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(HANSARD)

Friday, April 7, 2006

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 7, 2006

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

• (1000)

[*English*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from April 6 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment, as amended.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I began my remarks at the end of the sitting yesterday, but I would like to make some further remarks in the time I have remaining.

Yesterday I talked about the five priorities of the government, particularly about the GST cut that we campaigned on and that we have a mandate to introduce. It is important to point out, however, that this one percentage point cut in the GST is an important part of our tax relief plans, but it is by no means the only one.

We also intend to act on other fronts, for example, on the current tax burden shouldered by business people, our job creators. We will deliver because all Canadians stand to gain from this kind of tax relief. Competitive corporate tax rates attract the kind of investment that boosts economic growth and creates well-paying jobs.

This government will also make a special effort to recognize and reward small businesses for what they are, the backbone of our economy. It is true in my community and in my city of Calgary, it is true throughout the province of Alberta and it is true right across our country.

As the Minister of Finance mentioned in his remarks, we will be implementing our opportunity plan for small business. It is a package of measures to give our small business people a well deserved tax break and create an incentive to hire new apprentices in industries that so urgently need them. Our plan would also raise the threshold at which small businesses have to pay the general corporate tax rate and cut the small business rate itself within five years.

Clearly there is a lot of work to do on the tax front, however, we are prepared to get down to work to lighten the financial load on Canada's families and businesses. Our government believes we must set priorities that are reasonable and fiscally responsible, and stick to them.

In January Canadians gave us a mandate to lead change, and we cannot have responsible leadership without making responsible choices. We cannot afford to jeopardize our strong economy with reckless spending, and I can assure members that we will not. Our plan is focused, prudent and affordable.

All told, the priorities we have proposed to Canadians may sound like a tall order, but we are up to the task and we will keep our word. Canadians expect us to say what we mean and mean what we say. They are looking for practical action, day after day, to address their priorities, their needs, their aspirations and those of their families and communities. They are looking for honest, accountable and transparent government, and that is what we will deliver to them.

• (1005)

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the Speech from the Throne. Before I commence, I would like to state that I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Before I get into my remarks, I want to take this opportunity, like all members have after this most recent election, to thank some people. First and foremost, I would like to thank my family, starting with my wife and my children, my sons, Paul and Daniel, my daughter, Irene, my son-in-law, Tony and our little grandson, George, who came together as a team. I would also like to thank my riding association executive and all the many volunteers and supporters of this most recent campaign. As well, I give a big thanks to the residents of Scarborough Centre who, in their wisdom, once again chose to give me the opportunity to have the honour and the privilege to represent them here in the 39th Parliament for the fifth consecutive time.

I read the throne speech over very carefully and I listened to remarks from other members throughout the past couple of days. I chose to take excerpts of some of the comments and I will comment on those.

The Speech from the Throne has been described as a pamphlet. I heard somebody this morning call it blue light. In one of the paragraphs it states:

Through hard work, foresight and good fortune, we have come together to make our vast country one of the most successful the world has ever seen.

The Address

That is so true. By making that statement, the Conservatives admit that this is one of the most successful countries. We did not simply get there by saying "Here we are. We are the most successful country". The right type of investments had to be made. The right type of decisions, and tough decisions, had to be made.

In order for the Conservatives to make that statement today, we must go back to 1993 and before 1993 when the Conservative government was in office, prior to the Liberal government assuming office in 1993. The Conservatives say in their statement that we are the most successful country today. You, Mr. Speaker, were here at that time as were other members. They know very well that this beautiful country of ours was described as a banana republic. It was literally bankrupt. The statement could not have been made at that time.

However, the Conservatives are in a position today to make that statement, and I am very pleased it is being made. It is reflective of some of the decisions, some of the initiatives that were brought forward over the past four mandates.

It is proper to acknowledge the hard work of many of the members, led by the two previous prime ministers and so many cabinet ministers who, along with caucus, were able to consult with Canadians and bring forth forward thinking ideas.

Along the way, were there some mistakes? Very much so. As one of the members of the Conservative Party clearly stated so eloquently yesterday, we do not live in a perfect world, and I agree with him. It further states in the pamphlet:

The distance we have travelled is remarkable. A country once perceived to be at the edge of the world is now at the leading edge of science, business, the arts and sports.

Again, I agree with that, but we could not have got on the podium in Turin if proper investments by the previous government had not been made. We would not have been on the leading edge in science, business and art if the right type of investments had not been made.

We must remind Canadians that the present government just took over. The many successes that are outlined were investments that were made in previous years. I thank the government again for acknowledging the success of the previous government.

The Speech from the Throne goes on to say, "The Government is proud of what Canadians have accomplished so far". I thank the Prime Minister and his newly elected minority government for acknowledging the many accomplishments and for being proud of those accomplishments. Let me remind them of some of the accomplishments, which I took the opportunity to explain to Canadians during the election.

• (1010)

When we inherited the government from the Conservatives, we had a national debt of just over \$600 billion. Today, not only have the Conservatives inherited a country awash with surpluses, but the debt is down by almost \$60 billion to \$499 billion. We inherited a deficit of over \$42.3 billion and we eliminated it many years ago in 1997, if I recall.

In this country, we had never heard of surpluses like those we have had in the past several years, surpluses averaging \$8 billion or

\$9 billion year after year, which we invested in the sciences, business, arts, sports et cetera, as the Conservatives have acknowledged that we did successfully. That is where the investments went.

I remind the party opposite, the minority government, that back then we had an unemployment rate of almost 11.5%. Most recently, before the election, it was at 6.4%.

We supported small business enterprise because, as was stated earlier, we also believed then that it is one of the main engines that drives the economy. That is why well over three million jobs were created.

Our debt to GDP ratio, which is so significant, had dropped dramatically to almost 38% from a high of 68.4%. What does that mean? It means that in terms of interest we were saving an average of \$3 billion a year. The Liberal government took that money and invested it back into the country. We invested it back into the programs that Canadians asked us to invest in.

I stand here proudly to say that every budget we brought forward was a budget that was a result of consultations with Canadians. We used a balanced approach. We also knew we could not satisfy everybody. At the end of the day, the country became what the party across describes in the brochure as the best country and the number one country in the world.

I will go on referring to their pamphlet, which states, "This Government has been given a mandate to lead the change demanded by the Canadian people". Does the government's mandate reflect the fact that two out of three Canadians did not vote for that party? I emphasize the fact that two out of three Canadians did not vote for that party. Had it not been for the dynamics of how the parties are split, with the beautiful province of Quebec and so on, I think things might have been different.

Today's Prime Minister gained some political capital along the way in the campaign. He made statements about the Prime Minister's "new way". He talked about honesty and integrity. He talked about doing government differently. Where have we heard that? Back in 1993 we heard almost exactly the same phrase. "We came here to do government differently," said the then Reform Party led by Preston Manning.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Absolutely. It's good stuff.

Mr. John Cannis: Absolutely? There we go. Those members agree.

Let me remind Canadians of the fact that the Reform Party said it had come here to do government differently. That party wanted no limousines. Members may remember the bowling alley those members wanted. They wanted no pensions, of course, but they reneged on that. That is how they ended up doing government differently.

Let me say for the Prime Minister that he had gained some political capital, but unfortunately he lost it all overnight. I will tell the House why.

The Address

I will reflect on the most recent Parliament. Before we recessed, Bill C-31 and Bill C-32, which would have created the Department of International Trade, were before the House. The present Prime Minister and his party, along with the NDP and the Bloc, voted against my party.

Why am I bringing this up? Because the Conservative Party recruited the member for Vancouver—Kingsway and gave him the portfolio of Minister of International Trade, yet that department does not even exist. The Conservative Party did not want that department to exist and yet the Prime Minister appointed a Minister of International Trade.

No wonder the people of Vancouver—Kingsway are upset. The member for Vancouver—Kingsway said he could best serve his constituents in this capacity. What is he saying? Is he saying that I, as a member of Parliament, and all the other members of Parliament cannot serve our constituents in our capacity as MPs? Is he saying that he has to be a minister to serve his constituents? I say no. He has done a wrong to his constituents and I encourage him to reflect and make the right decisions.

• (1015)

I will close by saying that there were a lot of innuendoes during the campaign. Candidates put out brochures promising pie in the sky, promising to repeal the gun legislation, for example. I say they had better keep their word. That is what they said.

The government talked about recognition of foreign credentials. Those members know very well that it is a provincial responsibility.

There was talk of buying more DART systems, when they ridiculed that in the defence committee when I was the chair.

I wish I had another half an hour, because I have a whole list of things here. I will just remind the government that Canadians are looking for constructive change. The Conservative Party, when two out of three Canadians did not vote for it, had better think twice.

• (1020)

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the remarks made by the member opposite, I will make a couple of comments and I do have some questions.

I will refer to his point that consistently there were surpluses of \$8 billion to \$9 billion. Why is it that with all that financial wisdom, now on the opposition benches, the Liberals could not accurately project those surpluses? As well, they went on major spending sprees at year-end. We can actually say that the Liberals' \$1.9 billion surplus turned into a \$9.1 billion surplus. If the Liberals were so accurate, why did that happen every year?

Given that the Liberals have benefited from Conservative policies to get Canada to where it is today, why were the health and education transfers gutted under the former government?

Yes indeed, Canada voted for change and Canadians will get that change with the Conservative government.

Mr. John Cannis: Mr. Speaker, the member is a new member and first I will congratulate him on his election, but when he talks about Conservative approaches, I will say that there was a Conservative experiment under Brian Mulroney and we all know what he left the

country with: debts, deficits and high unemployment. Our country was psychologically down and out.

I said earlier, and I will repeat it again, that those members were not the Conservatives then. They came in as the Reform Party and then were the Alliance and today they are the so-called Conservatives.

I want to remind the member that we took a responsible position. On the contingency plan, for example, when he asks why, the Liberals took that contingency plan, that money left over, and put it directly to debt reduction. We made that commitment and we kept that commitment throughout the 13 years we were in government.

The numbers I quoted to the member are facts. I challenge the member to look at them. I say to the member, we just do not wake up, sir, and say that there was a \$600 billion debt and now we have a \$500 billion debt, or that we had a \$42 billion deficit and suddenly we have no deficit. There is no magic wand. It comes from being constructive, intelligent, fair and liberally balanced.

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on his speech. He has brought up some very good points that the House needs to be reminded of. Obviously the little bit of information that was in the throne speech acknowledged the condition that we have left the economy in.

One of the areas in which the previous Liberal government was so successful was the area of addressing the skills issues and developing Canada, specifically universities, through research and innovation. There has been \$13 billion invested since 1998, taking Canada from near the bottom of the G-7 in terms of publicly funded research to a place at the very top of the G-7. Most recently, last year the government introduced specific measures to address accessibility for students, particularly those from low income families, low income Canadians.

I would like to ask my colleague a question. When we talk about "five priorities" for Canadians, would he agree with me that education might be one of those five priorities? Was he surprised to see that education was not even mentioned in the Speech from the Throne?

Mr. John Cannis: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, not only was I surprised, I was shocked. I was shocked because we had talked about how the Liberals would take our country into the 21st century by creating a smart society, about how we were going to be competitive. Even though I say it is a shame that education was not even one of the Conservative priorities, I will say in complimentary comments that they acknowledged it in their pamphlet when they spoke of our success "at the leading edge of science, business, the arts and sport".

In response to the question, what the Conservatives have done here, to some degree, is acknowledge the investments made by the Liberal government. It is no coincidence that we are where we are today; it is because the Liberal government made the proper investments.

The Address

I am hopeful that the government also has a change of mind and starts investing in these areas as well, like we did, so that we can continue making our country leading edge, as they say, leading the world as a smart country that is competitively strong and, most important, united.

• (1025)

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations upon your re-election. It must be quite pleasing to win re-election twice in three months.

I would also like to thank the constituents of Winnipeg South Centre, who have again shown their confidence in me and have given me the privilege of representing them for a third time.

I listened closely to the government's Speech from the Throne. I rise today to comment on those important elements that are missing. These missing elements concern me, because I believe the road map of the government of the country must reflect the diversity and complexity of the people of this nation and of the regions. A five priority list sounds good, but five easy pieces is not enough.

The government's position on child care is profoundly disappointing. In my home province of Manitoba, we are deeply disturbed that the government refuses to honour a true system of early learning and child care, a program that supports children and allows families the opportunities they deserve.

On April 29, 2005, the Government of Canada signed an agreement with the Government of Manitoba, the first in Canada, which provided new multi-year federal funding on child care and learning. I was there that day and I am confident in stating that no one who attended the signing would have predicted the sorry state we are in today. It was a profoundly moving event. As the signing of the agreement took place, those in the crowd spontaneously stood up and sang *O Canada*. What a moment.

It is important that members know what Manitoba is losing because of the government's approach to child care. Over the life of the five year plan, Manitoba would have obtained 1,650 new child care spaces in Winnipeg, 700 newly funded spaces in rural Manitoba communities, 68 new spaces in northern communities, funding for new facilities, for renovations, for the expansion of existing facilities, and for what I consider most important, new training spaces and wage increases for child care workers. This is all gone.

Let us be clear: a taxable \$1,200 per child will simply not come even remotely close to achieving the objectives that I just laid out.

It is also important to note that I have not heard any discussion anywhere of the \$100 million the previous government committed to child care in aboriginal communities.

I know that I speak for thousands of Manitobans who have asked the members on the opposite side to honour the agreements made in good faith. I want to remind members of a comment made by the premier of British Columbia. It was a comment following the signing of the Kelowna accord. He said that "the honour of the Crown depends on our meeting these commitments". Indeed, that was a commitment made government to government.

What also concerns me is that the government is now speculating about withdrawing funds for those who advocate for early learning and child care. I hope this is not intimidation.

The Speech from the Throne was also silent on another agreement put in place by the former government. I am speaking of the Kelowna accord. It would seem that the current government has never heard of the Kelowna accord. There was hardly a word on aboriginal people in the speech. It was mentioned twice, and only in passing. But we know that the government is aware of the Kelowna accord. It simply does not want to honour it.

The new government must begin to listen more closely, especially to its own members. I want to congratulate the new Minister of Indian Affairs on his appointment. It appears that he cares, but what about his colleagues?

On January 10, at the height of the recent election campaign, he said on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network:

—I am the party spokesman on the Kelowna accord and let's be perfectly clear for the viewers of your network. We are supportive of Kelowna. We are supportive of the targets and objectives that were set at Kelowna.

He said they are supportive, but is anyone listening to him? Is his own Prime Minister? Is his Minister of Finance?

• (1030)

Why is the aboriginal community not in the five priority list? Kelowna speaks to hope and opportunity for aboriginal peoples. It speaks to dealing with the different circumstances in all regions and communities, in rural and urban areas, on reserves, on settlements in the north and Arctic regions. It speaks to working with first nations, with Inuit and with Métis, to women, to men and to children. It speaks to improving education, housing and health care. It speaks to partnership, collaboration and accountability, and accountability is more than financial audits. Accountability is to change the lives of Canada's first citizens. It speaks to transformation and it speaks to change.

Again, I would say to those opposite that they should honour the agreements reached by all the aboriginal leaders, by the provincial leaders, by the territorial leaders and by the Government of Canada. I repeat what Mr. Campbell said, "The honour of the Crown depends on meeting our commitments".

The throne speech was silent on all matters relating to the aboriginal community, in particular, the Indian residential school resolution. We have asked the minister questions about honouring it. He is not silent but he says nothing.

The Address

According to Statistics Canada, it is estimated that there are 80,000 people alive today who attended residential schools. Many of the elderly survivors of the schools are dying daily. I do not believe the new Minister of Indian Affairs does not care. He knows that aboriginal people want the respect and recognition of what happened to them. He knows the residential school experience haunts many aboriginal people. He knows that the elderly and ill survivors of the residential schools look forward to the financial compensation to make their lives easier. He knows there was a good faith clause to immediately fast-track payments to the elderly and sick. He knows it is time to do something.

Again I say to the members opposite that they must honour the Indian residential schools agreement and bring some closure to the painful Canadian experience. The honour of the Crown depends on meeting our commitments.

There is only a passing reference to the environment in the Speech from the Throne.

It goes without saying that I love the province of Manitoba but there is a special place in Manitoba for me. Since childhood I have vacationed on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, a lake that is truly an inland sea. I know the communities around it. I have met the fishers from the aboriginal communities like Pine Dock and Bloodvein. I also know that Lake Winnipeg is the 10th largest freshwater lake in the world. It sustains a commercial fishery with an annual landed value of approximately \$20 million. It is a key component of Manitoba's hydroelectric system. I also know that Lake Winnipeg is undergoing increasing stress and without action from all levels of government, Lake Winnipeg may be a lake in crisis. We can prevent this crisis from occurring but further action is needed. It is incumbent upon the government to take that action and to move forward.

I ask the members opposite to commit to Lake Winnipeg, to commit to the initiatives that the previous government implemented. It is important for the viability of those around the lake and it is important for Saskatchewan and Alberta as well.

I also want to briefly mention another missing aspect of the throne speech. There is no mention of cultural endeavours, of the arts, film, theatre and music. There is no mention of supporting the Canada Council in order to meet the needs of creators and performers. There is no reference to support for galleries and museums. There is no reference for the Museum of Human Rights. I urge the government to move forward there.

I am almost out of time but I do not want to leave without speaking about the fact that there is no mention, as my colleague referenced earlier, of post-secondary education, of the importance of innovation, of support, of skills development and of revising the student loan program. In a country like ours, this is critical and the previous government made many commitments.

There are many challenges ahead of us and I look forward to them but I want to repeat the phrase "honour the commitments made by the Crown". The honour of the Crown depends on our meeting our commitments. We have many challenges ahead of us in this new Parliament and I look forward to working with my colleagues.

● (1035)

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first occasion to be on my feet here in the House of Commons I would especially like to thank the people of Kildonan—St. Paul for re-electing me and the faith they have shown in the job I have been doing in the House and in Kildonan—St. Paul.

I listened with great interest to the member's speech. As I listened to all the speeches I heard sort of the same themes: a renewed interest in very key issues like day care, aboriginal issues and Lake Winnipeg.

My daughter lives and owns property on the waters of Lake Winnipeg. The lake has had a lot of problems over the past 10 years. Everything was silent until very recently this year when there was a renewed interest in Lake Winnipeg.

The member opposite talked about day care. There is a very strong interest in a national day care program. What we have chosen to do is give parents choice. Parents will receive \$1,200 a year for every child under the age of six and we will also create 125,000 new spaces, which is a lot of spaces.

As a new government we have addressed certain things.

On the aboriginal issues, my daughter-in-law is aboriginal. She is an Ojibway girl. She was so dismayed at what the Liberal government had presented for the aboriginal people. Our new minister for aboriginal affairs has done an absolutely astounding job, immediately before the House was even called back, to address the water problems.

The Canadian people have spoken and, with all due respect, they have said that they want a new leaf turned over and that they want a new government.

Does the member not believe that parents should have choice? Does she not believe that 125,000 new day care spaces is something to rejoice in and to support the government? Does she not believe that the water situation on the reserves is something that is of paramount importance? Can she not understand that these kinds of things need to be supported by all sides of the House so we can work together, instead of doing the partisan toe to toe thing day after day?

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Speaker, the member and I have gone toe to toe on a number of issues because we have a very different approach to it. I applaud her commitment to day care but I want to inform the member that the issue is not day care. It is child care. It is early learning. It is providing opportunities for parents to enter the workforce or to go to school.

The program to which my hon. colleague is speaking is modelled on a program that was introduced in the province of Ontario and did not provide one single day care spot. We know in Manitoba what the funding in Manitoba was going to provide. We have calibrated it and we know what it means.

The Address

It is interesting that the member raises the issue of water. We heard the minister yesterday talk about the shifts in the water. I applaud him for reintroducing the Liberal water plan. He spoke yesterday of the issue at Canoe Lake but he was speaking of a band-aid solution. The community is trucking water in. It needs a new system. The system was built for 130 homes, not the 220 homes that are there now. If members will recall, the Kelowna accord added an additional \$400 million for water and water systems, and we want that agreement honoured.

● (1040)

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to respond in the House today to the Speech from the Throne.

I will say at the outset that I will be splitting my time this morning with the member for Vegreville—Wainwright.

Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time I am on my feet in the 39th Parliament I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker and as a member of Parliament. I would also like to congratulate all new members in the House on their election and incumbents on their re-election. I thank all Canadians who let their names stand for election in this great country.

It is important that I say thanks to the voters of Palliser for once again investing their trust in me and the Conservative Party in the last election. I extend a heartfelt thanks to the hundreds of quality people who volunteered their time to send me back to this chamber. Most important, I extend a special thanks to my loving wife Denise for all her hard work to help me get here and her solid support every step of the way.

It is truly an honour to serve the hard-working families of Palliser. Since first being elected in June 2004, I have had the great opportunity and sincere privilege to listen to and speak with thousands of people throughout my constituency about their hopes and dreams for the future, for the Canada they want to see and the government that they deserve.

During the past election, it was clear throughout the many conversations I had with people in Moose Jaw, Regina, Wilcox, Avonlea, Mossbank, Pense, Rouleau, Caron and Caronport that concern about trust and accountability were common threads uniting rural and urban, young and old. Those voices spoke loudly and clearly during the last election. They voted for change. They voted for a new government that would respect their families and their tax dollars.

They voted for a new Conservative government because we promised to deliver on five key priorities: cutting the GST from 7% to 6% and then to 5%; ensuring our communities are safe by cracking down on gun, gang and drug crime; giving parents choice in child care with a \$1,200 annual payment for each child under the age of six and creating 125,000 more child care spaces; and working with the provinces and territories to establish a health care patient wait time guarantee.

Most important, they voted Conservative because they wanted a party in power that would restore trust and accountability to government. It is a pleasure today to rise in the House on behalf of

the people of Palliser as part of a government that is making good on that commitment to Canadians.

As announced in the throne speech on Tuesday, the government's first piece of legislation will be the federal accountability act. This new law will restore the principle that government should serve the public interest of all Canadians, not personal interests and certainly not the political interests of the Liberal Party of Canada, as well as restoring Canadians' faith in our public institutions by making them more accountable and effective.

Canadians expect politicians and public sector employees to conduct themselves according to the highest ethical standards. My goal as a representative of the people of Palliser is to make government more effective and accountable to Parliament and to Canadians.

During the last election campaign I knocked on a lot of doors and many people told me how fed up they were with Liberal corruption. These are hard-working men and women who play by the rules and pay their taxes. They were absolutely fed up and disgusted by the culture of entitlement that developed in Ottawa under the former Liberal government. That is why they voted for change, positive change that would get rid of this culture of entitlement, positive change that would mean tough new rules to ensure that the kind of corruption we saw happening under the Liberal government could never happen again.

The federal accountability act builds on our platform commitment. It takes into account our discussions with officers of Parliament, such as the Auditor General and the Information Commissioner, along with public policy experts, eminent Canadians and unions. Our accountability package will address longstanding and difficult issues head on.

● (1045)

Most importantly, through this new legislation we will increase public confidence in the integrity of the political process by tightening the laws around political financing and lobbying. We will take steps to ensure government is more accountable by eliminating the undue influence of big money donors, by banning large personal or corporate donations to political parties, by toughening the rules governing lobbying, by making the federal government more transparent and accountable by increasing the power of independent officers of Parliament such as the Auditor General, and by providing real protection to whistleblowers, both public servants and other Canadians who wish to come forward with information about unethical or illegal activities that they may have seen in some area of the federal government.

We will make government more open while balancing legitimate concerns about the need for personal privacy, commercial confidentiality and national security. Accountability and trust in government is essential. It is not our business, it is everyone's business. It requires that Parliament, the government and the public service work together to serve Canadians honestly and with integrity. This is a government that campaigned on trust, believes in trust and will govern with trust. That is why it is my sincere pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to the throne speech today.

The Address

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the member's comments intently. I was particularly puzzled when he talked about the culture of entitlement because he made it seem as if it was something that was unique to one political party. If it is, I would ask him which party it is? Is it an entitlement for the member for Vancouver Kingsway to gain a cabinet position, car and driver, Challenger travel, ministerial salary and perks, independent of whether or not his party actually wins the election?

Is it an entitlement for Mr. Fortier to be appointed to the Senate, a Senate that we were told would be elected? I was encouraged to see that it was elected. I was surprised to see that only the Prime Minister had a vote. I would have thought that it would have been a more popular election, but was that his entitlement, his entitlement to cabinet? Is it an entitlement for Mr. John Reynolds to become a privy councillor, so he can advertise on his website that he has the capability to see cabinet documents and cabinet secrets? Is it an entitlement for the defence industry to get its lobbyist appointed as minister? Are those the entitlements we are talking about? Is it an entitlement for campaign workers to get untendered contracts to advise the government on how to tender in the future?

I believe that Canadians did want change, but they received nickels and dimes. We saw that in the Speech from the Throne. They received no real political change. When these people say that they want to change Ottawa, that they want to shake it up, I believe they want to shake it down.

• (1050)

Mr. Dave Batters: Mr. Speaker, it surprises me to hear the member opposite talk about a shakedown, because if anybody should be talking about shakedowns it is certainly not the members opposite.

The term "culture of entitlement" did not exist until we saw the exploits of the prior government. This is new terminology. I do not know if Canadians really want us to get into chapter and verse. Certainly we could do that. There are about 35 different RCMP investigations ongoing and people are under investigation. My constituents want Liberals to go to jail, but I do not think we really want to go down that road.

What we are doing in this party, as our first order of business, is cleaning up government with a robust and vigorous accountability package.

The ballot question in the 2006 election was about who could restore honesty, trust and accountability to Ottawa, and Canadians spoke. Accountability for hard-earned tax dollars should be a given. It is not something we should really have to be spending all this time on. As we have seen from the exploits of the previous Liberal government and prior Liberal governments, unfortunately it is not a given, but this party and this Prime Minister are going to give Canadians the good, honest government they deserve.

The federal accountability act will ensure that the trust of Canadians will be upheld. The residents of Palliser and Canadians from coast to coast grew sick and tired of watching the previous Liberal government function like a big club. The vast majority of Canadians were outside the Liberal club, so they closed down the club and they want it closed down permanently.

Under the previous Liberal government, the mantra truly was "Who do you know in the PMO?". Under this new Conservative government, the questions will be these. What is in the best interests of Canadians? Is this good value for money? Is this decision in keeping with the trust that Canadians have bestowed upon us as the government and all of us as elected officials?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, allow me to congratulate you on your election. I would also like to thank the constituents of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine for putting their trust in me and the Bloc Québécois for the second time in a row.

I have listened carefully to my colleague's remarks. To me, it sounded like he was listing accomplishments. But the Conservative government came to power just a few months ago. At this point, they can really talk only of intentions, not actions.

I would also like to remind the members opposite that they were elected to form a minority government. As a result, they will be under scrutiny. All parliamentarians are under scrutiny, of course, but government members more intensely so.

The member's comments verge on arrogance. He was practically reading a record of results. He went on and on about the past, blaming the Liberals for everything and promising that things will be different now. I simply want to say that this government will be judged by the decisions it makes and the actions it takes.

As such, I would recommend that the member pay closer attention to what is actually going on and frame his statements more as intentions. I would suggest that he be more careful about what he says.

[*English*]

Mr. Dave Batters: Mr. Speaker, this is the fifth day of sittings of this Chamber and we are very fortunate and very blessed to have been entrusted with this great honour by Canadians. This is a record that is just going to build. We are going to build our report card and it is one that Canadians are going to be proud of.

We on this side of the House look forward to the scrutiny of the opposition parties because our record is one that we are going to be proud of. This is going to be a record of honesty, integrity and accountability, and it is just going to continue to build. This is why our first order of business is going to be this monumental piece of legislation, the federal accountability act, which is going to change the way that this place functions forever. This is a nice way to begin what is going to be an excellent report card for this Prime Minister and members on this side of the House.

• (1055)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can see by the time that I will not be finishing my speech before question period.

Statements by Members

I would like to begin like many others have here today by sincerely thanking my constituents for their overwhelming show of support during the election campaign. It is an honour that I do not take lightly, and it is a great responsibility that they have bestowed upon me. I recognize that I represent all of my constituents, not only those who voted for me, and I will work as hard as I can on behalf of all my constituents when they come to me. I will work with them to build a better Canada, which is what this Conservative government is here to do.

I would like to talk a bit about the Speech from the Throne. The Liberals have been criticizing us by saying that our whole agenda is boiled down to five points. It is much better to have five specific points to work on and to actually do them, then to have 30, 40 or 50 pages of rhetoric out of which nothing comes. That is what we have seen for the last 13 years since I came here as a member of the opposition. We have focused government and we will continue to do that.

The Speech from the Throne is this government's agenda for what is going to happen in the House in terms of legislation for this first period of time. It is not our agenda for the whole Parliament. Our election platform is our agenda. It is what we intend to accomplish in this mandate, and we will work on that. Given a chance, by all members in the House, we will deliver our entire election platform. That is what we intend to do. For this first session in the House we are going to focus on this throne speech.

There are five parts to our throne speech and many people already know this. The federal accountability act, the first part of our throne speech, will be the first piece of legislation we will deal with. We will cut the GST by 1%, bringing it down from 7% to 6% and then we will continue to bring it down to 5%.

We will get tough on crime, especially on those who commit violent crimes and those who use weapons in committing crimes. The \$1,200 a year child care allowance is part of our plan. We will be working with business and communities by creating 125,000 child care spaces. We will work with the provinces to put in place firm wait time guarantees for health care delivery. That is our throne speech.

Members opposite criticize that as being a light agenda. Accomplishing any one of these things will be a wonderful accomplishment, more than the Liberal government certainly did in the last Parliament. We fully intend, with their help and with the cooperation of the House, to accomplish all of these.

I want to focus today on the federal accountability act and on our sixth priority which is not in the throne speech but is certainly a priority of this caucus. We saw this priority last night when so many members of this caucus were here for the take note debate on agriculture. Our sixth priority is working on behalf of farmers to make things better for them and for the agriculture industry. That is a focus of our caucus and it has been a focus for the last 13 years. It is a good thing we have been here in opposition in the past to focus the government on that or there would have been little to no focus on that at all. Now that we are in government we are going to be working hard on agriculture as well.

Why is the federal accountability act so important? This bill would be the toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history. I see, Mr. Speaker, that you are about to cut me off so I will finish my presentation after question period.

• (1100)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vegreville—Wainwright will have a good five minutes to complete his remarks when the debate resumes on this important matter.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous honour to rise today to address this chamber. As a new member I look forward to learning from each of my hon. colleagues.

The people of Kitchener—Conestoga have honoured me by providing me the opportunity to serve. I thank them for the trust they have shown in me. I want to thank my family for the support they have given me, especially my wife, Betty, and my children.

I want to speak to an issue that has recently taken on a new urgency. Last week I was meeting with a family of a young man in my riding. The young man, full of hopes, dreams and ambitions, had those dreams cut short when he was murdered by a young offender last month.

The young offender is currently out on bail. If convicted he will be out on the street, likely before his 20th birthday.

Many young offenders realize the current Youth Criminal Justice Act has little to do with justice. They continue their criminal activities fully aware that they will also continue to enjoy their freedom. Canadians deserve better.

I look forward to working with my hon. colleagues on both sides of the House to restore justice to this great land.

* * *

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the constituents of my riding of Oak Ridges—Markham for placing their trust in me to represent them in Parliament once again. I look forward to the challenge and to ensuring that their views are expressed here in Ottawa.

On April 21 Queen Elizabeth II will mark her 80th birthday. My office is pleased to have launched a very successful initiative to mark this important milestone. I sent out hundreds of birthday cards for constituents to fill out for the Queen. We distributed more than 500 photographs of the Queen to constituents, and also organized a series of coffee and cake receptions throughout the riding.

I want to thank the people of Nobleton, King City Seniors' Centre, the Royal Canadian Legion in Stouffville and the Markham Seniors Activity Centre for helping my office to organize these receptions.

On behalf of Oak Ridges—Markham, I extend a heartfelt birthday wish to Queen Elizabeth. God save the Queen.

* * *

[Translation]

SAINT-HUBERT CITIZEN ADVOCACY

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the mandate of the Parrainage civique Saint-Hubert community agency is to help adolescents with mental and physical disabilities become socially active in the community. The agency does this by pairing adult volunteers with young people who are having a hard time integrating socially due to a temporary or permanent disability. In other words, they match a dedicated adult with a young person in need.

Adults devote a few hours of their time, around the same time every week, to an adolescent who may be experiencing difficulty due to a physical or mental disability.

Every summer, Parrainage civique Saint-Hubert also organizes day camps for such young people, thus giving their parents a well-deserved rest.

Next week, April 9 to 15, is citizen advocacy week in Quebec. Thus, now is the perfect time to highlight the extraordinary work of this agency and, particularly, its president, Richard Rioux, its general manager, Yvette Leblanc, and their collaborators, Marianne Veilleux-Poulin, Jacinthe Barabé and Benoît Renaud.

* * *

TUITION FEES

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, I met with students at Selkirk College in Castlegar. They presented me with more than 400 cards, representing half the students at the college, and asked that we take action to reduce tuition fees.

[English]

In 2005, B.C. students paid an average tuition fee of \$4,874, up from \$2,592 in 2001. High tuition fees are the most significant barrier to education.

These students are asking that the \$1.5 billion allocated for post-secondary education in the last budget be used exclusively to reduce tuition fees.

It is clearly unacceptable for our young college graduates to have a debt of anywhere from \$20,000 up to \$60,000.

● (1105)

[Translation]

We must act. The future of our country is at stake.

* * *

[English]

CURLING

Mr. Todd Norman Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 24, ordinary life drew to a halt across Newfoundland and Labrador. All eyes were focused on Pinerolo, Italy and the curling

Statements by Members

rink of Brad Gushue, Jamie Korab, Russ Howard, and from my riding, Mark Nichols and Mike Adam. Not only the best in Canada, this rink proved that they are the best in the world, winning the gold medal for Canada in the 2006 Winter Olympics in a spectacular final.

Gushue and Korab from Newfoundland and Nichols and Adam from Labrador became heroes to the entire province. With the addition of Ontario and New Brunswick's curling statesman, Russ Howard, they became the pride of all of Canada.

My constituents and I have since had the pleasure of meeting members of the Gushue rink at the recent Labrador Winter Games and at events in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Wabush and Labrador City. We are proud of their historic accomplishment. We admire their exemplary sportsmanship. We wish them continued excellence in the sport of curling.

* * *

RIDING OF BURLINGTON

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today. I would like to take this moment to thank all those who helped me out in my campaign during the last election.

It was a very tough campaign over the Christmas break, but we came together as a team and we worked very hard. I am very honoured to represent all of the constituents of the riding of Burlington.

* * *

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the constituents of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for re-electing me for the third time as their voice in Ottawa.

Today I pay tribute to those who have made a difference in this great country. Sunday, April 9 will mark the 89th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the battle that forged Canada as a nation.

It is difficult to visualize 20,000 soldiers under enemy fire trudging through muddy trenches in driving rain while carrying a load of heavy equipment, but that is exactly what they did. We lost more than 3,500 Canadian soldiers during the battle, and of those who returned home, only three remain.

There were four Victoria Crosses awarded for bravery and courage.

Vimy Ridge is a proud part of our history and our heritage. When called upon, Canadians have always risen to the occasion to ensure peace and democracy in the world. Our proud military history continues today.

On Sunday, say a prayer of thanks to those proud warriors of Vimy Ridge.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

ÉRIC BÉDARD

Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to congratulate Éric Bédard, a short track speed skater from Sainte-Thècle in my riding, on winning a silver medal at the Winter Olympics in Turin.

His achievement is the result of thousands of hours of training and hard work. Since he began competing in this sport, Éric Bédard has won three other Olympic medals, as well as many national and international titles, including the world cup and the world championships.

A high-calibre athlete, he is without question a true model of perseverance and determination for our youth and for all Quebecers.

The Bloc Québécois salutes and applauds Éric Bédard's remarkable performance. Quebecers are proud of you, and we wish you every success in your future competitions. Congratulations, Éric.

* * *

[English]

RWANDA

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Parliament declared April 7 as a day of remembrance for the victims of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The Rwandan genocide is a reminder to all of us that we in the international community have an obligation to protect civilians from genocides, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

It is beholden to the people of the world to band together to ensure that we no longer go down the path of genocide. Our history has too many genocides. It is not a proud legacy to humankind.

In September at the 2005 World Summit, responsibility to protect principles were given global endorsement.

Over the past 12 years Rwandans have courageously taken steps to achieve national reconciliation and rebuild their country. Canada encourages Rwanda to pursue these efforts.

* * *

● (1110)

RWANDA

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 12 years ago the world watched with horror as the Rwandan genocide unfolded and over 800,000 Rwandans were murdered.

We must be prepared as a nation to prevent such things from ever happening again.

Canada takes pride that the responsibility to protect has now been given express international global recognition and endorsement. This was the centrepiece of the Liberal government's international commitment to peace and security.

May we never, ever let evil triumph again.

FEDERALISM

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week we have once again witnessed members of the Liberal Party, including the member for Malpeque, and the member for Eglinton—Lawrence who supposedly aspires to lead his party, display arrogant views on the role of federalism Quebec.

Even the deputy leader of the opposition has tried to distance herself from these comments.

After the Liberals' sponsorship program led to a public inquiry that investigated in part the Liberals' abuse of trust and public money, the Liberal Party continues with tired rhetoric and harmful antics.

Justice Gomery noted that key members of the Liberal Party put their partisan interests ahead of the interests of federalism. He found that such attitudes are "difficult to reconcile with basic democratic values".

While Liberals continue to display arrogance and disregard, this Conservative government is moving ahead on an agenda of respect for federalism and fairness for all provinces, including Quebec.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, protesters are entering the second month of a land reclamation near the town of Caledonia just outside the Six Nations reserve.

Protesters say the Haldimand Tract land was unlawfully sold in the past and that the federal government is negligent in its responsibilities to the reserve and its members.

This blockade is only one example of unanswered land claims frustrating first nations. The Six Nations alone have 28 land claims it is waiting for the government to settle.

The previous government and now this one have the attitude that it is cheaper to negotiate than to settle land claims or treaties. Aboriginal peoples of Canada feel differently. The cost to them in uncertainty and lost opportunity is almost immeasurable.

Yesterday the minister's office told the press that the blockade was provincial jurisdiction, not federal. We do not need finger pointing. We need somebody to take some leadership.

When will this government look at the big picture and see that coming to the table to negotiate land claims and treaties is its duty? It must act now in good faith to bring these issues to a conclusion.

[Translation]

WORLD HEALTH DAY

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Health Day. Every day, 40,000 children perish and 1,500 women die in childbirth. In Africa, one child in six dies before turning five years old.

[English]

The number of people who will die of AIDS will be in excess of 200 million. Two million people die every year from malaria and an equivalent number die from tuberculosis. This is shocking, considering that most of these deaths are preventable, manageable or treatable.

Here at home the number of people with dementia and other chronic diseases is escalating, and childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions.

None of these challenges were mentioned in the Speech from the Throne.

Simple measures and simple interventions properly implemented and coordinated with a long term view to capacity building would save millions of lives.

The new government should recognize that the world has more than five priorities. The massive challenges to global health must be one of the government's top priorities.

* * *

[Translation]

CANCER

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Daffodil Days, a fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society, was held this past March 30 to April 2. This year, I had the privilege of being the honorary chair for the City of Laval. Over \$100,000 was collected, surpassing the fundraising goal of \$80,000.

As a survivor of breast cancer, now in remission, I know the importance of funding research. I have experienced the anxiety, pain and suffering that this disease inflicts on individuals and their loved ones. These daffodils are a symbol of hope.

In 2005 alone, there were 149,500 new cases of cancer and 69,500 deaths attributed to this illness. Great strides have been made in research, but we must continue to support it in order to eradicate this disease. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of this fundraising campaign.

* * *

•(1115)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, violence against women and children is a major recurring social and economic problem in our country.

[English]

On April 2, 2006 this fact was highlighted by the murder-suicide of the Mailyly family of Cumberland. It appears that François Mailyly

Oral Questions

killed his wife, Francine, and their three children, Jessica, Brandon and Kevin, set the house on fire and then took his own life.

Unfortunately, this type of tragedy is all too common in Canada. Studies have repeatedly shown that women are more at risk from violence in their own homes than they are in the street. It is time that we as a society recognized that the violence experienced by women and children is part of a wider social problem that requires specific attention.

[Translation]

All levels of government must commit to finding solutions and looking for ways to integrate violence prevention strategies in all our social programs.

[English]

Our heartfelt condolences to the Mailyly family.

* * *

LIBERAL LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hare and tortoise race for the Liberal leadership has hit a hurdle. Suddenly more politicians are taking the plunge than jumping ship. The hon. academic from Massachusetts is on board, but it is one thing to be a captain of the *Titanic* when it hit the iceberg, it is quite another to go rushing to the bridge as the ship is headed for the bottom. We are looking forward to his support in eliminating the gun registry. I understand he is partial to the AK-47, although he is clearly not careful about whom he associates with.

Speaking of which, just about every party in the House has had the distinction of associating with the member for Kings—Hants. His razor wit has sliced and hooked so wildly through the House, I recommend his fellow candidates not join him on the golf course. Of course, they can join him for dinner. Like all good Liberals past, present and future, he will gladly pick up the tab and pass it off to the nearest taxpayer.

The former environment minister has great Liberal qualifications. His multi-million dollar announcements have expelled more greenhouse gases than have ever been pumped from an oil well. Like all Liberals, he is more sincere than coherent, but Canadians expect that from the former government.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister refused to promise to respect Canada's international commitments to the Kyoto protocol. However, a representative of the Minister of the Environment said that the government did not intend to withdraw from the protocol. There is utter confusion about the government's intentions.

I am asking once again today whether the government will respect Canada's signature with regard to the Kyoto protocol.

Oral Questions

Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's intention is quite clear on this matter. It will continue to draw up a plan for Canada in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants.

This is something the former Liberal government failed to do. In fact, greenhouse gas emissions increased by 30% under that government. Even the United States had a better record than the Liberal government.

[*English*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we learned that the finance department presently concluded that the Conservatives' so-called environmental plan was ineffective and costly.

Will the minister admit that a tax credit is not an environmental plan and will the minister commit to an actual climate change plan like the one the Minister of International Trade was so proud to release last April?

Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, every morning millions of Canadians are stuck in traffic jams around our big cities. Those traffic jams create pollution which creates health problems for Canadians.

For 13 years the Liberal government did nothing to address traffic congestion or to create incentives for people to use mass transit.

This government has committed and it will deliver with a tax credit for mass transit users that will help reduce traffic, reduce traffic jams and reduce pollutants in our air.

They talk, we act.

* * *

CANADA-U.S. BORDER

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even the Canadian Urban Transit Association disagrees with that.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

American politicians have announced their intention to fight legislation requiring people to show a passport when crossing the border with Canada. Unlike American senators, our Prime Minister simply threw in the towel in Cancun.

[*English*]

He simply cut and ran.

[*Translation*]

Why should Canadians have to rely on American senators rather than their own Prime Minister to protect their interests?

Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously the Government of Canada will continue to defend the interests of Canadians and will make our American friends aware of the importance of trade between people and businesses on both sides of

the border. The government will continue to work on solving these problems.

I believe the Prime Minister has asked the Minister of Public Safety to work with his American counterpart to resolve these issues as quickly as possible.

* * *

[*English*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only did the Prime Minister cut and run from the Americans on passports, apparently his meeting with President Bush did absolutely nothing on softwood.

The U.S. ambassador is now saying that we are a year from having a deal. The Minister of International Trade has been described as a mere cheerleader on the file. Apparently President Bush is fond of the Prime Minister's position on softwood but Canadians are asking themselves, when will Canadians actually see some firm results?

Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the House this much. Canadians saw no results after five years of prejudicial American tariffs that damaged our softwood industry under that member's government. They talked but they did not act. They talked but they did not deliver.

This government is going to continue to be very forceful in asserting the Canadian position that these are illegal tariffs, and we will vigorously defend the interests of the Canadian forestry industry.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. members across the way are fond of talking about the last 12 years. Well let us talk about 12 straight years of unprecedented economic growth, eight balanced budgets, world leading debt reduction, a triple A credit rating, low interest rates, low inflation, lower taxes, 3.5 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the best fiscal record in the G-7 and the best fiscal performance since 1867.

When can Canadians expect the \$1.5 billion that we booked to help the softwood industry in this country?

Mr. James Moore: The campaign is over, Ralph. You lost.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I hear somebody suggesting the campaign is over. I wish hon. members would bear that in mind.

We could have a little less noise in the chamber so we can hear the questions. I could hardly hear the hon. member for Wascana's question. I hope we will be able to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, who now has the floor, give a response. Perhaps he could speak on behalf of one side and one member could speak on behalf of the other.

Oral Questions

Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was an adviser to that member when he was an opposition MLA and I see he learned everything I taught him about asking questions.

Canadians judged that government's economic record on January 23, and they gave the Liberals a big F. After 12 years there was no increase in real disposable income for the average Canadian family, which is working harder but falling further behind. That will not be the record of this government because the finance minister will be introducing a universal tax cut for every Canadian in his first budget.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a spokesperson for the Minister of the Environment made it clear that the Conservatives are waffling on the Kyoto accord. It is becoming obvious that the government prefers to sit on the fence on this issue. On the one hand, it does not plan to withdraw from the Kyoto accord, but on the other, it has no intention of complying with the Kyoto commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6%.

Do the spokesperson's statements accurately reflect the minister's position?

Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's position and that of the government have been made clear for quite some time. We intend to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants. We will introduce a bill to ensure clean, pure air and water; that is a priority for Canadians and a priority for this government.

• (1125)

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as president of the United Nations climate change conference, the environment minister has a special responsibility.

With such a contradictory attitude about the Kyoto protocol, what sort of credibility does the minister expect to establish among participants in the upcoming summit to be held in Bonn beginning on May 15, when she is to preside over negotiations for phase two of the Kyoto protocol?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am acutely aware of the challenge that we are facing. As president of the conference of parties for the United Nations framework convention on climate change, I will be vigorously defending the taxpayers of Canada and Canada's position about approaching climate change from a realistic and effective plan.

I have had consultations with member countries and our international partners, and they are all finding themselves in the same position that we are in.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, without consulting the opposition, this government decided to cut programs linked to climate change, while maintaining its commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

If the Prime Minister is sincere in his desire to be transparent and cooperative, why does he not impose a moratorium on program cuts until he is ready to table his own plan to implement the Kyoto protocol, which members of Parliament could then debate?

[English]

Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member wants to work with us to achieve results.

What has happened is there have been a number of programs initiated by the previous government. There was an independent review initiated by this government. There were a number of programs that were deemed to be ineffective and not working. I can assure the hon. member that we are going to implement this review which shows that these programs are not working and are not in the interest of taxpayers.

We will, however, develop programs that will actually reduce greenhouse gases, and I look forward to working with the hon. member to achieve those results.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of the Environment wants to practise the open federalism her government preaches, what is she waiting for in order to reach a bilateral agreement with Quebec that would give Quebec control over attaining Kyoto protocol targets?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I need to point out to the hon. member that Quebec is a part of Canada, so Quebec will be very much a part of the made in Canada solution. I look forward to working with the minister of the environment in Quebec, Mr. Béchard, on a made in Canada solution for all Canadians.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for 13 years the Liberals promised that they would protect public health care in this country. Then we saw provinces chipping away at our public health care system. One could think of Alberta. What did we get from the Liberals? We got a beating of the chest, we got the occasional letter, and we got ever decreasing fines being called upon. They did absolutely nothing to stop the growth of for profit medicine and the deterioration of medicine in this country.

Will the Prime Minister today give a clear indication that he is prepared to impose significant financial penalties when the Canada Health Act is broken?

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first opportunity to rise in the House, I wish to thank the people of Parry Sound—Muskoka for this immense privilege.

Oral Questions

I want to assure the hon. member opposite that the government is committed to universally accessible, publicly funded health care that respects the five principles of the Canada Health Act. As the hon. member noted, there was a lot of rhetoric when the members opposite in the Liberal Party were government but not a lot of action. In fact, wait times doubled in the 13 years of the previous Liberal regime.

Canadians voted for change. They will get greater accessibility—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Alberta plan would allow doctors to be both inside and outside of the health care system at the same time. In addition, there is a proposal to allow wealthy individuals to get their own health insurance and jump to the front of the line. This is what credit card medicine is all about. This is the beginning of the creation.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Jack Layton: We are now hearing the return of the catcall approach from both parties this morning. I have to say it is quite disappointing. I cannot hear myself ask a question. Canadians want to know whether or not the government is going to put a stop to the two tier system which is unfolding in Alberta.

• (1130)

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am in agreement with the hon. member that in fact we have to have innovation in our health care system, but it has to be openly accessible and universally accessible within a publicly funded system. There is a lot of innovation that can occur within that mandate.

The letter that the Prime Minister sent to the Premier of Alberta makes it clear that our recommendation is that Alberta join other provinces in establishing wait time guarantees. That was our commitment to the people of Canada and there are many innovations that can occur within the Canada Health Act.

That is our commitment to the people of Canada. That is our commitment to Albertans who are also people of Canada and voted in the election for change. We represent that change and we will follow through on that change.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, daily reports question how the defence minister, a long time defence industry lobbyist, could possibly be free from conflict of interest.

Would the Prime Minister please explain how a minister turned lobbyist, which we would all restrict, could possibly be in a greater conflict of interest than a long time defence industry lobbyist, now turned Minister of National Defence?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to have a conflict one has to have an interest. I own no shares in defence companies. I get no remuneration from any defence company. I have no connections with any defence companies. Therefore, there is no conflict.

LOBBYISTS

Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has a very narrow concept of the issue of conflict of interest, which of course also includes former colleagues and clients, all of which are lining up for defence industry contracts.

Given this ethical lapse, would the Prime Minister please at least commit to not appointing any further lobbyists as ministers with portfolios that are related to their lobbying colleagues and clients?

Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we reject the premise of the question. There are no lobbyists in the government. There are members of Parliament elected by the people and appointed to this cabinet to deliver change. That is exactly what we are going to do beginning with the federal accountability act which will be the most sweeping reform of the system of lobbyists and party financing that this country has ever seen, something that the Liberal Party never dared do.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC ZOO

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative members from Quebec City, led by the Minister responsible for the Francophonie, have betrayed their constituents.

The Conservatives had promised the people of Quebec City that they would resolve the issue of the zoo, but instead they put their heads in the sand. The mayor of Quebec City and more than 65,000 people have since asked Ottawa to do something. Still nothing.

How will the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec make up for the betrayal by his colleagues from Quebec, who, as Easter approaches, call to mind Pontius Pilate washing his hands? Will the minister also wash his hands of this issue?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the voters in Jonquière—Alma for again allowing me to represent them in this House.

In response to my hon. colleague from Bourassa, I will say that as a government, we intervene when the proponent of a project, in this case the Government of Quebec, asks for our assistance. This has not happened. Since we were elected, the Government of Quebec has not asked for our government's help on the issue of the zoo in Quebec City.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seeing how people work on the other side of this House, I think that the Prime Minister will have to appoint another senator as minister responsible for the Quebec City region.

Could the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec—who does not place his trust in his officials and who has decided to personally look after all his files—be proactive, as he wishes to be in his region, and provide the \$35 million that the entire population of Quebec is asking for in order to save this Quebec City institution?

• (1135)

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member went to Quebec City and rushed before the media to save the zoo. However, it is his government and the preceding minister who refused to provide Quebec City with this financial assistance.

This letter, dated June 10, 2005, and signed by the minister himself, states, “Regrettably, I must advise you that, in the present circumstances, Economic Development Canada cannot provide the funding requested”.

The honourable member should have intervened and done his work at the appropriate time.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, recent statements by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration about implementing a refugee appeal division have us deeply worried. Before deciding whether he will go ahead in this matter, the minister told us he wants to review the immigration system as a whole. At this rate, the appeal division is nowhere near becoming a reality.

Is this review not a just a ruse to mask the intentions of the minister, who does not want an appeal division?

[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously in Canada today, we have probably the most generous system in the world when it comes to accepting refugees. They have tremendous opportunity to appeal to the courts at every level and I argue that today they do have due process. Having said that, I appreciate the hon. member's intervention and we are continuing to investigate the issue of the refugee appeal division.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not only did several United Nations bodies vote in favour of creating a refugee appeal division, but the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration voted unanimously in favour of creating an appeal division on December 14, 2004.

What more does the minister want before acting?

[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that in Canada today people who are applying for refugee status sometimes spend 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 years working their way through a system. They have many avenues of appeal when it comes to determining whether or not they are refugees.

Oral Questions

As I just said a moment ago, we will continue to investigate this, but we would never put something into legislation as the Liberals did four years ago with no intention of ever implementing it.

* * *

[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during their meeting in Cancun on March 30 and 31, the Prime Minister and President Bush agreed to resume discussions on softwood lumber. However, we do not know under what bases and conditions negotiations will resume.

Can the Minister of International Trade confirm that full respect of the NAFTA decisions will continue to be a prerequisite to the negotiations?

[English]

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that one of the biggest threats to NAFTA in the last 10 years has been the softwood lumber dispute. The Government of Canada is firmly committed to NAFTA. We are committed to improving it. We see the resolution of softwood lumber as a key element in building a stronger and better NAFTA that serves Canadians better going forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the industry is in crisis and the aid announced before the election never saw the light of day. More worrisome still, despite his election promise, is that the Prime Minister suggested in Cancun that there would be no aid packages if negotiations resume.

Could the Minister of Industry reassure the industry and forestry workers and tell us when the government plans on keeping its promise and announce the implementation of a loan guarantee program to cover all the duties levied and illegally retained by Washington?

[English]

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear that support for the softwood lumber industry is being prepared. It is critically important that we try to get through this very delicate period right now. We are assessing our options around the potential for a resolution of the softwood lumber support. The government will be there to support the softwood lumber industry. The issue of loan guarantees and loan insurance is clearly still under consideration by the hon. Minister of Industry.

Oral Questions

● (1140)

[Translation]

VETERANS

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new Veterans Charter, which came into force last Monday, was introduced in the House of Commons on April 20, 2005, by my colleague, the hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville. This marks the most significant improvement to legislation on veterans' services since the second world war. Yesterday, during a public ceremony, neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister of Veterans Affairs acknowledged the contribution of our colleague and former minister. This leads me to believe that the charter has undergone some major changes.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what changes he made to the Veterans Charter?

[English]

Hon. Greg Thompson (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I made it perfectly clear yesterday that every member in the House of Commons deserves recognition for the implementation of the charter because every member in this House, from all sides, supports it, including the Senate. I was more than generous in pointing that out.

The real ownership of this belongs to our Canadian Forces veterans and the six major veterans organizations that really pushed the government to get this done. I thank all of those organizations and all hon. members.

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for clarifying that he and the other parties supported a Liberal initiative and have implemented a Liberal initiative for veterans, and I congratulate the minister.

Where he did differentiate from us is that he did not believe there should be a methodical approach to how we treat veterans who have suffered from agent orange. The parliamentary secretary for health has said many times in the House that the government would be sending cheques out to people for hepatitis C immediately upon forming government.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs has said he would do the same thing for agent orange. Veterans in my riding are waiting for those cheques not only for agent orange but other defoliants. Where are the cheques? When are they coming?

Hon. Greg Thompson (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the difference between our approach on agent orange and just about any approach that the Liberals have is that we have a plan and we have an objective in mind. I am working very closely with my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, to come up with a plan.

It has two parts to it and one of them is compensation. We are going to do our homework. We are going to do it on the basis of good information. We are working very carefully to ensure that our plan is a good plan as opposed to the one that the Liberals had on hepatitis C which still has not been clarified and is still in the courts. We are not going to allow that to happen. Our plan will be consistent with good government and fairness to all victims in terms of the exposure to agent orange.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

My riding houses the only remaining federally owned and operated veterans hospital in Canada, the Ste. Anne's Hospital. The Department of Veterans Affairs is in the process of transferring surplus lands owned by the hospital to Canada Lands Corporation for development.

Could the minister confirm whether this transfer of land has taken place?

Hon. Greg Thompson (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that the Government of Canada is spending about \$104 million on a modernization program at that particular hospital. In terms of the specifics, I will have to meet with the member to go over those.

However, I can assure the member that there is a major commitment by this government to proceed with the modernization of Ste. Anne's. It is an important part of our operation and we recognize that. Under the new charter there will be more important work to be done at Ste. Anne's. We have a total commitment to that hospital.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the modernization project at Ste. Anne's has nothing to do with this file. This file is one of the most timely and active in the minister's portfolio, outside of the Liberal veterans charter. Has two months not been sufficient time for the minister to be briefed by his officials?

Given that the surrounding communities, including veterans groups, want the land developed as a housing project that benefits veterans, pays homage to their sacrifice and preserves valuable green space on the island of Montreal, would the minister officially require, as part of the terms and conditions of an eventual transfer, that Canada Lands develop the land in line with the wishes of the community and local veterans groups?

Hon. Greg Thompson (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member could in fact be speaking to the wrong minister in terms of this file. My job is to look after the veterans and to take care of that very hospital to which he is speaking.

The member is talking about a transfer of lands and properties. I believe his question should be directed at another ministry, not ours. Our commitment is to that hospital, to the renovation of that hospital and to the patients it looks after. That is our commitment, to the veterans, to the patients and to the hospital.

* * *

● (1145)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last fall the Liberals held an environment conference in Montreal. Could the Minister of the Environment tell us how much that conference cost and how many tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were reduced because of it?

*Oral Questions***FISHERIES**

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as president of the conference of parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, I am uniquely well aware of the opportunity Canada has to participate in the international dialogue on climate change.

I also understand the importance of accountability to Canadian taxpayers on how we spend our money. In fact, the result of that conference in Montreal was that Canadian taxpayers shelled out \$44 million. As to a reduction in emissions, the result is that emissions are actually up by 30%.

This government refuses to do that. We will be accountable to the environment and accountable to taxpayers.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Prime Minister said that he was hopeful that real child care spaces would be created. We all know that it takes more than hope to create new child care spaces.

In a year, working families will have no choice but to have child care spaces ripped away from their children.

Will the minister please tell us how she plans to fulfill the throne speech promise to create real child care spaces?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the Conservative plan to create 125,000 new child care spaces right across the country. We will be working with business groups, community groups and non-profit organizations to create the spaces that the previous government promised for 13 years and never once created. I look forward to this.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government promised \$1,200 in a new family allowance. For a couple earning \$35,000 that actually equals a dollar a day.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina has the floor.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Mr. Speaker, for a couple earning \$35,000 a year that is worth \$1 a day after the tax backs and clawbacks. One dollar a day does not even buy diapers. It does not even provide child care. It is \$1 a day. The government gives with one hand and takes away with the other.

Will the minister promise the House today that every penny, every dollar, will go into the hands of the families without tax backs or clawbacks?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for starters, I would like to assure the hon. member that we have not reached the 75% tax rate in this country. Our intention with the \$1,200 a year child care allowance is to have a universal benefit. It will, as the Prime Minister said repeatedly during the election campaign, be taxed in the hands of the lowest earning parent. Therefore if there is a stay at home parent who earns zero dollars there is no tax on that.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made public commitments that he would establish a Canadian fisheries custodial management regime on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish cap.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has made similar commitments. The Prime Minister wrote Premier Danny Williams on January 4 stating his commitment and support for custodial management. The throne speech, however, made no reference whatsoever to fisheries or custodial management.

When will the government establish a custodial management regime?

• (1150)

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate my critic and thank him for his question. Let me also say to him that despite any disagreement we might have in question and answer period, a Newfoundlander will always be right.

The member well knows, being part of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, that the issue of control off the continental shelf and of the overfishing that goes on is an issue we have fought since we came to this place. I assure the member that the issue is being dealt with in the throne speech and the priorities listed are very important ones for our province.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the election the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has been talking a lot about international cooperation. Those of us who follow fisheries issues know that he is really supporting the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, that toothless, useless organization to which the minister has referred.

Before the election the minister believed strongly in custodial management. He promised it to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Why has the minister changed his position? Why this jelly fish approach? When will we see custodial management?

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the member that I am herring him well and I am not trying to cod anybody. We are committed to ensuring we deal with the overfishing on the nose and tail. Anything I said before on that side of the House I believe not only as firmly but even more firmly today because, unlike the members opposite when they were in government, we not only will talk about such issues, we will deal with the issues.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

AIRPORTS

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the financial situation of small airports, such as those at Charlo and Saint-Léonard, is disastrous. During the last election campaign, Conservative party candidates promised to find the necessary funds—about \$300,000 per year in federal money—to subsidize small airport operations. But now the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities has indicated that he does not want to help these airports.

Why has the government decided not to keep its promises to Canada's rural regions?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is also my first speech in the House of Commons, I would like to thank the member for his question. I would also like to thank my constituents for giving me the opportunity to represent them here.

The member is referring to a program that was introduced by the former government. He has provided another example of the consequences of that government's failure to act. The old program was not designed to address the issues he raised, so it is currently under review. Once we have made a decision, we will announce it.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how can the Conservative Party claim to be responsible and accountable while breaking the promises it made only a few months ago?

Furthermore, the Conservative Party promised to create a federal policy for small airports. Can the minister guarantee that he will establish such a federal government policy?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that the hon. member speaks of accountability and transparency. As we all know—it has been repeated here over and over in the past few days—for many years, the Liberals did nothing. We intend to do something about it.

* * *

FRANCOPHONE AND ACADIAN COMMUNITIES

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on January 16, 2006, the Prime Minister said that he intended to continue the federal government's support for francophone and Acadian communities. Yet, such communities have long been asking for an increase in the funding they receive through the Canada-communities agreement.

When will the Conservative government put its words into action? Will it increase the budget of the Canada-communities agreement from \$24 million to \$42 million, as the francophone and Acadian communities have repeatedly requested?

• (1155)

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the citizens of Louis-Saint-Laurent for electing me on January 23.

I was very proud to accept the official languages portfolio, entrusted to me by the Prime Minister. Francophone communities outside Quebec can count on the Conservative government's support. I am here to listen to them, cooperate with them and contribute to their development.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in its electoral platform, the Conservative Party promised to reopen the nine detachments that the RCMP closed in Quebec in 2005.

Now that the Conservative Party is in power, can the Minister of Public Safety tell us when the government will make good on its promise?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will begin right away to increase the number of police officers from coast to coast, especially in Quebec. We will add 1,000 RCMP officers and 2,500 municipal police officers, starting immediately and continuing for the next five years.

* * *

[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1971 Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy affirming the value and dignity of all Canadian citizens.

Since 1972 Canada has always had a minister responsible for multiculturalism, always that is, until now.

Is it the Prime Minister's intention to abandon Canada's multiculturalism policy and if not, why did he decide that it no longer required representation at the cabinet table?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member's question gives me the opportunity to express on behalf of the government its commitment to multiculturalism.

We are reviewing the programs. We know a review is called for after 12 years of perpetuating a program that is ineffective and needs to be re-addressed.

We will commit to every ethnic community across Canada so they can participate equally and fully in all aspects of Canadian society.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 13 years of neglect, Atlantic salmon are threatened or extinct on most east coast rivers. The Inner Bay of Fundy salmon in particular are an endangered species.

*Routine Proceedings***TAXATION**

The Atlantic salmon endowment fund was promised \$30 million but the Atlantic Salmon Federation has not seen a penny of that money.

Will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans finally deliver that funding?

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me say, as those on the former standing committee will admit, that nobody worked harder to get such an endowment fund than the member who has just asked the question.

The fund has to be delivered through an independent body, which has now been set up, after two years, by the way. My officials will be meeting with them very soon to get this moving forward.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EDUCATION

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for 13 long years, ordinary Canadians and young people were left off the Liberal government's political agenda. The Speech from the Throne was once again silent on post-secondary education.

Will the current government also remain silent? We need stable, long-term funding for education to increase Canada's competitiveness in the global economy.

Will the government boost our investment in education?

• (1200)

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Chong (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister for Sport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to working with the provinces, with the territories, and with business and labour partners to ensure that post-secondary education in Canada continues to be an important priority.

We also welcome the Council of the Federation's initiatives in this regard and we look forward to working with the Council of the Federation as we go forward to make sure that post-secondary education and training remain an integral part of the government's priorities.

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, students and working families have waited long enough for relief from soaring tuition fees. We need an immediate comprehensive strategy, accompanied by a pan-Canadian lifelong learning and training plan, to address the skills shortage. What exactly is the government planning to do to address this issue now?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government has several initiatives it will be bringing forward to encourage skills development for people of all ages, whether it is through our trades program, with incentives for apprentices and for employers to hire more apprentices into those skilled jobs, or whether it is assistance for university students, not through tuition credits but through relief on their student bursaries and scholarships. We will be developing programs that will help all students continue lifelong learning.

Mr. Blair Wilson (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that I am humbled by and thankful to the voters of my riding of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country for electing me.

I must say that in recent days a shocking and bizarre alliance has been forming between Parliament's newest chums, the Conservatives and the NDP. We all know that NDP members have never seen a tax they did not want to hike, and we know they are not going to join us in our partnership for a tax campaign, but we would not expect that the Conservatives would not join us.

When will the government end this marriage of convenience with the NDP and join our campaign against tax hikes?

Mr. Jason Kenney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. This government is committed to lower taxes and we will deliver that in our first budget for 100% of Canadian families.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF VICTIMS OF RWANDAN GENOCIDE

The Speaker: Order, please. Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand there is an agreement to commemorate the Rwandan genocide.

[*Translation*]

I invite hon. members to rise for a moment of silence.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1205)

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-216, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (capital gains exemption on disposition of fishing property).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Income Tax Act allows an individual to claim a \$500,000 cumulative lifetime exemption for capital gains that arise from the disposition of qualified farm properties. This enactment would amend the act so that an individual may claim this exemption in respect of qualified fishing property.

Privilege

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

* * *

PETITIONS

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition that is signed by many citizens across this country. It states that many undocumented workers have built homes and lives with their families in Canada, including many who have Canadian-born children who would be unfairly burdened by the deportation of their parents. Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to immediately halt the deportation of undocumented workers and to find a humane and logical solution for their situation.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present a petition signed by a number of people who are concerned about the government's plan, or what the petitioners consider to be no plan, for child care. The petitioners state, among other things, that 70% of women with children under the age of six are employed, that a taxable \$100 a month allowance amounts to a child benefit and will not establish new child care spaces, and that child care is an everyday necessity in the country. The petitioners are calling upon the Prime Minister and the government to honour the early learning and child care agreement.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations and I think you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, during the debate on the take note debate on Canada's significant commitment in Afghanistan, scheduled for Monday, April 10, the Chair would not receive any dilatory motions, quorum calls or requests for unanimous consent; any member rising to speak during debate may indicate to the Speaker that he or she will be dividing his or her time with another member; and when no member rises to speak or after five hours of debate, whichever is earlier, the committee shall rise; when the committee rises, the House shall immediately adjourn to the next sitting day.

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PRIVILEGE

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BUREAUCRATS AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to provide further details in response to the question of privilege raised by the member for Scarborough Southwest, who alleges that his privileges have been breached since he was unable to meet with public service officials during the last election campaign.

While I cannot comment on the specific details the member identified, as these circumstances took place under the previous government, I am able to confirm that the Privy Council Office does not have a policy that prohibits public servants from being in contact with members of Parliament during an election. While the PCO provides guidance to departments on appropriate activities during an election, such as limitations on government decisions and announcements and restrictions on the political activities of public servants, there is no policy that states public servants cannot speak to MPs.

With respect to the question of privilege, my understanding is that the member for Scarborough Southwest is arguing that his inability to meet with these public servants prevented him from carrying out his duties as a member of Parliament. However, this raises a grey area which the Speaker could advise on, as the events the member refers to occurred when Parliament was dissolved.

For example, it could be argued that in Canada's system of government, a member of Parliament is a member of a particular Parliament. When a particular Parliament is dissolved, that Parliament is terminated and no longer exists, and there is no Parliament of which to be a member. Accordingly, it could be argued that the member for Scarborough Southwest, who is currently a member of Canada's 39th Parliament, was previously a member of Canada's 38th Parliament until that Parliament was dissolved on November 29, 2005.

It can also be argued that this constitutional principle—that during dissolution there is no Parliament and hence an MP ceases to be a member of Parliament following dissolution—is recognized in section 69 of the Parliament of Canada Act, which states that members of the House of Commons at dissolution are deemed to continue to be MPs for the purposes of the payment of their salaries until the next general election.

If MPs legally remained members of Parliament during a dissolution, there would not be a need for this provision of the act. However, that is not to say that for practical purposes members of Parliament do not continue to have constituency duties to assist constituents with respect to government services.

The dissolution of Parliament also meant that all business of the House of Commons, including its committees, had been terminated.

The Address

While I understand that the member for Scarborough Southwest continued to have an interest in the work that the Subcommittee on Public Safety and National Security had been conducting before dissolution, it is clear that the subcommittee no longer existed and that its review of the Anti-terrorism Act was terminated.

Because these alleged events took place while Parliament was dissolved, it is clear that the member's privileges could not have been infringed upon. Marleau and Montpetit, at page 51, state:

The House has the authority to invoke privilege where its ability has been obstructed in the execution of its functions or where Members have been obstructed in the performance of their duties.

It is also stated at page 52 that:

—individual Members can only claim privilege insofar as any denial of their rights, or threat made to them, would impede the functioning of the House. In addition, individual Members cannot claim privilege or immunity on matters that are unrelated to their functions in the House.

Given that at the time these alleged events took place the member for Scarborough Southwest did not have any parliamentary duties, it is my submission that the member's privileges could not have been breached.

That said, I would like to take this occasion to advise the House that this government is committed to taking an open and constructive approach with all parliamentarians. We will be responsive to requests from parliamentarians for ongoing information and briefings.

• (1210)

The Speaker: I thank the parliamentary secretary for his intervention on this matter. As indicated yesterday, I have the matter under advisement and will continue to work on a ruling on the subject and come back to the House in due course.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment, as amended.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will continue in the debate today by talking about two issues: first, the federal accountability act; and second, agriculture which was also talked about in the throne speech.

We said during the election campaign that our very first piece of business when we came back to the House would be the federal accountability act, and it will be. The need for the federal accountability act is clear and obvious.

One member in his statement yesterday went through a list of the top 10 Liberal scandals. We have seen things such as: the billion dollar HRDC boondoggle; the Shawinigate scandal in the former prime minister's riding; another former prime minister registering his ships offshore in Barbados to avoid paying taxes in the very country for which he was a prime minister; the \$2 million gun registry that was totally out of control and has now cost \$2 billion and is ongoing, and we will get rid of that; and the ad scam and the sponsorship

scandal. Those things are talked about most often. Another was the issue of Mr. Dingwall, the former Liberal minister and former head of the Mint, and his statement that he was entitled to his entitlements. That attitude was widespread through the former government.

The need for the accountability act is clear, and we will put it before the House. After discussing it and possibly amending it, I believe there is no reason why we should not get agreement from all parties to pass it.

Our goal and our commitment is to make government more effective and accountable to Parliament and to Canadians, and we will do that.

The federal accountability act is the toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history. For that reason, it will be the most significant legislation I have seen tabled in the House in the 12.5 years of being a member of Parliament. Without a doubt, it will make more difference in the lives of Canadians and in the level of trust that the public has for politicians than anything else that has happened in the House in the last 12.5 years, and probably much longer than that.

For example, if passed, it will bring in a corruption watchdog to protect whistleblowers against bullying. It will end the revolving between lobby firms and ministers' offices. It will give the Auditor General the power to shine the light in every dark corner to hunt for waste, theft and corruption. It will ban big money and corporate cash in political campaigns. By moving from a culture of entitlement to a culture of accountability, it will fix the system for Canadians. It is extremely significant.

I would like to get into more detail on this, but I do want to talk about agriculture. I am sure we all have a chance in debating the federal accountability act when it comes to the House. It will be our first order of business, and I am looking forward to that debate.

What are we going to do for farmers and what have we already done? We did not wait for Parliament to sit to take action to deal with the neglect we have seen for the past decade or so.

We are going to put in place a program which is simpler and more responsive to the needs of Canadian farmers. We know Canadian farmers are hurting, possibly like never before. Therefore, the very first thing we did, after being sworn in as the government, was to extend the emergency payment program of three-quarters of a billion dollars to the Canadian grain and oilseed producers.

We are going to continue with not only larger and important measures and trade issues, but we are also going to pursue many so-called smaller, maybe less important issues which will help Canadian farmers in a very real way. I am looking forward to that in the years ahead.

• (1215)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three brief questions for my colleague from Vegreville—Wainwright.

I first want to recognize and acknowledge that it must be satisfying for him to see the pending accountability act. I recognize and pay tribute to the dedicated work he contributed as the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

The Address

I have a question for him about the new accountability act. One of the major irritants in the Auditor General's report of 2003, the infamous big, fat Auditor General's report, was chapter 5 about polling, which was not dealt with by Gomery. Could he indicate to me if his government plans to plug this outrageous opportunity for abuse, which the Liberals took advantage of to do their own private politically motivated public research?

Second, in the interests of tax fairness, is it the government's intention to plug the overseas tax fugitive loopholes that the former Prime Minister used to avoid paying Canadian taxes, such as tax havens in Barbados? Does he know if his government plans to finally do something about that?

My third question is on behalf of the farmers in my province of Manitoba. We have a terrible problem with Richardson's ground squirrels. Would he commit at this time that his government will do something about allowing prairie farmers to buy strychnine at a greater concentration than 2% so we can do something about this biblical plague of Richardson's ground squirrels which we suffer on the prairie provinces?

• (1220)

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, on the question of the Richardson's ground squirrel, more commonly known as a gopher, for about seven or eight years I have been pursuing this issue in the House of Commons, through private members' bills and motions, and across the country. Quite frankly, I have received literally dozens of phone calls from farmers and municipalities across western Canada encouraging me to keep that up, and I will.

I will now be working with the appropriate ministers to have returned to farmers the effective gopher control. Many people may consider this an unimportant issue, but to western Canadian farmers it means possibly \$200 million a year that is currently lost and can be returned to them. It is an important issue and I will continue to work on it. I look forward to making progress on that as quickly as possible.

In terms of the offshore registering of companies that allow Canadians to avoid paying taxes in this country, I do not know exactly what is going to be in the federal accountability act in its entirety. We put out a document before the election, which certainly lays out some of the key ingredients, but as far as I know that will not be dealt with in this legislation. I really cannot say for sure, but now that it has been mentioned, I will look into whether there is an intention on the part of our government to close that loophole.

The other question was on polling. The Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates dealt with this issue at various times. It was completely unacceptable and inappropriate the way the former government used taxpayer money to fund polling, which was done strictly for partisan reasons. We exposed several cases of that.

In the federal accountability act we have committed to end that practice. It is inappropriate, and we simply will not be a part of that. Through this legislation, we will end it for future governments as well.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment as Acting Speaker.

I have a quick comment for the member for Vegreville—Wainwright about whether it would be more credible for his government to stop claiming that it has the \$755 million out under special funding when in fact it is only \$400 million. We really would like to see the other \$350 million in the hands of the producers around the country.

My question is related to the statement yesterday by the minister of agriculture for Alberta. The federal government is looking to either get rid of CAIS or dramatically change it. The minister of agriculture for Alberta indicated a lack of cooperation or willingness to tinker with CAIS, as I understood his statement.

Could the member make any comment about any contact he has had with that minister and what he fully expects the province to do in terms of cooperating in getting rid of CAIS?

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the \$755 million resulted from a drive from our party and other parties in the House. The previous government went kicking and squealing toward passing that through the House. I do not know if it had an intention of ever delivering.

The problem that the member has outlined is accurate. In the past so much of the money that was promised was never delivered. We are stuck with that program for now, but we wanted to get the money out as quickly as possible. It is flowing. We have speeded it up immensely, and we will continue to work on that.

That is a problem. We intend to deliver the full amount, and we are doing that.

I know our federal minister has met with the provincial ministers. They intend to keep up the talks. We really want to get rid of CAIS and to form a new program that will do the job much better. We intend to do that.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment. Bravo!

Before starting, I would also like to mention my re-election last January 23, which I attribute not only to the electors of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine who once again placed their trust in me and the Bloc Québécois, but also to my large and wonderful team. In fact, many people work on an election and it is through team work that we make it through, and somewhat handily.

I would like to announce also that I will be sharing my time with the member for Laval. So, we will come back to that.

The Address

Now for the throne speech. It is easy to say, at first, that there are no surprises and that it is fairly predictable. There are no surprises because it contains more or less what we heard in the days and weeks immediately preceding the speech. There are no real surprises, because we have to expect that the government will act as a minority government—one with a very slim hold on power—and that it must consider that it will have to deal with the opposition in order to move forward on certain contentious bills or issues. For this reason the best thing about this throne speech is the lack of arrogance, because it recognizes that there is a minority government. I think it is worthwhile pointing this out.

However, the throne speech lacks both substance and a timetable, particularly for some very important matters. Let us say that there are not necessarily oversights, but gaps. Why do I say it lacks substance? It is only a few pages long, contains what was expected, but without expanding on the themes and without providing details. In the matter of fiscal imbalance the speech is incredibly vague.

The fiscal imbalance, as you know full well, causes a huge financial burden on Quebec. The word “huge” can also be used to describe Ottawa's surpluses. That is why we talked about it so much during the election campaign. I talked about it during my first election campaign in 2000, and again in 2004 and in 2006. The surpluses are in Ottawa and the needs are in Quebec and in the provinces. That is the fiscal imbalance in a nutshell. You will notice that when we talk about this issue there is no deadline. Well there needs to be one. It would have been nice to see.

The opposition parties are able to work. The Bloc Québécois, in particular, does intense, disciplined and responsible work. We had a chance to present different options to the previous federal government. Today we are making proposals to the Conservative government, but there is an urgent need right now.

This brings me to one of the major gaps in the Speech from the Throne: employment insurance and everything that comes with it. The Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine area, as you know, relies on seasonal employment in the forestry industry, in tourism and in the fishery. As the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel pointed out a few days ago, it is not the workers who are seasonal, it is the work. Individuals want to work year round, but in forestry, agriculture, the fishery or even tourism, it is not possible.

There have been some attempts and proposed initiatives, but, again, federal support is needed for those initiatives, or there needs to be acknowledgment of the fact that these people want to work the year round, and that is just not possible in the fisheries and in tourism, in particular. I will come back to this in my speech today.

Moving on, we need a system called the employment insurance program, but I continue to call it an unemployment insurance program.

• (1230)

I continue to call it that because we need to keep in mind the purpose of this insurance program which allows people, who are in between jobs, to receive a decent and suitable income.

Benefits cover 55% of salary. That is not very much for an employee in tourism. Often their schedules vary, for example, they might work 15 hours one time and 20 hours another. They might

work more at particular times of the year, such as during the summer season when the Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine area receives more tourists. These workers earn minimum wage and it should be noted that it is mostly women in this situation. Whether we are talking about the fisheries, factory work—what is left of it—or tourism, it is mainly women in these underpaid jobs. They receive minimum wage and work varied schedules. You can imagine what 55% of not much adds up to. It adds up to almost nothing.

That is why it is important to improve the unemployment insurance program. The Conservatives already made cuts to this program when they were in government in the 1980s. The Liberals promised to change things and improve the situation. At the time, Jean Chrétien, leader of the opposition, even wrote a letter on the issue before he became Prime Minister in 1993. The program underwent more cuts and was absolutely gutted. This was a major blow to regions like the one I represent and it accelerated the exodus.

If the past is an indication of the future, it is very important for the opposition parties to ensure that the members across the way, those in the government, truly do their work. They have to behave much more responsibly than their predecessors, who have done nothing but cause harm to these women, men and young people.

The unemployment insurance program puts young people and women in very difficult situations. That is why we must absolutely improve the system by a set deadline.

The federal government is raking in enormous surpluses while Quebec has to bear a huge financial burden. This illustrates how important it is to have a short deadline instead of a vague deadline and just intentions.

During the 2006 election campaign, the Conservatives promised not only to recognize the fiscal imbalance, but also to correct it. The Speech from the Throne was one of their earliest opportunities to move from talk to action. Unfortunately, the government did not give clear, precise and convincing indications of how it would address this major challenge.

This challenge is indeed a major one. The people and the members of the Bloc Québécois—and me in particular as the representative for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—have high expectations of this government. They promised a lot during the election campaign. The challenges are huge.

I would like to discuss the initial responses we have received concerning fisheries. My colleagues and I know that the seal hunt has been condemned internationally by the uninformed, the misinformed, and the ill intentioned. I am talking mainly about Brigitte Bardot and, more recently, Pamela Anderson, not to mention Paul McCartney. Opponents of the hunt put out a poster demanding that the seals be protected. They justify this demand by implying that baby seals are being killed, but this is not the case. Whitecoats have not been hunted since 1987. The poster showed Brigitte Bardot standing in front of microphones with an actual baby laid out on the ice behind her. That is pretty shameless.

The Address

•(1235)

Unfortunately, members of the Conservative Party did not respond appropriately. I will leave it at that. I may have the opportunity during the question and comment period to delve deeper into the subject.

In closing, I would note that I am sharing my time with the member for Laval, who will take the floor shortly.

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the voters of Laval who participated in the democratic process, particularly those who placed their trust in me for a second time. I would also like to thank all of the volunteers who helped me throughout the campaign. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on the honour bestowed upon you in your appointment as Deputy Speaker of this House. I would also like to give my regards to an 86-year-old Vancouver woman whom I had the pleasure of meeting. She confided in me that her greatest wish in life now is to learn French. Ms. Margaret Davies, I raise my hat to you.

Several things were missing from the Speech from the Throne. However, I would like to devote my time here today to talk about our seniors. In the throne speech, only nine words were dedicated to the 5,598,223 Canadian seniors and the 1,448,719 seniors in Quebec. Those nine words were, "It will work to improve the security of seniors". Only nine words to recognize the five billion volunteer hours worked by Canada's seniors. Economically, that corresponds to a financial contribution of \$60 billion annually. Only nine words to recognize that 77% of seniors made charitable donations in 2004, totalling \$854 million.

The population of the world is undergoing extremely significant and profound changes that are unprecedented in human history. In 2050, there will be more seniors than young people in the world. The increase in the number of seniors will affect family relations, intergenerational equity, lifestyles and family solidarity. It will also have an economic impact on health, medical care, family composition, living conditions, housing and immigration.

Demographic changes will affect politics, the vote structure and representation, because seniors read, watch the news and stay current. More seniors vote than any other age group.

If we want to have a healthy democracy in years to come, young people also have to get involved and start learning about politics and keeping up with the news.

In 1950, there were 12 people in the labour force for every senior. By 2000, this ratio had declined to nine to one, and in 2050, there will be only four labour force participants for every senior. This will directly affect the social security system. That is why the UN has held three major conferences on aging in the past 25 years.

The most recent conference, which took place in 1999, focussed on implementing principles developed in 1994. These principles call for giving seniors greater autonomy, creating conditions to improve their quality of life, enabling seniors to work and lead independent lives, creating health care systems and economic and social safety nets for seniors and introducing social support systems to make it easier for families to care for seniors.

The Bloc Québécois includes these values in its platform. This is increasingly important, because in 2001, 44% of seniors in Quebec had incomes under \$15,000 and 80% had incomes under \$25,000. The guaranteed income supplement accounts for 20% of the incomes of people who earn less than \$15,000. This is not very much. Retired women have incomes ranging from \$11,000 to \$17,000. The guaranteed income supplement is very important to them. Out of their incomes, seniors have to pay rising amounts for housing, which represents between 21% and 30% of income, as well as for food, transportation and taxes. People who earn \$15,000 a year pay taxes. These four items account for roughly \$20,000 annually, and that does not include medication.

In Quebec, 58% of low-cost housing is occupied by the elderly. These people are very poor and have no financial or other resources. This is why I am so surprised that more was not said on this matter in the throne speech. The Canadian Council on Social Development states that:

Economic security refers to an assured and stable standard of living that provides individuals and families with a level of resources and benefits necessary to participate economically, politically, socially, culturally and with dignity in their community's activities. Survival is more than just mere physical survival and includes a level of resources that fosters social inclusion.

With an income of \$11,000 or \$12,000 per year and all manner of expenses totalling \$10,000, there is not a lot of money left over to be part of the social network. Yet, 19% of seniors live just below the low income cutoff. Despite all this, the former government did not deem it advisable to refund the Guaranteed Income Supplement, with full retroactivity, to those seniors entitled to it.

We know that in 2001, some 68,000 seniors in Quebec and 270,000 seniors in Canada were deprived of income as high as \$6,600 a year. Thanks to a broad operation put in place by the Bloc Québécois, 42,000 of these seniors have been found so far. These efforts represent roughly \$190 million that have been redistributed to the least fortunate in our society.

The fact remains that the seniors who were duped by the federal government still need to be reimbursed. My colleague, Marcel Gagnon, who is now retired, presented Bill C-301 calling for full retroactive payment to seniors who were entitled to it. On November 23, 2005, the hon. members of this House voted unanimously in favour of passing the bill at second reading in order for the government to reimburse the \$3.2 billion it has owed seniors for a number of years now.

In short, this Speech from the Throne includes only nine words to acknowledge those who built Canada and Quebec; just nine words to acknowledge those who defended our rights and freedoms during two great wars; nine words to acknowledge those who, despite having major financial difficulties, made many sacrifices in order to feed and educate their family; nine words to acknowledge those who continue to take part in our lives and agree to babysit our children at the last minute, to do our laundry when our washing machine is on the fritz, to cook our roast beef when we are too busy to do it ourselves.

The Address

I am referring to my mother, Jano Demers, to whom I am eternally grateful. Thank you, maman. It is true that when we have a busy schedule we often have to call on our elders to get us out of a bind.

The Speech from the Throne includes a mere nine words to refer to all these hours spent passing down our history—to us, to our children and to our grandchildren.

Eight words are not enough. This government must do better than that. It must ensure that seniors can live out their remaining years with dignity and respect. The government can do so by ensuring that those who are entitled to the guaranteed income supplement receive it and by paying \$3.2 billion in retroactive payments to those who have been cheated in recent years. The government must ensure that the old age pension and guaranteed income supplement continue to be fully adjusted for inflation and the specific realities that seniors must face. It must offer the option to opt out for compassionate leave with full financial compensation in Quebec, which already has the health and social service infrastructures in place to support caregivers effectively. It must act quickly to establish the program to assist older workers.

● (1240)

Lastly, it must do everything it can to adapt government services and crown corporations to the reality of our seniors.

● (1245)

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her very timely and very, very important remarks.

In my riding, elder care is deteriorating daily because of a lack of commitment by our provincial government.

I would ask my colleague whether she thinks the federal government needs to target transfer payments, to ensure that the money transferred to the provinces is used to help our seniors.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Mr. Speaker, I think that the provincial governments are wise enough to be aware of what seniors face and to be able to make good use of transfer payments, investing the money in programs to benefit seniors.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit surprised that the member has not talked much about the accountability act, which was a key part of our throne speech.

[English]

The accountability act will be the toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history. It will bring in a watchdog that will protect whistleblowers against bullying. It will give the Auditor General the power to shine light in every dark corner in her hunt for waste, corruption and theft.

This law will extend access to information right into all the crown corporations. It will ban corporate cash and big money from political campaigns all together. This is one of the most consequential pieces of legislation ever passed. In fact, it is the toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history. Why did the member not focus more of her attention on that law?

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Here is my concern. It is good to have appropriate legislation to give us some assurances with respect to the accountability of members of Parliament and ministers of the crown, hence the governments. At the same time, it is important to go beyond that. Good government does not involve only good legislation to ensure that governments are accountable. It also means ensuring that our fellow citizens, the people, those in need, have all they need to live with dignity. It means providing social housing, pension indexing, health care, all that people need, and not only accountability.

I am certainly very pleased that thought was given to accountability, so that scandals such as the sponsorship one never happen again. But that is not enough. Efforts have to be made to ensure that every citizen has what he or she needs to live with dignity.

[English]

Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that I will be sharing my time with the member for Lévis—Bellechasse.

Before I proceed with my comments on the throne speech, I would like to offer my thanks to the constituents of Brandon—Souris. I have had the pleasure of representing that constituency. This is my second election and I am very grateful and honoured by the confidence that they have shown me by allowing me to be their representative. I would also very briefly like to acknowledge and thank my family, and my wife, Bev, who is a working person as I am. She was unable to attend my first speech and unfortunately could not be here today, but has been with me all week and saw some of the highlights of Ottawa and Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate you on your new appointment. I am very pleased to see that. I know that you will be a very strong representative. I want to thank the Prime Minister and the agriculture minister for their comments last night.

Last night was the first time since I have served in this Parliament that I actually, at the end of the day, believed that we got straightforward honest answers from government and that it understood the issues and concerns that the agricultural community is going through and responded with direct responses. I think that is such a refreshing attitude for a new government and I hope that it continues throughout.

In the communities of Brandon—Souris, 85% of our revenue is generated through agriculture and agri-food related businesses. My communities and I recognize how very important a successful, thriving agricultural industry is and I look forward to working with the minister on a continued basis offering advice as asked, and sometimes when not asked, to ensure that our positions are represented when governments make decisions.

The Address

On January 23 Canadians turned a new leaf. They made a new decision that they would like to take the country in a different direction. I feel very fortunate that I am a part of that. It was a turn of a new leaf for change, a change from the way government has acted and performed in the last several years, and the attitude and the disdain with which it treated the Canadian population, particularly in the last few years.

Canadians have asked us to provide change. They have asked us to clean up government. For many years I would have said that as honourable people we would not need this type of an act. Unfortunately, it has come to that point in our history and I am very proud to be a part of the accountability act that we are going to present to Canadians. It will change the way we do business in Ottawa but also reinforce and regain the confidence of Canadians who for some time have been quite skeptical and cynical of Parliament and the members who represent them.

I am pleased that we are going to move on our promises made during the election campaign. One of the very first things will be the accountability act, but the reduction of the GST from 7% to 6% will be announced in the upcoming budget and eventually it will go to 5%.

As I travelled throughout my constituency, and I know many of my colleagues have made the same comment, many of the criticisms came from the fact that it is not going to benefit certain groups or individuals in our community. I say to them, that is simply not true.

The reduction of GST by 1% and eventually 2% will impact every individual in my community and every Canadian in the country. Whether one is paying for a gas bill, hydro bill, telephone bill, transportation costs, legal services, and even when our children go out to make a purchase, they will have less to pay. A lot of people use the phrase that we are going to put more money in the hands of Canadians. In my position, the way I look at, we are going to leave the money in their pockets and let them choose how they choose to spend it and do with it as they will.

• (1250)

Be assured that when Canadians tally up their year end or month end expenses, that reduction will be significant over a period of time. Whether they are homeowners, whether they are buying a new vehicle or even buying a newspaper, over time people are going to see the benefits of that reduction. And Canadians are going to see a bigger benefit when it is reduced to 5%. Every Canadian will benefit from this reduction.

We talked about ensuring safe communities. How can anyone argue about ensuring the safety of our communities? During the election campaign, a lot of the debate in my communities was that we have to provide rehabilitation services, that we have to provide a form of transition for criminals to work their way back into our communities to become a productive part of our communities, but at the end of the day, my communities want to feel safe. They want to know that the perpetrators of crimes are going to serve the time that they have been sentenced to. They want to know that those criminals are not going to get out on an easy street pass to go back into our communities and commit the same types of crimes that they had been charged and prosecuted for.

It makes absolutely no sense to say that we are working on behalf of the criminals to get them back into the community. We forget the other half of the equation that so many Canadians are worried about, which is, what we are doing to protect the law-abiding citizens of our community.

It is very important to stress that these sentences must be served to their completion. There cannot be an easy way out. If that means serving the full time, then that is what I want to see. I want to guarantee the safety of my law-abiding constituents. I will deal with the criminal element at the end of their term and hopefully bring them back into our communities in a safe environment, but first and foremost, I want to protect the people who live in my communities in a safe environment.

We have had many discussions about child care. The communities that I represent, and I suspect many of the communities that other members represent, are rural communities. We have no access to institutionalized day care. We have no access or the wherewithal to provide these types of services. Many of the working families in the communities I represent work shift work or work part time. Husbands go one way while their wives go the other way. It is just not possible to provide a cookie cutter system of services for those people. They have said to me time and time again that they continue to be asked to contribute their tax dollars to provide these services, but at the end of the day, they do not get any return on their investment.

By offering the dollar benefit to families with children under six years of age, it provides them with a real choice. It provides them with an opportunity to choose where they receive their child care services from.

If we look at the studies that many people often refer to, moms and dads, when asked who they wanted to care for their children, their first choice was the mother or the father. Their second choice was the children's grandparents. Institutionalized day care was fifth on that list.

I think we have actually addressed many of the concerns that people expressed in the campaign and before that. We cannot have a national system that provides services for 20% of the population. That would not be a national system. I suggest that the previous administration's proposal to do that would be just as catastrophic as the health care system that we currently have, where access to care and timely service has been completely forgotten in trying to be all things to all people.

In the campaign we were told many times by the past government, the Liberals in opposition now, that the Conservative Party has come up with simple solutions to solve complex problems. For 13 years the Liberal government ignored the simple solutions and that is why the problems have become so complex. If we want to decrease wait times, put in a wait time guarantee. If we want to increase economic activity, decrease consumption taxes. If we want safe streets, provide resources for the police officers and make sure criminals serve their full time. It may be simple, but it is common sense and I agree with it.

The Address

• (1255)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my Conservative colleague that there is no mention of the employment insurance account in the Speech from the Throne. Since the Conservative Party took office, contributions paid by employees and employers have allowed the government to accumulate \$1.6 billion in surplus.

There is nothing in the Speech from the Throne about an independent employment insurance account, and there was no mention of it in my hon. colleague's speech either. An independent employment insurance account would be available to employers and employees to increase benefits and reduce the number of weeks people need to qualify for longer benefit periods.

What does the hon. member have to say to the unemployed in Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel and to my colleagues here: the hon. members for Gatineau, Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Rivière-du-Nord, Terrebonne—Blainville, Laval, Brome—Missisquoi and Beauharnois—Salaberry?

What does one tell people who have lost their jobs? We had been asking the Liberals since 1997 for changes to the program, including an independent account and a program for older workers who lose their jobs.

What do the Conservatives have to say about the fact that since coming to power, they have accumulated \$1.6 billion? That money belongs to working people and the unemployed. The Conservatives have not said a word about the unemployed, they have not helped them, and they have not improved the program as requested by the Coalition des Sans-Chemise.

• (1300)

[English]

Mr. Merv Tweed: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague. In the past several years many opposition parties, in fact all opposition parties have criticized the previous government for the way it handled the EI premiums and the EI fund. We have to look at opportunities. It is a huge amount of money. It is a large amount of money that I certainly do not want to see rolled into government general revenues. It should be specific to the issues that are concerning people.

I would suggest to my hon. friend that it is not just Quebec that is suffering from these situations. It is a Canada-wide situation. In a lot of cases it is somewhat regional, but I think we will see this government move on those types of issues in the future.

In the throne speech we directed our comments specifically to the five commitments that we made. It was our opportunity to show Canadians that we are committed to doing what we said we would do in the election campaign. Obviously there are other issues that the government will deal with as we go through this process. I would ask the member to offer his comments and suggestions to improve the system for the people in his community. I am sure he will find a very open mind on this side.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to truly understand early childhood development issues, perhaps one has to have children. I myself have an 11-month-old daughter. As a member of Parliament, I receive a very good salary, but we have to put ourselves in the shoes of parents who earn an average salary. Often, to provide their families with a reasonable quality of life, both parents nowadays have to work. This enables them to own more than one car and to afford certain luxuries from time to time. However, when both parents work, child care can be problematic. The plan to offer parents \$1,200 a year is one thing.

But the annual cost of a day care space in New Brunswick is \$12,000 of a family's net revenue. That means that the first \$12,000 dollars a family earns goes to pay for day care.

If we really want to offer parents a logical choice, should we not keep the existing program, improve it, and strengthen day care centres? We could offer parents a lump sum of \$1,200, thereby giving them more choice. That would be better than giving them \$3.50 a day. Since both parents have to work, that does not seem to me to be a real choice.

[English]

Mr. Merv Tweed: Mr. Speaker, I think it will benefit families. I see families in my communities who have no choice but to pay their tax dollars and get no benefit from the child care system that the previous government was proposing.

What we have to consider is that we are not only offering the \$1,200 for every child under six to families, but we are saying that we will create more child care spaces. The past government for 13 years talked about child care and child care development but delivered nothing. It signed agreements with provinces and it always had a 12 month opt-out clause. All we have done is implement the policy it set in place.

• (1305)

[Translation]

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to address the House today and to show my support for the Speech from the Throne, delivered by the Governor General, Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean.

First, I would like to thank the people of the riding of Lévis—Bellechasse, which includes Les Etchemins, for their trust. On January 23, 2006, they voted for change. I am honoured to have their trust. I would also like to thank the team of volunteers who supported me, as well as my family, especially my wife, Marie, and my two children, William-Antoine and Alexandra.

My presence here today comes in response to 13 years of inertia in Lévis—Bellechasse and Les Etchemins, and the previous members' inability to act. The Speech from the Throne offers concrete solutions to those 13 years of inaction and negligence.

In the Etchemins highlands, lumber producers, who face rising production costs and an inaccessible market, can count on a Canada that will maintain stronger bilateral relationships with our major trading partners.

The Address

This week more than 70 farmers from Lévis—Bellechasse gathered here on the Hill. They are facing serious problems after years of negligence. In cooperation with my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, our government will take concrete action to ensure that they have a prosperous future.

For taxpayers facing financial pressure and reduced services, our government will be an accountable government in which they can trust. Our government will also provide them with a \$1,200 annual allowance to cover child care costs. It will improve access to health services with reasonable wait times and reduce the GST by 1% initially and then by an additional 1%.

My riding is the home of Canada's largest shipyard. It is going through difficult times following a period of scandalous indifference by our governmental authorities toward the marine industry. I need not remind hon. members that marine transport is the most ecologically sound mode of transportation around.

I want to commend in this House today those who are working on rebuilding this great Canadian enterprise. I want them to know that Canada is counting on their success for the future.

I am proud to be here in this House as a Quebecker and to join my new colleagues to form the new Canadian government.

It is time to turn over a new leaf. As George-Étienne Cartier said on the eve of founding this country in 1866: "This is the beginning of a new era; we are entering into Confederation. We need not be afraid!" Today we are also paving the way for a new era in our country, we are turning over a new leaf.

I want to thank the Right Honourable Prime Minister, who has finally given Quebeckers an option to the arrogance of a centralist government and the threat of breaking up the Canadian federation, which is now part of a world of interdependence.

With a Conservative government, Quebec and all the provinces now have a unique opportunity to fully experience prosperity and the spirit of federalism. That is what the Speech from the Throne offers: an open federalism, which is more than words, it is about concrete actions to respond to the concerns about the fiscal imbalance, and implementing fiscal arrangements to allow the provincial governments to fulfil their growing obligations.

[*English*]

Is open federalism only for Quebeckers? Absolutely not. This new federalism is for all Canadians, from every province and territory, from coast to coast, from Port Coquitlam to Brandon—Souris to the fair shores of Avalon in Newfoundland.

• (1310)

Canadians long for a government that respects their concerns and their pocketbooks, a government that uses provinces as partners in our federation instead of opulence, and a government that puts the interests of Canadians first.

[*Translation*]

As you are aware, the previous government introduced the GST to reduce deficits accumulated over the years by previous governments—Liberal governments, we should add. Now that this tax

measure has come to fruition, it is time to return to taxpayers the money that belongs to them. Rather than establishing costly and ineffectual programs, rather than raking in billions of dollars away from the eyes of the Auditor General, we believe it is time to give back the money to Canadians, so that they can manage it as efficiently as possible.

As an engineer and environmental consultant, I am proud to know that our government will propose a responsible and credible approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This plan will stimulate Canadian industry and will be more than just an election slogan.

Because it clearly demonstrates turning over a new leaf for Canada, because it proposes an open federalism, with tangible measures, and because it puts money back in the pockets of taxpayers, I support the throne speech out of respect for the citizens of Bellechasse, Les Etchemins and Lévis. I invite my fellow members to lend their support as well. These citizens get up every morning to earn a living. We owe it to those who have given us the mandate to oversee the affairs of the state to do so diligently and responsibly.

[*English*]

Let us never forget the solemn truth that the nation is not constituted of the living alone. There are those as well who have passed away and those yet to be born. This great responsibility comes to us as heirs of the past and trustees of the future. However with that responsibility comes something greater still, the opportunity of proving ourselves worthy of it and I pray this may not be lost.

[*Translation*]

Thus spoke the Right Honourable Sir Robert Laird Borden in 1916. He was referring to our responsibility to those who came before us and those who will follow. Let us prove ourselves worthy of that responsibility.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member across the way for his speech. I also want to congratulate him for having been elected for the first time. For me, it was in 2004. The first days here are very important and I am sure that he is very nervous.

Nonetheless I would like to remind the hon. member that the GST was introduced by the Conservatives. Maybe they made a little mistake when they did it, but it was certainly not the previous government who created that tax. I think that the Conservatives should be reminded that they were the ones who created that tax and not us.

During his speech, the member talked about forestry. It is surely an important sector. I can assure you that it is important where I come from. However, where in the Speech from the Throne do we find the words that show how important it is? The forest industry does not want us to be content with discussions, it wants action. It is one thing to continue discussions with our American friends, but that does not solve the problem in rural areas of Canada.

The Address

There is another element on which the hon. member should reflect seriously. He mentioned shipyards. Obviously, there are none in my area, which depends more on forestry. However, if shipyards are so important for him and his colleagues from the Quebec City area, I wonder how he can tell his constituents that this sector is important but that his government did not include it in its priorities.

I think it is not enough to say that the shipbuilding industry must be a flagship among Canadian industries. If that is a real priority, I think the hon. member should have tried a little harder to make sure that the people from his riding were respected and that this priority was included in the priorities of his government. It is sad to say, but that is not what we see.

• (1315)

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his wishes. This is indeed the first time I rise in this kind of debate. First, regarding shipyards, I would remind him that the shipyard in Lévis flourished under a Conservative government. And our Prime Minister's ships are not sailing under a foreign flag.

That said, I am pleased that a Conservative government also introduced free trade and the goods and services tax that benefited the previous government. But instead of putting the money back in the taxpayers' pockets, it developed expensive programs.

We plan to change that approach in Ottawa and to manage taxpayers' money with integrity and efficiency.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am rising in this House for the first time in this 39th Parliament. I would therefore like to recognize the people of my riding, to whom I am very grateful for re-electing me.

I would like my colleague from Lévis—Bellechasse to try and convince me, for every situation I will put to him. I am thinking in particular of the \$1,200 per year for child care that the Conservative government will be giving parents. By my calculations, that is \$100 a month. My daughter has a child in daycare. It is costing her \$7 a day. Five days times \$7 is \$35. The government in Quebec subsidizes daycare to the tune of \$30 a day, for a total cost of \$185 per week for my granddaughter's daycare. Four weeks times \$185 is \$740 per month. So, my daughter will be getting a bonus of \$100 a month, minus taxes. Where is the logic?

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I have had to call upon every ounce of my university training in engineering to follow the hon. member's math.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Steven Blaney: I want the hon. member to know that the proposed measure is for all parents, regardless of income or child-rearing choices. As we know, some parents choose the child care system. Other mothers and fathers choose to stay at home with their children.

I am proud of the fact that we are not injecting this money into cumbersome and expensive systems, providing it instead to parents, who will ensure that it is managed efficiently and reallocated where necessary to programs available to them.

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time this afternoon with the member for Vancouver Quadra.

[Translation]

I welcome this opportunity to make a few remarks about the Speech from the Throne presented by the government a few days ago.

• (1320)

[English]

Before doing so, however, I would like to sincerely thank the people of Ottawa South for electing me again to the House of Commons as their member of Parliament. For a second time, I make a sincere and single pledge to them. I will work as hard as I can to serve the needs of the people of Ottawa South in order to ensure that our community continues to flourish.

[Translation]

I will do everything in my power to respond to the needs of the people of Ottawa South, and so ensure that our community continues to flourish.

[English]

I have so far dedicated my career to solving public welfare and policy issues here in Canada and around the world. Through the great privilege of public office, I hope to continue to use my experience to help the people of Ottawa South and, by extension, the people of Canada.

I look forward to working constructively with this new Conservative government when it makes sense for Canadians and for the people of Ottawa South. On accountability and integrity, for example, I will work tirelessly with the government to rebuild trust between our federal government and the people.

[Translation]

During the recent election campaign, people from Ottawa South opened their doors to me.

The Ottawa South community is facing the same pressures and challenges as many other communities in the country: rapid growth, preserving green spaces, an aging population, health care needs, low cost housing, public transit and higher education, to name just a few.

That is why I am firmly committed to do my share so that the government can undertake a variety of measures to achieve progress in the future.

[English]

Each time the residents of Ottawa South open their doors to me I see again how Ottawa South is also a microcosm of Canadian society. With over 80 languages and dialects spoken, our community is proof that people from every walk of life, every race, every creed, and every culture can come together to build a society which is the envy of the world.

The Address

I want the House to know that, as Canadians today, we have a special charge, a 21st century responsibility thrust upon us as the world comes together much more quickly than we ever could have anticipated. In short, my community and our country are a project that the world ought to be watching carefully and they are, and we must succeed.

Keeping this in mind, I believe Canadians have serious reservations about the government's approach as laid out in the Speech from the Throne. It aims for a few tentative political points. It does not and cannot be interpreted to amount to a vision. The government across the floor has rejected the tried and true balance of social spending, personal income tax cuts, and debt reduction that has served Canadians so well over the past decade.

In its place we have yet to see an economic blueprint or even some general economic direction for this nation state. Instead, we have a promise to replace fair, productive income tax cuts with a cut to the GST. I am certain that the economists in the Department of Finance have repeated to the government what every other economist in Canada has said. The switch-up does not make any economic sense at all. The balanced approach has seen us lead all G-7 countries in growth and allowed our government to deliver eight surpluses in a row. It will give the government its first balanced budget in the coming weeks.

I know that the Prime Minister understands this. He is an economist by training. But perhaps the economist is not fully prepared to take the bold steps that a Prime Minister must take. Canadians agree that every dollar discharged on our mortgage frees up valuable resources to invest in our common future, but to invest wisely, a government must have a vision.

On their doorsteps I listened as my constituents described the quality of life challenges inherent in our rapidly urbanizing country. The world is urbanizing at breakneck speed and not only in Canada. The question of quality of life in Canadian cities speaks not only to our future as a nation but to our ability to attract capital, to retain the best and brightest minds, and to adjust to our economy in transition. It also speaks to the larger question: how will quality of life be improved for billions of people around the world?

The previous government was right to pursue a progressive and forward looking cities and communities agenda because the world will need the skills, the experience and the knowhow of Canada's cities, our companies and our governments as it struggles to deal with the consequences of rapid urbanization. It is surprising that the current government has neglected cities entirely. Even more surprising is the neglect the government has shown for families.

● (1325)

[*Translation*]

When my constituents opened their doors to me, I was able to understand their needs and those of their children.

I remember speaking frequently with parents about the need to save the early learning and child care program.

[*English*]

Approximately 84% of children today live with two parents or a single parent who work or study full time. The early learning and

child care program represents our most enlightened self-interest. Despite the government's rhetoric, I know that it knows better. It knows better than to waste this unprecedented opportunity to build a national early learning and child care system.

We should invest as early and as often in our children as we possibly can. Studies show that the national early learning and child care plan is the program that can help us most close the poverty gap in 2036.

In a world where a people can borrow their capital, copy their technology and buy their natural resources, the only thing left to us as a country is to develop the smartest people possible. But in order to invest wisely in people, a government must have a vision.

On their doorsteps I shared my concerns with other citizens about the future of our natural environment. My neighbours understand instinctively what science has come to confirm, that the caring capacity of the planet is not limitless, that we must stop a fundamental fiction wherein we believe that we can continue to draw down our natural capital without compromising the planet's regenerative capacity, and that the implementation of the Kyoto accord is indispensable if we do not want to play Russian roulette with the atmosphere.

When the Prime Minister recently met with President Bush and President Fox in Cancun to discuss continental issues, I was pleased to hear the word "energy" being discussed. I was even more pleased to see that we are going to pursue an energy strategy as a continent. The Prime Minister shied away from advocating a continental greenhouse gas reduction strategy. Perhaps he is not fully prepared to take the bold steps that a prime minister must take. To invest wisely, a government must have a vision.

I take great pride in being a Liberal member in this Parliament. I believe liberalism is the outlook best qualified to deal with our world. It is imbued with a spirit of progress and reform, vision and imagination. Liberalism has implicit faith in the power of men and women to do what is good and possible to meet the challenges of the present and the future.

We believe in always striving to improve, not settling for what comes easiest. As such, I believe our opposition reply to the Speech from the Throne demonstrates the best of the Liberal tradition. I would like to cite words written by my own father, words which I would ask others to live by as we work together in this 39th Parliament:

Let us remember that when we leave this earth, we can take with us nothing that we have received—fleeting symbols of honour, trappings of power—but only what we have given: a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice, and courage.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on being re-elected to the House. I also congratulate him on his speech. I notice that he put an emphasis on family and children, but he did not talk a lot about safety, law and order, and crime.

The Address

In 1993 when I was first elected, I spoke with regard to the protection of children in my maiden speech. My speech dealt with trying to do something about child pornography, a very evil thing going on in our nation. If the member's riding is close to Toronto he will understand how serious this problem has become.

Since 1993 there have been dozens of speeches made by myself and members of my party encouraging Liberal justice ministers over the years, from Allan Rock through Anne McLellan to the last one, and to no avail. When private member's bills were brought forward to deal with this problem, they were rejected. When there were amendments to legislation, they were rejected. Thus, child pornography has grown to become a multi-billion dollar industry and that is disgraceful.

The Conservative Party is now the government. We have a justice minister who I know is going to do the right thing with regard to laws that protect our children. Over and over, in the past, we have seen the government use the charter, through the courts or whatever means, to protect freedom of expression, freedom of speech when referring to child pornography and that is why protecting children never went anywhere.

Will this member join this party and put the rights and safety of children ahead of the rights of these predators and imbeciles that have been attacking our children over these years?

• (1330)

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I would say to the hon. member is that as a father of four children, I share his deep concern and passion for the child pornography challenges we are facing in the country today. I share his frustration in the limits of the law and the application of the law in terms of arresting the further spreading of child pornography, online or otherwise.

There are risks. We are hearing, for example, in American senate hearings just this week of young people being exposed, at a very young age, to these challenges online. However, as a lawyer, I would also say that it is important for all members to remember that we have to strike a balance here. I believe that the charter is now working for us in terms of its interpretation by the courts. There are some challenges, of course, in terms of sentencing. There are challenges in terms of enforceability, as my local police force reminds me on a regular basis.

Maybe I could just switch the channel for a second and reply to the member that the single most important thing we can do, as a country going forward, is invest in our social and human capital. That means investing in our kids where it counts most. Every child psychologist in the world who is an authority tells us that if we get to our children between the ages of three and seven, we are going to be better prepared for the economic challenges of the future. Even a Conservative government would understand that. I look forward to working with the government on a real child care plan for the country.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Ottawa South. Indeed, I had the pleasure of knowing his father and the quote at the end of his speech were wise words that I hope we do all abide by. In fact, my father and his father went to high school together.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Ottawa Centre for electing me to this place and I hope to stand in as good a stead as my predecessor, Mr. Broadbent.

I have a question and a concern about the environment. I share the hon. member's concerns about the environment, and about the challenges we all face with clean air and clean water. As the member will know, as he has been a resource on the environment to which others have turned to, we have not met the challenges that were presented to us through the Kyoto accord.

I would like to put aside the partisanship for a minute and talk about real solutions and ideas about how we can tackle the concerns of clean air and clean water. As a school teacher, I have been saddened to see the levels of asthma escalate over the years. If anyone has had the unfortunate opportunity to go into our emergency wards recently, they will see that it affects more and more children every day.

Does the hon. member see the solution for dealing with the problems with our air quality and clean water in the area of legislation? Particularly, one of the solutions our party has put forward and that I strongly advocate is to have a clean water and a clean air act.

• (1335)

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, I share the member's concerns and the notion of a clean water act. I can assure the member and the House of one thing. If the government were to withdraw this country from the Kyoto protocol and the leadership role that Canada has played over the last decade, a mounting 128 signatures to join this Kyoto protocol, we would not tackle seriously together and internationally the whole notion of protecting one single atmosphere.

If the Conservative Party and the government do not understand that, perhaps they should speak to the Canadian Council of Chief Executives who overwhelmingly support the Kyoto protocol and whose companies have moved to embrace it over the last 25 years.

Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to speak today to the Speech from the Throne. To begin my comments I would like to pay my high regard to the government for this Speech from the Throne because of the beautiful way it was delivered. In fact, this may be the ultimate triumph of form over substance because it was blessedly short but I think short in some substantive ways that need to be addressed.

A major theme of the government's Speech from the Throne and, indeed, the accountability act which will be tabled next week, is the question of accountability. I would like to spend a few minutes addressing those issues.

The Address

The first point of issue I would raise is the pledge in the Speech from the Throne to ensure that people in positions of public trust do not move on to areas of private lobbying. I think we agree that it is something that should be done. The current lobbyist legislation has grown, improved and evolved over the last 10 years. It needs to go further and I commend the government for proposing further amendments and expansions to it. However I think it leaves two gaping holes that I hope the government will consider adding to the accountability act.

The first is that while it prevents people in senior positions, whether they be ministers, ministerial staff or senior public servants, from leaving that public office holder position and going directly into a lobbyist position, what it does not deal with is the people who are in positions of very considerable trust and influence in the opposition who then become part of government. Those people then going straight into lobbying. Frankly, we have seen in the last very few short weeks of the Conservative government dozens of people going from senior positions in the former opposition now government into lobbyist positions, including the former deputy leader of the opposition.

This is a gap that has to be filled and I hope the government will consider ensuring that alternative is not available. Ironically, the people who have the least potential for improper influence on their former department are the former ministers who are now in opposition or out of politics all together.

We have the emphasis wrong and we have to plug that hole. I hope we can work with the government to ensure that it is a balanced situation.

The other gap that is glaring, which relates to this, is where former lobbyists then become ministers and in fact ministers of the very portfolio to which they were previously lobbying. We have three ministers now who were lobbyists previously for their very portfolios. I fail to see how one could ever suggest that an ex-minister, now lobbyist when his former government has lost power, could have more potential for improper influence than a former lobbyist now minister in the very portfolio where he was previously lobbying.

That is another gap that I think all of us, in seriously trying to evolve the Lobbyist Registration Act further and ensuring the greatest possible protection, need to pay some attention to.

Another issue of accountability is respect or disrespect for individuals in high office and, in particular, the independent officers of Parliament. The Speech from the Throne mentions that the capacity and the independence of independent officers of Parliament should be enhanced. We have seen, unfortunately, in far too recent months examples of disrespect by the government when it was in opposition and now in government to those independent officers and, in particular, the Ethics Commissioner.

I do not know how the current Prime Minister can express in a Speech from the Throne the desire to raise respect, capacity and independence of an independent officer when four months, when he was Leader of the Opposition, he refused to make time to meet with the Ethics Commissioner, an independent officer of Parliament, to

answer questions about the Grewal case. What possibly could be a greater disrespect?

• (1340)

Another area of disrespect, of course, was after the election of the present government when the Ethics Commissioner identified explicitly that the action of crossing the floor and the enticement of a member was disrespect for the voters. We all have problems with the crossing of the floor and I think we all understand that we need some limits around it. However, as I have learned, never has such an incident of floor crossing been so extreme where, within two weeks of being voted into Parliament, a member is enticed to the government party that received 18% of the vote from the voters of that constituency. As the Ethics Commissioner properly pointed out, that shows at the very least disrespect for the voters.

Another issue on accountability, in my mind, was the very honourable and important move of the government to move toward the election of senators. The problem is how to do it and how to do it piecemeal rather than looking at a full reform and, through constitutional amendment, a re-ordering of that very important House. We all respect the very fine work that so much of the Senate and its committees produce, but not being elected is a problem and I am glad the government is addressing it.

The difficulty, which again goes to respect, consistency and perhaps seriousness around this area of reform, was the appointment of a party functionary, who decided not to seek election, to the Senate and then went on to become Minister of Public Works. He is not available in the House to take responsibility and be accountable for the actions of that important ministry. That is an area where I think we have to question the level of respect that is really being shown to the concept of a reformed-by-becoming-elected Senate.

It is not as if regional and, in this case, city representation is the key issue. We have seen no enthusiasm or action toward, for instance, the appointment of a non-elected member of cabinet from the Toronto area where the government holds no representation either. I might note in passing that the province of Prince Edward Island has both a vacant Senate seat and no representation in cabinet. There is inconsistency there and accountability certainly demands consistency.

Let me very briefly touch on a few of the other five areas of the throne speech concentration. Of course, the first one is child care, which is immensely important. Everyone is declaring it and speaking about providing some relief for parents who need child care and wish to put their children in child care. I must say that the very minimal cash payment to parents with children under six will not handle the need and I think we all know that. It is of least, if any, benefit whatsoever to the parent or the parents who must work either because they are a single parent or because they need two incomes. It is taxable income and therefore they will receive much less than the \$100 a month.

The people who will benefit most will be the parents who already stay at home with their children. It will not give them the opportunity to put their children in child care but it will be of benefit to the parents who already stay at home and look after their children.

The Address

•(1345)

Let me speak very briefly to the GST and the tax policy in general. There are few times in the ordering of public affairs when all of the economists in the country agree on anything. Economists, as we know, are famous for having many different points of view. They are unanimous on this, and I mean practising economists, not simply people who got an economics degree 30 years ago.

We would all like to see the proposed GST cut if we can because it is a sensible thing to do, but this is a very progressive tax benefit but the progression is that it gets progressively more valuable the richer one is and the more one spends. That is the opposite—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The hon. member for Macleod.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the enthusiasm with which people are responding to the Speech from the Throne has not allowed me the opportunity to stand and speak yet in this 39th Parliament. I must start off by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, for the honour bestowed on you and I am sure you will do an excellent job.

I also want to talk about how honoured I feel that the constituents of my riding of Macleod have allowed me to come back to Ottawa to represent their views. However I cannot represent their views properly if I do not stand and question the hypocrisy that we are hearing from members of the former Liberal government.

We have brought in a very concise document with some actual priorities. One of the main items is accountability and we are hearing questions from that side of the House on accountability. We do not need to go into the record of the lack of accountability in the former government.

What is wrong with making five priorities, focusing on five priorities and getting the job done?

Hon. Stephen Owen: Mr. Speaker, there is certainly nothing wrong with addressing the issues that the five priorities attempt to address but there are two problems with this approach.

First, we actually must deal with them in an appropriate, progressive, public interest way rather than superficially or in ways that actually confound the public interest.

Second, we must not disregard the many other pressing issues that need to be dealt with in the country.

Let me just go to the wait times. Everybody knows, including the Supreme Court of Canada, that wait times need to be shortened, which is why the Liberals, when they formed the government, progressively dealt with wait times in a comprehensive way with a 2004 election pledge, with a major multi-billion dollar agreement with all the provinces and territories, with benchmarks being set and a guarantee all in succession. It was credible, funded and all the governments in the country agreed to it. That is the way to set progressive public policy.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member failed to discuss at any length the accountability act that will be the

toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history. Among other things, it will create an anti-corruption watchdog who will protect whistleblowers against bullying. It will end the revolving door between lobby firms and ministers' offices. It will give the Auditor General the power to shine light in every dark corner in her hunt for waste, theft and corruption. The member's party is familiar with all of those things.

Finally, it will ban big money and corporate cash from political campaigns altogether. These are concrete steps that will form the basis for the toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history.

Why did the member not take at least a few moments to acknowledge those steps? Could it be that his party is shaking, that his party is terrified about the implications that those tough measures will have on the practises and modus operandi of his organization, the Liberal Party of Canada?

•(1350)

Hon. Stephen Owen: Mr. Speaker, as I have before, I applaud the government for bringing forward an accountability act. I just want to make sure that it is as effective as it possibly can be. Let me just speak to that issue of lobbying.

Yesterday in the *Globe and Mail*—and excuse any reference to someone named—the article read, “Even as the Harper government finds its footing in the House of Commons some of the best defence firms in the world are circling Ottawa like hungry—”

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member is referring directly to the Prime Minister by name. He should show some respect for that office and some respect for the House by following—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I thank the parliamentary secretary. I know the member for Vancouver Quadra understands that even if he is quoting a press document, he is still discouraged from using members actual names, referring to them instead by titles or ridings.

Hon. Stephen Owen: Mr. Speaker, I take your discouragement, and the quote will not be repeated.

The point is these world-leading defence firms are circling like raptors over a former defence industry lobbyist for eight years, now Minister of National Defence. If there is really serious intent to clean up the issue of the relationship between government and lobbyists, let us do it fully. I will be supportive of the government when we debate that bill next week and see that amendment to enhance it further. We all want to ensure that lobbyists do not have inappropriate influence on government decisions.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your new job. You are wearing it very well.

Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful people of Haldimand—Norfolk who have once again asked me to represent them in this place. My gratitude goes out to them and to all those who worked so hard to once again grant me this very great privilege.

The Address

It is an honour today to have this opportunity to speak to one of our government's top five priorities as outlined in the Speech from the Throne. I am referring of course to the government's strong commitment to the well-being of children and families, a commitment that we are proud to advance through our proposed new choice in child care plan.

The centrepiece of the plan, the choice in child care allowance, is a \$1,200 a year benefit for all parents of preschoolers, regardless of the parents income or career choice, of where they live or how they wish to raise their children. Combined with the many federal supports already available to Canadian families, this universal allowance will give parents more choice in child care. Whether child care is provided at home, with neighbours or a family member, or in a day care setting in the community, or even in a work environment, parents need the freedom to choose what is best for their family.

• (1355)

[Translation]

As the Speech from the Throne said so well, the most important investment that the country can make is to help families raise their children.

[English]

The new allowance is part of a broader plan to allocate over \$10 billion over the next five years to help Canadian families find the kind of child care that they want and demand.

Toward that end, our plan is also committed to creating up to 125,000 new community-based child care spaces over the same period. These are spaces that will be designed, created and delivered in the communities where parents live and work and raise their children. They will be designed not by government, which tells us what works best, but by parents who know what works best. These new child care spaces will be flexible and responsive to the needs of working families.

[Translation]

In the coming weeks and months, we will work with businesses, not-for-profit and community organizations, the provinces and the territories to build on their experience in order to help promote the creation of more child care spaces.

[English]

A recent survey by the Vanier Institute of the Family asked parents to rank a series of possible child care options. The most interesting finding of this survey was that first choice of parents for raising their children was their spouse or partner. The second choice was a grandparent. The third choice was another relative. The fourth choice was home-based day care. The fifth choice was institutional day care. Finally, there was the option of babysitting by friends or a hired sitter.

The lesson learned from this survey is clear. Parents want choices and they want to make those choices themselves. Parents want choice and empowerment when it comes to deciding how they can best take care of their children.

No politician or party in the House can claim to have a monopoly on knowing the best child care arrangements for Canada's children. I

believe that no one in this place, no matter from which party they come, can be accused of not wanting the best for our children.

These matters are not up for debate. What is up for debate is the path that we, the government, can and should take to help parents do what is best for their children.

A child care solution that only helps some children or some parents is not much of a solution. Canadians want a program that helps all children, whether they be in a major urban centre, on a family farm or in an aboriginal community, so they can reach their full potential.

[Translation]

We all know that the family is the foundation of Canadian society. Strong families make healthy communities. However, healthy communities are synonymous with social and economic success, which then determines the quality of life of all Canadians.

What can the government do to support strong families? There is no simple answer to that question, because each family is unique, and what produces good results in one family could have other effects in another.

[English]

As a government, we recognize this. Our responsibility is not to tell families how to raise their children. It is not to impose a one-size-fits-all solution. It is to respect and trust parents to make the right choices for their children. Our choice in child care plan is all about that, to give every Canadian family the freedom and opportunity to give their children a healthy start in life to the ultimate benefit of all society.

There are 2.1 million preschoolers in our country. Statistics Canada recently issued a report entitled "Child Care in Canada". It found that only 15% of preschool age children are in formal day care. The biggest portion, well over half of all children under the age of six, are actually cared for at home by mom, dad, grandma, or another close relative or a neighbour.

The report clearly outlines the diversity of the child care choices that families make. There are countless other arrangements, including licensed in-home care, informal child care and preschool.

The option that parents choose depends on many things, including their personal beliefs about child rearing and the needs of their family as they balance their work and family responsibilities.

Some believe that a formal day care setting will expose their children to valuable early learning and socialization. Others believe that staying home with their children during those first years is the best choice for their family. Still others might prefer to have a parent stay at home with their children, but need two incomes to sustain their balance.

The Address

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

Parents often make choices that involve personal sacrifices. Some adjust their work schedules to make sure that there is always one of them at home with the children. Others try to make ends meet with only one salary so that one parent can stay home with the children.

Some parents cannot or do not want to send their children to a daycare centre. A centre's hours are often more suitable for those who work from 9 to 5, Monday to Friday.

[*English*]

Part timers, shift workers and people such as farmers and fishermen with largely seasonal work need different, more flexible forms of care. For the one-third of Canada's population living in rural and remote parts of the country, including my riding of Haldimand—Norfolk, often there are neither the staff nor the resources necessary to operate regular child care facilities of the sort that we might see in downtown Toronto or Montreal.

In short, many Canadians must have real choice in the child care options that meet their needs. Our government believes in supporting all parents in their child care choices. This is why we have come up with a choice in child care allowance. Starting in July, Canadian families, no matter where and how they live, will receive \$1,200 per year for each child under the age of six.

[*Translation*]

This child care benefit is intended to give them more choices. They can now use this money to pay part of the daycare fees or to hire somebody to help the stay-at-home parent with the daily chores.

[*English*]

Alternatively parents may use the allowance to purchase learning materials such as books, crafts or a computer program, or this may allow parents to enroll their child or children in a course such as swimming, or music or a pre-school program. Some parents may wish to invest some or all their allowance into a registered education savings plan for their child. However, the fact is that this allowance is about helping families in a direct, real way.

I would like now to highlight a few things.

First, this allowance is more than families have ever received for this purpose. For all of its promises to help parents with their child care needs, the previous government's program offered nothing concrete for parents. Our new government will offer something tangible to all parents, regardless of their child care choice.

The government is not proposing some distant, perhaps unattainable promise. We are proposing a concrete means of helping all parents with their child care choices, and this support is something that will become a reality in a matter of just three months. This allowance will come on top of the \$13 billion that the Government of Canada already invests every year in support for children and families, programs that include the Canada child tax benefit, the child disability benefit, the national child benefits supplement, the child care expense deduction, extended parental leave provisions and the Canada learning bond.

[*Translation*]

First and foremost, the child care benefit will be given directly to the families who will then be able to spend it as they wish, in accordance with their needs. Whether they work in a factory, spend long days working on the farm, operate a home-based business or stay home to care for their children, all parents of young children will benefit from it.

[*English*]

Why? Because we believe that the role of government is to empower parents to make decisions that will be in their children's best interests.

Another way the government can help is to ensure meaningful choices for parents who need child care spaces. That is why this new government will work with employers, communities and other governments to promote the creation of flexible and responsive new child care spaces tailored to the true needs of the community. And it is not just a handful of spaces. Our plan calls for \$250 million a year for five years to create up to 125,000 more child care spaces. These spaces could be built by businesses, community groups or non-profit organizations, anyone who identifies a local need and sees the value in filling it.

Under our plan the new Government of Canada will be a partner in creating real child care spaces, working with businesses, community groups or non-profit organizations. For example, a group of employers, including businesses and non-profit employers, could cooperate to develop a child care centre in partnership with a community child care organization. In rural Canada, something which I know a little about, parents and community organizations in small towns could come together to create a multi-purpose child care centre offering child care, learning resources and a community centre on which parents could rely. A non-profit community organization such as a social planning council, the United Way or the YM-YWCA could partner with a number of non-profit employers to establish a new child care program. These are just a few of the possibilities that our plan will open up.

I trust the ingenuity of Canadian communities and Canadian parents to develop new and exciting ways to meet their child care needs, and we want to be a partner in that work.

How would the plan work? Through incentives. By 2011, our new government is committed to investing up to \$1.25 billion in the creation of child care spaces alone. We will be talking to businesses, non-profit employers and communities, in addition to provinces and territories, to make sure that we get this initiative right. We know that our key to success is to ensure flexibility in design. Our goal is to meet the needs of all Canadian parents regardless of whether they live in a city or a rural community and whatever their hours of work, which may not fit the nine to five model.

The Address

This initiative will complement the roles of partners, such as provincial and territorial governments, by helping to create new child care spaces.

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The child care choice program is being well received because it makes sense. It has been praised by parents across the country. They told us that they saw in this program precisely the type of flexible, attentive approach they needed.

[*English*]

The plan has also garnered the backing of many groups with an interest in child care, including Advocates for Childcare Choice, the Institute for Canadian Values, Kids First Parent Association of Canada and Prairie Advocates for Childcare Choices.

The premiers of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Alberta have all endorsed our plan. Significantly, the governments of Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Ontario and New Brunswick have already said that they will not recover the child care allowance from social assistance recipients, an important step in making this program work. I am hoping that other jurisdictions will follow their lead.

After 13 years of being told about Liberal grand designs for a national day care program, parents were left with nothing more than promises. On January 23, Canadians voted for a government so committed to child care that it made it one of its top five priorities. The fact is that our government is committing over \$10 billion to assist parents with their child care needs, more than twice as much money as the previous Liberal program promised but did not deliver. This money will help parents, giving them real choices in child care, and support investments in the creation of child care spaces.

Our plan will benefit all Canadian families with children under six. The Speech from the Throne promised a choice in child care plans because it is the right thing for Canadian families. It is about treating all Canadian families the same, whether they live in downtown Toronto, rural Prince Edward Island or Inuvik.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

Canadian parents are true experts in child care. They do not need to be told how to raise their children, especially not by the government.

[*English*]

As a government, our responsibility is to lend a helping hand to ensure that Canadian families have meaningful choices in child care and to support them in whatever child care choice suits them best. That is also our responsibility as a society. I call on my hon. colleagues to support the government in this most worthy initiative.

Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding there is a significant population that is on reserve. Unfortunately, 80% of the on reserve residents are on social assistance, a federal program.

There is a significant baby boom occurring in our communities as well. With over 60% under the age of 25, 50% under the age of 18,

approximately 25% under the age of 5, the need for child care is desperate. This proposal may actually create a situation where choices for proper child care are taken away.

Will the on reserve residents be receiving the \$100 a month payment without a clawback from the federal social assistance program?

Will the Conservative government and the minister commit to the \$100 million that the previous Liberal government committed to the aboriginal day care program and allow parents to pursue training and get off the social assistance system?

How will the tax credit proposal build day care spots on reserve when there is a different tax environment?

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that this would be a universal benefit available to all parents right across the country. By that we also include aboriginals, be they on reserve or off. They would be eligible for the \$1,200 a year choice in child care allowance. In turn, we want to make sure that the benefit is universal. That is why we will be exempting it from means testing for social assistance. I am so very pleased that the provinces of Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Ontario and New Brunswick have taken the lead and joined us in excluding this allowance from the calculation of social benefits.

We recognize that parents need choice, that they need a bit a help. That is why we will be doing everything we can to make sure they get to keep as much of this money as possible. That is why the money will only be taxed in the hands of the lower income parent. In many cases, almost half of the cases in fact, young preschoolers have one parent who stays at home with the child. In most of those cases the parents earn very little if anything, and the parents are below the tax level. If the allowance is taxed in their hands, they will pay no tax. This is how we want to make sure that maximum benefit is derived.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, allow me to congratulate all members of this House who were elected on January 23. This is a show of trust, until proven otherwise.

Let us look at the so-called universal \$1,200 allowance for families with children under six. We are now learning that this allowance will be tax free for low income families. Pardon me, but that smacks of improvisation. The federal government is getting very much involved in the area of family policy, which is in the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. In fact, Quebec and the provinces, and they alone, know how to manage their family policies properly, with all their ins and outs.

I would like to emphasize certain elements of a recent study published by three professors from the University of Sherbrooke:

Providing an allowance of \$1,200 a year to parents with children six and under could impoverish low income families, and single mothers in particular—

The study also states:

The Address

—should Ottawa pay \$1,200 to families instead of transferring funding to the Quebec government, Quebec will be forced to raise daycare fees and ask parents to contribute a larger share.

Let us not forget that the [name of Prime Minister] government's initiative will deprive Quebec of some \$800 million.

The end result varies depending on assumptions or scenarios. Abject poverty, measured one way, could be increased by up to 60%.

Finally, these professors also consider that such a shift could act as a barrier to employment.

I think it is obvious that this policy is another trick the Conservatives have learned from the Liberals, a trick to boost their visibility: a maple leaf on a \$1,200 cheque. I do not think that the government's objectives can be achieved in that context.

I believe in the freedom of the provinces and Quebec in the area of child care. Naturally, parents who are staying at home with their children might choose to buy nicer crayons. But to say that people will enjoy greater freedom of choice with \$1,200 is really improvising.

• (1415)

[English]

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure which of the member's many questions I am supposed to answer. I would address some of the misconceptions raised.

I mentioned a few moments ago that I am working with the provinces to try to make sure that people are not impoverished by this program. With respect to benefits from any assistance programs, be they federal or provincial, that people receive now and for which they are now eligible, we want to make sure that people do not lose those benefits. We truly want this to be a universal benefit.

Our \$1,200 choice in child care allowance was never intended to be 100% subsidized child care. That was not the plan from the start. This was well thought out. What we want to do is help parents get the resources they need to make the choice for child care that best meets their needs. We are very cognizant of the differences between the federal jurisdiction and the provincial jurisdiction. We have long said that the federal government wants to stay out of provincial affairs, unlike the previous government that not only meddled in provincial affairs, but municipal as well.

No, we are the federal government. We want to act federally. Our role as the federal government is to support parents and give them the resources they need to make the choices that best meet their needs, but it is the responsibility of the provinces and territories for the delivery of child care.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, certainly the minister understands that for a single parent who earns \$30,000 and receives that so-called \$1,200 family allowance, the dollar amount that he or she will receive is only \$460. As for one parent who is working, as the minister has mentioned, the person will receive only \$673 per year. This means that half of it is being clawed back or taxed back. For a two income family, for a couple that earns \$35,000, it is even worse. Two out of three dollars are clawed back or taxed back. If the person is on social assistance, there is absolutely no guarantee that the \$1,200 family allowance will not be clawed back by the provincial government.

The government's promise on this rings hollow if it is taxable or available for clawback. I hope the new government is not learning from the old Liberal government and making a lot of promises but not doing a lot of delivery. That would be truly disappointing.

Will the minister please work with the NDP and support the NDP and Bloc plan that basically says to protect that \$1,200 family allowance delivered through the child tax benefit so that not one dollar of it would be taxed back or clawed back?

• (1420)

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has given this particular issue a great deal of thought, as her party came forward with a proposal for \$1,000 a year family allowance type of program. Ours is \$1,200 for the choice in child care and the same rules apply, except, as I have mentioned, we are working very closely on it. Because we have analyzed the same numbers that the hon. member has, we recognize what the potential problems could be. We are working to avoid those. That is why we will be exempting the allowance from the calculation of the national benefits so that there is no clawback.

I am very pleased to advise the member once again that in Ontario, from where she hails, the Ontario government—and let us remember that this is a provincial matter—along with the governments of Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, has already indicated to us that it will not be clawing back this benefit. I am very pleased to hear that.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to be speaking today in the House of Commons. As this is my first speech, I would like to thank the citizens of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for giving me the great honour of representing them once again.

Indeed, it is humbling to be in the House. As somebody once said, there is no bad seat in the House of Commons. There are only 308 of us here and there are over 30 million Canadians. It is indeed an honour. I think everybody here feels the same way about giving our best for the people of our communities and our great country.

Having said that, I must say that with regard to the Speech from the Throne one can always admire brevity, but our country is more than five points. What the Speech from the Throne had in it were five simple points that were good politics but bad policy.

One can see what the end game is. I think most people understand that this is a way of setting the bar extremely low so that at the end of the day the government can go to the public and say that it accomplished five things. Our country is more than five challenges. What I am going to do is take a look at each of those five policies, or as much as we have time for today, and take them apart piece by piece.

The Address

Let us take a look at the GST issue. It is wise to put money in the hands of taxpayers. Indeed, when the Liberals were in government, our finance minister took one million people off the tax rolls. We put forth and implemented in 2005 a plan that decreased the lowest tax bracket from 16% to 15% and increased the basic personal exemption.

I know that members on the other side are deeply interested in putting more money in the pockets of Canadians. In fact, and across all party lines, we would agree with that. The question is, what is the most effective way of accomplishing that goal? Is it really to lower the GST one percentage point versus a decrease in personal taxes?

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Don Valley East.

Let us look at reducing the GST. Who primarily does it benefit? It benefits the people in the higher income tax brackets. For example, somebody who makes \$150,000 a year would at the end of the day receive roughly \$900 in benefits from a one percentage point decrease in the GST. If we were to look at the 43% of Canadians who make less than \$40,000 a year, we would see that a GST reduction would result in about \$190 in their pockets. Let us compare that to the Liberal plan, which would put into the same category those who make less than \$40,000 a year. Those individuals would actually have about \$380 in their pockets.

I would encourage the government to rethink its position on the GST, as I think members from across party lines would. While it may be attractive on a superficial level, it does not in fact put more money in the hands of individuals, particularly the poor and working poor, who need the money the most.

The child care tax issue has been looked at quite closely.

I also want to look at the issue of the military because I was parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Defence and had the honour, as others of us have had, of representing and working hard for those men and women who give their lives every day for the benefit and the defence of our country. All of us are strong supporters of them and their families.

It was disappointing, I may say, to see how little the military issue and our defence forces received in the Speech from the Throne. This is critically important. We are actually having a competing debate right now. The government is pursuing a 1980s course of action with respect to its plan for the Canadian Forces. It is completely different from the ones we laid out. It is different from the one we hammered out with General Hillier and his staff, one that is very attractive to the members of our Canadian Forces, a plan that in fact meets the asymmetric threats we are faced with today in this changing world of ours.

I would ask the members of the government to please look at the plan that the current Minister of National Defence is pursuing, because it does not reflect the asymmetric threats we have today. They are not the kinds of battles we will fight in the future. It is based on an old, obsolete cold war vision, a plan that was put forth in 1987 and was roundly defeated because it was unaffordable.

● (1425)

For example, the Canadian Forces do not need armoured icebreakers in the north right now but they do need other things. We went a long way to putting more boots on the ground and putting more resources in the hands of our forces, particularly in terms of equipment. We certainly hope the government pursues that course of action. However putting armoured icebreakers in the north would take away the valuable resources our forces need to engage in the quite exciting transformation in which they are engaged right now. I also hope that vision for the Canadian Forces will receive closer scrutiny.

With the few minutes I have left I want to draw attention to the issue of economic productivity. In order for our country to continue on the course of action that we hammered out, we gave the government the best books that any incoming government has ever received in the history of our country, with the lowest unemployment rate we have had in 30 years, the lowest interest rates we have had and a growth rate that is the envy of the OECD. That is the plate the government now has.

What the government cannot do is compromise the wonderful gift it has. I have to say that it is disappointing that more specific references were not made to a productivity agenda that would include strategic investments into human capital, that would involve the continued reduction in taxes that we started off, both for individuals and the private sector, and a comprehensive plan that the government could offer the Canadian public that would do something to ensure that we will continue the economic productivity that has been taking place over the last few years.

On the issue of health care, the wait time strategy nibbles at the edges of a problem that is vexing most Canadians. In fact, it is the number one issue that challenges all of us. We cannot shy away from our aging population. To simply talk about wait time guarantees is not enough. What is the point of having a guarantee if we do not have the resources to pay for what we are guaranteeing? That is the central problem.

Health care expenditures are growing at 8% per year and our GDP is at 3% per year. The gap between supply and demand is widening and it is the poor and the middle class who fall through the cracks. It is utterly unacceptable that in the Speech from the Throne we cannot have a more comprehensive, dynamic and intelligent series of solutions that will address this problem. It affects all of us and all of us are willing to put our backs into solving this for every person out there who needs care now or will need it in the future.

As I said before, our aging population and the more expensive technologies will only create a widening gap. The rich will not suffer because they will always be able to find care. It is the poor and the middle class who have justifiable fear. For heaven's sake, let us stop the shopworn non-debate that has been taking place in health care for far too long. Let us talk about the facts and about the reality on the ground. Let us listen to the health care workers and to the patients and their families.

Every person in the House, themselves or their families and certainly their constituents, knows full well what is taking place on the ground in health care. For God's sake, let us ensure that we talk about the reality on the ground and have the courage to implement the solutions and talk about the truth so that at the end of the day we will have a public health care system that is accessible, affordable and ensures that Canadians will get timely access to quality care across the country and that it is portable.

We should work with the provinces to implement those changes that are within our purview, as well as implement strategic preventive solutions. Some effective preventive solutions will decrease demand on our health care system, such as the issue of childhood obesity.

The Address

I know that members of the government will find in the opposition a vast array of individuals across all party lines who are willing to work together for the benefit of our country and to implement solutions that are based on fact, not on cheap politics.

● (1430)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): It being 2:30 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, April 4, the House now stands adjourned until Monday, April 10 at 11 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 2:31 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

HON. ROB NICHOLSON

MR. JOE PRESTON

HON. KAREN REDMAN

HON. LUCIENNE ROBILLARD

HON. CAROL SKELTON

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Kootenay—Columbia.....	British Columbia	CPC
Ablonczy, Diane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Calgary—Nose Hill.....	Alberta	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga.....	Ontario	CPC
Alghabra, Omar	Mississauga—Erindale.....	Ontario	Lib.
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Allison, Dean.....	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of the Environment.....	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West.....	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary (for the Canadian Wheat Board) to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé.....	Québec	BQ
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Arthur, André.....	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.....	Québec	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard.....	Manicouagan	Québec	BQ
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior.....	British Columbia	NDP
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean.....	Québec	BQ
Bagnell, Hon. Larry.....	Yukon.....	Yukon	Lib.
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, President of the Treasury Board.....	Ottawa West—Nepean.....	Ontario	CPC
Barbot, Vivian	Papineau	Québec	BQ
Barnes, Hon. Sue.....	London West	Ontario	Lib.
Batters, Dave	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Beaumier, Colleen.....	Brampton West.....	Ontario	Lib.
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bell, Catherine	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	NDP
Bell, Don	North Vancouver.....	British Columbia	Lib.
Bellavance, André.....	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's.....	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon.....	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Industry	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Ontario	Lib.
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories....	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake.....	Manitoba	CPC
Bigras, Bernard.....	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie....	Québec	BQ
Black, Dawn.....	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	BQ
Blaney, Steven.....	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Ontario	Lib.
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	BQ
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooog, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	Québec	BQ
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Pontiac	Québec	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Québec	BQ
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	BQ
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Chan, Hon. Raymond	Richmond	British Columbia	Lib.
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister for Sport	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	Ontario	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet— Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	BQ
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Hon. Roy	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	BQ
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Demers, Nicole	Laval	Québec	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	BQ
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes— Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	Lib.
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	British Columbia	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	BQ
Dykstra, Rick	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	CPC
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Québec	BQ
Fast, Ed	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Charleswood—St. James— Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	Lib.
Fontana, Hon. Joe	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	BQ
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Québec	BQ
Galipeau, Royal, Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing— Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	Québec	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Québec	BQ
Godfrey, Hon. John	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la- Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Graham, Hon. Bill, Leader of the Opposition	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	BQ
Guergis, Helena, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	BQ
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Harvey, Luc	Louis-Hébert	Québec	CPC
Hawn, Laurie	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	Lib.
Hubbard, Hon. Charles	Miramichi	New Brunswick	Lib.
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	CPC
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Québec	Lib.
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill	Ontario	Lib.
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Nunavut	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Keeper, Tina	Churchill	Manitoba	Lib.
Kenney, Jason, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Khan, Wajid	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	Lib.
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kotto, Maka	Saint-Lambert	Québec	BQ
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	Québec	BQ
Lake, Mike	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	Alberta	CPC
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	Québec	BQ
Lapierre, Hon. Jean	Outremont	Québec	Lib.
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	BQ
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	BQ
Lemieux, Pierre	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	CPC
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	Québec	BQ
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	BQ
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
Lussier, Marcel	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	BQ
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	Lib.
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	BQ
Maloney, John	Welland	Ontario	Lib.
Manning, Fabian	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Ontario	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	Lib.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Right Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	Lib.
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	NDP
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Ontario	Lib.
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Ontario	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	Québec	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	BQ
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Merasty, Gary	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.
Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick	CPC
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	Québec	BQ
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of National Defence	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	BQ
Owen, Hon. Stephen	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Québec	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	Québec	BQ
Paradis, Christian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Mégantic—L'Érable	Québec	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Québec	BQ
Peterson, Hon. Jim	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Petit, Daniel	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	CPC
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	Québec	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	CPC
Pridy, Penny	Surrey North	British Columbia	NDP
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	Lib.
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Ontario	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis— Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	Québec	BQ
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Andrew, Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Simard, Hon. Raymond	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Skelton, Hon. Carol, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	BQ
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	BQ
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin— Kapuskasing	Ontario	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	Lib.
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette— Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	BQ
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Peter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent	Québec	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	Québec	BQ
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Lib.
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	NDP
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Ontario	Lib.
Williams, John	Edmonton—St. Albert	Alberta	CPC
Wilson, Blair	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	New Brunswick	Lib.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Diane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of the Environment	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CPC
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	CPC
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Jason, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Mike	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	CPC
Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Medicine Hat	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
Williams, John	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Abbott, Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Bell, Catherine	Vancouver Island North	NDP
Bell, Don	North Vancouver	Lib.
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Chan, Hon. Raymond	Richmond	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	CPC
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Vancouver Kingsway	CPC
Fast, Ed.	Abbotsford	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	Lib.
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Owen, Hon. Stephen	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Priddy, Penny	Surrey North	NDP
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	NDP
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	CPC
Wilson, Blair	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	Lib.
MANITOBA (14)		
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Keeper, Tina	Churchill	Lib.
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Simard, Hon. Raymond	Saint Boniface	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	NDP
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Hubbard, Hon. Charles	Miramichi	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Fundy Royal	CPC
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	Lib.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)

Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	CPC
Manning, Fabian	Avalon	CPC
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)

Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
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NOVA SCOTIA (11)

Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Central Nova	CPC
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Lib.

NUNAVUT (1)

Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Lib.
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ONTARIO (106)

Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alghabra, Omar	Mississauga—Erindale	Lib.
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, President of the Treasury Board	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Barnes, Hon. Sue	London West	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West	Lib.
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Oshawa	CPC
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda	Guelph	Lib.
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister for Sport	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Lib.
Cullen, Hon. Roy	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Lib.
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick	St. Catharines	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Fontana, Hon. Joe	London North Centre	Lib.
Galipeau, Royal, Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Godfrey, Hon. John	Don Valley West	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	CPC
Graham, Hon. Bill, Leader of the Opposition	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Lib.
Guergis, Helena, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Lib.
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Khan, Wajid	Mississauga—Streetsville	Lib.
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Lemieux, Pierre	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Lib.
Maloney, John	Welland	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Lib.
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of National Defence	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women	Durham	CPC
Peterson, Hon. Jim	Willowdale	Lib.
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Lib.
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Lib.
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Lib.
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	CPC
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC
Van Loan, Peter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	York—Simcoe	CPC
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe	Egmont	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Lib.
QUÉBEC (75)		
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	BQ
Arthur, André	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	BQ
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	BQ
Barbot, Vivian	Papineau	BQ
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Industry	Beauce	CPC
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	BQ
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Jonquière—Alma	CPC
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	BQ
Blaney, Steven	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	BQ
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages	Beauport—Limoilou	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	BQ
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	BQ
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Pontiac	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	BQ
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska— Rivière-du-Loup	BQ
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	BQ
Demers, Nicole	Laval	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	BQ
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	BQ
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	BQ
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	BQ
Harvey, Luc	Louis-Hébert	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Kotto, Maka	Saint-Lambert	BQ
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	BQ
Lapierre, Hon. Jean	Outremont	Lib.
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	BQ
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	BQ
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	BQ
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Lussier, Marcel	Brossard—La Prairie	BQ
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	BQ
Martin, Right Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	BQ
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	BQ
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Christian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Petit, Daniel	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	CPC
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	BQ
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	BQ
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	BQ
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	BQ
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	BQ

SASKATCHEWAN (14)

Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary (for the Canadian Wheat Board) to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Batters, Dave	Palliser	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Lib.
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Merasty, Gary	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	Lib.
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew, Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Skelton, Hon. Carol, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of April 7, 2006 — 1st Session, 39th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FINANCE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

HEALTH

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

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

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

LIAISON

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

NATURAL RESOURCES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chair:

Gary Goodyear

Vice-Chairs:

Michel Guimond
Marcel Proulx

Yvon Godin
Jay Hill
Marlene Jennings

Tom Lukiwski
Stephen Owen

Pauline Picard
Joe Preston

Karen Redman
Scott Reid

(12)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Chair:

Joe Preston

Vice-Chair:

Pauline Picard

Scott Reid

(3)

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

STATUS OF WOMEN

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

STANDING JOINT COMMITTEES

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Joint Chair:

Joint Vice-Chair:

Representing the Senate:
The Honourable Senators

Representing the House of Commons:

Janis Johnson
Jean Lapointe
Donald Oliver

Vivienne Poy
Marilyn Trenholme Counsell

(5)

SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

Joint Chair:

Joint Vice-Chair:

Representing the Senate:
The Honourable Senators

Representing the House of Commons:

Panel of Chairs of Legislative Committees

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

MS DAWN BLACK

MR. BILL CASEY

MR. JOHN CUMMINS

MR. KEN EPP

MR. RAHIM JAFFER

HON. DIANE MARLEAU

MR. DAVID MCGUINTY

MR. BERNARD PATRY

MR. MARCEL PROULX

MR. DAVID TILSON

THE MINISTRY

According to precedence

Right Hon. Stephen Harper	Prime Minister
Hon. Rob Nicholson	Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform
Hon. David Emerson	Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics
Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn	Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec
Hon. Greg Thompson	Minister of Veterans Affairs
Hon. Marjory LeBreton	Leader of the Government in the Senate
Hon. Monte Solberg	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Hon. Chuck Strahl	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Hon. Gary Lunn	Minister of Natural Resources
Hon. Peter MacKay	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Hon. Loyola Hearn	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Hon. Stockwell Day	Minister of Public Safety
Hon. Carol Skelton	Minister of National Revenue and Minister of Western Economic Diversification
Hon. Vic Toews	Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Hon. Rona Ambrose	Minister of the Environment
Hon. Michael Chong	President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister for Sport
Hon. Diane Finley	Minister of Human Resources and Social Development
Hon. Gordon O'Connor	Minister of National Defence
Hon. Bev Oda	Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women
Hon. Jim Prentice	Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Hon. John Baird	President of the Treasury Board
Hon. Maxime Bernier	Minister of Industry
Hon. Lawrence Cannon	Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Hon. Tony Clement	Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario
Hon. Jim Flaherty	Minister of Finance
Hon. Josée Verner	Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages
Hon. Michael Fortier	Minister of Public Works and Government Services

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher	to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages
Mr. Jason Kenney	to the Prime Minister
Mr. Tom Lukiwski	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform
Ms. Helena Guergis	to the Minister of International Trade
Mr. Betty Hinton	to the Minister of Veterans Affairs
Mr. Ed Komarnicki	to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Mr. David Anderson	(for the Canadian Wheat Board) to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Mr. Jacques Gourde	to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Mr. Christian Paradis	to the Minister of Natural Resources
Mr. Deepak Obhrai	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Peter Van Loan	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Randy Kamp	to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Mr. Dave MacKenzie	to the Minister of Public Safety
Mr. Rob Moore	to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Mr. Mark Warawa	to the Minister of the Environment
Mrs. Lynne Yelich	to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development
Mr. Russ Hiebert	to the Minister of National Defence
Mr. Jim Abbott	to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Mr. Rod Bruinooge	to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Mr. Pierre Poilievre	to the President of the Treasury Board
Mr. Colin Carrie	to the Minister of Industry
Mr. Brian Jean	to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Mr. Steven Fletcher	to the Minister of Health
Ms. Diane Ablonczy	to the Minister of Finance
Mr. Ted Menzies	to the Minister of International Cooperation
Mr. James Moore	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics

CONTENTS

Friday, April 7, 2006

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Resumption of Debate on Address in Reply

Ms. Ablonczy	169
Mr. Cannis	169
Mr. Allen	171
Mr. Savage	171
Ms. Neville	172
Mrs. Smith	173
Mr. Batters	174
Mr. Thibault (West Nova).....	175
Mr. Blais	175
Mr. Benoit	175

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Youth Criminal Justice Act

Mr. Albrecht	176
--------------------	-----

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Mr. Temelkovski	176
-----------------------	-----

Saint-Hubert Citizen Advocacy

Mrs. Lavallée	177
---------------------	-----

Tuition Fees

Mr. Atamanenko	177
----------------------	-----

Curling

Mr. Russell	177
-------------------	-----

Riding of Burlington

Mr. Wallace	177
-------------------	-----

Battle of Vimy Ridge

Mrs. Hinton	177
-------------------	-----

Éric Bédard

Mr. Laforest	178
--------------------	-----

Rwanda

Mr. Obhrai	178
------------------	-----

Rwanda

Mr. Cannis	178
------------------	-----

Federalism

Mr. Bezan	178
-----------------	-----

Aboriginal Affairs

Ms. Crowder	178
-------------------	-----

World Health Day

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca).....	179
--	-----

Cancer

Ms. Demers	179
------------------	-----

Violence Against Women and Children

Mr. McGuinty	179
--------------------	-----

Liberal Leadership Campaign

Mr. Ritz	179
----------------	-----

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Environment

Ms. Robillard	179
Mr. Kenney	180
Ms. Robillard	180
Mr. Kenney	180

Canada-U.S. Border

Ms. Robillard	180
Mr. Kenney	180

Softwood Lumber

Mr. Goodale	180
Mr. Kenney	180
Mr. Goodale	180
Mr. Kenney	181

The Environment

Ms. Guay	181
Mr. Kenney	181
Ms. Guay	181
Ms. Ambrose	181
Ms. Picard	181
Mr. Lunn	181
Ms. Picard	181
Ms. Ambrose	181

Health

Mr. Layton	181
Mr. Clement	181
Mr. Layton	182
Mr. Clement	182

National Defence

Mr. Owen (Vancouver Quadra)	182
Mr. O'Connor	182

Lobbyists

Mr. Owen (Vancouver Quadra)	182
Mr. Kenney	182

Quebec Zoo

Mr. Coderre	182
Mr. Blackburn	182
Mr. Coderre	182
Mr. Blackburn	183

Citizenship and Immigration

Ms. Faille	183
Mr. Solberg	183
Ms. Faille	183
Mr. Solberg	183

Softwood Lumber

Mr. Laframboise	183
Mr. Emerson	183
Mr. Laframboise	183
Mr. Emerson	183

Veterans	
Mr. Thibault (West Nova).....	184
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest).....	184
Mr. Thibault (West Nova).....	184
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest).....	184
Mr. Scarpaleggia.....	184
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest).....	184
Mr. Scarpaleggia.....	184
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest).....	184
The Environment	
Mrs. Grewal.....	184
Ms. Ambrose.....	185
Child Care	
Ms. Chow.....	185
Ms. Finley.....	185
Ms. Chow.....	185
Ms. Finley.....	185
Fisheries	
Mr. Matthews.....	185
Mr. Hearn.....	185
Mr. Matthews.....	185
Mr. Hearn.....	185
Airports	
Mr. D'Amours.....	186
Mr. Cannon.....	186
Mr. D'Amours.....	186
Mr. Cannon.....	186
Francophone and Acadian Communities	
Ms. Bourgeois.....	186
Ms. Verner.....	186
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	
Mr. Ouellet.....	186
Mr. Day.....	186
Multiculturalism	
Ms. Minna.....	186
Ms. Oda.....	186
Fisheries	
Mr. Keddy.....	186
Mr. Hearn.....	187
Education	
Ms. Savoie.....	187
Mr. Chong.....	187
Ms. Savoie.....	187
Ms. Finley.....	187
Taxation	
Mr. Wilson.....	187
Mr. Kenney.....	187
Day of Remembrance of Victims of Rwandan Genocide	
The Speaker.....	187

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Income Tax Act	
Mr. MacAulay.....	187
Bill C-216. Introduction and first reading.....	187
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed).....	188
Petitions	
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Silva.....	188
Child Care	
Mr. Savage.....	188
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	188
Business of the House	
Mr. Nicholson.....	188
Motion.....	188
(Motion agreed to).....	188
Privilege	
Communications between Bureaucrats and Members of Parliament	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	188

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Resumption of debate on Address in Reply	
Mr. Benoit.....	189
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre).....	189
Mr. Comartin.....	190
Mr. Blais.....	190
Ms. Demers.....	192
Mr. Atamanenko.....	193
Mr. Poilievre.....	193
Mr. Tweed.....	193
Mr. Laframboise.....	195
Mr. D'Amours.....	195
Mr. Blaney.....	195
Mr. D'Amours.....	196
Mr. Perron.....	197
Mr. McGuinty.....	197
Mr. Thompson (Wild Rose).....	198
Mr. Dewar.....	199
Mr. Owen (Vancouver Quadra).....	199
Mr. Menzies.....	201
Mr. Poilievre.....	201
Ms. Finley.....	201
Mr. Merasty.....	204
Mr. Cardin.....	204
Ms. Chow.....	205
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca).....	205

APPENDIX

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