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(HANSARD)

Friday, November 24, 2006

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 24, 2006

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1000)

[*Translation*]

THE QUÉBÉCOIS

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (for the Prime Minister) moved:

That this House recognize that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first off, I have to admit that it is with great pride that I propose at this time that the following motion be concurred in:

That this House recognize that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada.

Such pride comes, first, from the fact that this motion was put forward in this place on Tuesday by the Prime Minister of our country and that it has allowed us to share a rare moment of solidarity among all members of this House who believe in Canadian unity and want to help preserve it.

On this occasion, most of us experienced something akin to a moment of grace in the middle of debates that usually divide us along party lines.

We all know that, under such circumstances, there can be no unanimity in Parliament. We have here a caucus whose stated purpose is precisely to break our unity, a caucus that will always vehemently oppose any measure or great initiative designed to cement the historical spirit of cooperation between francophones and anglophones in Canada. The irony of the situation is not lost on anyone anymore.

Here is a party which has been sitting in the federal Parliament for 16 years, yet purports to demonstrate the uselessness of federal ties. Here is a party ensconced in our parliamentary system with the objective of advancing the specificity of Quebec, but when given the opportunity, it will not recognize that Quebecers form a nation within a unified Canada.

[*English*]

It must be said, more out of sorrow than anger or despair, that unanimity is not possible in this Parliament because there is one

party represented here that does not want Canada to succeed. Tuesday's spontaneous show of support by the members of those parties who do believe in Canada for the motion put forth by the Prime Minister is as close to unanimity as we can possibly get. The fact itself should be a powerful reminder of the necessity for us to reflect carefully on what should unite us and what could divide us.

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

Nevertheless, here in this House, we are all democrats. Every last one of us represents Canadian democracy. I believe that our first responsibility as members is to exemplify and defend Canadian democracy. That is what we are doing and that is what generations of men and women from all across this vast nation have done before us.

I am thinking especially of those generations of members who have brought forward in this House the grievances, questions, achievements and hopes of their fellow citizens from Gaspésie, Saguenay, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the Outaouais, Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, Montreal, the South Shore and the North Shore. They have come here from our cities, our regions, our plains and our mountains to accomplish something and take something back to their communities. Most of them have been Conservatives or Liberals, but there have also been Créditistes, members of the Bloc populaire and independents. There was even an NDP member from Quebec once.

However, I do not think that there has ever been a group of members in this House, not even a single member from Quebec, who would have been opposed to recognizing that Quebecers belong to a nation within a united Canada, simply because they all know that they belong to the Quebec nation within a united Canada—even the members of the Bloc Québécois, though they do not want to admit it.

The Bloc Québécois members are a little like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain, who wrote prose but did not know it: they belong to the Quebec nation within a united Canada without even knowing it. Having Quebec members in Canada's Parliament whose goal is for there to be no Quebec members in Parliament is unprecedented.

Bloc Québécois members are also democrats and representatives of democracy. We must recognize that. They sit among us because they were elected, just like the rest of us, by their fellow citizens. They are members of Parliament and Quebecers, as am I, which gives me the right speak to them frankly.

Government Orders

If I may, I would also like to emphasize how proud I am that the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie supports the passing of this resolution. I have been a great admirer of the hon. member for a very long time. I had the privilege of serving alongside this remarkable woman for five years in the Quebec National Assembly, when we were both part of Robert Bourassa's government.

The hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie and I now sit on opposite sides of this House, but such is life in politics. I feel nonetheless very comforted, even touched, to know that we are still on the same side when Quebec's higher interests and Canada's integrity are at stake.

Like her leader and almost all her Liberal colleagues, and like the members of the NDP, I would like to point out, the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie has chosen to put the interests of the country before the interests of her party. The hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie and I experienced, from the Quebec perspective, the grand adventure of the Meech Lake accords, which, as I recall, inspired tremendous enthusiasm and also caused plenty of anguish.

Yesterday, I alluded to the role of separatist groups in the eventual failure of that promising constitutional initiative. I will not repeat myself here today, except to say the following to my Bloc Québécois colleagues. Nearly ten years ago, you were on the wrong side of history and the majority of Quebecers were not with you. Please do not make the same mistake again here today. The majority of the people who elected you to serve them are delighted that we are recognizing them for what they always have been and what they always will be. Support this motion. Recognize your constituents for what they are, and not for what you would like them to be—which they have always democratically rejected.

● (1010)

You can always defend your dream of a sovereign Quebec, but do not close your eyes on today's Quebec.

I must repeat what I said yesterday: division has never helped us Quebecers. This is even truer now. The world is not going to stop while we are stuck in debates on existential issues. A new generation of Quebecers is ready to take fully its place in the new global economy, and it has already begun to do so brilliantly. Our most fundamental responsibility as Quebec parliamentarians is to open wide the doors to the future for this generation. It is particularly important not to drag it into sterile and fruitless debates.

Since I have the opportunity to mention my past and current cooperation with the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie, I would like to warn my Bloc Québécois friends against the temptation to interpret the past in a slanted fashion to justify an uncertain future. For example, yesterday, I heard the Bloc Québécois leader quote, in front of the media, some well-known statements made by Mr. Bourassa, to which I myself referred in my speech yesterday, to support his new resolution on an eventual departure of the Quebec nation.

Out of the respect I have always had for that great man and out of respect for historical truth, I must say this to the leader of the Bloc: when I was a student, I worked in Mr. Bourassa's office. Later, I was a member of his caucus and his cabinet. I am honoured to consider

myself someone he trusted. I can say with certainty that Mr. Bourassa never wanted Quebec to separate and never supported separation. In fact, he fought against separation throughout his political career. Mr. Bourassa fought as long as he was able so that Quebec could achieve its full potential within the Canadian family and so that its unique character would be recognized, which is exactly what the resolution before us seeks to do.

I am convinced that those members of this Parliament who respect the memory of Mr. Bourassa will vote for this resolution. I have a friendly word for my friends in the Bloc: stop interpreting a dead premier and listen to a living Prime Minister instead. You will hear the answers to many of the questions you have been asking here for a long time.

For years, you have rightfully criticized the fiscal imbalance that has existed for too long between federal financial resources and provincial and municipal needs. We are going to correct that imbalance. For years, you have demanded that Quebec participate fully in UNESCO; it now does. For years, you have called for measures to prevent misappropriation of public funds; we are putting those measures in place. Since your party was founded, you have been demanding respect for provincial jurisdictions; we are also working on that. It is surprising what you can accomplish when you know who you are and what you want to do.

It is even more remarkable to think about everything Quebecers have been able to accomplish in Canada. The Bloc would have us believe that “nation of Quebec” and “Canadian unity” are incompatible. In reality, Canada is united because the nation of Quebec is part of it, and the nation of Quebec still exists because it is still part of Canada. That is what I am asking all the members of this House to recognize today.

● (1015)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. minister for a very clear statement of why we are here today debating this important motion. He talked about those in this place and in this country who believe in a united Canada and, more importantly, are here to protect it. I thank him for that assertion.

In his speech, the minister also alluded to the concerns that we have, and maybe that Canadians at large have, about what could divide us and the consequences of dividing us. I wonder if the minister would comment on that concern and why we are so passionate about keeping Canada united.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member and his party for the support they are going to give this proposal. I would say that Canada has clearly demonstrated over the course of its history, and through its different constitutions, the important role that Quebecers play. Before, it was the French Canadian community. Then it became the Québécois. In this country, we have a mosaic of people, nations, immigrants and groups that came together and built this strong country.

Government Orders

What we are doing by this resolution is indicating that today, November 24, there is indeed a recognition that has to be given to Quebeckers, à tous les Québécois et les Québécoises quant à leur contribution, and obviously to the maintenance and the commitment. They have done this, I recall, on two occasions. I was there. I fought for Canadian unity in the referendums, as did my colleague, the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

Fundamentally what we are saying is that Quebeckers are part of Canada. They are an integral part of Canada and they do want to continue in that way. They voted massively in favour of that and they promoted that.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for this opportunity to speak this morning to this government proposal, this motion that is so very important for the future of our country.

From the outset, I want to say without hesitation that I intend to support this motion presented this morning for the government by the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. I intend to speak to a few subjects that are important to me: I will talk about my background and my own view of the motion before us, its meaning and its importance for the future of our country.

We all agree that this issue is important in the historical context of our country. Our country was shaped by two founding peoples, as well as by the aboriginal nations, the first nations. It was built up with every passing decade, sometimes with difficulty and tension that manifested itself one way or another, but always with the goal of improving life for the citizens of the country, especially for our children and grandchildren.

I think it is right to say that over the years and through the generations we have succeeded in Canada in creating a country where people see improvement in their economic situation, their civil status and their living conditions. It is important for us to be able to continue down that path. For that we need to have harmony, coherence, a vision, an open mind and an open spirit, qualities which I believe this country has always demonstrated.

In recent years this historical context has been tested. As we all know, this happened twice: in 1980 and 15 years later in 1995. The people of Quebec were called upon to vote on whether they wished to continue to be part of this country. Twice, the majority said no to separation and yes to Canada. But—because there is always a but—there was also an understanding. It was not so much an understanding as a promise by the rest of the country to come up with an arrangement and a recognition of some sort. Some attempts were made, which unfortunately did not succeed.

Today the House is asked to consider a government motion recognizing that Quebeckers form a nation within a united Canada. That is the reality of our country, and we must recognize that fact. We must also recognize that history progressively led us to this situation. We are simply recognizing a fact: Quebeckers form a nation within Canada.

Recognizing that fact will not take anything away from other citizens of this country.

That is the starting point.

I also want to mention something as an aside.

• (1020)

[*English*]

I do want this parenthesis addressed to you in particular, Mr. Speaker, because I find it also a bit awkward that the debate we are having and which has seized the entire nation—I am not trying to play with words—the debate which has seized the entire country, if we will, has come at us from a supply day of the supply cycle. This is a parenthesis that I will close rapidly, but I think that at one point we may be well advised to look at that process.

To have this kind of debate thrust on us in a rather surprising move and in a manner, I would argue, and I think most people would agree except my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois, so as to trap the federalists, perhaps to embarrass the Liberals in this case, because we are having a convention next week and internally there has been this debate, I am not sure this is appropriate. I am not sure that this is an appropriate use of the supply cycle and an opposition day.

I think this kind of debate is so serious and so important that it necessitates preparation time. It necessitates reaching out to Canadians. It necessitates the ability to have this collective reflection that would then be brought to the House and voted upon.

Now we are caught in a situation in which some political games have caused the situation whereby the Prime Minister felt that he should do this. We support the Prime Minister in that move, because indeed, we cannot play silly politics with this kind of important debate that is fundamental for the future of our country.

I would hope that at some point, when the dust has settled on this, some of us in this House might actually be able to take a look at how far we can go and how flexible we can be in the supply cycle motions of opposition days, so that these kinds of debates are not thrust upon us as a surprise, as a political tactic, but rather in a manner that is respectful of the significance of the debate we are having today. I will close that parenthesis.

[*Translation*]

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, I want to talk about a situation that is obvious to me as a French Canadian from Ontario. I find myself taking part in a debate that can be heart-rending and very difficult sometimes. I used the term French Canadian and I respect the fact that this concept of a French Canadian nation offends my colleagues from the Bloc. They do not accept it, and I recognize that fact.

However, 50 years ago, a hundred years ago, that French Canadian nation did exist. Members will recall that in the 1960s, the States-General of the French Canadian nation led to a rupture. Today the French Canadian family includes the Franco-Saskatchewanians, the Franco-British Columbians, the Franco-People of the North, the Franco-New-Brunswickers or the Acadians—some even talk about the Acadian nation. There are also the Franco-Ontarians and the Quebeckers. They are all members of the family formerly known as French Canadian.

Government Orders

On a few occasions, I tested my colleagues to see if they identify with this notion. More often than not the answer was no. However, I have a feeling that it may be less shocking than it was in the past.

Having said that, I believe that, in this country, we have a Canadian francophonie. It is undeniable and all francophone Canadians identify with this Canadian francophonie. Whether they are Quebecers, Franco-Ontarians, Franco-Manitobans, from Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland and Labrador, no matter where they live, the francophones of this country identify with the Canadian francophonie.

I hope that we will be able to see clearly in this debate. I have some good friends who have told me they are worried. One of them, Pierre Deblois, sent me an e-mail yesterday. He is worried about this motion before us. He is not convinced that it should be supported. I wish to reassure him: in this country there is a Canadian francophonie from coast to coast. There is no question about that. Where there are common ties, a willingness to do what is right and to improve the lot of all, there is a willingness to renew ties in this Canadian francophonie.

I was delighted when the Government of Quebec announced, a few days ago, that it wishes to step forward and play an important role in this Canadian francophonie. Unfortunately, that can only come from a federalist Quebec government. In fact, we have seen Mr. Charest stand up and take not only his rightful place but the one he must occupy, that Quebec must occupy in this Canadian francophonie. That also goes for New Brunswick, and we do not often speak about this.

Kudos to the province of New Brunswick and to Mr. Hatfield, the Conservative premier who, at the time, had the courage to make bilingualism official in New Brunswick and to declare that the province, the only one in the country, was officially bilingual. As a result, we can affirm that the Acadian society, that the New Brunswick francophonie and the Acadian nation are thriving.

In the years to come, when we have a Quebec nation within a unified Canada again, we will be able to forge again the ties within the Canadian Francophonie, so that francophones across Canada but outside Quebec do not feel as if they are part of a diaspora, but rather that they are part of one big family, and even, eventually, a nation.

I do not know if I will live long enough or be a member of Parliament long enough to rise in this House and vote in favour of a French Canadian nation one day. I would be delighted to do so. This represents an ideal, an objective I intend to continue dedicating myself to achieving as I have for many years. I have done so as the minister responsible for official languages and I plan to continue for as long as I have the privilege of representing the people of the riding of Ottawa—Vanier.

But right now, I will make another aside, this one about the government. I think that the government cannot sit on its laurels with respect to the implementation of the Official Languages Act.

• (1025)

Much remains to be done in this country to ensure that the French Canadian family that we now know as the Canadian Francophonie feels comfortable and completely at home anywhere in the country,

and not only in Quebec. In Ontario and the other provinces, much remains to be done.

In 1969, under the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, this Parliament approved the Official Languages Act. This brought about a turnaround and recovery in terms of making this francophone family, the Canadian Francophonie, feel comfortable in Canada. In 1988, the Mulroney government amended the legislation to strengthen it. In 2003, the Chrétien government introduced the official languages action plan, which gave effect to many initiatives requested by our communities. Last year, this Parliament passed a very significant amendment to the Official Languages Act. This amendment came from the Senate, more precisely from Senator Jean-Robert Gauthier, who introduced, as members will recall, Bill S-3 to make an important part of the Official Languages Act enforceable. Next week, when this legislation goes into effect, all government agencies and departments will now have this obligation to act, under the Official Languages Act.

In my opinion, if we want to say that, eventually, we will recognize the French Canadian nation again, or the Canadian Francophonie from coast to coast, and that today we are talking about recognizing that Quebecers form a nation within a united Canada, we cannot underestimate the importance of respecting Canada's linguistic duality.

I think this goes without saying. Any government, regardless of political stripe, partisanship or allegiance, must not only respect the Official Languages Act, but go beyond that and also respect the linguistic duality of Canada and of its two founding nations, just as we are currently making efforts to show better respect for the country's first nations, which are also founding nations.

What is Canada?

• (1030)

[English]

What have we been trying to do since the official start in 1867 and even before? We have been building a country that has become, and I hope will remain, the envy of the world. Canada is a country of diversity, of accommodating, but not of tolerance. No one wants to be just tolerated. That is not good enough. We want to be accepted and celebrated. The Canadian population of all the populations in the world is the one that celebrates diversity the most. We have a head start there.

As we all know, the world is shrinking in terms of our ability to communicate with each other instantaneously and our ability to move around. The human species had better begin preparing for some of the difficulties and the tensions we are now confronting.

We have built in this country, bit by bit, an edifice that is a bit of a beacon for the world, as the interim leader of the official opposition said in this House on Wednesday. It started with the two founding nations and the first nations. Over the successive decades, we have added to that. From Europe, we have had people coming from Italy, Poland and Ukraine. We recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the arrival in Canada of 40,000 Hungarians who came to our country because of difficulties in their own country.

Government Orders

The same goes for the Vietnamese people. We may remember the early 1980s. Now we have people from South America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East coming to join us, and for very obvious reasons. We are a beacon of peace and hope for them. These people come here hoping to give their children a better future and a better life. That is essentially how Canada has developed.

This has led us to basically to what we are becoming, which is a pluralistic society. In a pluralistic society, people must acknowledge and recognize that there are others who are different than we are and we must welcome them with open arms.

The source of this motion is to recognize that Quebeckers form a nation within a united Canada. Apart for those people, as the Minister of Transport said, whose purpose in coming here is to cause the separation of our country, I do not think we will find much dissension in this House that we as members of the House of Commons have a duty to preserve our national unity.

The Prime Minister's motion works to that purpose. When it is adopted, I believe it will be a positive step toward preserving the unity of this country. In preserving the unity of this country we are helping the world.

This is not bravado. We are helping the world by being a good example of civility, of accommodation, of openness, of celebrating diversity and of recognizing that the wealth and the richness of humankind needs to be celebrated and embraced.

[*Translation*]

Whether they live in French or in English, people have come here from all over the world and are now in a country where human rights are respected.

Yesterday, I heard some Bloc Québécois members say that Quebec did not sign the Constitution. That is true, but the Constitution benefits Quebec, because all Canadians, whether they live in Quebec or elsewhere, benefit from the rights enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. All citizens, whether or not they come from the countries I mentioned, whether they live in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada, benefit from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We even used its amending formula to recognize linguistic school boards in Quebec. One can say that Quebec did not sign the Constitution, but it still uses it and benefits from it. We must put this situation in its proper perspective.

We would like to see this made official, and we would like to see the Quebec National Assembly eventually adhere to the Canadian Constitution. I think it will happen some day. In the meantime, we must continue to build our country.

I believe that the motion before the House today will work and will help us achieve that goal.

It has been a pleasure for me to address this motion. I believe I raised all the issues that I wanted to bring up in a debate of great interest to all Canadians. In conclusion, I move:

That this question be now put.

● (1035)

The Speaker: Are there any questions or comments on the speech made by the member for Ottawa—Vanier?

[*English*]

The hon. member for Mississauga South.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first want to acknowledge the work of the member for Ottawa—Vanier who, ever since he has been in this place, has been the voice on behalf of the linguistic duality of Canada. In our caucus, and I know in this place, he has taken every opportunity to remind us of the rich heritage that we have in our two official languages.

He has also, and I think it is reflective in his speech, reached out to explain how Canada has developed into a country that celebrates cultural diversity and representation from countries all around the world that contribute to the greatness of Canada and also, as he puts it, the beacon for countries around the world.

The media commentary on this issue has somehow deflected, from time to time, attention away from the points that have been raised by the speakers so far about the importance or the strength of Canada and the reasons why we are here to protect it.

I wonder if the member could share his thoughts on how we can assure Canadians that what is happening here, in terms of supporting and protecting Canada and embracing the Quebec reality as well, is important for Canada's long term future.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, when I spoke a bit of the recent history of the country, we cannot ignore the fact that twice, in 1980 and in 1995, the population of that province said, "We won't separate from Canada. We want to remain in Canada".

At that time, those of us who were involved in those debates and those referendums will remember that there was a commitment from the rest of the country toward that population that there had to be some accommodation and some recognition. That was done by Pierre Elliott Trudeau, among others. Over the years since then, we have grappled with that, and now we are coming to terms with a significant portion of that commitment in recognizing that Quebeckers form a nation within a united Canada. Those are very important words because they are the words that show we respect the decision that the population of the province of Quebec made twice.

There is nothing nefarious in the motion that the Prime Minister has put forward here. It is a reflection of a commitment that was made by the country toward the population of Quebec in 1980 and in 1995 when both times the population of Quebec said, in a majority voice, that they wished to remain in Canada. That commitment we made has yet to be delivered upon. What we are doing today when we vote on this and, I hope, adopt that motion, is part and parcel of the commitment we made to those who said that they wanted to keep this country united.

● (1040)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have known the member for quite some time and I recall the times we spent together dealing with this issue around the constitutional discussions in and around Charlottetown. We learned, hopefully, from that. However, I do want to ask him about the issue before us.

Government Orders

Many in the media have said that the repercussions of this motion, if we were to pass, as most of us would like it to, will amount to acknowledging something around constitutional conversations that perhaps we might not want to get into.

In 1995, as the member mentioned in his speech, we passed a motion in this House having to do with recognizing Quebec in a way. What is today's motion really about? Is it about acknowledging what we all believe Canadians want to acknowledge or is it something that goes beyond that? I would like the member's take on that.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, yes, I fondly remember the efforts of I and my colleague in Charlottetown. We were rather successful in this community because there were only a few areas in the country where Canadians voted in favour of that. The National Capital Region happened to be one of them. Some people might try to dissect that in any which way they can, and I will let them do that.

I had the pleasure to be in the House and supported the distinct society motion without any hesitation. It is a recognition of the state of fact. What I was trying to say is it is sometimes with envy that I look at the dynamics of Quebec society in cultural and economic matters, its ingenuity and so forth. It is a recognition that it is a society with some distinct characteristics, some of them enshrined in law, le droit commun versus le régime napoléonique, some of the enshrined in law in terms of language rights for education and other matters and some of them enshrined in custom, in the way it does things. The country has not suffered for that. Au contraire, the richness and diversity of our country, Canada, has benefited tremendously from the francophone presence as well as the presence of others in Quebec who are not francophone.

Canada is a good representation of the human species in that we accommodate each other. We recognize we cannot all be the same. It would be damn boring if we were. We are not the same in the country, but we do not diminish differences. We value them. We take great pleasure and pride in the fact that we can accommodate diversity from around the world in our country, but it could not work or happen if we had not initially recognized the two founding nations and our aboriginal societies and accommodated each other that way. If we could not do that at the level of linguistic duality, how could we go beyond that and start talking about pluralism.

We have done that. We have accommodated each other, and not in a tolerant manner but respectfully. That is the way of the world. In that sense, the motion before us today builds on that and pushes us in the same direction.

Some of us may have some hesitation, differences or second thoughts on it. I have received some of those messages. However, let us put those aside for the benefit of our country. Let us rise above partisan politics for the benefit of our country. Let us think of our children and grandchildren instead of ourselves for a while and think of what we will cede to them in terms of a great country that is the envy of the world. Let us keep building this place.

• (1045)

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice that with respect to the consideration of Government Business No. 11 at the next sitting a minister of the

Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that the debate be not further adjourned.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I decided to table a motion on the recognition of the Quebec nation, I had a choice. I could have very well decided to word the motion in a way that would have forced the other parties in this House to vote against it. That is not what I chose to do. I chose to make the motion neutral so it would be possible for all members to vote in favour of this recognition.

We have tried on several occasions to bring the House of Commons to recognize the Quebec nation and, each time, the other parties used some term in these motions as an excuse to oppose them. That is why I proposed a motion without any second thoughts, without any ulterior motives and especially without petty partisanship. I wanted, and still want, the House of Commons to recognize Quebecers for who they are. It is obvious that they form a nation.

This nation is neither better nor worse than the others. There is no such thing as a "better nation" in the world. Our nations are equal, and they are different. It is as simple as that. I have acted in good faith since the beginning. I even went so far as to amend the Bloc Québécois motion to include the words "currently within Canada".

The Prime Minister is an intelligent man. He realized that his party would be divided by the Bloc Québécois's motion. He realized that the federalist members would be divided. He realized that continued refusal to recognize the evidence would be disastrous for federalists in Quebec. He had no choice but to be proactive and table his own motion, which included the words "within a united Canada".

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister has clearly and formally recognized the existence of the Quebec nation. That is a huge step forward for Quebec. The Bloc Québécois is very proud to have instigated this unanimous recognition of the Quebec nation by all parties in this House. Careful analysis of the facts shows that there is something in these two motions that all parties in this House can agree on. For the first time ever, everyone in the House of Commons recognizes the existence of the Quebec nation.

I realize that it must be difficult to explain to some Canadians that suddenly, after decades of denial, the House of Commons and the Prime Minister of Canada recognize that Quebecers form a nation. Politically, this was a very difficult decision, and people in Canada are already speaking out against it. I would urge my colleagues from other parties to stand fast and explain to their fellow citizens that it had to come to this and that the Bloc Québécois was going to force the issue anyway.

For my part, I am very happy that after so many years, the Bloc Québécois has succeeded in winning recognition for Quebec as a nation. Objectively, we have to admit that Quebec is still part of Canada. That is a fact. The proof is that I am here in this House. Now, determining whether Canada is united is more difficult.

As André Boisclair asked yesterday, can we claim that Canada is united politically when the nation of Quebec has not signed the Canadian Constitution? Politically, it is clear that we cannot. Moreover, with this appendix, the Prime Minister is saying that he recognizes the nation of Quebec only as part of Canada. Recognition of Quebec as a nation is a fundamental issue, however.

Quebeckers are masters of their own destiny, said Mr. Bourassa, who was not a sovereignist but accepted the different options. Mr. Bourassa had agreed to respect Quebeckers' decision in the event they opted to form a country. Obviously, the whole world will recognize that country. It was not his preferred option; on that I agree with the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. In my opinion, we can conclude that Robert Bourassa was a democrat.

• (1050)

Recognition of Quebec as a nation is a fundamental issue, however. Today, for the first time, the National Assembly and the parties in the House of Commons are recognizing unanimously that Quebeckers form a nation. They form a nation, and both Quebec City and Ottawa now recognize that.

To settle the matter once and for all, the Bloc Québécois will live up to its responsibilities. In the best interests of Quebec, I announce that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of the Prime Minister's motion.

Now that the issue of Quebeckers' status has been symbolically addressed by the unanimous recognition of the parties in this House, we can move on to the next step. I see that the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities is pleased.

Nations have rights. Resolution 2625, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1970, says it best:

All peoples have the right freely to determine, without external interference, their political status.

[All peoples have the right] to pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Nations have the right to control their own development.

On Wednesday, one of the Prime Minister's allies, the leader of the Action démocratique du Québec, Mario Dumont, said that the Prime Minister's decision to recognize the Quebec nation opened the door to discussions on reviewing the federal framework to the satisfaction of Quebec.

The Quebec premier said that this recognition could have legal consequences. He added that it significantly advances Quebec's place within Canada.

As we know, last week in Nairobi, the Government of Canada chose to silence Quebec on the international scene. Now that the government recognizes the Quebec nation, will Quebec have its own voice at international forums? As Mr. Boisclair requested, will the government offer Quebec the opportunity to create its own legislation for young offenders? From now on, will the federal government concede to the many unanimous demands voted by the Quebec National Assembly?

What is the next step?

Statements by Members

Quebeckers are no doubt delighted to finally be recognized for what they are. However, they are now anxious to see what the next step will be. For now, federalists are not promising anything to the Quebec nation. This must change, and the Bloc Québécois will ensure that this recognition leads to action.

As a final point, we must celebrate the fact that, this week, Canada became the first country to officially recognize, in its democratic structures, Quebec as a nation. One day, many other countries will recognize the nation of Quebec and Quebec as a country.

• (1055)

Hon. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the motion before the House, that represents all Canadians, concerning the future of Quebec and its place within Canada, I am very grateful—as are all my colleagues—to the Bloc for having recognized the important role of all Canadians in the future of Quebec.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, sometimes, comments are indeed wishes.

I will tell my colleague that the future of Quebec will be decided by Quebeckers under the rules set by the National Assembly. There is unanimous agreement on that in the National Assembly of Quebec. Whether members of the National Assembly are federalist or nationalist, they all agree that it is for Quebeckers to decide their future and to maintain a nation-to-nation relationship with our friends from the Canadian nation.

From today on, the relationship that Quebeckers may have with Canada will be a nation-to-nation relationship. We will demand, as representatives of Quebec here in the House of Commons, that the rights of the Quebec nation, that has now been recognized, be respected.

We are now in a much better position not only to claim those rights after being recognized for the nation that we are, but also to interact with all other nations in the world that know what that recognition means. The day we decide to become a country, it will be a lot easier for these nations to say that they recognize this new nation that has formed a country because the House of Commons will have recognized, some time ago, that the Quebec nation in fact exists.

The Speaker: There are seven minutes left for questions and comments on the speech by the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie. If he so wishes, we can proceed with that after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

BURLINGTON PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers in my community who are working hard to bring the dream of a performing arts centre to Burlington.

Statements by Members

In particular, I want to thank the member of my community who recently donated the largest philanthropic gift our city has ever received. This individual has pledged \$5 million of his own money to this project. This has created a dollar for dollar matching program for all other donors to the performing arts centre.

The leadership and generosity of Mr. Gary DeGroot will make a difference. We want to thank him for his vision and commitment to the development of culture and arts in Burlington.

From the new council to all the donors both large and small, to those who will perform on stage, and to those who will be enriched as audience members, a performing arts centre will enhance the quality of life for all the citizens of Burlington.

[Translation]

I want to thank all these volunteers for their time and efforts. Their relentless work will make this dream a reality.

* * *

[English]

JOHN ALLAN CAMERON

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I speak of the passing away of John Allan Cameron.

John Allan was born in Inverness, Cape Breton in 1938. He learned to play the guitar at the age of 12. After studying education at St. Francis Xavier University and after studying for the priesthood in Ottawa, he left the order of the oblate fathers in 1964 to follow his passion as a performer.

Early on, John Allan performed on CJC-B-TV and later starred in his own TV series on CBC and CTV. He recorded more than 10 albums and performed at many music festivals in Canada and in the United States. He played at many military bases abroad. In 2003 he received the Order of Canada.

John Allan captivated audiences around the world with his music and storytelling. He is known as the godfather of Celtic music in Canada and has passed his legacy on to his son Stuart.

Our thoughts are with John Allan's wife Angela and his son Stuart. He will be sadly missed by all of us.

* * *

• (1100)

[Translation]

PHILIPPE NOIRET

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with much sadness that we learned about the passing of the great French actor, beloved by Quebecers: Philippe Noiret.

How can I describe him other than as a generous individual, a true gentleman, who was tender and had panache?

What truly set Philippe Noiret apart was his deep voice, so tender and unforgettable.

French cinema has lost an exceptional actor who was loved by his audience and respected by his peers. He also won the hearts of Quebecers.

Few actors have had a career lasting 50 years or been in nearly 130 films. *Alexandre le bienheureux* is without a doubt one of the most famous films of his long and wonderful career and definitely made him choose film.

The range of this prolific actor went from comedy to drama. We remember *Les Ripoux* or *Cinéma Paradiso*. He worked with the best directors. He won two César awards for best actor for *Le Vieux Fusil* in 1976 and for *La Vie et rien d'autre* in 1990.

Farewell Philippe Noiret.

* * *

[English]

CHILD POVERTY

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 17 years ago today Ed Broadbent's motion to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000 was passed unanimously. I was honoured to stand in this House with my colleagues in support of that goal.

I stand here today in shame of the fact that child poverty in Canada is worse than it was 17 years ago. There are 1.2 million children, one out of every six in Canada, living in poverty.

We have heard many times in this House about the strong links between child poverty and poor health, slower growth and learning, and fewer options later in life. We know that income is a powerful predictor of outcomes.

I am the proud grandmother of a wonderful little girl who was born on Wednesday. I beg the government and this House to ensure that on her 17th birthday we do not have to stand again in this House to deplore the state of child poverty in our country. It is time for all of us to act now, together, and eliminate child poverty for good.

* * *

REVEREND GEORGE LESLIE MACKAY

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to honour a great Canadian, Reverend George Leslie Mackay. Canada can be rightfully proud of the accomplishments of this man that occurred 125 years ago.

Reverend Mackay was born and raised in Oxford County. He went to northern Taiwan as the first modern missionary. Reverend Mackay made Canada proud in cultivating and inspiring humanity in Taiwan.

An unconventional character, but sensitive to local needs, Reverend Mackay practised dentistry and trained local clergy. During his time in Taiwan he established over 60 chapels, several schools and a hospital, and even founded a university that was at one time known as Oxford University. Members of this House have travelled to Taiwan and they will be familiar with these institutions.

Statements by Members

Reverend George Leslie Mackay is still deeply imprinted in the hearts of the people of Taiwan. He laid the groundwork to help foster good relations with Canada and Taiwan that are still developing in a positive manner today.

Reverend Mackay is being honoured in a Rogers OMNI 2 documentary entitled *The Black-Bearded Barbarian of Taiwan* which will air tomorrow at 7 p.m.

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BRIZIO MONTINARO

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise to pay tribute to Brizio Montinaro who recently passed away. Brizio was truly a great Canadian.

He immigrated to Canada from Italy and quickly established a thriving business. He contributed greatly to Canada's success as a nation and was always the first to offer a helping hand to anyone in need.

Brizio was an adoring husband to Vittoria, a loving father to Constantino and Joseph, and a loving grandfather to Daniela and Brianna. Brizio was an inspiration to us all. He was a man of tremendous courage who will be greatly missed by all of us who knew and loved him.

On behalf of all members of the House of Commons, I want to express my deepest condolences to the Montinaro family as we honour the exceptional life of Brizio Montinaro.

* * *

• (1105)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and we will pause to reflect on the far too many women and girls for whom violence is a daily reality.

Sadly, Canadians need not look further than their own communities, and in some cases their own families, for the evidence of violence against women. As a recent Statistics Canada report made clear, it crosses social, economic and racial divides.

Canada's new government is taking concrete action to address this issue. Among recent initiatives, we have introduced legislation that would put an end to the use of conditional sentencing for serious offences, including sexual offences.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo our government has been assisting tens of thousands of civilians, mostly women and girls, who have been sexually assaulted or tortured during more than 10 years of conflict.

I would ask all Canadians to renew our commitment to combat violence against women in Canada and throughout the world.

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, November 24, at 5 p.m., Canada Post will close the Verdun post office despite opposition from nearly 1,000 people who signed petitions—petitions I tabled in this House—and despite a number of initiatives that I took with Canada Post.

I would like to pay tribute to the dedicated people who gave part of their lives to serving the people of Verdun.

I want to acknowledge the contribution of Claude Rochon in particular. He spent nearly 33 years working for Canada Post in Verdun. It was his welcoming smile behind the desk at the post office on Église street. I know, through the many testimonials I have received, that his work was greatly appreciated. I want to pay tribute to him for his dedicated work. I want to thank him on behalf of the people of Verdun.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the contribution of his colleague, Diane Ross, a woman who also gave 17 years of service to Canada Post. I want to pay tribute to her and thank her as well.

* * *

[English]

TRANSIT SECURITY

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the commitment of Canada's new government to protect the safety and security of all Canadians, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities recently announced funding under the transit-secure program. This funding is part of the \$1.4 billion in national security committed in budget 2006, including \$254 million for transportation security.

The first round of this program invests up to \$37 million in security projects in the six highest volume urban transit systems in Canada: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, the National Capital Region and Montreal. The second round provides \$80 million for passenger rail and urban transit security for smaller operators in municipalities and communities.

Canada's new government is taking concrete action to address the priority security needs of the transit systems in Canada.

* * *

REFUGEES

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the years Canada has generously opened its door and its heart to the Vietnamese boat people. Over the years that generosity has been repaid manyfold and these people are now a strong part of the Canadian social fabric.

Sadly, for 17 years, 151 of these people still remain stateless with no durable solution in the Philippines. They are spread around the country earning a living, many as illegal street vendors. Most of them earn less than 80 pesos a day and it costs 160 pesos to buy a cup of coffee.

Statements by Members

The Canadian Vietnamese community has clearly expressed its willingness to sponsor and help absorb these refugees. The 23 people who arrived in May and June of this year are very well adjusted. I implore the Prime Minister to allow the remaining 151 stateless people to find a home in Canada.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about Canada's fiscal and economic update. Simply put, Canada is back.

Our first economic and fiscal update is a positive story. The economy is strong. Government spending is focused, our debt is lower, and taxes are going down.

To build on this prosperity, the Minister of Finance has put forward a long term economic plan entitled Advantage Canada. Advantage Canada will create the economic conditions and opportunities necessary for families and businesses to succeed.

I have spoken with Canadians across this great country. The message that they have given me is loud and clear. They want their government to remain focused and deliver responsible tax relief to make it easier for them to save for their priorities. Our government will reach higher and go further for the benefit of families, students, workers and seniors from coast to coast.

Just like on January 23, when Canadians won at the ballot box, under Advantage Canada, Canadians will continue to prosper under this Conservative government.

* * *

●(1110)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I make this plea on behalf of two of my constituents in Oliver, German Melgar and Santos Molina, and their two children, Anderson and Kimberly. They are currently employed by Mrs. Linda Fortunato as farm workers, providing much needed services to the farm and the community.

They are currently appealing to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, but have been told by the Canada Border Services Agency that they will be removed from Canada on November 30. However, their children, Canadian citizens, can stay.

Should Mr. Melgar and Mrs. Molina return to El Salvador, there is fear that their lives may be in danger due to Mr. Melgar's political affiliation. His father was killed because of his political opinions.

In January of this year, their young son, Anderson, had ear surgery. Their family physician, Dr. Evans, fears that "risks for death would be significantly increased should he be unable to access his current level of care".

On behalf of this family, their friends and the community, I ask our government to show compassion and allow them to stay in Canada at least until their appeal is heard.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago today, members of the United Nations signed the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. Like the UN Declaration of Human Rights before it, this new declaration proclaimed the fundamental dignity and right to freedom of all human beings.

It is not enough to abolish intolerance from our laws. We need also to banish it from our minds and our hearts. The advancement of global society requires us to be open to the universal values and different perspectives inherent in other belief systems.

Promoting tolerance and understanding must be the guiding purpose of all governments. On this 25th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, I know that all my colleagues in the House join me in affirming the need to listen and to learn from each other, as well as to oppose the persecution of those whose views and beliefs may not be those of their government or of the majority of their fellow citizens.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MUSIC

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Lucille Girard, an octogenarian and co-founder of the Maison des Grands-Parents de Villeray in the riding of Papineau, contradicts the notion that the young and the not so young in our society have little in common. She is the delightful founder of a project that brings together generations through their love of music. Since last May, she has been introducing the tam-tam to young people who do not always channel their energy in a positive way.

Another activity that they can join is the Chanter pour chanter group, a group of singers of all ages, accompanied by a piano, violin and guitar. According to Mrs. Girard, this is a leisure activity that brings people together, helps develop friendships and dispels the isolation of the various generations.

Thank you, Mrs. Girard, for your determination and contagious enthusiasm. You are proof that it is possible to bridge the generation gap.

* * *

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it will be a year ago tomorrow that the Liberal government concluded the landmark Kelowna accord. The agreement set aside \$5.1 billion for health, education, housing and infrastructure, and economic development for Canada's aboriginal people and communities.

Perhaps the Conservative government does not realize that when it attacks the Kelowna accord, it is attacking the first nations people. It is attacking the Métis people. It is attacking the Inuit people.

Let me read for members what Inuit leader Ms. Mary Simon recently said about the cancellation of the accord:

Abandonment of this promise, combined with an absence of any alternative plan, is not a mere detour. It would be a self-declared admission of defeat. A focused, federally funded attack on the social problems that beset aboriginal people is a necessity, not an ideological indulgence.

The government's cancellation of the accord is not acceptable. It is not honourable. It is not in line with Canadian values.

* * *

[Translation]

REPENTIGNY BYELECTION

Mr. Christian Paradis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned this week that the Bloc candidate in Repentigny refused, not once but twice, to publicly debate his ideas. If the Bloc Québécois' strength is to float ideas, the expectations of the Conservative candidate Stéphane Bourgon and the voters of Repentigny certainly were not met. Ironically, the Bloc Québécois, the party that claims to have a monopoly on representing the interests of Quebec in Ottawa, refuses to debate its ideas.

Is that because, apart from its pipe dream, the Bloc Québécois has nothing to offer voters as it can accomplish nothing in Ottawa? The Bloc Québécois is so entrenched in the opposition in Ottawa that it now shows contempt for the voters of Repentigny.

In next Monday's election, Stéphane Bourgon deserves to be voted in by the people of Repentigny because he will never step back from promoting the interests of the people of Repentigny in Ottawa, and above all, yes above all, he will be able to accomplish things for them. The people of Repentigny deserve better than to be out in the cold forever. On November 27, Repentigny deserves to be in power.

* * *

• (1115)

GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a year ago today, the House of Commons unanimously passed Bill C-301 at second reading, thereby entitling eligible pensioners to full retroactivity for the guaranteed income supplement.

One year ago, all of the Conservatives voted for this bill.

One year ago, pensioners were given reason to hope that the government would give back the \$3.2 billion it owes them.

Yet one year later, neither the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development nor the Minister of Finance has made an announcement. The Conservatives' silence belies their November 23, 2005, vote and abandons seniors.

One year ago, the Conservatives engaged in electioneering to get seniors' votes. It was all a sham. Once again, we have proof that the Conservative members from Quebec are not standing up for Quebec seniors. They have betrayed their trust, and we will not forget that.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, three words describe the government's economic statement yesterday: off-loading, unfairness and deception.

Conservative rhetoric about the debt is deceit at its worst. They have played with trick definitions to create a false illusion of greater debt reduction, but it is a fraud. The rate at which they will pay down federal debt stays exactly the same at \$3 billion per year.

Will the government confess that under its plan federal debt will still total \$436 billion a generation from now in the year 2021?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former government certainly left us quite a legacy of debt, but the good thing is that we are now going to do something about it.

The good news as set out by the Minister of Finance shows that the economy is strong. Spending is under control. Taxes are going down. The hon. member should celebrate that and get behind it.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are ahead of them. The previous Liberal government slashed federal debt by more than \$63 billion. We cut the federal debt ratio almost in half. We restored Canada's triple A credit rating, the best in the G-8.

Those Mike Harris retreads across the way cannot beat that record, so they want to change the rules of the game. How? By appropriating all of the assets of the Canada pension plan and all of the wealth of Alberta. What a fraud. Why can the government not just tell the truth?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seems to want to have it both ways. On the one hand he is upset about everything we are doing, and on the other hand he wants to take credit for it. It seems to me that he cannot have it both ways.

The Minister of Finance has outlined a blueprint that I think all Canadians should be proud of and it shows that we are on the right track.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative deceit about debt continues. They say it is okay for one's chequing account to be chronically overdrawn just as long as one can swipe the mother-in-law's RRSP to cover the loss.

On the tax side, they are also a fraud. Liberal personal income tax cuts to 2012 were booked at \$25 billion, but Conservative personal income tax relief now stands at only \$5.6 billion.

They take away \$25 billion and they give back \$5.6 billion. Why is that deceitful government reducing personal income tax relief by 80%?

Oral Questions

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member continues to be miserable about everything the government is doing, and I respectfully disagree with him, but yesterday was a very good day for the country. It was a day when we found out that we were going to continue to reduce debt, eliminate the net debt, use the money saved from the debt to reduce taxes, and improve competitiveness, productivity and innovation.

To make the day even better, now the Bloc Québécois says it wants to be part of a united Canada. What could be better than that?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, financial projections have always been prepared by private sector firms. This year, in an effort to fool Canadians, the Minister of Finance is touting his own projection, which is \$2.5 billion higher than private firms' projections for the next two years.

Can the minister explain this huge difference? Does he not realize that by doing this, he is setting Canada up for a deficit situation?

• (1120)

[*English*]

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government this year has become transparent, for the very first time. The party opposite, when it was in government, used fudge numbers. It did an averaging of different private sector projections. What we did is put all these projections side by side with the government's projections. Amazingly, they turned out to be almost all the same.

Canadians can see for themselves that we are not trying to hide anything and that all of these projections are clearly laid out. They are not melded together, averaged or any of those things. This is a new beginning for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, a past master in the art of creating deficits as Ontario's finance minister, should know that overvaluing profits is the best way to create a deficit.

By manipulating the numbers, the government is acting like a homeowner who has a \$100,000 mortgage on a \$200,000 home and claims to have no debt. That is ridiculous.

Did the Minister of Finance not learn his lesson after his Ontario disaster?

[*English*]

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, let us be clear. The finance minister of Canada never ran a deficit when he was the finance minister in Ontario, never. He inherited a deficit from the NDP and he cleaned it up in large measure.

Also, let us talk about net debt. Net government debt is the standard used by the OECD to compare countries' debt positions. In fact, when the Liberal Party was the government, in its last fall

update, on page 67, it put in a table comparing Canada's net government debt with other G-7 countries.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the Prime Minister promised Quebecers that the issue of the fiscal imbalance would be settled. This was one of his major election commitments. When the Minister of Finance tabled the budget, in May 2006, he presented a relatively tight schedule to settle the fiscal imbalance. However, yesterday's economic statement shows that the minister is well within schedule, but the target dates are being postponed. We no longer know exactly what is going on.

I would like to know why the government is standing still regarding that important commitment.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I think it is very important to congratulate the Minister of Finance on his excellent economic plan, particularly since this document shows that the Canadian economy is doing extremely well. Our economy is sound, it is creating jobs, and the long term forecasts are very optimistic. As for the fiscal imbalance, I should point out that the Minister of Finance said in this House that he will have the opportunity to meet with his provincial and territorial counterparts, on December 15.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will use the very words of the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. If the economy is doing so well, if the situation is so extraordinary, if the administration is so good, what are the Conservatives waiting for to fulfill their commitments to Quebecers? They promised they would settle the fiscal imbalance. The fact is that the target dates have disappeared, and this reflects a change in priorities.

I am asking the government to tell us why it has yet to fulfill its promise, when things are going so well, according to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that, in recent months, we have consulted the provinces, territories and municipalities. The Minister of Finance did an exceptional job. We will settle the fiscal imbalance issue. I am asking the hon. member to be patient. We are getting there. We are committed to doing it and, as usual, we will deliver.

• (1125)

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on September 22, 2006, the Minister of Finance said that the budget statement planned for early October would report on the progress of negotiations with the provinces concerning the fiscal imbalance, and that there would be an indication of the direction that everyone is taking, in his own words. Yesterday was November 23. The minister made his budget statement, which included nothing concrete about the fiscal imbalance.

How can the minister justify this spectacular flip-flop in just one month?

Oral Questions

[English]

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Bloc is confused about what a fiscal update is. A fiscal update simply gives the figures as they are halfway through the fiscal year so that Canadians can see how the government is doing.

In this case we put together a long term economic plan which has been widely supported across Canada. The member knows there are ongoing discussions on the fiscal imbalance. The next one will take place on December 9. She will just have to be patient, because we are getting there in a way that is respectful of the provinces and fully consults with everyone.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government continues to rake in surpluses and is obviously trying to bury the issue of the fiscal imbalance among other budget issues.

Can the minister assure us that he is not simply trying to buy time so that, at election time, he can say that he wanted to but was unable?

[English]

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the Bloc members would like to think that they are in charge of solving the fiscal imbalance. The fact of the matter is they have no power. They will always be an opposition party, a small party. All they can do is quibble and complain because they do not have a meaningful role. I feel sorry for them, but they are simply going to have to accept that this is a program and a process that respects all Canadians and will be conducted in a way that will get to a solution that is fair and reasonable for everyone.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, another damning report on poverty among first nations, Métis and Inuit was released today by Campaign 2000. It is another stinging indictment on the Liberal and Conservative records.

It has been 10 years since the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples gave us the road map to alleviate poverty, yet the Conservatives are ignoring RCAP. Aboriginal people were not even mentioned in the fiscal update.

Why does the government have billions for corporate tax cuts but nothing for child poverty in aboriginal communities?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it is true that this government inherited a shameful situation from the previous Liberal government. We can look back over the last 10 years since RCAP came out. The AFN issued a failing grade of F, and it was well deserved by the previous government.

We have done much since that time. We have entered into the first modern treaty with British Columbia. We dedicated \$300 million for northern housing and \$300 million for off reserve housing, as well as

signed the residential schools agreement. We are taking real action for aboriginal people.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have had 10 months, yet Pikangikum children do not have access to running water. Kuiper Island has limited access to medical care. North of 60 over 50% of children have experienced violence in the home. One in four first nations children on reserve live in poverty. Off reserve 40% are living in poverty. Does anyone need to hear more? Nearly 50% of first nations houses in all of Canada are contaminated with mould.

How long is the government going to say that children will have to wait for clean water and stable houses? How long?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, immediately upon taking office, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development began to address the shameful state that the government had received. Water was at the top of his list. Since that time, he has put forward a plan and brought forward an expert panel to look at the issues facing first nations people in relation to water.

Thankfully, we are taking real action and we are seeing real results.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, deception, unfairness and off-loading are three words to describe yesterday's economic update. For one thing, the statement offers grandiose plans without intending to back any of it. Worse, it takes billions away from low and middle income Canadians.

Possibly the most blatant deception in this document is the alleged elimination of the debt by 2021. In fact, under the Conservatives' plan the federal debt will not be paid off by 2021, but in 160 years.

Why is the government tying its debt reduction targets to its greenhouse gas emission plans?

● (1130)

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member well knows that the net debt has been mentioned in every single Liberal budget and that there is an objective for the very first time, a commitment to get rid of the net debt.

We want to be the first OECD and G-7 country to get rid of the net debt. This is important because the debt puts a heavy weight on the shoulders of young Canadians. We want them to have a strong future, not one where they have to pay off the debt of former generations. The member should be getting behind this program to pay off Canada's net debt.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are laughing right in the faces of Canadians. The Liberal government always set aside \$3 billion to reduce the debt. There is nothing new in yesterday's proposal. Yet, the minister claims that the debt will be eliminated 140 years earlier. This proposal cannot be achieved without the help of the provinces, as the minister well knows.

What will happen if a finance minister finds himself facing a \$6 billion deficit, as Mike Harris did in Ontario?

[English]

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member knows that reducing debt is a matter of fairness. In fact in reducing the net debt we are adopting the accepted international standard used to benchmark debt reduction from country to country. For example, Australia has recently celebrated the fact that it has eliminated its net debt.

We can eliminate Canada's net debt by 2021. We expect all Canadians to be part of this. We know they want to do this. They are proud that there is at least a benchmark and that we will put all of the unanticipated surpluses toward the debt, as we did this year, paying down \$13.2 billion on the national debt.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's economic understatement was a massive exercise in unfairness.

In 2005 the Liberals provided \$29 billion in tax relief for all Canadians, particularly the low and middle income earners, but that is all gone and in its place a scheme that would make George W. Bush proud. The government's update laments the fact that those poor souls who are earning more than \$120,000 are treated unfairly. Imagine that.

Why do the Conservatives always favour the six figure income earners over regular Canadians?

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, lowering the GST especially helped low income Canadians who do not pay any other kind of tax. Yet that party did not want to support that. I wonder why it does not want to support tax relief for low income Canadians.

In this fiscal update, we will be giving Canadians a tax back guarantee. That means there will be more money in the pockets of Canadians, because every time we pay down the debt, we save interest, and that interest will go right back to Canadians in the form of reduced taxes. By 2011, Canadians will see each and every year an additional \$1.4 billion in tax relief—

The Speaker: The hon. member for York West.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has shown an incredible ability to shift the tax burdens from the rich to the poor in a mere 10 months.

The GST cut that the member referred to offers pennies on a Timex and hundreds of dollars on a Rolex, but on Canada Day, Canadians woke up to an increased tax rate at the lowest bracket. Now the government wants to further line the pockets of those who earn the most.

That party has taken the word "progressive" from its name with good reason. Why is it now doing the same thing to the tax system?

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a mischaracterization of what we have done, because in our very first budget we took 650,000 Canadians completely off the tax rolls. We cut consumer taxes for the lowest income Canadians. Under our tax back guarantee, we will continue to return to Canadians the benefits of paying down the debt. It will be \$800 billion in the very next year. By 2011, Canadians will have another \$1.4 billion every single year because we are paying down Canada's net debt.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in an annual report submitted to the United Nations, the government itself admits that if nothing is done, greenhouse gas emissions will surpass by 47% the 2010 Kyoto protocol targets. We should remember that the government's clean air plan has no reduction targets until 2011.

Why is the government so bent on not taking action now to deal with greenhouse gas emissions, when it has noted the urgency of the situation?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1135)

[English]

The Speaker: Order. Perhaps the member for Wascana and the President of the Treasury Board could carry on their discussions in the foyer while the rest of us continue with question period. It is very difficult for the rest of us to hear the questions. I would be glad to send somebody out there to manage the discussion, if necessary. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment has the floor.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this was a report that the Liberal government was supposed to table with the UN on January 1, just prior to the election.

That report said what the member said, that the Liberal government's plan would have brought us 47% above the Kyoto targets. The big question is, why would that member support a government that has a failed Kyoto plan? It makes no sense.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what the parliamentary secretary has stated is one more reason for taking immediate action to tackle climate change.

Oral Questions

Since it is written in black and white, in a report prepared by his government, that greenhouse gas emissions will reach unacceptable levels by 2010 if Canada does not take action, will the government stop procrastinating and immediately put in place a plan to meet the Kyoto protocol targets as per the demands of climatologists, economists, environmental groups and citizens?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former government did nothing for 13 years. It did not present that report. Now the member opposite is saying that he supports that, he supports us carrying on. That is utter nonsense.

This government is committed to reducing greenhouse gases, not like the former government.

All the hon. member did in Nairobi was make mischief. He did not participate. He should actually be paying back the taxpayers for the waste of the dollars to send him to Nairobi.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to an expert in international law, the World Trade Organization rules could allow a tax to be imposed on countries that violate the terms of the Kyoto protocol.

In light of this, will the Minister of the Environment reconsider and change her position on the Kyoto protocol before her inaction and her laissez-faire approach endanger the economy of Canada and Quebec?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been committed to the Kyoto protocol but we have been honest with Canadians and we have been honest with our international partners that we will not be able to meet the targets because of what the Liberals did when they were in government.

We are working with our international partners. We received a consensus. We have support on the international stage. We need to encourage every member of the House to work together on the clean air act because that is the only piece of legislation that will help us meet targets.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government's inaction is deplorable, because in the long run it could have an incalculable impact not only on the economy, but also on the future of export companies. I therefore ask the minister to stop leaving Canada in uncertainty, which even companies are criticizing, and to reveal her greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree that those who are trying to sabotage the plan to deal with greenhouse gases should be condemned. It is the Bloc members and the Liberals who should be condemned.

This party is a party of action. We have tabled the clean air act and those parties want to stop Canada from moving forward on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

They need to stop their sabotage. They need to get on side with reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while there are numerous members of the former Harris government present in this House, I want to ask the Minister of the Environment a question.

The contaminated water saga in Walkerton was caused in part by heavy precipitation, which produced heavy runoff of contaminated water into a local well.

Experts agree that climate change will increase the frequency of heavy precipitation, which represents a constant and growing threat to clean water in Canada.

What will the minister do to reduce this threat?

• (1140)

[*English*]

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first nations communities are experiencing challenges with water supplies, much like other small communities across the country and around the world.

Boil water orders are being issued under provincial legislation and it is becoming common across Canada. This is due to the 13 years of neglect by the member's party.

This government has announced \$450 million over the next two years to address drinking water, education, children and women and housing issues. This government is taking action.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous government funded a range of climate change programs, including the Canadian Climate Impacts and Adaptation Research Network.

The network was funding research into the impact of climate change on water at the Brace Centre in Ste. Anne de Bellevue in my riding. This program has been abruptly cut. Its funding will come to an end in about 10 months.

Will the government reconsider its short-sighted approach to climate change and restore the network's long term funding so it can continue to do its crucial work in the area of water research?

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the government takes climate change, global warming and air pollution very seriously.

The Liberal plan was to do nothing for 13 years, which is shameful. The former environment minister said the following:

I will be part of Kyoto, but I will say to the world I don't think I will make it.

No wonder we have a mess. The member who said that is actually one of the people running for the leadership of the Liberal Party. It is shameful.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration said he would be targeting certain regions of Canada to get temporary foreign workers to settle there, but this means that other parts of the country will be left out.

In addition, that will not solve the issue of undocumented workers.

What does the government intend to do to address these two situations? Will it simply continue to ignore them?

That is incredible.

[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, right now there are tremendous job shortages across the country. In fact, in the next number of years, Alberta and B.C. alone project job shortages of around 700,000 people.

We are acting to respond to that, which is why we have made some administrative changes to speed up the process so employers can bring workers into Canada more quickly, more efficiently and in a more cost effective way.

After 13 years of Liberal non-action, we are acting on this and we are starting to get some things done for employers around the country.

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the greater Toronto area needs more skilled workers but the government's response is to ignore the situation and to pit one region against the other.

Does the government not understand that without these workers Toronto's economy would come to a standstill? Torontonians contribute immensely to the strength of Canada but in return they get no support from the government.

Running a government means helping people from all over Canada. If the minister is unwilling to regularize undocumented workers, will he at least extend the temporary foreign workers enhancements to Canada's largest city or will he continue to ignore Toronto?

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a little rich coming from that member.

I would point out to the member that we are in negotiations with Ontario with respect to temporary foreign workers, and have been for some time.

If the member is so concerned about undocumented workers, why did he sit idle while his government deported over 100,000 undocumented workers over the last number of years? Why did the member stand in this place and vote against a proposal to raise settlement funding to Ontario by 60% this year alone? Those are the real questions.

FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, the Liberal-dominated Senate continued its dirty work and sent the federal accountability act back to committee in order to delay it even further. This, after the House of Commons voted at least six times for the accountability act.

What is even more outrageous is the silence from Liberal MPs and Liberal leadership candidates whose complete failure to speak out against these delays demonstrates they are complicit in the foot-dragging.

Would the President of the Treasury Board tell the House what he is hearing from Canadians about the Liberals' lack of respect for democracy?

• (1145)

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Parliament, this House of Commons dealt with the return and the gutting of the federal accountability act by the unelected Liberal Senate by strengthening it, putting the teeth back in and sending it back. All four parties came together to do that in less than two days.

Now the unelected Liberal Senate is going on to day 146. It is disgraceful and it is outrageous.

The unelected Liberal Senate is so concerned about its own ethics officer, it is so ethically challenged, I guess it needs its own ethics officer. We would like it to do the right thing: to stand up for accountability and pass the federal accountability act.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week we learned that the government has appointed a nine member committee on the future and renewal of the public service, one of this country's most important national institutions. However, not one member is currently employed in the public service.

Will the Prime Minister correct this by appointing a representative from today's public service to the advisory committee?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we were very pleased that a number of eminent Canadians accepted the offer of the Prime Minister and the Privy Council to provide us with guidance as we go forward, to build upon the strength that we have in our public service and to deal with the huge challenge we will face with the retirements of eminent Canadians, such as Paul Tellier, the former Clerk of the Privy Council; the right hon. Don Mazankowski; and Aldéa Landry, the former deputy premier of New Brunswick under the Liberal government of Frank McKenna.

We will certainly take the concerns of the member opposite under advisement because we want to ensure we have and continue to have the very best public service in Canada.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with respect, this kind of dismissive attitude is precisely what is wrong with the public service renewal plan.

If the government is really serious about recruiting future leaders to our public service, it needs to show respect to today's public servants.

Will the Prime Minister appoint, in addition to his high-powered friends, a member of today's public service to his advisory committee? We need to ensure this is not top-down and that we have a bottom-up approach. It is the sensible thing to do. Will the government please do that?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with great respect to the member for Ottawa Centre, I was not dismissive. I certainly indicated to him in my first response that we would be happy to take his concerns under advisement.

We will be having a good number of exercises designed to ensure we continue to have a top quality public service, respected around the world. We will certainly look at what we can do to bring in a wide variety of public servants to get their advice and input into what will be a huge challenge for the Government of Canada in the years ahead.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 25, a unanimous motion passed in the House calling on the Minister of Transport to use his powers to direct Canada Post to maintain traditional rural mail delivery and protect public safety when rural constituents are required to collect mail at designated group box locations which are often a long distance from their homes.

Since then we have seen no action from the Conservative minority government. When will rural Canadians receive their mail?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, rural Canadians are receiving their mail and progress has been noted on that file.

I have met on several occasions with the president and the chairman of Canada Post to bring forward a comprehensive plan that will necessarily encompass the wishes of this House to continue to maintain traditional rural mail delivery. The purpose for which I am working with Canada Post is to be able to do that so Canadians will be pleased and satisfied that it is done with the utmost safety and concern for the employees also.

Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rural Canadians should not need to travel long distances from their homes to collect their mail. Group mail box locations were intended for urban areas, not rural Canadians. This issue is high on the minds of rural Canadians and the government's inaction tells me that rural Canadians are second-class.

When will the government start protecting public safety and take real action to protect traditional rural mail delivery?

• (1150)

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, quite honestly, we need to recognize that this issue did not spring up the day that we were elected. Obviously there have been things that have been going

Oral Questions

on. We are working closely with the concerned parties. We take this matter very seriously. I have indicated this on several occasions in this House and have conveyed to the chairman of the board of Canada Post that this is an extremely serious matter. We want traditional mail delivery to be maintained and we will, to that purpose, do what needs to be done.

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TRANSPORT

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Labradorians say that Tory times are tough times but neo-conservative times are even tougher.

The government confirmed last night that a so-called commitment to the highway in Labrador is a sham. Now we learn that the same may be true about the new airport terminal promised for Goose Bay, the busiest airport in Labrador.

Mr. MacAdam, the ACOA minister's political appointee, says that the funds budgeted by our former Liberal government are still there. The defence minister's office says that the funds are still there. Even a well-connected Tory lobbyist says that the funds are still there. However, the transport minister cannot find them.

Will someone please show him where the money is for the Goose Bay airport and will he then tell us when can we get the cheque?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that has been brought forward and we are looking into it. When it comes time to be able to resolve it, we will advise the House on the direction that we will take.

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is not much. A year ago the former Liberal government approved a major investment in Goose Bay, Labrador: a \$20 million diversification fund, a victim of Tory cutbacks; \$30 million from DND for foreign military training and marketing, cancelled; a \$96 million Coast Guard investment, axed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The only survivor of the cutbacks is supposedly \$9 million for a new airport terminal.

Could the fisheries minister or the transport minister assure us that the airport terminal is still on, or was it axed like the Coast Guard and so many other things that were committed to by the Liberals their first days in office?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it highly hypocritical for a member of that party to be talking about Goose Bay. The Liberals had Goose Bay on the hit list. They were going to close Goose Bay. What they did before the last election was put a few little salves on the locals to pretend they would preserve Goose Bay. They are against Goose Bay. They wanted to close Goose Bay.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after his unilateral decision to increase the shrimp fishing quotas for Newfoundland caused market prices to drop, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is now set to take away from Magdalen Island fishers a lobster fishing area that has been theirs since 1985 and give it to Prince Edward Island.

Is the minister's unilateral decision not hiding a strategy to take more fish stock away from Quebec fishers?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is certainly not the case.

First, I am very pleased to be speaking on behalf of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, who does an excellent job on behalf of our country and for fishers everywhere.

The government will be working closely with the province of Quebec on this issue and others, including anything to do with the fisheries industry. I think the member will be quite pleased.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first it was cod, then shrimp, and now lobster.

Does the minister not realize that, anytime the federal government makes political decisions about quotas, the impact not only on Quebec fishers but also on the resource is simply disastrous? Is the minister waiting for the ocean to be empty before changing his approach?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is going about his portfolio in the right direction. Including today, the minister is co-chairing a forum with the province of Quebec. We look forward to hearing from the minister upon his return to the House of Commons.

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PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 11, 2004, the current member for Nepean—Carleton wrote a letter attacking any attempt to move defence headquarters to the JDS Uniphase building in his riding. In his letter he complained of increased traffic, increased infrastructure costs, lack of public consultation and, most important, the waste of taxpayer dollars.

Now that the RCMP will be moving there, could the Minister of Public Works and Government Services tell the House if he has received the same complaint from that member or is this just another example of the blatant partisan hypocrisy we have all come to expect from the member for Nepean—Carleton?

• (1155)

Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the

Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the JDS Uniphase building, we were handed a mess by the Liberal government. The way it approached that contract was inappropriate. It was not open nor was it competitive.

As we put it forward, we opened the process. We allowed other people to compete for the contract and solved a lot of the problems that the Liberals had put forward. In fact, we are very proud that the RCMP will have a state of the art headquarters, where it needs to be, to meet its needs so it can meet the needs of all Canadians.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, hon. members will know that tomorrow, November 25, is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my wholehearted support for efforts around the world to bring an end to the cruel and inhumane violence inflicted on women.

Could the Minister of International Cooperation tell us what our government is doing for women in developing countries?

[Translation]

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want this House to know that Canada has been actively dealing with this issue.

Take for example our mission in Afghanistan, where women have suffered greatly under the rule of the Taliban. Through our mission, we have already helped the Afghan people achieve progress in asserting their rights and taking control of their own future. Twenty seven per cent of members in the new Afghan Parliament are women and 75% of micro loans have been made to women. Women have access to health care, legal aid and literacy services, not to mention access to schooling for young girls. I have—

[English]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Western Arctic.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Federal Court has ruled that the government has the duty to consult with the Dene Tha of northern Alberta on the development of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

The joint review panel has said that it will reconsider its hearing schedule in light of this court decision. However, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development says that this ruling will not slow down his push for the project.

How will the minister prove he cares about the concerns of the Dene Tha or the Deh Cho or the Sahtu? Are all these consultations just for show?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is very supportive of the Mackenzie gas project. It is subject, though, to undergoing rigorous environmental assessments and regulatory review.

We will continue to discuss this project with all the parties involved. We do not want to pre-empt the economic benefits that will be there for all northerners and aboriginal Canadians.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada needs northern gas, but the north needs a fair deal from Canada.

To the media last week the minister suggested that the decision of the Federal Court just did not matter. It seems to me the minister has forgotten his role in judgment on this process. He has a duty to hear from every northerner who has a stake in the pipeline.

Could the minister advise the House if he will be thinking of the needs of average northerners, particularly the needs of aboriginal northerners, upon whose land this pipeline will be built, or will he be thinking of the needs of his friends in the Petroleum Club?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will be keeping in mind all the needs of aboriginal Canadians throughout the north. This is very important for the economic benefits that will be seen from this project.

We are proceeding with other plans as well, a \$500 million socio-economic fund, which will help remediate the effects of this project.

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GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the devastating cuts recently announced by Canada's new heartless government was to the summer career placement program. This was a double whammy and a disgrace. It hurt students attending university or college and it hurt important community organizations.

In my riding the grants went to assist mental health groups, seniors, the disabled and many more. However, the primary beneficiaries were groups that helped young children, like the Boys and Girls Club and youth recreation, all of which were not for profit.

Could the minister be specific on which group of young Canadians she was most seeking to hurt, children of the Boys and Girls Club or students saving for post-secondary education?

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former government used that summer job program to provide wage subsidies for the largest corporations in the world. At the same time, it put money into the hottest labour markets.

We are going to stop subsidizing big business and stop putting money into the red hot labour markets. We are going to refocus money where jobs are harder to find by spending \$45 million per year to help students who are having difficulty finding work.

● (1200)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday the Minister of Finance introduced the economic and fiscal update. As part of the update, the minister introduced a tax back guarantee for all Canadians. He outlined Canada's new national goal of eliminating our total net debt by 2021.

Could the arliamentary secretary outline for the House how the tax back guarantee will benefit all Canadians in our country?

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his outstanding work as a member of the finance committee.

Canada's new government has set a new bold national goal of eliminating Canada's net debt. As we pay down Canada's national mortgage, the interest savings of reduced debt will be returned directly to Canadian taxpayers each and every year through a reduction in personal income taxes. That is our tax back guarantee.

It will give Canadians a direct stake and a direct benefit in how Canada's new government manages finances on their behalf. Less debt means less interest on debt, which will mean lower personal taxes for Canadians.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to six petitions.

*Routine Proceedings***INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

Mr. Russ Hiebert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34 I have the honour to present, in both official languages, two copies of reports from the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association concerning the CPA UK Branch Parliamentary Seminar, which was held in London, England and Brussels, Belgium from May 7 to 19; my pre-Abuja conference visit to London, England, August 28 to September 2; the 52nd Annual International Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, held in Abuja, Nigeria from September 1 to 10; and the Study Group on Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures held in Bermuda from October 30 to November 3.

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TAX CONVENTIONS IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2006

Hon. Stockwell Day (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill S-5, An Act to implement conventions and protocols concluded between Canada and Finland, Mexico and Korea for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

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PETITIONS

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present another petition, one of several thousand of petitions my office has received, dealing with the issue of undocumented workers.

The petitioners call upon the government and Parliament to immediately halt the deportation of undocumented workers and to find a humane and logical solution to their situation.

• (1205)

MARRIAGE

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud today to present two petitions with hundreds of names on them.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to reopen the issue of marriage in this Parliament and to repeal or to amend the Marriage for Civil Purposes Act in order to promote and to defend marriage as the lawful union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition with over 100 names asking that terminator technology in Canada be banned. The fact that seeds are made sterile and that seed saving is key to the livelihoods farmers, the petitioners call upon Parliament to enshrine in legislation a permanent national ban on terminator technologies to ensure that these are never planted, field tested, patented or commercialized in Canada.

AFGHANISTAN

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two sets of petitions to present.

The first petition calls upon the Canadian government to immediately withdraw Canadian troops from Afghanistan and to develop an independent foreign policy that promotes world peace and ecological sustainability and to grant residence to American war resisters.

The second set of petitions is also about Canada's role in Afghanistan. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to begin the withdrawal of Canadian Forces from the counter-insurgency mission in southern Afghanistan.

MARRIAGE

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present three petitions on behalf of a number of individuals from Nova Scotia.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to reopen the issue of marriage in this Parliament and to repeal or to amend the Marriage for Civil Purposes Act in order to promote and defend marriage as the lawful union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

[*Translation*]

SEAL HUNT

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present a petition concerning the seal hunt. It contains a hundred or so signatures from residents of my riding.

* * *

[*English*]

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, the following question will be answered today: No. 103.

[*Text*]

Question No. 103—**Mr. Pierre Paquette:**

With respect to the Income Tax Act and the research and development incentives of the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SRED) Tax Incentive Program: (a) can the government tell us the estimated dollar value it places on unused SRED Tax Incentive Program tax credits; and (b) is the government planning to expand access to these tax credits and to amend refund provisions and, if so, which ones?

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the amount of SR and ED investment tax credits, ITCs, that have been earned but not used to reduce taxes and are available to reduce taxes in future years was \$5.9 billion at the end of 2004. This figure is subject to revision when tax returns are filed and processed by the Canada Revenue Agency. The estimated dollar value of these unused credits would depend on at what point, if any, the ITCs would be used during the carry forward period before they expire. As the use of these ITCs in future years is affected by the future financial conditions of particular companies, it cannot be known with certainty. Information is available on the amount of ITCs earned in previous years and used to reduce income taxes payable in the current year. In the publication "Tax Expenditures and Evaluations", the Department of Finance provides annual estimates and projections of this amount.

In response to (b), the Department of Finance reviews the effectiveness of tax incentives on an ongoing basis. In this context, the department will continue to review the SR and ED program to ensure its effectiveness in the context of the overall federal strategy of providing assistance for R and D. For example, the 2006 budget extended the carry forward period of unused ITCs, including SR and ED ITCs, from 10 to 20 years. The increase in the ITC carryforward period will be of particular benefit to some businesses, such as research-intensive companies, which may realize little profit for extended periods.

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE QUÉBÉCOIS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the motion that this question be now put.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House to speak to this motion today. I will be sharing my time with the member for British Columbia Southern Interior.

I perhaps have a slightly different perspective about this motion. Partly it is that I am a first generation Canadian on my mother's side. My mother came to Canada in approximately 1948. She went to Montreal. I was born in Montreal. Subsequently my family moved, but I then returned there to complete a couple of years of school.

I also am a very fortunate Canadian, in that I have lived from coast to coast in this country. I have lived in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, and my father spent time in Manitoba, so I have a unique perspective on this country.

Government Orders

One of the things I value about living in Canada is its diversity. I value its complexity. I value its depth and breadth. The motion before us gives us an opportunity to talk about that diversity.

Members of the House are very well aware of the fact that New Democrats have always recognized the contribution of Quebecers to the Canadian social fabric. We have always recognized that our strength is in our diversity and we also believe that the Québécois people can realize their potential within the Canadian federation.

The NDP wants to create winning conditions for people in Canada and in Quebec. When we talk about the contributions that Quebec has made to the social fabric, we need only look at Quebec's innovation around child care and pay equity. We know that the issues that Quebecers have taken on front and centre can contribute to making sure that the rest of Canada has that kind of depth and breadth as well.

When we talk about nationhood, I cannot help but talk about first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in this country. On November 23, a story was run about first nations and nationhood. Because it is relevant to our discussion about what it means to be a nation in Canada, I think it is very important that I bring this story into the discussion. It states:

—the Assembly of First Nations calls upon the Prime Minister to clarify his position in a way that does justice to the status and role of First Nations in Quebec and within Canada as a whole.

I am going to quote from this very important document from the Assembly of First Nations and Chief Picard:

National Chief Phil Fontaine commented that "mindful as we are of our own history and identity, we want to be respectful of other communities and traditions in Canada. The AFN has been, and remains, open to recognition of the nature of Quebec society that acknowledges features such as the French speaking majority in that province. It is important, however, that such recognition be carried out in a way that does not dismiss or diminish in any way, the nationhood of First Nations in Quebec and throughout Canada.

AFN Regional Chief of Quebec and Labrador, Ghislain Picard also added that "the First Nations of Quebec reserve the right to assert and affirm our status as Nations regardless of what other governments may imply." Furthermore, Picard stated that "the recognition by one government of another is only meaningful through a process of negotiation to confirm mutual understandings of the relationship."

The Aboriginal and Treaty rights of First Nations peoples, as referenced in the Constitution Act, 1982, already provide for the unique status of First Nations in law. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which delivered its final report 10 years ago this week, provided a comprehensive affirmation of our rights and title, as well as a clear path forward for First Nations and all Canadians. Yet, Canada has failed to act and failed to respond in a manner consistent with Aboriginal and Treaty rights and title.

Indeed, First Nations across Canada are expressing frustration at the lack of action and attention to First Nations issues. At the same time as putting forward this motion, the Government of Canada is actively opposing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada's opposition to this non-binding Declaration that would set only minimum standards for dignity, survival and well-being of the world's Indigenous Peoples is unprincipled and inconsistent.

● (1210)

In the conclusion, National Chief Fontaine said, "There is space for all in Canada".

These are really important elements for us to interject into this discussion.

Government Orders

I am going to come back to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, because it laid out some clear guidelines around what we are talking about when we are recognizing first nations people as nations in Canada.

In regard to these guidelines from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which, as I mentioned, celebrated its 10th anniversary, both the Liberals and the Conservatives have failed to take into account the extensive consultation process that happened in order to formulate the recommendations in RCAP. As Campaign 2000 indicated in its release today, we still see desperate poverty for first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples from coast to coast to coast in Canada.

I want to come back to chapter 3 on governance in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report. This is important because it does set the stage. It states:

The right of self-determination is vested in all the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The right finds its foundation in emerging norms of international law and basic principles of public morality. By virtue of this right, Aboriginal peoples are entitled to negotiate freely the terms of their relationship with Canada and to establish governmental structures that they consider appropriate for their needs.

The second point states:

When exercised by Aboriginal peoples within the context of the Canadian federation, the right of self-determination does not ordinarily give rise to a right of secession, except in the case of grave oppression or disintegration of the Canadian state.

The chapter on governance outlines a number of other factors. Part of it is about the fact that:

All governments in Canada recognize that Aboriginal peoples are nations vested with the right of self-determination.

With regard to government recognition of aboriginal nations, the commission concludes that:

Aboriginal peoples are entitled to identify their own national units for purposes of exercising the right of self-determination.

Under point 2.3.3, the RCAP report states that:

The federal government put in place a neutral and transparent process for identifying aboriginal groups entitled to exercise the right of self-determination as nations, a process that uses the following specific attributes of nationhood...

It then goes on to talk about a collective sense of national identity, that the nation is a sufficient size and capacity, that the nation constitutes a majority of the permanent population, and so on.

As we are having this very important debate about Quebec as a nation within Canada, we also should be opening up the doors to talk about first nations as a nation within Canada. While we are having this very important debate around Quebec as a nation, why do we not open that door to have that conversation around first nations peoples as nations? This is a missed opportunity.

In my province of British Columbia, we have seen so little progress over the decades in moving forward on treaties and land claims that people are giving up in despair, believing that they will never see a resolution in their lifetimes. I have told members before about a community elder who told me that he started at his grandfather's knee at the age of nine learning how to work toward treaty and land claims settlements. He is 63 now. His community still does not have a treaty. He is now training his grandchildren to take over his role in treaty and land claims settlement.

We are losing a generation. The Campaign 2000 poverty report that was released today states that one in four first nations children living on reserve is living in poverty, and that includes their families because children do not live in poverty in isolation.

In our country, we cannot even get the Conservative government to acknowledge the declaration on indigenous rights. What hope did first nations people have that a Conservative government, or the Liberal government before it, was willing to take the necessary steps to work in partnership with first nations, Métis and Inuit communities to ensure that living conditions were not substandard?

We will be supporting this motion. I urge other members of this House to consider that as well.

● (1215)

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, for her excellent speech linking some of the aspects of other people struggles in this country to the struggles of Quebec in achieving its proper state in this country.

I live in the Northwest Territories where we have many aboriginal first nations that are actively pursuing self-government. They are actively moving forward to ensure that they have their nations well established in Canada. Key to their progress is an understanding of their culture and language. It certainly was not well supported with the taking away of aboriginal language programs by the government just recently.

As well, we have in my territory the first claim being negotiated by a Métis first nation, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, in Canada as a whole. Once again the need to hold onto their culture, their expression, and their history is so basic to nation building.

How are we building Canada as a nation? Right now in this Parliament we have the opportunity in nation building. We are going to be creating in the next while a special committee and the four parties in this Parliament are going to talk about nation building when it comes to dealing with the question of greenhouse gas emissions, the climate and the environment for the future. That is nation building as well.

To my hon. colleague, when we recognize the Québécois as a nation, how can this Parliament work to build Canadians as a nation across this country?

● (1220)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Western Arctic has really hit the nail on the head when he talks about the importance of language and culture in terms of building a nation.

In a press release by the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council, it condemned the Conservative government. It said that the aboriginal language program unilaterally cut by the minister was a betrayal to the B.C. first nations languages.

In British Columbia, which only gets 10% of the language funding, that is two-thirds of the language groups in the province. It was a great lesson for me when one of the Cowichan elders was teaching me some of the Hul'qumi'num language and was teaching me a word for heart which is "shqwaluwun". I realized I could not understand the word unless I understood some of the culture.

Government Orders

It was a good lesson for me and for other Canadians that as we embrace languages and cultures, we cannot take language apart from culture. It is essential that when we are recognizing nations, that we recognize their right to determine their language and culture. We must encourage and support first nations communities, Inuit communities and Métis communities in continuing to keep their languages healthy and vital in order to maintain their culture.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have an opportunity today to speak in the House about my country, Canada. One of the reasons why I decided to go into federal politics is that I firmly believe in Canadian unity. That being said, I have been thinking about this issue for years, especially about Quebec's place within our federation.

The NDP recognizes that Quebecers form a nation. At its convention, held just two months ago in Quebec City, the NDP supported without any hesitation the national character of Quebec, as it has done for 40 years. We believe in a strong Quebec within a united Canada. We also believe that ordinary Quebecers will be better served if Quebec remains within Canada.

What does all that mean for me, a Vancouver-born Canadian of Russian and Ukrainian origin whose mother tongue is Russian? In my family, we were able to keep our culture and still be proud to be Canadians. I arrived in Quebec City in 1975 to learn French. I recall living on Crémazie Street. I was taking language training at the university and was beginning to understand the Quebec culture.

Since then, Quebec has become a special corner of my country, a place not like any other. I have had the opportunity to live in every major region of Canada and I must admit that every time I go back to Quebec I feel at home.

This might seem a little odd to my friends living in the West, but those who have spent time in Quebec think the same way. I have had the honour of living in Quebec a number of times: for a summer course in Chicoutimi; for three months in Trois-Rivières in 1989 with my wife; a few months in Quebec City; for visits with my friends in Thetford. In fact, I went to see them this summer before our convention in Quebec City.

In the 1990s, I was a French immersion teacher in British Columbia. At the time, I twice had the opportunity to bring a group of students to Thetford. That is when I first met my friends, the school teachers and their families. We have remained friends ever since. Every time I go there, I feel like I am going home. I want to thank Mike, Robert and Jocelyn.

It was thanks to SEVEC, the society for educational visits and exchanges in Canada, a federal program, that we were able to go on these exchanges. Is there a better way to get to know one another? Is there a better way to see both parts of the country? I was also able to send students to Quebec through a six-month exchange program. They spent three months in Quebec, and the Quebecers spent three months with us. Imagine what it is like for a young student from British Columbia to stay and live with a Quebec family for three months. There is also the Katimavik program, which encourages young people to travel throughout Canada. It is important. I urge this

government to maintain this program and every program of this nature.

All that is my personal experience, what I have been through and what I will continue to do. I met my wife, an American, in Martinique through a federal bursary program in the summer of 1986. French is our language of love. She is the one I spent three months with in Trois-Rivières and she is the one I went with to visit my friends in Thetford. When she speaks French I can even detect a slight Quebec accent.

I am not here to bring in so-called logical arguments to make sure Quebec continues to play an integral and important role in a united Canada. We know that there are many of those arguments. I am here to share with my colleagues, and especially with my friends from Quebec, my profound and heartfelt beliefs.

• (1225)

I hope with all my heart that the people of Quebec will decide to remain with us in the Canadian family.

Finally, we know that there are external forces that want to destroy our country and put pressure on us. I am alluding here, for example, to those who want to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board, who advocate corn dumping in Quebec and Ontario or want us to abide by the so-called global rules.

It is by remaining united, from coast to coast, that we can fight those external forces and preserve Canadian sovereignty.

A united Canada, independent and strong, will guarantee that the Quebec nation remains a full and strong member of the Canadian federation.

[*English*]

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about nation, again I want to come back to the campaign 2000 report that was released today, I wonder if the member could comment on how he sees nationhood in the context of the fact that we have people in this country who are living in houses that are contaminated with mould, who do not have sufficient access to drinking water, who do not have enough money to pay for school supplies, and it goes on and on.

I wonder if the member could comment about that. When he talks about nation, what critical elements must be in place to building a strong, healthy nation in Canada?

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, we have a couple of concepts here. We have the idea of a nation within a country and we have the nation that we are talking about, Quebec. We have the nation of first nations. We have other nations who have a right to call themselves a nation within our federal context. However, the question that my hon. colleague addresses, that of poverty, that of injustice, vis-à-vis our first nations, is not acceptable.

In order to keep our country together, it is imperative that we address those concerns. We are only as rich as the poorest people. We are only as rich as those people who live in those outlying area, who can have access to water, and who can have access to all the good things that we all desire.

Government Orders

• (1230)

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

[*Translation*]

I am honoured to rise today to speak in favour of the government motion, which reads as follows:

That this House recognize that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada.

[*English*]

I am proud as a Canadian and as a member of this government to fight for one Canada, strong and united.

For me, a nation is a people, usually from the same geographic area, who largely share a common language, culture, history and sensibility. This describes les Québécoises et les Québécois.

We will soon be celebrating the 400th anniversary of Quebec City in 2008, a national celebration in which our government is a proud partner. We recognize that Quebec was and still is the cradle of the francophonie in North America. Over 400 years, despite the vagaries of history and changing powers, the Quebec people, the French language, their culture and traditions, survive because of the courage, the determination, the tenacity and the creativity of generations of les Québécois.

This is every Québécois' heritage, their strength and great source of pride. It is also Canada's heritage, our strength and our source of pride. Their unique history and place in our country is integral to who we are as Canadians. Les Québécois survived as a nation, from its founding as New France, through its days as a British colony, to the creation of Canada. This set the tone for the kind of country we were to become, the kind of country we wanted to be, and the Canada of today.

The spirit of tolerance, of cohabitation between English and French Canada leads directly to our Canada: a multicultural mosaic, enriched by peoples and cultures from all over the world. Our diversity, our openness, our freedom, our security and our way of life are the envy of the world.

A large part of where we are today and the good fortune we enjoy flow from the legacy of Quebec. From the first meetings of the aboriginal peoples and the French, to the arrival of other Europeans, followed by peoples from all over the world, we have become who we are together: one Canada. We cannot take away any one essential aspect of that totality. We must believe in a Canada as we know it and love it today.

We believe in a united Canada, but we also believe in a Canada that respects its provinces, territories and regions. That is why the Prime Minister signed an agreement with the premier of Quebec earlier this year to allow Quebec to fully participate in the work of UNESCO in conjunction with Canada.

[*Translation*]

Canada's new government has recognized the unique character of Quebecers and their major national and international contribution in the fields of science, education and culture.

[*English*]

That is why this government is rigorously pursuing the ratification of the UNESCO convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. We will make sure that Canada's bilingual and diverse cultural character is faithfully reflected on the international scene.

Both I and my colleague, Madame Line Beauchamp, Quebec's minister of culture, are taking every opportunity to encourage our colleagues from other countries to pursue ratification of the convention.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

As the Minister of Canadian Heritage, in recent months, I have had the opportunity to meet more than 50 representatives from Quebec cultural and artistic groups. These meetings have allowed me to get a better understanding of their reality.

[*English*]

I understand just how vibrant and innovative the cultural community of Quebec is and how important it is to the cultural life of all Canadians.

We recognize that language is an integral part of one's culture and heritage.

[*Translation*]

Quebec is recognized in this country and in the world for its artistic and cultural wealth, vitality and diversity. The innovative and creative spirit of Quebecers is undeniable. There is no doubt that Quebec's talents, creativity and cultural dynamism are marks of excellence in our country and contribute to our country's growth on the international level.

[*English*]

Les Québécois enrich our country. Together we have a face in the international forum that is unique, strong and envied. Les Québécois bring an essential element to our identity as a country. That is our vision of Quebec. That is our vision of Canada. That is why I believe les Québécois et les Québécoises form a nation within a united Canada.

Canada is made up of small communities, neighbourhoods, families and individuals. Each one of us believes in a strong country. Each one of us believes that we work hard to contribute to our country and also to reap the benefits of living in such a fine country. We must embrace every individual, every neighbourhood, every community, every province and every nationality in order that we can remain strong and united. That includes les Québécoises et les Québécois.

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to speak about the advantages today for the people of Quebec continuing to play their rightful role at the heart of the broader country they themselves have helped build, that is, Canada.

Government Orders

I want to focus in particular on the benefits to both Quebeckers and other Canadians of continuing to build on Canada's economic success story. Federal states such as Canada operate not only to preserve and promote diversity and allow for the harmonious co-existence of nations, but also to bring concrete benefits to all members of the federation.

[Translation]

The benefits of the political and economic union for Canada are among the most tangible.

[English]

When events around the world can disrupt economic activity, our strong, robust and integrated economy represents a tremendous advantage. In times of need or crisis, it is always a benefit to be able to rely on mutual support that Canadians in all parts of the country can offer each other. This is especially true today in the face of globalization and the rapidly evolving new rules that govern the international economy. These new developments are placing a premium on the ability of nations around the globe to achieve a degree of economic integration that safeguards and promotes their prosperity.

Economic integration is no longer a vague concept that only economists talk about. It has become a reality. Our economy is a global economy. The benefits of economic integration have been demonstrated and those countries that pay attention to the lessons to be learned reap the rewards of prosperity. Canada is one of those countries.

The focus on economic policy is not an end in itself, but a means to broaden the range of choices available to all members of our federation, including the choices on how to improve our quality of life made by individual Canadians themselves, by the larger communities of shared interests and national identity to which they belong, and by their federal, municipal and local governments. Quebeckers and other Canadians have long shared the same basic values: inter-regional sharing, a universal commitment to the best possible public services, respect for diversity, innovation and autonomy throughout the country, an undying belief in democracy and freedom, and mutual respect for other cultures.

Quebeckers and other Canadians also place a high value on living in a country that is healthy, safe and prosperous. Canada is a model for how countries can amplify the strengths of their component parts into a sum that is far stronger economically, and speaks with a far stronger voice in international economic forums than all of those component parts could ever do on their own.

We would do well to remember that Canada is not the first country where the weaving of strong economic and political ties has led to economic prosperity, nor is it alone in today's world.

• (1240)

[Translation]

Throughout history, there have been many examples of successful countries that have united the economic interests of their diverse constituents and prospered.

[English]

One of the great examples is that of Great Britain. Great Britain was and remains today a union of nations. Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, was one of the principal architects, along with George-Étienne Cartier of not only our political confederation, but also of the Canadian economic union. He viewed himself as a Scot as well as a member of a larger nation that was Great Britain, as well as a Canadian.

John A. knew something about nations. He was also not afraid of words. On one occasion he said in referring to the people of Quebec:

Treat them as a faction and they will react like a faction. Treat them as a nation and they will react like a nation.

And like many Scots in the history of both Britain and Canada, members of the Québécois nation contributed greatly to Canada's economic development. Recognizing the Québécois as a nation is simply recognizing what they are and the historic role they have played and continue to play in advancing Canada's economic advantage.

Today, according to the OECD, Canada's economy is one of the strongest among OECD countries. In the OECD's view, Canada has worked steadily to become one of the world's most open economies.

Under the leadership of Canada's new government, our Prime Minister and our finance minister, Canada's economy is among the fastest growing in the G-7. We are on the best economic footing of any of the G-7 countries.

Recent public consultations and commissioned experts' work on Canada's internal market indicate that when compared to similar efforts to reform the economic union in Australia and in the European Union, Canada is still considered to be ahead of the EU and comparable to Australia in terms of economic integration.

But we still face major challenges. We need to further strengthen our economic union to improve our ability to compete in the global market. We need to reduce our remaining internal barriers to mobility and trade within Canada, and make Canada an even more attractive destination for foreign direct investment.

We also need to continue speaking with a strong and united voice in defending and promoting open trade internationally. International trade remains a central driver of Canada's economy.

[Translation]

The advantages of pooling our economic strengths within a united Canada are as relevant today—in a globalized market and unstable world—as they ever were.

[English]

In the various international forums that are increasingly important in securing economic prosperity, it is as crucial as ever to speak with a strong, united voice.

After all, there is a world of difference between having the right to speak out and having the power to make oneself heard.

Government Orders

I submit that Quebecers benefit greatly from being part of the Canadian voice and are heard more loudly as a consequence. It is certainly the case that all Canadians benefit greatly from having the voices of Quebecers joining those of other Canadians in formulating the Canadian voice upon the international stage.

As a Canadian, but also as an Albertan who loves his province very deeply, I submit that advancing our common interests and values is best done by binding together. As history has shown, a strong and united country provides the best conditions for societies and economies to flourish.

Think of how deeply integrated our economy is. Think of how much stronger our voices are when speaking in unison.

I support this motion because I firmly believe we must do what we can to safeguard the vital ties that bind Quebecers and other Canadians within a strong, united Canada.

* * *

•(1245)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions between all the parties, and I think you will find there is unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, in relation to private members' business, any votes deferred to Wednesday, November 29, 2006, be further deferred to Tuesday, December 5, 2006 at 3 p.m.; and on Wednesday, November 29, 2006, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be 5:30 p.m., and private members' business shall be cancelled.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

* * *

THE QUÉBÉCOIS

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the motion that this question be now put.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a Canadian, and I am proud to be a Quebecer. No, let me rephrase that. I am passionately proud to be a Canadian and passionately proud to be a Quebecer.

I would like to give a brief account of my personal history, not because it is an extraordinary history, but because, on the contrary, it reflects the history of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of Quebecers.

On my maternal grandfather's side, I have Acadian roots, even though my grandfather, Louis Doucet, was born in Quebec and grew up there, including in Montreal. His roots went back to the area of the Maritimes known as Acadia.

My paternal grandfather came to Canada from Italy in the 1920s, via Ellis Island in New York. He became a barber and had a shop in the bus terminal on Craig Street, a building that no longer exists, where Montreal's convention centre now stands and where, in two weeks' time, my party and I will elect the next leader of the Liberal Party and the next Prime Minister of Canada.

My children speak both official languages. My two daughters are fluently bilingual and enjoy the fruits of English and French culture equally. My spouse is not from Quebec and is not French-speaking by birth. She comes from the west. She lived in Calgary, Alberta, for most of her life. But she is fully bilingual because, when she was five, her parents, who did not speak a word of French but were inspired by Trudeau's vision of Canada, decided to enrol her in a French immersion school. She now lives in Montreal. She is proud to be a Canadian, and she considers herself a Quebecer.

I would like to tell another anecdote, because it brings me to the central point of my speech. Because I have family in Alberta, I sometimes fly from Montreal to Calgary. One summer, on a plane, I sat next to a young, extremely dynamic francophone Quebecer, who had made a life for himself in Calgary. He was a general contractor who was caught up in the economic boom that has been going on in Calgary for the past few years.

I will support the government's motion on the nation of Quebec, but I cannot support the Bloc Québécois motion.

•(1250)

[*English*]

I can support one motion on the Quebec nation but not the other, and I will give my reasons.

Many people underscore the fact that the Quebec National Assembly has unanimously endorsed the idea of a Quebec nation. I would add that this is perfectly normal. The Quebec National Assembly is responsible for life within the boundaries of the province of Quebec. It is not responsible, in any direct way, for French-speaking minorities outside of Quebec.

The motion that the Bloc has presented is a territorial motion. It speaks of a Quebec nation as defined by the boundaries of the province of Quebec, and I cannot support a motion that takes a territorial view of the Quebec nation.

I do not believe it is the business of the federal government to define culture and society in a given province. It is ironic because whenever the federal government gets involved in grey areas of possibly provincial jurisdiction, many of the provincial premiers and provincial governments, rightly, and, of course, our colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, protest. However, when it comes to having the federal government bestow a definition on a culture or a society within provincial boundaries, it does not seem to bother anyone.

Government Orders

I am supporting the government motion because it speaks about recognizing the Québécois as a nation, not the territory of Quebec, and that is very important. Because, like the young Québécois man with whom I shared a plane ride to Calgary, he was not living in Quebec. Many Canadians of French-speaking origin who live outside of Quebec believe themselves to be and think of themselves as being Québécois because they trace their ancestry to those French-speaking people who came and settled in New France which became Quebec. The French-speaking people in eastern Ontario or in New Brunswick can identify themselves as Québécois, descendants of Quebec, of New France.

The other reason that I prefer the Quebec nation definition in the government's motion is that it allows for self-identification. It does not say that because people live in Quebec they must consider themselves Québécois. Some people are proud Quebecers and some of them in my riding and in other ridings love Quebec. But they prefer not to identify themselves as Québécois as strongly as maybe others. The element of self-identification is very important.

If all parties agree to support this motion today to designate Quebec as a nation in a motion of Parliament, not in a law and not in a constitutional amendment, if we feel comfortable with that idea, it would be in no small measure because of successive measures and laws by successive Liberal governments that have built the modern Canada that we know, that have created the framework in which we can recognize, legally and constitutionally, the rights of a French-speaking society from coast to coast to coast. Whether we speak of the Official Languages Act or of the minority language education guarantees in the Charter of Rights, we have created, through successive Liberal governments and through the vision of Pierre Trudeau, a society, a country that includes a French-speaking society from coast to coast to coast of which many of those French-speaking Canadians can identify themselves as Québécois.

• (1255)

I know my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and their Parti Québécois cousins in Quebec will try to use this as a pretext to continue with their independence agenda. If they do take that road, we must remind Canadians of the strength of this country, of our belief in the equality of Canadians and in the fundamental equality of provinces, and that through working with all the provinces and nations within this country we can create something very unique in the world, a society where people come together in solidarity to protect fundamental social values that we all share, values of social justice, values that have led to policies such as medicare and values that have made this country great.

I will be supporting the government's motion because it is not a territorial motion. I obviously will not be supporting the Bloc's motion, which, as I said, is a pretext for carrying on the fight for an independent Quebec.

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to a motion that goes to the heart of what it means to be a Canadian. As a Canadian from the centre of Canada, Manitoba, today's motion is an opportunity to remind ourselves what is at stake not only for the Québécois but also for all Canada.

The success of our country has not happened by accident. It is not something which can or should be taken for granted. We think of Canada as a young country, a country, as has often been said, with more geography than history. It is, therefore, ironic that this young country should also be one of the oldest democracies and one of the oldest federations on the planet.

Canada represents a paradigm shift from the 19th century nationalism of a nation state based on cultural, linguistic and ethnic homogeneity. Canada was premised on the concept of diversity as a permanent characteristic. The Fathers of Confederation chose a form of government uniquely suited to expressing and accommodating regional, linguistic and religious diversity. The most important example of this diversity was undoubtedly the existence of the two major language groups.

One of the major factors in the creation of Canada as a federation was the presence of Quebec. The founders of our country wanted to build a country which embraced our diversity. Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, stated very well:

I have no accord with the desire expressed in some quarters that by any mode whatever there should be an attempt made to oppress the one language or to render it inferior to the other; I believe that would be impossible if it were tried, and it would be foolish and wicked if it were possible.

Cartier stated in the Confederation debates:

We could not legislate for the disappearance of the French Canadians from American soil, but British and French Canadians alike could appreciate and understand their position relative to each other.

He went on to say, "It is a benefit rather than otherwise to have a diversity of races".

From a historical perspective, we have a long tradition of dealing with the accommodations necessary in a society with two important language groups. The federal structure is perhaps the most obvious, but by no means the only structure possible.

In the context of a North America which is overwhelming English-speaking, the Canadian federation has provided the framework for an effective commitment to the continuity and survival of a French speaking society centred in, but not limited to, Quebec.

Today it is hard to imagine any other arrangement which would have served us so well and one which, 140 years later, is still a model for the world.

The challenge of accommodating diversity is perhaps one of the most difficult facing the world today. The recent debate in Quebec on what constitutes reasonable accommodation for religious minorities is echoed in similar debates across the globe.

Diversity is a modern reality. Most states in Europe, Asia or Africa contain a variety of languages, religions and cultures, and many of the most successful in dealing with this diversity have chosen a federal system of government. Looked at from a contemporary world viewpoint, it is the apparently homogenous states that are the exception.

Government Orders

●(1300)

The nation state, which implies the parallel occurrence of a state and an ethnic nation, is extremely rare. In fact, there are no ideal nation states. Existing states differ from this ideal in two ways: the population includes minorities; and they do not include all the national groups in their territory.

Today, Canada is a prosperous, politically stable country because we have made diversity an asset rather than a problem. Canadians are able, as a result, to make democratic choices based on the respect of human rights. Today, more than ever, we understand that accommodating pluralism is not merely a political necessity, but also a source of pride and enrichment which reflects Canadian values.

Our capacity to develop and adapt as a society and to build institutions that respond to demands of its citizens has served us very well. Federalism is the natural response to governing a large, demographically and regionally diverse country. With 10 provinces, three territories, six time zones and bordering on three oceans, Canada's regional diversity is obvious.

Our diversity is also reflected in our two official languages. Almost all Canadians speak English or French and one in five also speaks a non-official language. In Newfoundland and Labrador, 98% have English as a mother tongue, while in Quebec 81% have French as a mother tongue. In Nunavut 79% speak Inuktitut, a language spoken by less than one in a thousand Canadians.

Today, nearly one million Canadians report an aboriginal identity. This is also a rapidly growing segment of our population.

Canada is increasingly urban and multicultural. In 2001 nearly 80% of Canadians lived in cities of over 10,000. Today, Canada's immigration population represents 41% of the growth in 2004 and new Canadians tend to settle in our major urban centres. Between 1996 and 2001, Toronto received more than 445,000 immigrants, 180,000 settled in Vancouver and 126,000 in Montreal.

Beyond accommodating regional preferences and diversity, the Canadian federation has provided an environment which is complementary to national, provincial and cultural identities, all of which have flourished. Federalism allows and encourages experimentation in political, social and economic matters.

Quebec is inescapably in the heart of the Canadian dream. Canada's values have been shaped by the challenge of understanding each other and responding to the presence of two major language communities with courage, generosity and sensitivity. Each successive generation of Canadians has had to face this challenge.

The choice we have made expresses our shared hopes for the future of this vast land and has made us the envy of the world. Anyone who has travelled extensively outside our borders knows that Canada remains one of the world's most favoured nations. Our prosperity and our civility are the product of much hard work and cannot be taken for granted.

Canada is a pluralistic society not only because we have the diversity that is the makeup of our population, whether it be linguistic, cultural, ethnic or regional, but more important, because we have come to understand that these differences contribute to our national community.

●(1305)

Across the country Canadians work together in a variety of ways to build a better nation that either group could not build in isolation. As a result, Canada has become a model for other countries. In a world with some 6,000 languages and only 200 states, pluralism is the norm, not the exception.

Success requires a uniquely Canadian talent, the ability to work together and transcend our diversity. This vision of Canada as a nation, inspired by generosity and tolerance, has repeatedly triumphed over the narrow ethnic tribalism.

Canadians in Quebec and across the country are proud of our success. Our Canada includes a strong, vibrant francophone Quebec. Canada and Canadians have every reason to be proud of our francophone heritage, which is centred in Quebec and very much alive across Canada. It enriches our public life, arts and culture and is a source of cultural enrichment for millions of Canadians who speak French as a first or second language.

Canada's diversity is a source of strength from which all Canadians benefit. Our respect for diversity has in no small manner contributed to the enviable reputation we enjoy throughout the world. We would not have it any other way.

I am, like much of humanity, genuinely perplexed by the desire of certain intellectuals in Quebec to form an independent state. This is why I support the motion of the Conservative Party. We are a strong Canada. We respect the great contribution that the Québécois have given our nation.

I am also very appreciative of my friends in Quebec and the Québécois for exposing me to another language. I have undergone French language training. I am only beginning, but I would like to continue it because I want to be able to reach out to my friends in Quebec. Canada is a great country and I hope, after this motion is passed, we can focus on the things that matter to all Canadians: the economy, health care, justice.

We all want hope. We all want to live the Canadian dream and that dream includes the Québécois in a united and free Canada. As it says in our national anthem, "God keep our land glorious and free".

●(1310)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, my name is not on the list of members who are to speak to this motion today. I believe there was a mistake. I am supposed to speak to Bill C-278.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Government Orders

Mr. Christian Paradis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this House to show my support for the motion put forward this week by the Prime Minister. I consider this an historic moment.

Yesterday, my hon. colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin shared a number of quotations to clearly illustrate the current state of affairs in Quebec. I find it very interesting that he quoted great Quebec premiers such as Daniel Johnson, Jean Lesage and Robert Bourassa.

I will not list all of them here, but something came out of all that. It is a fact. Quebecers form a nation within a united Canada.

Why is it a fact? Because Quebec has a specific culture, one that is based on the French language, its own history and its French heritage. This is very important because this creates something extraordinary. In Canada, our country, we have two main cultures. One is English and the other is French. This is what enriches our country.

For my part, I will give the following example: I was trained as a lawyer. I studied law in the early 1990s. What I found fascinating during my studies was that Quebec has a civil law system, but it also has to consider the whole common law system, which comes from British law. It is an asset. Few places in the world give us access to such an asset. Lawyers in Quebec, in Montreal, are in demand because they have a double knowledge of the culture of law.

Such examples show what our country is today. Quebecers come from one of the founding peoples of Canada, our country. In all the numerous Canadian institutions, Quebec has left its mark. It is a great asset.

I take this opportunity to recognize the leadership that the Prime Minister has shown this week. He did something courageous. It is the first time that this issue has been brought explicitly before the federal Parliament. The Prime Minister agreed that the debate should take place here.

Although this is a given in Quebec, and people are aware of it and it is part of their lives, the Prime Minister felt that he had to take a stand on this issue. This is in keeping with the fundamental view of government held by our party, which wishes to exercise an open federalism and not centralize everything as the previous government tried to do.

Each region in our country is different from the next and each is equally rich in its own way. This diversity has enriched our country. I believe that open federalism will enable us to evolve. The same applies to the discussion of any issue: the less we debate the issue, the less chance that we will arrive at a complete understanding.

In our country, we have various points of view that make Canada what it is today, a credible and recognized global leader.

I am pleased that the words “united Canada” are part of the motion. Personally, when I entered politics as a Conservative, I believed in open federalism. We must not be satisfied with defending the interests of Quebec. We must promote them. We must move forward and take the offensive.

•(1315)

We live in a united Canada and we are moving our interests in that direction.

I believe that is how we will succeed. We will not succeed by arriving with the idea of separation.

These are my points of view that I wished to put forward today. I will be pleased to support this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the speech from the member opposite and found it quite interesting.

One of the primary difficulties or impediments that I see with respect to the motion by the Bloc is that, by my reading of it, it speaks not at all to those French speaking Canadians who live outside the province of Quebec, some half a million in Ontario alone, let alone all of those other thousands and thousands of French speaking Canadians who live in other provinces.

I would like the member opposite to comment on his view of that and whether or not the motion by the Prime Minister, which refers specifically to the Québécois, is in fact as significant as I see it to be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Christian Paradis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

Of course, when I say that I support the motion introduced by the Prime Minister which recognizes that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada, I think that the word “Québécois” makes sense because we talk about all Quebecers, no matter where they are.

Thus, it is a fundamental perspective that takes this aspect into account and reflects the Prime Minister's wisdom; I think that it is important to go that way.

Once again, I express my support for the Prime Minister's motion. I think that it is a big step forward and I am proud to say that we recognize the fact that Quebec is a nation in a united Canada. One does not contradict the other.

Once again, at the risk of repeating myself, I will say that Quebec's culture enriches Canada. Even though it is a statement of fact, even though everybody knows that it has been there for many years, it is satisfying, and, from a historical point of view, it is important that the Prime Minister of Canada is now ready to recognize that fact with a motion like the one he introduced this week.

I think it is a courageous gesture that will be beneficial to our country's unity and one that represents a great step forward.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you know, I am a Franco-Ontarian member, but I would also like to explain or point out that my roots are in Quebec.

My grandfather and my father were born in Quebec City, and my father's family, with the same last name, also lives in Quebec.

Private Members' Business

As a family, we are very proud of our contribution to our country. We are also very proud of our heritage. My colleague here lives in Quebec. He comes from Quebec and his constituents live in Quebec as well.

I would like to know whether he can share with the House his constituents' feelings and views about our motion.

• (1320)

Mr. Christian Paradis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his interesting question. It is very interesting indeed. My constituents are very pleased with what is happening today because we are talking about open federalism.

Once again, we see that the Prime Minister of Canada wants to move things forward and make things work for our country's unity. That is leadership, and it shows that he is really listening to Quebecers.

I speak on behalf of my riding, but it is clear that this motion is welcome in all regions of Quebec. People are ready to talk about it and they want to hear people talk about it. Putting forward a motion like this one, which is about recognizing reality and has nothing to do with abstract ideas, shows the path that the government plans to take by creating open federalism, correcting the fiscal imbalance, recognizing Quebecers for who they are and valuing their immeasurable contribution to Canadian culture.

[English]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I notice that the member hesitated during his response when he started to say Quebec and then immediately corrected himself to say Quebecers or the Québécois. Canadians probably are interested to know why there is a difference if the resolution were to say Quebec as opposed to Quebecer or the Québécois.

The member commented about the actions of the Prime Minister, and while the federalist members within the House unanimously will support the motion, it is interesting from my perspective to look at the dynamics of how this unfolded. It appeared to have its genesis quite a long time ago. More recently, I would think that there were discussions by Quebec Liberal Party members with regard to a resolution to start dealing with the issue of recognizing, or in their case, I think they used the word "officialize" the recognition of the special nature of Quebecers.

Following that there has been about a month long discussion on the question and then this motion was proposed by the Bloc, and so now we have another vote. It appeared to be somewhat of an effort to be a little mischievous with regard to the discussions going on during the Liberal leadership convention campaign which is going on right now. Once that came in, almost immediately the Prime Minister reacted to ensure that the additional phrase "within a united Canada" was added because of the concern that there was a opening that would be interpreted in the wrong way.

There has been some progression. I can assure the member that should the matter have not been dealt with by the Prime Minister, who has the principal responsibility of taking the lead on matters of representing the country on behalf of all Canadians, that certainly the Liberal Party would have made the same motion. That is why we are so delighted that it is before us and that we can have this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could seek the unanimous consent of the House to extend this question section for about four minutes, given that it would be difficult for someone to rise and begin a speech but have to finish it at a later time.

• (1325)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent for a four minute extension?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): There is no consent.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, does the member believe that Canadians are aware of the sensitivities of the words using Quebec versus Quebecer or Québécois and the reason why it was important to put that last phrase into the motion with regard to a united Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Christian Paradis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question. In my remarks earlier on, I wanted to read the motion as written, which mentions the Québécois. I think that is what matters here.

The member for Brant raised this point for good reason. I think it is the people, not the territory, who form a nation. Regardless of where Quebecers find themselves in this country, they belong to the Quebec nation. That is how I understand the motion and that is also why, in my remarks just now, I chose my words with great care so as not to distort the motion, but to talk about it as it is written.

As for my colleague's other comments, there was some build-up to this. That question was raised this week and is being raised again.

[English]

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is late and perhaps it is time for us to get ready to head back to our ridings for the weekend. In that spirit, I think if you were to seek it you may find unanimous consent to see the clock as being 1:30 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 1:30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from October 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-278, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (benefits for illness, injury or quarantine), be now read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the Bloc Québécois to speak on this bill to amend the Employment Insurance Act with respect to benefits for illness, injury or quarantine. The bill was put before this House by the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria under private members' business.

In summary, this bill extends the period for which benefits for illness, injury or quarantine may be paid from 15 weeks to 50 weeks. I want to commend the member for his bill, which humanizes the EI program and takes into account the needs of those whose illness lasts longer than the prescribed period of 15 weeks.

I cannot help, however, but express surprise, surprise and joy, over the fact that such a bill was introduced by the member for Sydney—Victoria, when it is a well-known fact that, in May of 2005, at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the Liberals, who were in government at the time, opposed a motion of that committee which was relatively similar to what the member is proposing today.

The hon. member for Sydney—Victoria was asked to explain this about face. I must admit that I find the hon. member's explanation for this somewhat amusing. Truly, his words should be quoted. However I also find his comments reassuring. It goes to show there is always hope. It is always possible, when faced with an obvious injustice, that reason and common sense will prevail.

Let us come back to the comments by the hon. member who said the following in response to his about face and that of the Liberals, "The reality is that our society is changing. At one time people who got cancer died. Now they get cancer and they come back to society and they are also working."

Between the position of the Liberals forming the government in May 2005 and their position today, in November 2006, in the span of a year and a half, I would say that the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria, once in opposition, opened his heart and mind to understand the situation of workers in difficult situations following a prolonged illness, despite their desire to go back to work.

To the Bloc Québécois it is clear. Our party always strived to propose improvements to the employment insurance program and changes we deem necessary. We have always been in favour of substantial improvements to the employment insurance program.

In fact, the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle, from the Bloc Québécois, introduced, in May 2006, Bill C-269, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (improvement of the employment insurance system). This bill received support from the House in October to be referred for consideration by the standing committee.

We are confident that all the opposition parties will support Bill C-269 and we strongly encourage the Conservative minority government to support it as well.

The Bloc Québécois also introduced, in October, Bill C-344, sponsored by my colleague from Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, entitled An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (Employment Insurance Account and premium rate setting).

Private Members' Business

Previously there was Bill C-280 from the hon. member for Manicouagan, on creating an independent employment insurance fund. It was passed at second reading on April 13, 2005. Unfortunately, there was no vote at third reading.

In November 2004, my colleague, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières, introduced her Bill C-278, a bill that proposed amendments to the employment insurance program.

Thus the House has paid particular attention to employment insurance in the last year is thanks in part to the efforts of the Bloc Québécois.

With regard to the bill before us, without getting into the actuarial and statistical details, it must be understood that it would help first and foremost workers suffering from the most serious illnesses, the oldest workers and mostly women.

• (1330)

I wonder how can anyone be opposed to that. I am convinced though that the Conservatives will find a way. Claims for sickness benefits have decreased among young people aged 15 to 24 and among workers aged 25 to 44 while they have increased among workers aged 45 to 54 and among older workers aged 55 and over.

Also, during the reference period, claims for sickness benefits decreased among men and increased among women. Even though the proportion of women who filed claims for sickness benefits remained relatively stable in 2004-05, women continued to file the majority of claims for this type of benefits, with 59%.

The last monitoring and assessment report of the Canada Employment Insurance Commission stated, and I quote:

About 32% of sickness beneficiaries in 2004/05 used the entire 15 weeks of benefits to which they were entitled. This proportion has been relatively stable in recent years, suggesting that for some types of claimants or illnesses, 15 weeks of EI benefits may not be sufficient.

I may have already mentioned that I was trained as a social worker. During my professional career, I often had to deal with workers who had left their job, because they were sick. Take cancer, a disease that is really wreaking havoc these days. One Canadian in three may be struck by cancer. A person who undergoes chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatments over a number of long weeks goes through a painful experience that leaves him exhausted for a period longer than the 15 weeks covered by employment insurance.

In other words, the 15 weeks currently provided under the employment insurance program are not enough to ensure a full recovery for the person who gets these treatments and who manages to get cured. We often talk about these people, but we should not forget that caregivers—and the bill may be silent on this—who support cancer patients, because they are spouses, children or family members, also get exhausted in the process. Unfortunately, these caregivers must, at the end of the process, leave their job, for reasons of sickness and exhaustion, because they supported that relative or friend throughout his battle with cancer.

I am asking our governments to also reflect on the situation of caregivers who, in my opinion, are not getting much support from them.

Private Members' Business

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois intends to support this bill, which reminds us of the importance of reforming the employment insurance program. I wish to point out that Bill C-269, sponsored by the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle, is more complete than that of the Liberals, which still does not propose an in-depth reform of a program that is ill-suited and unavailable to over 50% of those who should be covered by it.

This is why we hope that parliamentarians in this House will support real improvements, such as those presented in Bill C-269.

● (1335)

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak about Bill C-278, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (benefits for illness, injury or quarantine), and to continue the debate on this bill.

This bill will allow people who claim sickness benefits under the employment insurance program to receive benefits for a maximum of 50 weeks instead of 15 weeks, as the program currently provides.

I say that the bill will “allow” claimants to receive benefits, because they will not necessarily use the full 50 weeks, but will have access to benefits for a longer period.

The 2005 report on employment insurance by the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development indicates that roughly 32% of sickness benefits claimants in 2004-05 received benefits for 15 weeks. According to a survey, 75% of the 500 respondents stated that this period was not long enough. In addition, 76% of the respondents said they had missed more than 15 weeks of work.

Clearly, there is a real need to amend the Employment Insurance Act. But let us turn our attention back to the bill.

This bill is for the men and women, the workers who have been diagnosed with cancer or a serious illness, illnesses that may require medical treatment that lasts longer than the 15 weeks provided for in the Employment Insurance Act. We also have to consider recovery time, which is just as important and necessary to successful treatment.

Imagine being diagnosed with cancer and having to undergo treatment to beat the cancer and increase your chances of survival. Imagine having to choose between getting better and going to work. The last thing anyone would want to worry about is money and keeping a job. Regaining health becomes the only goal. Fighting the disease is the priority.

Those are the people for whom this bill was drafted and introduced in this House.

Why should a family worry about its finances when the mother is seriously ill? It seems to me that the most reasonable thing to do would be to try to ease the family's suffering. This bill gives us the power to do that.

This bill is intended for future mothers and pregnant women whose health, or whose baby's health, is at risk and therefore must stop all activity during their pregnancy. At present, these women who use all their sick leave in such situations are left with a shorter maternity leave and forced to return to work earlier than planned.

When the Liberal government extended maternity leave to one year, it was absolutely convinced of the importance of this year of leave. We of the NDP are just as convinced. For the best possible development, a newborn baby needs to form a strong emotional bond with his or her mother. This bond is formed over time and with the mother's presence.

What could be more painful for a mother than to have to return to work after only a few months spent with her newborn? This bill will allow these women to stay at home longer and take advantage of their full maternity leave with their baby. This is good news to the NDP.

This bill is also intended for workers who burn out at work. Burnout affects a vast majority of Canadians. Rest and reducing stress levels are two important remedies. People who must return to work after just 15 weeks of sick leave do not have the opportunity to recuperate and get back on their feet. Burnout symptoms often re-emerge, and the changes of getting over them are slim.

● (1340)

In 2005, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities tabled the report *Restoring Financial Governance and Accessibility in the Employment Insurance Program*. This report contained 28 recommendations, including Recommendation 27 which reads:

The Committee recommends that the government study the possibility of extending sickness benefits by 35 weeks for those who suffer from a prolonged and serious illness.

The Liberal government at the time did not consider this recommendation and never took the necessary steps to implement it. As for the Conservative members, they did not support the report but they did support this recommendation.

The NDP is pleased to note that the Liberal Party has changed its mind and is tabling a bill on this matter in this House. I can only hope that the Conservative government will support this bill given that it supported this recommendation when the report was studied.

Today we are talking about health—the physical and mental health of Canadians. What is more precious than health? As parliamentarians we must adopt the best measures to ensure the quality of life of our citizens.

The NDP supports this bill and will vote in favour of Bill C-278 to enhance the dignity of the people, the well-being of citizens, to provide relief to families and to support the sick in their struggle.

● (1345)

[English]

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to speak today in support of Bill C-278, and to thank my colleague from Sydney—Victoria for drafting and introducing the bill.

In summary, it calls for the extension of EI benefits to those who are suffering from a prolonged illness, injury or quarantine, from 15 weeks currently, to 50 weeks. This is also consistent with the 2005 subcommittee report on EI reform that made 28 recommendations, supported by the Conservatives, and, of course, this was one of them.

It is a question of compassion and of common sense. It would provide an innovative and cost effective solution to a problem that many of my constituents have faced, continue to face and will face again and again if we do not provide the much needed help.

Many people in my riding of Labrador have no supplemental private health coverage to assist during a catastrophic illness and to help assist them and their families through the illness. This is especially the case for seasonal workers and those in the fishery, and many throughout Labrador.

With or without such coverage, treatment for catastrophic and long term illnesses, such as cancer, which is never easy under the best of circumstances, is even more difficult for people in rural, northern and remote areas of our country, and Labrador is one of those places.

The health care infrastructure and expertise simply does not exist in many areas of Labrador. This means that people must travel or even relocate to a larger centre just to get the treatment they need, treatment that people in other areas of Canada take for granted.

It was very depressing to hear, in a report from the Rural Physicians of Canada, that people in rural areas have a shorter life expectancy than those in urban centres.

I would like to talk for a minute about some of the hardships that people in my riding face. I was particularly struck and saddened by an e-mail I received from a lady in the small community of Cartwright. She writes that she spends nearly 60% of her time raising money to help people travel for long term illness and care. She goes from door to door asking for money. She holds raffles and raises money through ticket sales. She does all of types of things just to help people who are in long term care to receive the basics.

Our society should not be that way. When it comes to our health and what is important for us and our families, medical care is one of those things that we should not need to debate but we do, which is why I want to thank the member again for introducing this bill. It is something we not only want but it is something we need.

Despite the economic conditions in the local area of Cartwright, which I just talked about, people do give and they give generously. They give what they can as often as they can but the problem is only getting worse, especially as the population ages.

I will talk about another example. A friend of mine, who lives in the little community of Williams Harbour, where I am originally from, on the south coast of Labrador, had a very serious illness in January of this past year and only got out of the hospital in June. This not only affected him but it also affected his wife who had to travel thousands of miles with him so he could receive the care he required.

After 15 weeks, neither of them can receive EI. He cannot get a note from his doctor to go back to work as he is still recovering. This

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particular person and his wife have been left without any income whatsoever. Basically, they will need to resort to social assistance. Social assistance is not where they want to go.

The EI fund, with all of the dollars that exist in it, can provide much needed help for individuals like those in Williams Harbour and throughout other communities in Labrador. This bill would go a long way toward helping people who find themselves in this circumstance.

• (1350)

In fact, HRSB's own internal research has shown that the existing 15 week illness and injury benefit is likely not enough. One-third of all recipients use up the entire period before their treatment or recuperation is complete. Cancer treatment, of course, is the classic example, but there are other illnesses and injuries that can require long periods of treatment, therapy or recuperation for many weeks or even months.

This bill is aimed at meeting the needs of people in this situation and treating them with compassion. It will also help relieve the terrible financial burden on families and communities when a family member, neighbour or friend is faced with illness or injury. It will help those who do not otherwise have access to another government income support program or to private insurance benefits.

This bill will provide a safety net to people who find themselves in need under the worst possible circumstances. It will prevent many people from falling through the cracks. It will strengthen families and communities.

That last statement is a slogan often touted by the Conservative government. Now I would like to see the Conservatives put some action behind their words and vote for this bill. Yet, if this bill goes through, it would do so at a minimal cost, because even with an extension of illness or injury benefits from 15 to 50 weeks, the cost will be only .02% of the existing EI surplus.

I think that we as Canadians can afford that compassion. Labradorians need it and deserve it. The government can afford it. The government should vote for the bill as well.

For all these reasons, I am pleased to pledge my support for Bill C-278. I again thank and congratulate my colleague from Cape Breton for advancing this important cause through this legislation.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to take part in private members' business in the House. It is usually about something that tugs at the heartstrings and is near and dear to the people putting the bill forward.

Of course they look for all party support to try to put through their piece of legislation, but unfortunately over the history of this House, although I cannot remember the percentage off the top of my head, the number of bills that actually get royal assent and move on to become part of the social fabric of this country is minuscule. I am very concerned that a bill like this will actually face that same fate.

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Having said that, that is as kind as I can be to this bill. The member for Sydney—Victoria sat on the government side for almost 10 years. His government was in power for 13 years and did nothing to address this type of situation, absolutely nothing. Somewhere on the way to the ballot box, I guess, those members had an epiphany and decided that maybe they should do some different things with the EI fund as opposed to the political posturing and partisanship that they displayed on that fund over the years.

The biggest example of that is what the former prime minister did as finance minister. The Liberals talk about the EI surplus being there and that somehow this bill means only .02% of that surplus, but there is no surplus, because the former finance minister scooped \$42 billion. He took it and played with it to juggle his numbers to make his books look balanced. There is no surplus.

As for any moneys like this that are dedicated to a fund like EI, it is basically a tax on jobs. Everybody agrees on that. The higher the EI premiums, the more that affects the job situation across Canada. We have a very volatile job market at this point. My part of the country is very fortunate in that anybody who wants a job can have one.

The Saskatchewan government is always complaining bitterly about Alberta not having a proper minimum wage standard. Saskatchewan has just raised its minimum wage to \$7.25 now, I think, and from my latest perusal of Alberta the minimum wage is \$14 an hour. That is the starting wage at the counter at Tim Hortons. Things are going very well.

Again, the EI premiums are rolling in because of those increased paycheques for folks, but my biggest concern in regard to a bill such as this is the unintended consequence of who actually pays into that fund and how much extra it is going to cost to cover off this type of thing.

As a self-employed person in my former life, I paid the maximum into EI three times in a year, and I always got it back as an employee of my own companies, but I never got back the company portion, the 1.4%, so I was subsidizing someone else.

I certainly would not ever buy into this type of a grandiose scheme, in that it is not necessarily required in this way. I am sure I am supporting this bill to the same degree that the members opposite who are heckling did when they were on the government side. In fact, I have seen them do it, and we can certainly go back to *Hansard* and pull that up for them. What hypocrisy.

Statistics prove this. I heard the member for British Columbia Southern Interior talk about some statistics he had, but Statistics Canada itself says that nine and one-half weeks was the maximum claimed for medical reasons by 70% of the claimants, if I have those numbers correct. Certainly there are people who fall through the cracks. I get the same calls and they do tug at your heartstrings, but there are other venues.

The biggest concern I have when the members opposite talk about cancer patients, and I grieve for them, because I have had cancer patients in my own family, is that it speaks to the perverted view that the former federal government had about what was called the Canada Health Act. There were five pillars in the Health Act and the only one the government ever got mired in and was concerned about

was the public administration, which is who gets to hand out the money and take credit for it.

If we are really concerned about cancer patients and other patients who face the untimeliness of treatment, we have to go to one of the other pillars of the Health Act: the portability. The member who spoke before me talked about somebody having to go 1,000 miles to get treatment. That is supposed to be covered under portability in the Canada Health Act. People go where medical treatment is available. It is accessibility: if people cannot get treatment in their own province, they go where they need to, and the provincial government picks up the tab. That is how this is supposed to work.

It is about comprehensiveness. If some of these new leading edge treatments are not available other than thousands of miles away, patients are allowed, under the Canada Health Act, to go there. Then there is the timeliness, of course, with people talking about waiting weeks before treatment begins. I sympathize. I know that this is what is happening out there.

● (1355)

It is because of the political games and gamesmanship by that same former government that created problems that we are now trying to address by twisting other government programs to cover off the mistakes of the past. We must get back to fundamentals and address the Canada Health Act in that way.

There are credits under Revenue Canada, CCRA, for travel associated with seeking health care. They are there. It is unfortunate that one has to spend the money to get the money back and it comes off the taxes and so on. Certainly, there are people who fall through the cracks. However, this is not the way to address it.

It is important that we discuss these types of things, but we have to realize that EI was always based and founded on the idea that it is a temporary measure. We do have extensions of the EI situation, for example, the child bearing 50 week maternity benefits and so on that last up to a year. The member from B.C. southern interior was somehow alluding to the fact that this would be added on top of that, in the way I interpreted his comments, and I do not see that happening.

There still is not the take up on the actual extra months going to a year that often at this point. The vast majority of people tend to want to get back to work as quickly as they can. It is fortunate for some and unfortunate for others, but this is not an add on to those maternity benefits.

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There are certainly many more longer term illnesses out there and that is unfortunate in this country, but there are things that are done like monitoring assessment report notes. I mentioned this earlier. The 70% of the total number of claimants, or about 200,000 people a year, do not use the full 15 weeks. There are some who do and some who do not, but stretching it to 50 weeks is three times more than what most people do not make use of now. We must look at the cost of what it would do to society. It would fall to workers and employers who pay 1.4 or 1.5 times to cover this off. The problem is that this would be a killer of jobs. Short term, we might have a little bit of gain. Long term, it is going to start to backlash and fall back on us.

The Canadian Breast Cancer Network referenced a Canada Employment Insurance Commission report which clearly stated:

The analysis indicates that, on average, claimants collected 9.6 weeks or 64% of the maximum entitlement. In addition, one-third of sickness beneficiaries collected the maximum 15 weeks of benefits. Overall, these results indicate that the 15 weeks of sickness benefits provided by the EI program is meeting the needs of most claimants.

As I said before, there are always those who slip through the cracks, but the system seems to be working fairly well. It would be a perversion of that system to multiply it by three when 70% are only using two-thirds of what is out there already.

The administration of EI itself would also be greatly affected by such a change. At the present time EI sickness benefits are simply and quickly processed, that could be argued, based on medical certificates. That is for a 15 week period. Things change after the 15 weeks. How many times would people have to go back to the doctor to keep qualifying for the full 50? We already have an overloaded, overworked health system. When we start sending people back through the system multiple times to maintain that 50 weeks, I think those again would be unintended consequences.

If the duration and cost of these benefits were increased, the relatively quick response now available might suffer. I think that is true. We tend to bog down in administration in this business.

I find it hypocritical that the members opposite would bring this forward and speak out of both sides of their mouths as though the last 10 to 13 years never happened. My heart goes out to people caught, but for the vast majority this works for them. I could never support this type of perversion of the situation as I see here.

There is always the fallback on to CPP once EI funds run out. Certainly, it takes time to make that jump, but if people are proactive and get their paper work in and so on, it does pay back retroactively up to nine months if it is needed. Therefore, there are other avenues out there without totally destroying and again going after the EI fund that unfortunately does not have the substance to it that it once did because of what the previous government did when it scooped it.

In conclusion, when we look at the factors to be considered, much as we are sympathetic to those forced to be absent from work because of illness, we must ensure that the approach we follow is rational and evidence based, not just politically expedient.

• (1400)

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of my constituents of Fleetwood—Port Kells and welcome the opportunity to join in today's debate on Bill C-278,

which proposes to extend EI sickness benefits from 15 weeks to 50 weeks.

While it would be premature to give Bill C-278 a blanket endorsement at this time, I join with the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria in acknowledging the need to examine the adequacy of the current provisions surrounding EI sickness benefits.

However, before proceeding with an examination restricted solely to EI sickness benefits, I believe it is important to frame this discussion in the larger context of the overall EI program.

The EI program helps to strengthen Canada's economic performance and protects our social foundations. It is one of several tools used by the Government of Canada to support a productive, efficient and mobile labour force.

Each year, through EI, the Government of Canada provides temporary financial assistance to unemployed Canadians while they look for work or upgrade their skills. Under the program, Canadians may obtain help through employment assistance services and access to programs they need for skills training. In 2003-04 alone EI income support provided \$13.2 billion in benefits and helped 1.97 million unemployed Canadians to regain employment.

Canadians also look to the EI program to provide support at times of major transition in their lives. EI helps Canadians to bridge the gap when they are moving from one job to another, or when they are making the transition from skills upgrading back to the working world.

The EI program also provides temporary financial assistance for Canadians who are pregnant or caring for a newborn or adopted child. It also assists those who need to care for a family member or loved one who is gravely ill and provides support for those who have their own short term illness that keeps them away from their job.

As for the performance of the EI program, the most recent employment insurance monitoring and assessment report shows that EI continues to serve Canadians in an effective manner. Evidence shows that access to the EI program has remained stable. Regular EI claims decreased by 6.7%, while regular benefits decreased by 6.3%. This was consistent with the economic growth experienced over the period. Also, the number of sickness benefits remained fairly stable at just over 294,000 new claims, an increase of only 0.1% over the previous year.

When we talk about sickness benefits, as mentioned earlier, the EI program currently provides for a 15 week sickness benefit. This is designed to provide temporary income replacement for individuals who are absent from their job due to short term illness, injury or quarantine. I add emphasis on the words "temporary" or "short term" in the preceding statement.

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It is important to underline that the current 15 week duration of sickness benefits was determined following extensive research and analysis. Factors considered in setting the 15 week number included an examination of the availability of sickness benefits in Canada's private sector, comparisons to the time allotted in other countries and discussions with representatives of the medical profession.

Taking all of this into consideration, the design of Canada's EI sickness benefit, while not sufficient to cover every situation, does cover the majority.

An objective evaluation of the existing data would strongly support such an assertion. For instance, the previously referenced monitoring and assessment report noted that the average length of time for sickness benefits in 2004-05 remained stable at 9.5 weeks. Likewise, a recent Statistics Canada study reported that the average work absence owing to illness or disability remained constant at 10 weeks for the past 13 years.

When reviewed in this context, one would be hard pressed to objectively argue that the 15 week provision for EI sickness benefit is not meeting the program's objective for providing temporary income support to workers when they are ill. In addition, it is interesting to note that the party of the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria held a similar view in government not long ago.

• (1405)

The former Liberal government, responding to a report from a parliamentary committee in May 2005, declared that:

—for the majority of workers who turn to EI when they are unable to work due to illness or injury, 15 weeks is meeting the objective of providing temporary income support.

What is more, the former Liberal government's response also indicated:

In the event a worker's illness or injury extends beyond that period of time, long-term income protection may be available through the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and other employment related benefits, if applicable.

Indeed, some situations may be covered by other programs or supports that are available. For example, CPP offers coverage for long term disability and many employers provide their employees with insurance coverage purchased from the private sector.

Though it is not chiselled in stone, nevertheless, EI is not a program impervious to change. It evolves in response to changes in our economy, labour markets and the needs of workers. In fact, recently a number of changes have been made to make the EI program more responsive.

For example, Canada's new government announced in June this year an extended EI benefit pilot project. It provides access to five additional weeks of benefit to EI claimants in high unemployment regions, up to a maximum of 45 weeks. In addition, we expanded the eligibility criteria for the compassionate care benefit so a broader range of EI eligible workers could claim the benefit while they cared for a family member or a loved one.

The performance of the EI program is carefully assessed on an ongoing basis with a view to determining if additional changes are warranted. I stress the words "carefully assessed". As commendable as it would seem, a change to the EI program on the magnitude as

proposed in Bill C-278 cannot be given a blanket endorsement without a clearly defined rationale and without further examination.

There are questions that remain unanswered. What, for example, would be the approximate cost or other impacts of such a change? What would be the advice of the medical profession? What is now the practice in Canada's private sector? What has been the experience in other countries that include sickness benefits in their employment insurance systems? All these considerations deserve a thorough examination prior to moving forward.

Plainly much more information is needed to understand the consequences and costs of increasing the duration of the EI sickness benefit.

While it can be acknowledged that the current 15 weeks provision may not be sufficient in selected cases, we must also recognize that blanket support for Bill C-278 at the present, without the required data to make an informed decision, would be premature. However, this does not preclude further examination on the implications of extending EI sickness benefits, ideally within and outside the confines of Bill C-278.

• (1410)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Before I recognize the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria, the sponsor of Bill C-278, I would like to give fair warning to members that once he speaks, no one else can speak on this issue.

The hon. member for Sydney—Victoria for a five minute right of reply.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I close out the second reading debate on Bill C-278, I want to take this opportunity to thank all members of this House who have contributed to this debate. I know my colleagues in the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party and the Bloc have been particularly supportive of the bill. I thank the respective critics from those parties for their ongoing support.

I also listened with great interest to the comments from the government benches. Recognizing I only have a few minutes here today, I would like to touch briefly on a few points raised in this debate by the members across the floor.

The first point pertains to the argument that to raise EI benefits from 15 to 50 weeks could cause problems for people who have employer sponsored insured plans or private coverage. I want to be clear that my bill is not intended for people who have such coverage. My bill is intended for people who do not have coverage. Bill C-278 seeks to address the people who have no such private or corporate plans that they can access.

These people find themselves, after 15 weeks, without any money for rent, heat and groceries. This needs to be rectified. We need to have programming in place so these people can focus on getting better and not need to worry about the basic needs of keeping warm and being fed.

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Another argument put forward by the new government relating to CPP long term disability benefits was that CPP was a complementary program that already serves the objectives of my bill. The rationale here, of course, is that a person can access EI sickness benefits for 15 weeks and if they have a longer term disability then they can go on CPP. In theory this sounds sensible but, regrettably, in practice it is often not the case.

The real life fact is that people are routinely denied CPP disability because they do not meet the stringent criteria. For an example of this I would encourage members on the government's benches to speak to one of their own, the Conservative member of Parliament from Saskatoon. In an early 2005 article that appeared in the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix*, that member told the story of one of his constituents who was battling cancer but was being denied long term CPP. The member and his constituent called for EI changes to address this issue, including extending the number of weeks for sickness benefits.

What is more, even if a person is accepted for CPP long term disability, the process for applying for the program is too long. In fact, it can take over four to seven months. The EI sickness benefits are long exhausted before the CPP payments start.

In a 1999 evaluation of the CPP program, the authors commented on this issue and pointed to other countries, such as Germany and Sweden, which the hon. member mentioned. Those countries have programs similar to our EI sickness benefits but they provide support for one whole year. The program is there to bridge the gap. However, that is not why CPP is there. CPP is for long term disability. The extension of this benefit would get people through the crunch and help them to again become productive members in our society. That is what the bill is all about.

I know all of us here have people coming to our constituency offices regularly looking for an extension to their EI sickness benefits. If all members were to check with their offices I think they would see that this is happening with increased regularity. Because of the regularity of this happening at my office in Cape Breton, I felt there was a need to find a solution, which is the solution in Bill C-278.

Over the past several months I have been fortunate to have prestigious organizations, noted individuals and others join me in this initiative. This includes the Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Lung Association. I have letters from social workers at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto and the Canadian Auto Workers.

I could go on and on but the reality is that we need this bill and I thank all members for joining me in support of this bill. The bill shows compassion and members who vote against the bill shows they are heartless.

• (1415)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Pursuant to the order made earlier today the division stands deferred until Tuesday, December 5, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 2:17 p.m., this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:17 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, The Deputy Speaker.....	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Blais, Raynald.....	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	BQ
Blaney, Steven.....	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Ontario	Lib.
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	BQ
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooge, 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
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	BQ
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Québec	BQ
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing— Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	Québec	BQ
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.
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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.
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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 Interna- tional 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
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and 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
Priddy, 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.
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis— Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shipley, 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
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Ontario	Ind.
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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.
VACANCY	Repentigny	Québec	
VACANCY	London North Centre	Ontario	

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, The Deputy Speaker	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary 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 (105)

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
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Godfrey, Hon. John	Don Valley West	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	CPC
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
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
Mathyssen, 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.
Poillievre, 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—Kapusking	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Lib.
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Ind.
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
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.

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Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.
VACANCY	London North Centre	
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 (74)		
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

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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
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
VACANCY	Repentigny	

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

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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, The Acting Speaker	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.

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