thread that is woven through all of these. We will be more targeted in how we approach these factors.

We will improve defence capacity, consider our representation abroad and determine how to expand trade and investment, how to better manage the U.S.-Canada relation and how to support multilateral renewal. Last will be how best to showcase Canadian creativity and know-how around the globe.

The outcome of the review, to be tabled in Parliament this fall, will reflect not just a "whole of government approach", but will also make proposals to ensure that Canada's global commitment, reflecting both our values and our interests, is implemented through a new partnership with Canadians.

I held a forum on foreign policy dialogue last spring in my riding. It was one of the best events I have had. There was a great deal of interest, not only in Canada but in how Canada's international policies are reflected in the world. There was a real commitment, not only through our decision not to go to the war in Iraq unless through multilateral means but clearly in how this multilateralism is in a large way the essence of how Canadians view themselves.

● (1830)

The review will put forward an international agenda for Canada, an agenda for the 21st century based upon the best attributes of the

Supply

country: respect for diversity, creativity and innovation, and democratic governance within the framework of law.

We have a rich and full agenda, and I look forward to working on this with my fellow parliamentarians as well as my constituents in Kitchener Centre as we go forward.

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the very informed remarks of my colleague from Kitchener Centre, and prior to her, the member for Toronto—Danforth. It was refreshing to hear the positive stuff.

The government has recognized the mistakes made with the sponsorship program, and the government is dealing with it. I listened to the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands and the member for Cumberland—Colchester. They rattled off some events in our financial history of which we are not that proud. In fact we would rather they had not happened, but they did. It is a big organization. The government spends \$180 billion a year.

There seems to be an absence of some other events in our financial or fiscal history that the members opposite seem to be ignoring, for example, the elimination of a \$42 billion deficit in three years. My colleague was right. When we were at a level of a \$42 billion annual deficit, \$150 million every calendar day was leaving Ottawa. We have eliminated that in three years.

The government has paid down \$46 billion against the debt, and that is saving all of us over \$3 billion every year in perpetuity. Those are funds that can be redeployed to other areas.

We have had one of the strongest economic growth performance records among the OECD and the G-7. Perhaps the members opposite have forgotten that.

We have had strong job creation, in fact stronger job creation than in the United States. We have had low inflation during all this period, and low interest rates. Many Canadians can afford to buy homes now, and are buying homes.

We have had the largest single tax cut in Canadian history: \$100 billion.

We recognize the problems. The members opposite talk about the numbers, such as with HRDC. Remember the difficulties we had there? I am sure my colleague will remember that. The figure of \$1 billion was mentioned. Of course politically it is quite attractive to throw out the figure of \$1 billion. I think it was something like \$6,000 which was finally reconciled as being a problem.

Does my colleague from Kitchener Centre think the members opposite are simply forgetting these milestones in our economic history, which are recognized worldwide, or are they deliberately hiding those facts because they know it makes partisan sense for them to do that?

Mrs. Karen Redman: Madam Speaker, I absolutely concur with my hon. colleague, and I do think the members opposite have waited for a very long time to find something that could counterbalance the incredible record we have.

Supply

Nobody is more outraged than the government members on this side when we look at the fact that there has been criminality in the sponsorship program. However, we can talk about the Auditor General's report because an internal audit was done. The government reacted to it and asked the Auditor General to come in and review it. I look forward every year, as does the government, to having those incredibly well thought out reports by the Auditor General so the government can continue to improve.

Our colleague from the Danforth area said that there were no multibillion dollar firms that had perfect systems. The government is able to talk about how we will bring improvements, whether it is the human resources structure or the sponsorship program. It is taking responsibility, finding improvements to go forward in the system and is standing up to the problems that exist. That allows us to discuss this.

I think the members opposite have overlooked the fact that we have taken action, and we will show that responsibility. The Prime Minister has undertaken not only to deal with the parliamentary process, but has put a judge in place to get moneys back, if it is at all possible. As well, the RCMP investigating. We are acting.

• (1835)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is quite incredible. I appreciate all the members on the other side as persons, but we have to keep our focus on what we trying to do.

When she brags about having paid down something on the debt, the debt is still higher than it was when the Liberals took over a little over 10 years ago. They allowed it to grow and part of that reason was the mismanagement of the funds. It is time that they own up to that.

Mrs. Karen Redman: Madam Speaker, there have been incredible investments made by the government over the past 10 years. There has been an incredible vision laid out by the Governor General in the other place on behalf of the government and the Prime Minister.

We have listened to Canadians. We are investing in health care. We are looking at the issues that matter to the people in Canada rather than trying to use cheap political tricks and score political points, as the members opposite are doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): The member for Calgary East will have four minutes before I will have to interrupt for further business.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's motion states that this House recognize that the current government is not new, but is one that is linked to the past decade of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence. That is the essence of this motion.

We should listen to those members of Parliament because at the end of the day they are the same members of Parliament in the same government. The finance minister was with the old Liberal government. This is not the new government. Now these Liberal members stand and say that they are as angry as other Canadians.

My colleague from the other side mentioned HRDC and said that it was not \$1 billion, but that it was \$600 million. That is \$600 million of taxpayer money. Now it is \$6,000, and then maybe he will

say \$600. This is the same government which mismanaged Canadian taxpayer dollars. It has a huge record. I talked about that today in statements by members. We even had a flag scandal. Flags were given to the Canadian public. A gentleman in Vancouver said that he was paid \$5,000 for the delivering nothing, not a single flag. The invoice was sent and the money was taken. That is how the government operates.

What did the Auditor General state? Quite clearly she identified that the government was not taking care of taxpayer dollars. We now have the Liberal members of Parliament on the public accounts committee literally attacking her and trying to discredit her. Today the Liberals stood and tried to defend their record. They said that they were not responsible for all the mismanagement and that they provided a stellar government. Canadians will tell them at the polls what they think about their stellar government. We are talking about incompetency.

Let us talk about something else such as the immigration department. We know the Liberals claim that they are absolutely a pro immigrant party, that they want immigrants, that they want new Canadians. They even used the figure of 1% of the population, which is 300,000 people. Let us forget about the 300,000. They cannot even manage the current immigration, the 220,000 people who are coming into Canada. People are coming into my riding. It used to take 18 months to process an application. Now they are talking 36 to 38 months, and it keeps increasing.

The lives of refugee claimants are hanging in the balance. It was two to three years. Now it will be six or seven years. When I spoke to the immigration officers in India and elsewhere, there was one simple answer. There are no resources and what the government says does not match the rhetoric.

I see I have used up my four minutes. I could have used my full 20 minutes to talk about the incompetency of the government.

• (1840)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): It being 6:42 p.m. and this being the final supply day in the period ending March 26, 2004, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Tribute

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): Call in the members.

Before the taking of the vote:

* * *

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his outstanding victory on the weekend. It was an outstanding and well-deserved victory.

[*English*]

This is not the first time that the Leader of the Opposition has been chosen Leader of the Opposition, but it is indeed the first time that I have had the opportunity to congratulate him. I appreciate him coming back for a second time in allowing me to do so.

I also want to say that it was a victory and I have had some experience in this kind of endeavour. It was a victory that was well merited. It was a victory for which the Leader of the Opposition worked very hard and indeed, we all share the enthusiasm that some of the members of his party have for this victory.

I want to say a couple of other things. First, I would like to congratulate his party on the convention. Those of us who watched the convention thought that it was indeed very well run.

As I listened to the speeches of the three candidates, and the number of times that I heard my name being taken in vain, I thought I should have at least received an award for best actor in a supporting role.

This House is where the great national debates take place. The choice of the leader by the new Conservative Party gives us in this House an opportunity now to have those debates in a way that will make this country proud.

Never before, or certainly not in recent years, have the divisions, and the differences of opinion and philosophy between all of the parties in the House been as clear as they are today.

Therefore, I congratulate the new leader. I congratulate him very sincerely and let the debate begin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to sincerely thank the Prime Minister for his remarks today, which I appreciate very much. I also appreciated what he said on Saturday night, when he telephoned me at the Conservative Party convention to congratulate me.

[*English*]

I do appreciate the Prime Minister's kind words. He did call me on Saturday night and he did observe that, notwithstanding the apparent

delight I had to hear from him, I had perhaps used his name in vain on one or two occasions.

I did explain to him there could be some mistake there. I am an intense follower of hockey. There is a hockey player that my son and I occasionally have some difficulties with, Paul Martin of New Jersey. He is what we call the Devil we know.

To say a few other things, I appreciate the congratulations and the Prime Minister did not miss the irony. I think I am the first opposition leader in history to be re-elected by his party without actually ever facing a general election. However, there are a lot of ironies in politics these days.

I noted the Minister of Finance today wished me a long and successful career in my post as Leader of the Opposition. I would just say that what we have seen in the past few years, the past year or so particularly, convinces me that it is impossible to have a long and successful career in that position, unless of course one is inside the cabinet.

I want to end my few remarks by also congratulating the Prime Minister—I have not had the chance to do it publicly in the House—on his own election to the high office of Prime Minister of Canada. I know this is something he aspired to for a very long time. My father, were he here, would say “Be careful what you ask for”.

However, I know how much he has cherished this role and I know how much he wants to serve the people of Canada. I will tell him what I told him when we talked on that occasion. Having lost my own father in the last year, I appreciate now more than ever how important those influences have been in both our lives and it is something we share. Certainly, as I am sure my own father is proud of me today, I am sure the Prime Minister's father is equally proud of the achievement that his son has made.

I will end by saying that I welcome the debate. The Prime Minister has spoken of the clear differences we have. I would agree with some of my friends in the NDP that from time to time, I have not really understood that the Prime Minister wanted to create these differences. It seems to me he often wants to look like me, but if he wants to have clear differences we are certainly going to look forward to that debate in the upcoming battles that are in front of us.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I also rise to salute the election of the hon. member for Calgary Southwest as leader of the new Conservative Party of Canada. I have known him since 1991, when we had our first one-on-one debates, not here in the House of Commons, because he had not yet been elected, but in English Canada in the televised debate concerning the future of the Reform Party as well as the Bloc's positions on the upcoming Charlottetown accord.

I will not be revealing any secrets in saying that I disagreed with him on many subjects, and I still do. Nevertheless, over the years we have been able to develop common positions on a number of subjects, in which all the opposition parties agreed to stand up to the government.

Supply

However that may be, in a democracy I think it is healthy and normal that various positions clash; if not, there would be no debates. I can say that I have always appreciated his energy, rigour, tenacity and high level of debate.

Therefore, I wish him good luck, especially in English Canada. In Quebec, there will be confrontations. Good luck.

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues here in the House, I certainly want to welcome the Leader of the Opposition to his latest political incarnation.

I am told that before he came to Ottawa he was once a Trudeau Liberal and since then he has been a Progressive Conservative, a Reformer, an Alliance MP, and now a Conservative. We hope for his sake that his grand tour of the political right is over, that the pilgrimage is over, and that he can now come safely to rest.

We hope that in the days and weeks ahead he will have a chance to put flesh on the bones of his policy pronouncements. We hope that we will have an opportunity to have a debate in this country with some clear choices in the coming election, whenever the Prime Minister decides to call it, and I will not give him any advice on that at the moment.

I noticed that he made reference to supporting roles. We thought that perhaps the Prime Minister should receive an award for best actor in a foreign film given some of the issues that we have raised with him.

The Leader of the Opposition accused the NDP of wanting to destroy the system. The hon. member has certainly not shrunk from the destruction of several political systems on the right in his own political career, so perhaps he is more attached to systemic change than he is willing to admit.

In any event, we would certainly welcome a debate between him and our leader about what part of the Liberal system he wants to protect from the NDP.

I extend our congratulations to the Leader of the Opposition and wish all the best to him and his family as he takes on these new responsibilities.

* * *

● (1915)

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion.

● (1925)

(The House divided on the motion which was negatived on the following division:)

*(Division No. 23)***YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Benoit
Bergeron	Bigras
Blaikie	Borotsik
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Burton	Cadman
Cardin	Casey
Casson	Clark
Comartin	Crête
Cummins	Davies
Day	Desjarlais
Desrochers	Doyle
Duceppe	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Fitzpatrick	Forsyth
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Godin	Goldring
Gouk	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Hearn	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hinton
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Laframboise	Lalonde
Loubier	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Mark
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
McDonough	McNally
Ménard	Merrifield
Mills (Red Deer)	Moore
Nystrom	Obhrai
Pallister	Paquette
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Proctor
Rajotte	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Rocheleau	Roy
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
St-Hilaire	Stinson
Strahl	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Tremblay
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	White (North Vancouver)
Yelich — 99	

NAYS

Members

Alcock	Allard
Anderson (Victoria)	Assadourian
Augustine	Bagnell
Bakopanos	Barnes (London West)
Barrette	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Binet
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brisson	Brown
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Castonguay
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Coderre
Collenette	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
DeVillers	Dion
Discepola	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Efford	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah

Folco	Fontana
Frulla	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Guarnieri
Harvard	Harvey
Herron	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson
Jennings	Jobin
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lancôt	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
Longfield	MacAulay
Macklin	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Marcil	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Mathews
McCallum	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Neville	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Robillard	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Sgro
Shepherd	Simard
Speller	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Stewart	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood— 144

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Catterall
Dalphond-Guiral	Fournier
Knutson	McTeague
Patry	Peschisolido
Plamondon	Sauvageau— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

[*Translation*]

ALLOTTED DAY—HEALTH CARE FUNDING

The House resumed from March 11, 2004, consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made Thursday, March 11, 2004, the House will now proceed to the deferred recorded division on the motion by the hon. member for Joliette concerning supply.

• (1935)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

Supply
(Division No. 24)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bergeron
Bigras	Blaikie
Bourgeois	Cardin
Clark	Comartin
Crête	Davies
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Duceppe	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Godin	Guay
Guimond	Laframboise
Lalonde	Loubier
Marceau	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse	McDonough
Ménard	Nystrom
Paquette	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Proctor
Rocheleau	Roy
St-Hilaire	Tremblay
Wasylcyia-Leis— 39	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alcock	Allard
Anderson (Victoria)	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Bailey
Bakopanos	Barnes (London West)
Barrette	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Bonin
Bonwick	Borotsik
Boudria	Bradshaw
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown	Burton
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Casey	Casson
Castonguay	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Coderre	Collenette
Cotler	Cullen
Cummins	Cuzner
Day	DeVillers
Dion	Discepola
Doyle	Dromisky
Drouin	Duncan
Duplain	Efford
Eggleton	Elley
Epp	Eyking
Farrah	Fitzpatrick
Folco	Fontana
Forseth	Frulla
Gallant	Galloway
Godfrey	Goldring
Goodale	Graham
Grey	Guarnieri
Hanger	Harper
Harvard	Harvey
Hearn	Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson
Jaffer	Jennings
Jobin	Johnston
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lancôt
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung

Supply

Lincoln	Longfield
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Macklin	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Marcil	Mark
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCallum
McCormick	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McNally	Merrifield
Mills (Red Deer)	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna	Mitchell
Moore	Murphy
Myers	Neville
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Obhrai
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Pallister
Paradis	Penson
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Rajotte
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Robillard	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Sgro
Shepherd	Simard
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Speller
Spencer	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Stewart	Stinson
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tirabassi	Toews
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Wayne
Whelan	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Wood	Yelich— 202

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Catterall
Dalphond-Guiral	Fournier
Knutson	McTeague
Patry	Peschisolido
Plamondon	Sauvageau— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2003-04

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1B—GOVERNOR GENERAL

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.) moved:

That Vote 1b, in the amount of \$200,000, under GOVERNOR GENERAL—Governor General—Operating expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that the members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, as well as on Motions Nos. 2 and 3 by the President of the Treasury Board, with Liberal members voting yes, except those who indicate otherwise.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, did I understand the chief government whip to say that this would include all three of those motions?

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Agreed, and Conservative members, Mr. Speaker, will be voting nay.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will vote against these three motions.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members of the New Democratic Party will vote against these three motions.

[English]

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the first motion and against the latter two motions.

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting all three of these motions.

Mr. Larry Spencer: Mr. Speaker, I will vote no.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add the name of the member for Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, who will be voting with the official opposition.

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 25)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allard
Anderson (Victoria)	Assadourian
Augustine	Bagnell
Bakopanos	Barnes (London West)
Barrette	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Binet
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brisson	Brown
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Castonguay
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Clark
Coderre	Collette
Cotler	Cullen
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Duplain	Efford

Eggleton
 Farrah
 Fontana
 Gallaway
 Goodale
 Guarnieri
 Harvey
 Hubbard
 Jackson
 Jobin
 Karetak-Lindell
 Keyes
 Kraft Sloan
 Lanctôt
 LeBlanc
 Leung
 Longfield
 Macklin
 Malhi
 Marcil
 Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
 McCallum
 McGuire
 McLellan
 Minna
 Murphy
 Neville
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Owen
 Pagtakhan
 Peric
 Pettigrew
 Pillitteri
 Price
 Provenzano
 Reed (Halton)
 Robillard
 Savoy
 Scott
 Shepherd
 Speller
 St-Julien
 Stewart
 Telegdi
 Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
 Tonks
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Wappel
 Wilfert

Eyking
 Folco
 Frulla
 Godfrey
 Graham
 Harvard
 Herron
 Ianno
 Jennings
 Jordan
 Karygiannis
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
 Laliberte
 Lastewka
 Lee
 Lincoln
 MacAulay
 Mahoney
 Maloney
 Marleau
 Matthews
 McCormick
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
 Mitchell
 Myers
 O'Brien (Labrador)
 O'Reilly
 Pacetti
 Paradis
 Peterson
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Pratt
 Proulx
 Redman
 Regan
 Saada
 Scherrer
 Sgro
 Simard
 St-Jacques
 St. Denis
 Szabo
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Tirabassi
 Torsney
 Valeri
 Volpe
 Whelan
 Wood— 144

NAYS

Members

Abbott
 Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
 Bailey
 Bergeron
 Blaikie
 Bourgeois
 Burton
 Cardin
 Casson
 Crête
 Davies
 Desjarlais
 Doyle
 Duncan
 Epp
 Forseth
 Gagnon (Champlain)
 Gallant
 Gauthier
 Goldring
 Grey
 Guimond
 Harper
 Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
 Hinton
 Johnston
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Lalonde
 Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

Ablonczy
 Bachand (Saint-Jean)
 Benoit
 Bigras
 Borotsik
 Breitzkreuz
 Cadman
 Casey
 Comartin
 Cummins
 Day
 Desrochers
 Duceppe
 Elley
 Fitzpatrick
 Gagnon (Québec)
 Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
 Gaudet
 Godin
 Gouk
 Guay
 Hanger
 Hearn
 Hilstrom
 Jaffer
 Keddy (South Shore)
 Laframboise
 Loubier
 Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)

Supply

MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Mark
 Masse
 McNally
 Merrifield
 Moore
 Obhrai
 Paquette
 Perron
 Proctor
 Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
 Ritz
 Roy
 Solberg
 Spencer
 Stinson
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Tremblay
 Wayne
 White (North Vancouver)

Marceau
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 McDonough
 Ménard
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Nystrom
 Pallister
 Penson
 Picard (Drummond)
 Rajotte
 Reynolds
 Rocheleau
 Skelton
 Sorenson
 St-Hilaire
 Strahl
 Toews
 Wasylcyia-Leis
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)
 Yelich — 98

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
 Dalphond-Guiral
 Knutson
 Patry
 Plamondon

Catterall
 Fournier
 McTeague
 Peschisolido
 Sauvageau — 10

● (1940)

[*Translation*]

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1B—PRIVY COUNCIL

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.) moved:

That Vote 1b, in the amount of \$1,869,152, under PRIVY COUNCIL—Department —Program expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004, be concurred in.

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 26*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock
 Anderson (Victoria)
 Augustine
 Bakopanos
 Barrette
 Bélanger
 Bennett
 Bevilacqua
 Bonin
 Boudria
 Brison
 Caccia
 Cannis
 Carroll
 Cauchon
 Charbonneau
 Collette
 Cullen
 DeVillers
 Discepolo
 Drouin
 Efford
 Eyking
 Folco
 Frulla
 Godfrey
 Graham
 Harvard
 Herron

Allard
 Assadourian
 Bagnell
 Barnes (London West)
 Beaumier
 Bellemare
 Bertrand
 Binet
 Bonwick
 Bradshaw
 Brown
 Calder
 Caplan
 Castonguay
 Chamberlain
 Coderre
 Cotler
 Cuzner
 Dion
 Dromisky
 Duplain
 Eggleton
 Farrah
 Fontana
 Gallaway
 Goodale
 Guarnieri
 Harvey
 Hubbard

Supply

Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 99

Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Peschisolido
Sauvageau— 10

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 15B—PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.) moved:**

That Vote 15b, in the amount of \$9,897,950, under PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES—Communication Canada—Operating expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004, be concurred in.

(The House divided on Motion No. 3, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 27)

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom

Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse
McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brisson
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collenette
Cullen
DeVillers
Discepola
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Fontana
Galloway
Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung

Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 99

Supply

Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Peschisolido
Sauvageau— 10

The Speaker: I declare Motions Nos. 1, 2 and 3 carried.

[*English*]

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.) moved:

That Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004, except any vote disposed of earlier today, be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that the members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, as well as on the following motion, that is the motion for second reading, with the Liberals members voting in favour.

The Speaker: It is my understanding that the hon. whip said that the vote already recorded applies to this motion and to second reading. Is this the case? If so, is there unanimous consent for the vote to be so applied?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to be recorded as voting against this motion.

The Speaker: We will make sure that was the case since the hon. member voted against the last two.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 28*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brisson
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collenette
Cullen
DeVillers

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton
Sorenson

Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saamich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse
McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Solberg
Spencer

Supply

Discepolo
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Fontana
Galloway
Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wifert

Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 99

Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse
McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Peschisolido
Sauvageau— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Reg Alcock moved that Bill C-26, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2004, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Reg Alcock moved that Bill C-26, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2004, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 29)

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Jaffer

Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brisson
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collenette
Cullen
DeVillers
Discepolo
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Fontana
Galloway

Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)

Abłonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saainich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse

Supply

McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 99

McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Peschisolido
Sauvageau— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. I do now leave the Chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilger in the Chair)

The Chair: Order, please. The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby.

(On clause 2)

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Chair, would the President of the Treasury Board confirm that the bill is presented in its usual form?

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Chair, the form of this bill is the same as that passed in the previous supply period. I can offer the member that assurance.

The Chair: Shall Clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Supply

(Clause 5 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 7 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 8 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 8 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall Schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Chair, I rise on a point of order. I would like to point out the fact that there are a number of members at each of your calls saying no. There is hardly anyone saying yes, yet you are saying yes to the carrying of the motions. I think you should ask the Liberals to at least wake up, when they are spending \$50 billion, to say yes.

The Chair: Order. Let me reassure the hon. member for Elk Island and the entire House that, yes, at one time in a previous life people did question my eyesight when I was a referee, but I give you all my assurance that my hearing is very good.

Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill reported)

● (1945)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Reg Alcock moved that Bill C-26 be concurred in at report stage.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Conservative members will be voting no on this bill, but I would ask that the name of the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys be taken off.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP are voting no to this motion.

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I will be opposing the motion.

Mr. Larry Spencer: Mr. Speaker, I will vote no.

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 30*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand

Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brisson
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collette
Cullen
DeVillers
Discepola
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Fontana
Galloway
Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe

Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan

Supply

Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse
McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 98

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Pescholido
Sauvageau— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Reg Alcock moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

The Speaker: Everyone voting yea in the same way?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I believe you could find unanimous consent to apply the results of the vote just taken on the motion now before the House.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to apply the previous vote to this vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*Supply**(Division No. 31)*

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brison
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collenette
Cullen
DeVillers
Discepolo
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Fontana
Galloway
Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott

Ablonczy

Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse
McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forsyth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylcia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 98

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Peschisolido
Sauvageau— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

The Speaker: The next question is on the motion for concurrence in interim supply.

* * *

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.) moved:

That this House do concur in Interim Supply as follows:

That a sum not exceeding \$50,088,477, 739.25 being composed of:

(1) nine twelfths (\$39,390,712,566.75) of the total of the amounts of the items set forth in the Proposed Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005 which were laid upon the Table Tuesday, February 24, 2004, and except for those items below:

(2) eleven twelfths of the total of the amount of Canadian Grain Commission Vote 40, Human Resources Skills Development Vote 5, Human Resources Development (Social Development) Vote 5, Statistics Canada Vote 105, Library of Parliament Vote 10, Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution of Canada Vote 40, National Parole Board Vote 45, Transport Votes 20, 25 and 30, Canadian Transportation Agency Vote 35 and Treasury Board Vote 5 (Schedule 1.1), of the said Estimates, \$2,688,148,833.33;

(3) ten twelfths of the total of the amount of Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation Vote 10, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Vote 20, Citizenship and Immigration Vote 5, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Vote 10, Health Vote 1, Indian Affairs and Northern Development Votes 1 and 10, Industry Vote 10 and Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada Votes 45 and 50 (Schedule 1.2), of the said Estimates, \$8,009,616,339.17;

be granted to Her Majesty on account of the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that the members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, as well as the main motion for second reading, with Liberal members voting yea.

[English]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in such a fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Conservative members here will oppose this motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members of the NDP are voting against this motion.

• (1950)

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I vote against this motion.

[English]

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion.

Mr. Larry Spencer: Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to this motion.

* * *

[Translation]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 32)

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand

Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brison
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collenette
Cullen
DeVillers
Discepolo
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Supply

Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrar
Fontana
Galloway
Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe

Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan

Supply

Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse
McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylcia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 98

Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brison
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collenette
Cullen
DeVillers
Discepolo
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Fontana
Galloway
Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lanctôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Peschisolido
Sauvageau— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Hon. Reg Alcock moved that Bill C-27, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2005, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Reg Alcock moved that Bill C-27, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2005, be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 33*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan

Elley	Epp
Fitzpatrick	Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Godin	Goldring
Gouk	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Hearn	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Jaffer
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Laframboise
Lalonde	Loubier
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Marceau
Mark	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse	McDonough
McNally	Ménard
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Nystrom
Obhrai	Pallister
Paquette	Penson
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Proctor	Rajotte
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Rocheleau
Roy	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	St-Hilaire
Stinson	Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Toews
Tremblay	Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Yelich — 98

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Catterall
Dalphond-Guiral	Fournier
Knutson	McTeague
Patry	Peschisolido
Plamondon	Sauvageau — 10

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made earlier, I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole. I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilger in the chair)

The Chair: The House in committee of the whole on Bill C-27. [English]

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, CPC): Mr. Chair, would the President of the Treasury Board confirm that the bill is presented in its usual form?

(On clause 2)

Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I can indeed assure the member that the form of this bill is essentially the same as that passed in the previous supply period.

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Supply

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

[Translation]

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 7 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

Supply

(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill reported)

Hon. Reg Alcock moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that those who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House and the main motion for third reading, with Liberal members voting yea.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 34*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brisson
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collenette
Cullen
DeVillers
Discepola
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberte

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Fontana
Galloway
Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt

Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood — 143

LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna
Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse
McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy

Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton

Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 98

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Peschisolido
Sauvageau— 10

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1955)

Hon. Reg Alcock moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 35)

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Barrette
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Boudria
Brison
Caccia
Cannis
Carroll
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Collenette
Cullen
DeVillers
Discepola
Drouin
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harvard
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laliberté
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)

Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Calder
Caplan
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Coderre
Cotler
Cuzner
Dion
Dromisky
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Fontana
Galloway
Goodale
Guarnieri
Harvey
Hubbard
Jackson
Jobin
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Minna

Mitchell
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Saada
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Wood— 143

Supply

Murphy
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Peric
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Cummins
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hilstrom
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
Masse
McNally
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)

Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Epp
Forsyth
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gauthier
Goldring
Grey
Guimond
Harper
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pallister
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich— 98

Supply

PAIRED

(Bill read the third time and passed)

Members

Asselin
Dalphond-Guiral
Knutson
Patry
Plamondon

Catterall
Fournier
McTeague
Peschisolido
Sauvageau — 10

The Deputy Speaker: It being 7:55 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24 (1).

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(The House adjourned at 7:55 p.m.)

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