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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 29, 2006

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 29, 2006

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

BURMA

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Burma, also known as Myanmar, is a small country nestled among Thailand, China and India. It is ruled by one of the most brutal military juntas in the world, with forced labour, sexual violence, child soldiering and numerous political imprisonments, including its own democratically elected leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Chee. Burma is one of the leading heroin suppliers to Canada and faces constant environmental degradation.

In September of this year, the United Nations finally put the crisis in Burma on its agenda. It is essential that Canada play a leading role in taking action against this brutal military regime.

I am proud to announce that we have created the group, Parliamentary Friends of Burma, and will be holding our first meeting on Monday, December 4. We will ensure the importance of keeping the pressure on the international community.

To date we have 10 MPs and senators signed up, and I would like to see many more. I encourage all members to join Parliamentary Friends of Burma and their government in exile.

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WILLOW CREEK COBRAS

Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to recognize the championship season for the football team from Willow Creek Composite High School in Claresholm, Alberta.

This past Saturday, the Willow Creek Cobras took on the number one ranked Sexsmith Sabres in freezing cold conditions in the provincial high school championship game. It was a thrilling game with the Cobras scoring the winning point with just 30 seconds left on the clock for a final score of 28-27.

I would like to congratulate the Cobras on their efforts this past weekend. The 38 young men on the Cobras have made Claresholm proud. I would like to extend special congratulations to Brady Egger of Claresholm, who was named the game's MVP.

None of this would have been possible without Cobras head coach Tim Bryson, who worked hard and dedicated himself to the team as an example for our youth. Congratulations to coaching staff Kelly Starling, Rob Charchun and Todd Lybbert.

On behalf of the community of Claresholm, I ask members in the House to please join me in congratulating the Willow Creek Cobras, Alberta's provincial football champions.

* * *

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

LOUIS BILODEAU

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, tuning into the television program *Soirée canadienne*, hosted by Mr. Louis Bilodeau from 7 to 8 p.m., was a Saturday-night ritual for thousands of viewers. Mr. Bilodeau passed away last Saturday.

Soirée canadienne has not been broadcast for 20 years but was one of the most popular shows in Quebec. It was on the air for over two decades and Louis Bilodeau hosted 985 instalments. Every Saturday evening, notable individuals, from the mayor to the priest, from many Quebec municipalities would star on this celebration of Quebec folklore. Call and response songs, square dancing and fiddling were featured on the program. This show brought Quebec folklore, a mixed heritage inspired by old French songs, the Irish jig and Scottish music, into our homes every Saturday evening.

My Bloc Québécois colleagues and I offer our most sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Mr. Bilodeau.

*Statements by Members***FISHERIES**

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the Forum québécois des partenaires des pêches was held in Quebec City. At the invitation of the Quebec minister of fisheries, our Minister of Fisheries and Oceans co-chaired this gathering.

The presence of both ministers is an indication that the willingness to bring together all stakeholders and to work in a spirit of inclusiveness is central to this forum.

In the wake of the meetings held in Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, this forum was an opportunity to discuss the priority issues and to work together to define the steps needed for a viable commercial fishery in Quebec, serving the interests of maritime communities.

It was agreed that solutions would be devised in order to make the 2007 fishing season more profitable.

An interim report will be submitted to the two ministers in February 2007 to deal with the issue of the catch in advance of the next season. The final report on the three issues will be presented on March 31, 2007.

The time has come to take action and our new government is determined to deal with this matter together with our Quebec partners.

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[English]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next Friday, the Team Work Cooperative and Work-Bridge Association will celebrate the first anniversary of their partnership in Halifax. This important partnership brings together two organizations to offer a wide range of services, including career counselling and an on-site resource facility to assist individuals in their search for work.

Nova Scotia has the largest per capita population of persons with disabilities. Some 180,000 of us have a disability. That is one out of every five Nova Scotians. Persons with disabilities are an untapped component of our labour force. It is organizations like these that make a true difference in the community.

By encouraging companies to hire persons with disabilities, we offer them the opportunity to explore their own abilities, to gain more independence, to reduce poverty levels and to provide them an opportunity to make a contribution to their community.

I congratulate Janice Ainsworth, executive director of Team Work and Judy Turner, executive director of Work-Bridge, for their hard work and that of their staff and volunteers for the wonderful and vital work they do in the community.

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VOLUNTEERISM

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, December 5 marks International Volunteer Day. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians are engaged in the battle to create justice, equality and peace in our world. Volunteers working in developing countries

return with a deeper understanding of our role in the world, a commitment to greater international cooperation and a deep devotion to real change. Here at home tens of thousands more are engaged in that battle.

On the eve of International AIDS Day, by way of example, let us celebrate the explosion of activity in the grandmothers supporting grandmothers movement, launched at the International AIDS Conference in Toronto this summer. In 127 communities already, such groups are energetically raising awareness and funds and mobilizing support for a generation of grandmothers in Africa who play a central role in raising 13 million HIV-AIDS orphans.

This army of volunteers and NGOs supporting such initiatives are doing more than their fair share. On International Volunteer Day, let the government match that volunteer commitment.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the 2006 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict issued by the UN Secretary General, the severity of continued acts of violence against children, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, cannot be ignored.

This is why Canada welcomes the decision of the International Criminal Court to try Thomas Lubanga, the former DRC militia leader charged with recruiting children. I welcome this important step in combatting impunity and congratulate the DRC for the prosecution of Jean Pierre Biyoyo, a former forces commander, as the first national level prosecution for recruitment of child soldiers.

During an open debate at the UN Security Council this week, Canada called on the international community to support the work of the ICC and national courts as they bring to justice those who perpetrate serious international crimes, including those committed against children.

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● (1410)

[Translation]

WORLD AIDS DAY

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Friday, December 1, 2006 is World AIDS Day, when we remember the sad reality that is the global AIDS epidemic. According to the latest figures released by UNAIDS, the disease is estimated to affect 39.5 million people and has claimed 25 million lives to date, including 2.9 million in 2006 alone.

In Quebec, it is estimated that 17,000 people are living with HIV, and that 1,000 Quebecers contract the virus every year. These figures, like the figures for Canada, are disturbing, because they are on the rise.

“Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise.”, this year's theme, focuses on responsibility and asks leaders to keep their promises and honour their commitments to provide funding, health programs and access to treatment.

Statements by Members

The Bloc Québécois reminds this government that it must take action and make the announcements that have been put off since the 16th international AIDS conference, held in Toronto in August.

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[English]

BOBBY GIROUARD AND ALBERT STORM

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan tried to put aside the tragic deaths of their comrades for a few hours yesterday as musicians from across the country entertained them.

Two eminent artists from the greater Fredericton region, *Canadian Idol* contestant Casey LeBlanc and Matchstick Mike Bidlake, performed at the three hour concert.

This event provided an important reprieve, and I am pleased Casey and Mike joined so many other entertainers to support the troops. They will undoubtedly return to Canada and spread the word about the great work done by our soldiers.

Before the concert, they paused to remember Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Girouard of Bathurst, his battalion's regimental sergeant-major, and Corporal Albert Storm, who were killed Monday in a suicide bomb attack.

We cannot thank them enough for their lives of bravery and honour. We offer our condolences to their families and to their communities.

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LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the eve of the Liberal convention, Canadians are once again reminded of why they voted out a tired and wasteful Liberal government last January 23.

Yesterday's Auditor General's report highlights many examples of Liberal waste and mismanagement.

That is why this government's very first piece of legislation is the federal accountability act, the toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history. What has been the response from Liberal leadership candidates? Deafening silence. Not a single Liberal leadership candidate has had the guts to talk about cleaning up the Liberal legacy of corruption, scandal and malfeasance.

While Liberal leadership candidates duck and dodge from accountability, their unelected Liberal senators continue their delay tactics, delaying the accountability act now for almost six months.

Canadians are tired of this anti-democratic and unaccountable behaviour from the Liberals. Thankfully, Canada's new government is here cleaning up the mess of 13 long years of Liberal corruption.

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WOMEN AND MONEY PROJECT

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, no one can dispute the importance of helping low income Canadians to acquire the tools they need to move out of poverty. For women, increased financial knowledge and skills building rank high among those tools.

In Winnipeg's north end, the women and money project has been providing these tools to women since 2000, from basics such as getting identification papers and navigating through financial forms, to training in job skills and valuable work experience. The women and money project has been a great success, or it had been until the Conservatives cut off its funding, part of the government's offensive against any measure that empowers women.

Winnipeg North just celebrated the opening of the Community Financial Services Centre, a groundbreaking initiative and the first of its kind in Canada that will provide access to financial services, counselling and micro-loans to those abandoned by big banks and left to the mercy of payday lenders. This is a testament to the power of a community to rise above all odds in the face of big money interests.

We cannot allow the women and money project to die. The government must reinstate its funding.

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LITERACY

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the issue of literacy and the recent federal funding cuts, the Progressive Conservative minister of education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador had this to say about her fellow federal cousins. In a press release issued just two days ago, the minister said:

It is unfortunate that the federal government has decided to reduce funding to local literacy projects and I have been actively lobbying both the minister responsible for literacy...to reinstate the funding that has been cut. And I will continue to do so. I am not prepared for the federal government to walk away from their responsibilities.

If the government will not listen to grassroots literacy organizations or to literacy learners, will it at least listen to the concerns being raised by provincial governments?

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●(1415)

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which marks the adoption by the United Nations of the 1947 resolution providing for the creation of a Jewish state and an Arab state within Palestine. It is an excellent opportunity to remind ourselves that the Palestinian question still has not been resolved.

The Bloc Québécois is very concerned that this government is increasingly moving away from its traditional role as a mediator, a peace broker and a defender of international law in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Oral Questions

Recently, Canada has elected to oppose or abstain from voting on certain UN resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian question, even though it has always endorsed them in the past. This about-face by Canada could increasingly undermine its ability to act as a credible, impartial, accepted mediator in this conflict. Canada can continue playing a role as a facilitator only if it is impartial.

We must not forget that Canada has an international responsibility to help resolve this conflict.

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[English]

IRAN

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of this House to the ongoing human rights abuses in Iran.

Many citizens of Iran dream of the opportunity to enjoy the freedoms that we in Canada take for granted every day. Despite international diplomatic efforts and United Nations resolutions, the abuse continues on a daily basis.

I call upon this House to join the voices of my constituents in Kitchener Centre in calling for an end to the crimes against humanity and the injustice in Iran. The promotion of peace, international cooperation, social justice and human rights are fundamental Canadian values.

I implore this Parliament to work with the international community to raise our collective voices in opposition to the human rights abuses in Iran.

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AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yet again we have the Auditor General's report that highlights the years of Liberal waste and mismanagement.

We learned that former football star and correctional investigator, Ron Stewart, wracked up at least \$325,000 of improper payments. What was the Liberals' response? The member for Malpeque congratulated him for doing such a good job, calling him "committed, engaged and accessible". I guess that is what passes for Liberal accountability.

This is unacceptable behaviour and that is why we have asked the RCMP to launch a criminal investigation into the missing money. We will not ignore the Auditor General's report. We will tackle the Auditor General's concerns and make real and lasting changes with a plan of action.

Thank goodness for a new government in town that is committed to bringing true accountability to Ottawa. It is time for the Liberal MPs to take a stand against corruption and tell the unelected Liberal senators to pass the accountability act today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PUBLIC SERVANTS DISCLOSURE PROTECTION ACT

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after months of serious work, last year the previous Parliament enacted Canada's first legislation to protect legitimate whistleblowers in the public service. It was passed by both Houses of Parliament and given royal assent on November 25, 2005, over a year ago.

Section 60 of that act empowers the government to bring it into force at any time by order in council but the minority Conservative government has failed to do so after 10 long months.

Why has this, ready to go, whistleblower protection been deliberately delayed?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for one simple reason. It was too weak and too ineffective. Public servants want to have a strong, independent watchdog to assist them so they will have confidence that when they come forward with concerns about wrongdoing they will be taken seriously and they will be protected.

Far too often, under the previous Liberal government, if people spoke up they were out the door. That will not happen under this government.

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● (1420)

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Information Commissioner; Democracy Watch; the most experienced public servant, Arthur Kroeger; Conservatives like Perrin Beatty and Derek Burney; and every serious legal expert in the country, all say that the government's draft of Bill C-2 was a mess.

The Prime Minister gave the Senate a big job to do, which was to fix it. He also entrusted the huge Department of Public Works to the unelected Senate. When he had to go to the media to explain his definition of Québécois, whom did he send? He sent an unelected senator.

Are those the reasons the President of the Treasury Board moved the motion last night to give the Senate \$53 million?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we made it the top priority of the government and this Parliament to deal with anti-corruption legislation. We presented a piece of legislation designed to clean up the ethical mess that was left to us by the previous Liberal government.

All we have seen is, first, sober second thought from the Senate, then it was foot-dragging and now it is anti-democratic obstructionism. Canadians want the federal accountability act. Maybe Liberal leadership candidates should speak up against this outrageous delay tactic.

Oral Questions

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rusty over there is in no position to offer advice on accountability. His previous government assignments resulted in a \$500 million computer boondoggle; \$2 million in partisan advertising paid for by taxpayers; \$5,000 for a personal image consultant, which was obviously a complete waste; and even an expense claim for 48¢ for a doughnut.

When exactly did the President of the Treasury Board experience his personal epiphany to become a practitioner of the very prudence he previously pilloried?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just yesterday the Auditor General came forward with her report. I can only hope that it is the last volume in a 13 year spree of waste and wild spending undertaken by the previous government.

Lax oversight, weak management and poor financial performance were, unfortunately, the hallmark of the Liberal government. Canadian taxpayers expected more from that member when he was in charge of the public purse.

We will bring in real accountability to ensure that, for the first time in 13 years, hard-working taxpayers' dollars are respected by this government.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that the Conservatives have defaulted outright on the Kyoto protocol, an international treaty signed by Canada.

Furthermore, the Minister of the Environment is not taking enough responsibility for this government's ill-considered actions. Twice this month, the minister failed to appear before a House committee to answer questions about the Conservative government's contradictory actions with respect to the Kyoto protocol.

An hon. member: That is unacceptable.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Why take such a confusing approach to the Kyoto protocol, and why is the minister refusing to explain her actions to her colleagues and to Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we explained our position on the international stage at the last United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change conference where Canada, along with over 160 nations, came to a consensus on Kyoto.

Our position on Kyoto is well known but the position of the Liberal Party is yet to be determined after two Liberal leadership candidates both said that they were against Kyoto and that Kyoto targets could not be met. Maybe after this weekend it will be a little more clear.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government implemented a dozen programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The current government canceled all of the most effective of those programs, including the one-tonne

challenge, EnerGuide and the wind power production incentive. Internal Department of Natural Resources documents confirm that all of those programs were working very well.

Why did the government cancel those programs and abandon Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if any programs were working, why did greenhouse gases skyrocket to 35% above the Liberal targets for the last 13 years? Why is it that the Liberal Party never mentions the word "pollution"? Its record is abysmal.

This government is committed to reducing greenhouse gases. We are committed to energy efficiency. We are committed to renewable energy. We are delivering results for Canadians, unlike the last Liberal government. The Liberals should be embarrassed to stand up and even mention the word "environment" in the House.

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● (1425)

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the NATO summit which wrapped up today in Riga, Latvia, member countries all agreed that their key priority was to contribute to peace and stability in Afghanistan and pledged that NATO troops would stay as long as it takes to bring peace to the country.

Can the Prime Minister explain what this NATO commitment means for Canada?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to NATO's priority and the mission in Afghanistan, as we all know, our allies greatly appreciate the efforts and sacrifices being made by Canada and Canadians to help the people of Afghanistan. Progress was of course made during the summit, by our Prime Minister, in particular, who did a wonderful job at this meeting.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the mission of Canadian troops in Afghanistan will end in February 2009.

Can the minister assure us that the Prime Minister clearly indicated that he will not prolong the mission beyond that date without first obtaining the consent of the House of Commons?

Oral Questions

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, some progress has been made, which is what matters to this side of the House. This progress was made together with our allies. We successfully cut down on a number of restrictions previously in place. We were able to increase development assistance, and other NATO countries pledged to work towards the same goal. All signs are that the Canadian initiative is bearing fruit.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that he cannot withdraw troops from Afghanistan without giving his allies reasonable notice.

Knowing that the mandate of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan ends in February 2009, should the Prime Minister not be very clear with his partners and tell them, right now, that he has no mandate to extend the presence of Canadian troops in Afghanistan after this date of February 2009?

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was very clear. Any deployment anywhere will be brought in front of the House of Commons, as was the deployment motion that was brought to extend it until 2009. He has been very clear that the House of Commons is where he will bring the motion and I can assure the member that the Prime Minister will keep his word.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister deplores that other NATO members present in Afghanistan are not helping Canadian troops who are based in the south.

Is it not all the more important, in that context, to indicate to his allies that they cannot assume that Canada will continue to pursue its efforts and to tell them, right now, that they have to plan to replace our troops after February 2009?

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there was progress made in Riga and it was a step in the right direction. The removal of national caveats is a very welcome development as it will enable increased troop mobility in Afghanistan.

We welcome as well the willingness of allies in Riga to deploy troops to the south to reinforce our Canadian troops.

* * *

HIV-AIDS

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this Friday is World AIDS Day. Stephen Lewis tells us that every day 11,000 people lose their lives due to AIDS.

Three years ago in this House, we passed legislation to send medical aid, to send drugs, and yet not one single pill has been sent. It is absolutely shameful. I am ashamed of the inaction of our government on this issue as people are losing their lives.

When will the government fix whatever has to be fixed in the legislation? When will the first pill arrive in Africa where it should be, helping the people of that continent deal with AIDS?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada plays an active role both domestically and internationally in the fight against HIV-AIDS through the federal AIDS initiative and through our contribution to international efforts.

Funding for federal AIDS initiatives will reach \$84.5 million annually by 2008-09. Canada will provide \$250 million this year and in the next fiscal year to the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and, of course, malaria.

• (1430)

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there was not a single reference to the question I asked, which has to do with pills that are to be sent to Africa. This House authorized that to happen. It is time the government got down to work.

Is the Prime Minister's word worth nothing? One year ago he signed a letter, as did I, saying we would put 0.7% of our GDP into development aid, yet the government has done absolutely nothing about it. It is a disgrace. Our reputation in the world is being transformed by the inaction of the government. Is the Prime Minister's signature worth nothing?

[Translation]

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is very active in the fight against HIV-AIDS. At the beginning of the year, we contributed \$250 million to the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Some 60% of that money goes directly to fighting AIDS.

We also announced a program in Haiti of \$14 million to help in the fight against AIDS. We will be pleased to announce projects as they are developed.

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[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Another day, Mr. Speaker, and another international embarrassment because of the government. Yesterday 20 years of efforts were disregarded when the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples was shelved, largely due to the lobbying efforts of the government. Rather than standing up for the rights of indigenous peoples, the government has chosen to politicize human rights.

Will the Minister of Indian Affairs listen to Canadians and insist that his government affirm the rights of indigenous peoples in Canada and indeed the world over?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The hon. member knows full well from previous discussions in the House that no previous Canadian government has ever supported the draft that was under discussion, including her government, so it is hypocrisy to suggest otherwise in this House.

The House should be aware that at the United Nations a large number of countries, 107 countries as I recall, have agreed with the Canadian position and have decided that this draft requires further study. We will be engaged in that.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's lobbying efforts were shameful.

Once again the government has passed up an opportunity to show a gesture of good faith to Canada's aboriginal peoples. The government's pattern is indeed shameful: Kelowna accord, gone; aboriginal stop-smoking programs, gone; aboriginal literacy programs, gone; and aboriginal language funding, gone.

Why will the minority Conservative government not listen to the call of the majority opposition and stand up for the rights of indigenous peoples around the world?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as long as we are talking about shame, I think most Canadians remember the 2003 mad as hell tour of the member for LaSalle—Émard. He embarked on another tour today at the Liberal convention, which I describe as the guilty as hell tour, because, to the astonishment of Eddie Goldenberg, whose book I have been reading, it was in fact the member for LaSalle—Émard who, to the astonishment of a former prime minister of Canada, refused to increase the funding for aboriginal Canadians. So wherever he goes, guilt will be his constant companion.

* * *

HIV-AIDS

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, December 1 is World AIDS Day. The government promised new funding to combat this disease. Forty million people have been infected, leaving a sea of orphans.

The Prime Minister said he was going to make a new announcement and the Minister of Health said he was going to make a new announcement, but there has been no announcement. The government reannounced commitments that we made when we were in government. When is the government going to stop turning its back on HIV-AIDS and come up with its own announcement, which it has failed to do?

• (1435)

[Translation]

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that we announced \$250 million in February for the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Some 60% of that money will go directly to fighting AIDS. We also announced \$14 million for Haiti to help in the fight against HIV-AIDS. When the Prime Minister went to the G-8 summit in St.

Oral Questions

Petersburg, he announced \$450 million over 10 years in order to enhance the health systems throughout Africa.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that just confirms that there is no new announcement.

Let us go on to malaria for a moment. The Canadian Red Cross has an excellent program. It has just rolled out a bed net program that is saving millions of children from the scourge of malaria. The government has blocked it and will not support this program.

My question is a simple one. Why will the government not continue to fund a life-saving initiative that will provide bed nets to save children from the scourge of malaria?

[Translation]

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can say that what I am hearing from the Red Cross and UNICEF is quite different from what the hon. member is saying. Among other things, we recently announced with the Red Cross that 875,000 insecticide treated bed nets would be sent to Sierra Leone. That is what we are doing to help children with malaria.

* * *

AFGHANISTAN

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): NATO member states have confirmed they will maintain their military presence in Afghanistan. However, the humanitarian aspect of this operation seems to have been largely forgotten at the conference.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how he tried to convince his allies to discuss the humanitarian aspect of the NATO mission in Afghanistan during the summit?

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, with NATO allies, reinforced the commitment to help Afghanistan with reconstruction. We have an approach there that takes reconstruction into account. The Riga summit, through the communiqué, has even asked for the regional countries to come along and help in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

We know this is a priority. The reconstruction of Afghanistan is a must. That is what NATO is concentrating on as well.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all rhetoric aside, will the Prime Minister agree that re-establishing the necessary balance between the military and humanitarian aspects of the mission in Afghanistan is crucial to counteracting Afghans' disillusionment with the international community and the Afghan central government?

Oral Questions

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that one of the first things our government did when we were elected was our Prime Minister's announcement of increased funding for reconstruction in Afghanistan. That is much more than the Liberal government committed to doing to help with reconstruction in Afghanistan. In addition, we have extended our commitment to 2011.

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PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services stated yesterday that the contract awarded to Royal LePage will not be revisited even though the Auditor General confirmed that there were irregularities in the contracting process.

Why does the government and the Minister of Public Works and Government Services wish to hold on to this contract at all costs even though it was slammed by the Auditor General?

[English]

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, we are going to honour the contract that was written. It was put forward after a competitive process by the previous government. We are going to honour the contract.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know that Conservative members of the public accounts committee were lobbied hard by Ms. Buckler, the current director of communications for the Prime Minister.

Does the fact that the government will not revisit the Royal LePage contract not prove that the interests of Ms. Buckler take precedence over those of taxpayers?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was announced yesterday that this contract was signed by the previous Liberal government, before Ms. Buckler began working for that company. She no longer works there. It is unfortunate that the Bloc Québécois continues to reiterate these false allegations.

* * *

• (1440)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is more international embarrassment. Diplomatically objecting to human rights abuses in China is always appropriate, but not by tying a message to a rock and throwing it through the front window. The Prime Minister paraded Canadian citizen Huseyin Celil as the poster boy for his human rights sideshow rather than plead his case in frank and open discussions behind closed doors and with government officials, policy advisers and translators.

Why did the Prime Minister squander his first and best opportunity to bring hope to Mr. Celil and his family?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the member is saying, the Prime Minister takes this issue very seriously. That is why he engaged with the president of China. Not only has the Prime Minister done this, but the foreign affairs minister has talked with the foreign minister of China three times.

We are taking this matter very seriously, contrary to what the member is saying. We are aware of this and we will fight for the rights of Canadian citizens.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we hear more platitudes.

The foreign affairs minister professes that he has been deeply involved in the case of Mr. Celil when in fact he is simply way over his head. Since April I have asked many times in this House for answers, but none has been forthcoming.

Today we do not know where Mr. Celil is. We do not even know whether he has been tortured. We do not even know whether he is alive. If the minister can answer any of these questions, will he answer them now and specifically identify the official Chinese source of that information?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated time after time, the Prime Minister is engaged and the foreign affairs minister is engaged. Not only that, but the Minister of Natural Resources, who was in China in November, talked with senior Chinese officials and he brought up this issue there. We are fully engaged with the Chinese to ensure that Mr. Celil's rights as a Canadian citizen are protected and brought to their attention.

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since coming to office 10 months ago, the Conservative government has done nothing but sabotage the long-standing healthy relationship Canada has had with China. This deteriorating situation has become an international embarrassment—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Mississauga—Erindale has the floor. I cannot hear a word he is saying. He is asking a question. Somebody is going to have to answer so we had better be able to hear the question, or else what will happen to the answer?

The hon. member for Mississauga—Erindale has the floor. We will hear him now.

Mr. Omar Alhabra: Mr. Speaker, I am glad they are listening.

This deteriorating situation has become an international embarrassment. Canadian citizens and businesses have expressed concern about how the government has approached its relationship with our fastest growing trading partner and they said the government is taking the wrong approach.

Oral Questions

Why has the government decided to ditch diplomacy and follow a confrontational approach that can only be—

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

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is totally false. Contrary to what the member is saying, this government has been fully engaged with the government of China. The Minister of Natural Resources was there. The Minister of Agriculture was there. The Prime Minister has talked to the president of China. We are fully engaged. We continue doing that also in Canada.

We recognize that China is an important partner of Canada and we will continue to maintain our strong relationship, but that does not take away times when we need to say something to the Chinese as friends. That is what we are doing as well.

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope the parliamentary secretary will heed the call of Senator Carney, a Conservative senator.

Canadians do expect the government to promote human rights here in Canada and abroad, but the government's approach of embarrassing the Chinese is ineffective. Everyone knows this ham-fisted approach does not work. Diplomacy does. Building strong economic ties does.

The government's behaviour has implications, not only economic ones, but also implications for the progress of human rights in China and around the world. When is the government going to realize that grandstanding is ineffective and that constructive engagement is the way to go?

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a recent survey of business CEOs showed that 60% believe that the Prime Minister did the right thing by being open, focused, clear, frank, and honest about Canada's views on human rights and democracy. There is no reason why we have to trade off good economics against good diplomacy. The Prime Minister is not doing that.

* * *

• (1445)

HEALTH

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Wait Time Alliance released an interim report on progress being made in regard to wait times. Could the Minister of Health inform the House how the new federal government scored and what initiatives he has taken to reduce wait times?

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform the House that in fact the alliance gives the government an A when it comes to funding. The press release quotes Dr. Lorne Bellan as saying, "Today, I think it's fair to say that government efforts on wait times are showing promise".

In the last two weeks I have announced two different wait time guarantees, the first wait time guarantees in Canada. That is what we are doing. We are protecting Canadians. We are moving forward.

Unlike the do nothing former government, we are making progress on behalf of Canadians.

Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Wait Time Alliance released its interim report card on reducing wait times. The report card gives—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: Order, please. We know the hon. member for Surrey North is very popular, but we have to be able to hear the question. She has the floor for a question.

Ms. Penny Priddy: Mr. Speaker, the report card gives the Conservatives a D for failing to establish a timetable for achieving targets and said that the government's work in achieving meaningful reductions is incomplete.

My question is for the Minister of Health. When will he keep the promise made to Canadians, almost a year ago, and implement a real, meaningful patient wait times guarantee or has his so-called priority been officially dropped from the agenda?

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have reported to the House that in the last two weeks alone the government has led the way for Canada with the establishment of the first two wait time guarantees in aboriginal prenatal care and aboriginal diabetes issues.

Clearly, the message is getting through to the Canadian Medical Association. It said our efforts are showing promise. We get an A for funding. We get a B for establishing the benchmarks and there is obviously some room for improvement.

If the hon. member and her party were in power, there would be no guarantees and no benchmarks. There would only be a lot of talk and no action.

Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is laughable that the Conservatives have announced only two minor projects recently and the minister trumpets them as the saving grace of health care. This is not what Canadians had in mind when they were promised reduced wait times across the board. In fact, the pilot projects do not affect any of the five priority areas identified by the Wait Time Alliance.

The Minister of Health has been ineffective and invisible, and time is running out. The Conservatives will not achieve the meaningful reductions in wait times called for in the first ministers "A 10-year Plan To Strengthen Health Care". How is the minister going to fix this mess?

Oral Questions

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member does not want to suggest that prenatal care on aboriginal reserves is not a priority. I am sure she is not suggesting that diabetes on reserves is not an issue that is incumbent upon all Canadians to be concerned about. We are going to those people who need the most help. We have taken leadership in our own area of competency and jurisdiction. We are leading the way for the country.

If the hon. member wants to be of help, perhaps she can get the NDP in Saskatchewan, who rule the roost in Saskatchewan, to get on board with wait time guarantees, so we can move ahead in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and anywhere else where the hon. member has some—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

* * *

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is becoming an international embarrassment at the hands of the Conservative government and it is small wonder. Once again, the foreign affairs minister has shown that he does not know the meaning of diplomacy.

First, he insinuated that a female member of the House was his dog. Several of us heard him. Last night he went further and claimed on television “when you sleep with dogs, you get fleas”. We all know what he was getting at.

When will the foreign affairs minister stop embarrassing all Canadians with this offensive behaviour?

• (1450)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the foreign affairs minister of Canada is doing an excellent job in representing Canada at international forums. He is standing for the principles that define the government and this country. We are all very proud of him.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week the Liberal women's caucus released “The Pink Book”. This groundbreaking policy document addresses several issues that impact women and discusses the challenges that they face in their daily lives. It focuses on modern, forward thinking approaches to these issues.

We in politics, on this side of the House at least, often say that more women are needed in the House, but when Canadian women hear the foreign affairs minister continue to make degrading remarks that go unpunished, do we blame them for simply saying no thanks?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear. In the caucus of this government we do not have a women's caucus or a men's caucus. We have one Conservative caucus.

We do not have a washed out policy book, a pink book. We have one Conservative policy book. In fact, every member in this caucus

and every member of the government, men and women, will stand up and do the right thing for women across Canada.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, putting political partisans into the civil service was not one of the Conservatives' five stated priorities, but this week the former policy adviser to Conservative Premier Binns was appointed vice-president of ACOA in P.E.I. Just months ago the former chief of staff to Premier Lord was appointed VP of ACOA in New Brunswick. These appointments are allegedly the result of a legitimate screening process.

Are we really expected to believe that the only qualified candidates to lead ACOA are evacuees from dying or dead Conservative governments in Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it very amusing that a person who in a day from now will be supporting the only Liberal leadership candidate who is dead set against ACOA would be complaining about the hiring. The people who are hired are highly qualified people, including highly qualified and heavily involved women. What does he have against that?

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we raised this issue in the House a month ago. The minister then said that competent, professional public servants were being put in place. Really?

Members should understand that there are three maritime provinces. In New Brunswick the new vice-president of ACOA is Premier Lord's former chief of staff. In P.E.I. the new vice-president is Premier Binns' former policy advisor. Who is next for Nova Scotia, perhaps John Buchanan?

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his suggestion. We will certainly take note of it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on November 10, the Minister of Justice announced that he had decided arbitrarily to alter the make-up of the judicial selection committee and the candidate rating scales.

Instead of making reforms in secret, why does the Minister of Justice not re-establish the subcommittee on the process for appointment to the federal judiciary, created at the request of the Bloc Québécois during the 38th Parliament, which could make impartial recommendations to depoliticize the judicial appointment process?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very important to add people to the committee who have a real and practical knowledge of the criminal justice system. Certainly, the Liberal critic for democratic reform said it was consistent with that motivation and the NDP justice critic also agreed with that position.

• (1455)

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has decided that a police officer should sit on every selection committee, in addition to the three members already named at his discretion. In this way, the minister is ensuring that he controls the committee.

Why is the minister trying to take over the judicial selection process? Is he hoping to appoint friends who share his vision of justice?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member should get her facts straight. These are in fact police officers who are appointed by police associations, not the minister.

* * *

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in order to help the Atlantic regions, financing must be provided to our entrepreneurs. However, ACOA no longer has funds available for programs such as the SEED capital program and the women in business initiative. The communities of Kedgwick and Baker Brook, which are presently going through tough times, are crying for help. The village of Baker Brook has turned to ACOA to find solutions.

Will the minister finally approve financing for the village of Baker Brook or will he continue to play petty politics with a community in need of assistance?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we recognize on this side of the House that in communities across Canada, whether they be in the Maritimes, out west, in Ontario, Quebec, or in the north, it is incredibly important that economic development and economic growth be a priority.

In my province, we learned a lot. We learned what happens when one overgoverns, overregulates and overtaxes. We saw the damage that Bob Rae did to Ontario. The member opposite could be part of the solution if he could go to Montreal and his convention and ensure that Bob Rae does not have the opportunity to do to Canada what he did to Ontario.

[Translation]

UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have always known that no Canadian government, either Liberal or Conservative, has ever accepted the wording of the United Nations draft declaration as it now reads, as indicated in the Canadian Press article of September 27, 2003, and the *Globe and Mail* article of September 26, 2003, and for very good reason.

Can the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tell this House why the draft declaration is unacceptable and what Canada's new government is doing about it?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I agree with him entirely.

During yesterday's vote, it became clear that many countries, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, have concerns and want to continue consultations. In total, 107 countries want greater clarity and want the declaration to fulfill its goal of effectiveness.

This new government is deeply committed to producing such a document.

* * *

[English]

BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, hosting political fundraisers for the heritage minister certainly seems to be paying off for the broadcasters. They are in Ottawa with a whole wish list of regulatory changes. They want to impose a TV tax on Joe Public. They want to open the airwaves to all commercials all the time, and of course, they want Cancon rules to be the same as YouTube.

My question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Given the regulatory free ride the broadcasters already enjoy, why would she put the interests of the people who hold her fundraisers ahead of the needs of Canada's domestic television production sector?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it amazes me that the critic does not understand that it is the CRTC that is having these hearings, not the Minister of Canadian Heritage. In fact, if he has a problem with legitimate fundraising, maybe he would like to return the money he received and his leader received from the artistic community.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, another swing and an ethical miss. If the heritage minister does not know the difference between receiving a donation from industry and having industry host fundraisers in her boardroom, then God help Canada's artistic sector.

Let us get back to the point. She is dragging her feet on renewing the television fund. She is dragging her feet on the new media fund. She is dragging her feet on the video fund. Meanwhile, broadcasters have declared open season on Cancon.

Oral Questions

Why would she impose a television tax on viewers while doing nothing to promote domestic Canadian television content?

• (1500)

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously for that member, consistency is not important. He said that regarding fundraisers, a critic should not be receiving funds. As I just said, he himself has received funds from artists, photographers, creators and musicians. He would then support us in our movement. He would work positively on committee when it was working on broadcasting issues. In fact, instead of misleading the House and Canadians, he would recognize he has his work to do as well.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during a question of privilege we forced the minister to allow discussion by the Wheat Board before the standing committee, a partial reinstatement of freedom of speech. However, the minister has failed to table his letter ordering the Wheat Board to take down from its website its analysis of the minister's discredited task force. The government continues a campaign of intimidation and suppression of information and a flood of propaganda utilizing the federal bureaucracy.

When will the minister lift his gag orders and allow freedom of expression by the board?

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Malpeque knows full well that every member of the Canadian Wheat Board is free to speak out, on their own dime of course. They should not be using farmers' money for that.

Speaking of intimidation, one thing we will not do to intimidate farmers is we will not put them in handcuffs and drag them off to jail.

* * *

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Auditor General confirmed exactly what happens when the Liberals govern: waste and mismanagement. An example involved Ron Stewart who took taxpayers for a \$300,000 ride, including so-called business trips to the Grey Cup and high school reunions, indeed, good, serious government business. This case validates Canadians' choice in the last election, but it also highlights the need for strong whistleblower protection.

Will the President of the Treasury Board tell the House what he is doing to strengthen whistleblower protection in the federal accountability act?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to create a culture within our public service where the men and women who serve Canadians and serve our government have the confidence that if they step forward to report wrongdoing, their concerns will be taken seriously. They will also have freedom to do so without fear of repercussions of losing their jobs or facing a demotion.

We have brought forward the most comprehensive, meaningful whistleblower protection ever tabled in Canadian history. Not a single union stepped forward before the Bill C-11 committee hearings, the Liberal bill to support it.

A lot of hard-working public servants are proud of our measures to protect whistleblowers.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Council for Refugees condemns the legal limbo into which individuals fall who have not obtained permanent resident status and who originate from countries for which Canada has imposed a moratorium on removal because of security concerns. In view of the flood of negative decisions handed down over the summer, there is little difference between the files that were rejected and those that were approved.

Given that two individuals having similar experiences are not given the same consideration, what changes is the minister prepared to make in order to make the decisions more just?

[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has lauded Canada for its leadership on refugee issues. When the member speaks of the moratorium countries, the fact is over 85% of the people in those situations are eventually allowed to stay in Canada because of the generosity of our system.

I would think that the member ought to be applauding this government for its work in helping refugees, including the \$307 million in settlement funding that will help refugees live the Canadian dream.

The Speaker: I know today is Wednesday, but since we are not sitting tomorrow, we will pretend it is Thursday, and the hon. member for Wascana, therefore, will want to ask a question.

Routine Proceedings

●(1505)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we return to the House on Monday, there will be exactly two weeks left before the normal adjournment for Christmas. I wonder if the government House leader could inform us in his usual comprehensive way as to what he expects to be dealing with in the first week of December. Also, because there is only that two week window after we come back, I wonder if he could offer any advice about the second week of December as well. Specifically, I wonder if he plans at any point in that two week period to call Bill C-21.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will do better than just tell the hon. member what will happen next week, I will tell him how we will conclude this week.

This afternoon we will be on the report stage of Bill C-24, the softwood lumber agreement. As you may know, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow and Friday the House will be adjourned for the Liberal leadership convention, and we will all be watching that with interest.

On Monday it is my intention to call ways and means Motion No. 12, a motion to refer Bill C-30, the clean air act, to a legislative committee before second reading. We will continue that week with Bill S-5, on tax conventions, and Bill C-34, on the first nations education agreement.

On Tuesday we will then consider the third reading stage of Bill C-24.

Later on that week it is my hope that we will begin the debate on the marriage motion. I will continue to consult my colleagues with respect to a date for the final vote on that. After that it is my intention to proceed with Bill C-28, the budget tax measures.

I hope that is of help to the hon. member.

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 responses to seven petitions.

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*[Translation]***INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting the visit of the Canadian delegation of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Political Committee and the Defence and Security Committee to Afghanistan, from May 17 to 21, 2006.

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

FINANCE

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Finance regarding prebudget consultations this year.

Mr. Speaker, if the House would give its consent, I would move that the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Finance be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADA POST

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present to the House a petition signed by a large number of residents of New Brunswick and most particularly of Fredericton.

The petitioners state that the Government of Canada has traditionally supported an enhanced mail delivery in all corners of the country. The petitioners state that the people of Canada require their mail to be delivered in a timely and efficient manner. Whereas many citizens, the sick, shut-ins and persons with disabilities, face barriers daily regarding accessibility issues, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons and the minister responsible for Canada Post to maintain traditional mail delivery and service instead of implementing changes that are causing people to travel long distances from their homes to receive their mail.

●(1510)

MARRIAGE

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I have the privilege of presenting five petitions to the House. The first four are signed by over 550 of my constituents of Kelowna—Lake Country who request that the government reopen the debate on same sex marriage.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this petition requests that the Canadian government ban genetic use restriction technologies in grain seeds, ensuring that this technology never be tested or planted in Canada. I present these petitions to the House and appropriate committee.

Routine Proceedings

CHILD CARE

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table three petitions today. One is signed by people in the lower mainland of British Columbia, including some from Burnaby—Douglas, who call on the government to achieve multi-year funding to ensure that publicly operated child care programs are sustainable for the long term, to protect child care by enshrining it in legislation with a national child care act to be a cornerstone of Canada like the Canada Health Act, and to help end child poverty by using the \$1,200 allowance to enhance the child tax benefit without taxes and clawbacks.

CHEMICAL PESTICIDES

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, is again from residents of the lower mainland of British Columbia, including some from Burnaby—Douglas, who call on the House of Commons and Parliament assembled to recognize that human and environmental health should take precedence in legislative decision making as well as in the product approval process in every jurisdiction in Canada.

The petitioners call on us to enact legislation banning the use of chemical pesticides for cosmetic purposes until rigorous independent, scientific and medical testing of chemical pesticides and a parliamentary review of the results are conducted for both existing and new products and to apply the precautionary principle in regard to restricting future allowable usage.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition from quite a few people in the Windsor and southwestern Ontario area. They call on the Government of Canada to cancel negotiations for a free trade agreement with Korea which would worsen the one-way flood of automotive products into our market. They call on the government to develop a new automotive trade policy that would require Korea and other offshore markets to purchase equivalent volumes of finished vehicles and auto parts from North America as a condition of their continued access to our market.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of hundreds of my constituents of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, it is my honour to present, pursuant to Standing Order 36, these petitions which ask Parliament to honour a legal commitment to the Kyoto treaty and to further pledge to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below the 1990 level by 2020, and to 80% by 2050 as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the State of California have done.

MARRIAGE

Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling two petitions on behalf of people in the Churchill riding on the issue of marriage.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to present in the House this afternoon petitions from several hundred individuals from across Canada. There are a number from Quebec, New Brunswick and different provinces and territories across the country.

The petitioners are simply asking that there be a reopening of the definition of marriage. They make the point that marriage is, in their view, the permanent union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. Marriage is a natural institution and not merely a bundle of rights and benefits subject to the equality provisions of section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The petitioners ask that this be revisited so that we redefine marriage as the union between one man and one woman to the betterment and well-being of Canadian society.

They call for that to be reopened, to repeal and 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*]

HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the riding of Drummond for this petition from the Refuge La Piaule du Centre du Québec Inc., which, like previous petitions, calls for the SCPI and RHF programs to be renewed immediately because people are currently living in insecurity—that is how they word it—and will leave their jobs if this program is not renewed immediately.

It is essential to maintain the actions and services of the community agencies that contribute to preventing homelessness and that support people faced with this reality and everything that comes with it.

* * *

● (1515)

[*English*]

INUIT SLED DOGS

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the final report on the review of allegations concerning Inuit sled dogs in the period between 1950 and 1970.

[*Translation*]

We went to the government archives in order to find documented files. The RCMP went back and interviewed nearly 200 former police officers and civilians who worked or lived in the North during that period.

[*English*]

The report indicates there was no government policy or evidence for the destruction of sled dogs, nor was there any program to diminish the way of life of northern residents.

*Government Orders***QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 105 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 105—**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):**

With regard to the Tomorrow Starts Today program in the Department of Canadian Heritage: (a) what has been the total spending amount under the program since 2001; (b) how much of this total has been spent in each of the provinces; and (c) what is the per capita amount of spending of this program per province?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER PRODUCTS EXPORT CHARGE ACT, 2006

The House resumed from November 22 consideration of Bill C-24, An Act to impose a charge on the export of certain softwood lumber products to the United States and a charge on refunds of certain duty deposits paid to the United States, to authorize certain payments, to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and to amend other Acts as a consequence, as reported with amendment from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 2.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this issue again because as New Democrats we have been speaking out about this issue for some time.

I would like to bring to the House's attention that I was in Thunder Bay earlier this week where I met with people from the ridings of Thunder Bay—Superior North and Thunder Bay—Rainy River because of the announcement that was made just this past week by Bowater at its Kraft mill. On the very day that the provincial Liberals

announced an electricity rebate for northern mills, Bowater was telling its employees and their families that it was demanding the right to reopen contracts, demand concessions and that the future of Bowater was on the line.

That was on the same day that Tembec Timmins went down. Tembec Timmins is fundamental in the softwood industry in our region. That was also the same day that the provincial Liberal minister, David Ramsay, told the people of northern Ontario not to worry, that they had gotten off scot-free. He was sounding somewhat like the Marie Antoinette of the forestry industry at that point.

I went to Thunder Bay to meet with the employees of Bowater because Thunder Bay was supposed to have been on the list of communities for hearings on softwood. A promise was made by parliamentarians at the committee that they would have hearings across Canada, from one end of the country to other, to hear from the people who were being affected because certain key communities will definitely take the brunt of the legislation if it goes forward. Thunder Bay is certainly one of those communities where the people were very upset when they heard that the hearings were cancelled. The committee cancelled the hearings with the help of the Liberal members, unfortunately, because the Liberal members of Thunder Bay stand up alongside the Prime Minister and give this deal the big two thumbs up. They sold out the people of northern Ontario on this and I, in no way, can allow this to go unrecorded because this is an issue where we need the people of northern Ontario to stand together.

I would like to reiterate some issues in case some members are not quite aware of the impacts of this deal and what it will mean for the forest dependent regions of the north, and particularly northern Ontario which I represent.

The first issue is the process that was entertained in this deal going forward. It was very clear that the government was interested in a quick photo op. It wanted a dirty deal done dirt cheap and done quickly so it could turn around and show back to the electorate and say that in its little check box of things that the Conservative government accomplished it finally dealt with the softwood deal. However, to get a deal done dirt cheap and done dirt quickly, it basically had to concede everything to the U.S. trade competition.

Our government did not seem to have a problem with that. It sat down and carved out a deal where basically we gave away every right that we had won in court decision after court decision in terms of defending our rights to maintain a free and open market in wood. The government came back here thinking that industry would sign on. Industry did not sign on. Industry was deeply opposed to the deal because there are number of elements in the deal that will affect the long term viability of industry in northern Ontario for years to come.

First is the fact that we were asked to agree to a crippled market and if that market starts to grow the tariffs start to come on again.

Second, our companies are having to give up the legal rights that they fought for and won.

Government Orders

Third, we will be taking money that belonged to our producers and giving it to the United States. It is a billion-plus dollars, and of that, \$450 million goes to our direct competitors. Here, in Canada where we have had community after community impacted, mills going down and a need for government retraining, restructuring and commitment to help the industry get on its feet, there is no money. There is no money for Red Rock, Dryden, Thunder Bay, Opasatika and Smooth Rock Falls but our competitors in the United States are using our money to retool.

We had our direct competitors who, after years of fighting the softwood deal, were pretty much at the end of their road and they did not have any money left in their pockets. Now they are flush with cash.

● (1520)

Bowater is an American company in Thunder Bay. Like many of our companies now, Bowater started out as a family operation. It could have been Great Lakes Paper. It could have been, in my region, Malette and McChesney, who were bought out and have become larger and larger corporations, further and further from the source. Many of these corporations now have operations in the southern United States and in the north.

When we talk to people within the industry, it becomes very clear as to where they will be putting their investment dollars. They will not be investing in the forest industries of Canada right now because there is no incentive to do so. Will they invest in Georgia? We can bet they will. Will they invest in South Carolina? They are already doing that and they will be using the money from our producers to retool their plants south of the border. It is an outrageous situation.

What is so disturbing about this deal is that another aspect to this would have come out in hearings in the amendment stages had the other parties not tried to silence the amendment process by limiting 60 seconds per amendment. These are amendments that will have profound impacts.

What we are being asked to do in this House of Parliament is to use the power of the Government of Canada to act as a predator on one of our primary industries. The forestry sector in Ontario is about the second largest industry in Ontario. We are being asked to go after our own producers because our producers have been efficient and they have used their resources well. In northern Ontario we have managed our forests well. We have a bountiful harvest of trees. We have a good system for bringing that forward and a public system but we are being asked to impose tariffs. We are putting a punishment tax on our own industry in order to placate Washington.

What is an even more outrageous predatory aspect of this deal is that our government is insisting on a further punishment tax for the companies that are holding on their legal rights, rights they have fought for year after year in court decisions. The government will impose a further punishment tariff on them.

Mr. Pat Martin: I wonder whose side they are on.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Exactly. It is a question of whose side the government is on. In this financial climate that we are in, we are not kidding around. Many long-standing Canadian industries are almost at the end of their ropes. They were asking for financial aid but that aid never came. Now, for the companies that have signed on, the first

money that is flowing is actually taxpayer money. It is money coming from the EDC to the companies that have signed on.

We were asking for that money to flow ages ago in order to allow our companies the lines of credit they needed to give them some breathing space until we could get through the final court challenge on October 13.

Those are some of the key areas that need to be looked at when we talk about this softwood agreement. They have profound implications for the forestry-dependent communities of our regions. It is hard to tell people in Smooth Rock Falls, Opasatika or Red Rock to reinvent themselves without a mill and become entrepreneurs. We have been through this in northern Ontario. We had the great adjustment committees that took a way of life and put people into a sunset life.

I have seen what it has done to communities after people are told there is no future for them and that the committee will not work with them on economic development opportunities. The best the committee said it would do was to give them some re-education. I remember the committee doing that when our mining sector was going down. What did that re-education give anyone? It taught the men in the mining sector, those who ran skidders, machines and the jacklight drills, how to play solitaire on computers assuming that somehow would allow them to reinvent themselves as entrepreneurs in the dot-com age.

However, that never happened because in northern Ontario, as much as we try to develop into other sectors, we remain fundamentally based on the resources of the north, on the hydro, on the forestry and on the mineral production. Those are the fundamentals on which we build an economy. What we are seeing with this deal is absolutely no incentive to go to value added because we are agreeing to impose an export tariff on the value of the product that is created. Therefore, if we are creating value added in northern Ontario, we are paying more for it.

Why would a company do that work in the north when it can do it south of the border and get the benefits from a government that has agreed to act in a predatory fashion against its own members?

I have met with people in communities across the north, with industry officials and with union people. As New Democrats, we remain absolutely opposed to this deal, not just because it is a bad deal for Canada but because of what it says about the government's willingness to sell out our domestic industrial sector from coast to coast to coast.

● (1525)

Ms. Helena Guergis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions for the member because I am concerned that he continues to ignore the facts.

Government Orders

First, we know that the softwood lumber dispute has gone through 24 years of litigation and the last lawsuit for five years alone. Without this deal, the U.S. lumber coalition has told us very clearly, not only through the public and news releases but very verbally, that there will be another lawsuit without this deal. Why does the hon. member continue to ignore that with a new lawsuit there will be new countervailing duties and new anti-dumping duties, which could total 27%?

I also want to point out that the trade committee was one of only two committees that sat throughout the summer. We heard from witnesses, not once, not twice, but many of them had three opportunities to come before us. Why is the member deliberately misleading the House when it comes to the number of times the committee has heard from witnesses?

I also want to talk about the fact that the deal will provide stability and predictability for 7 to 9 years, that 90% of the—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is very unfair to say that I would be deliberately misleading the House. I would like the hon. member to retract that. That is very unparliamentary.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Simcoe—Grey has heard the point of order and the chair occupant has also heard the allegation. I know she will do the right thing.

Ms. Helena Guergis: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member has not been on the committee so he would not know that we did in fact sit throughout the summer and had an opportunity to hear from many witnesses. He obviously was not there. Deliberately? No, because he was not sitting on the committee. However, now he knows witnesses had ample opportunity to come before the committee. Hopefully, he will remember that in the future.

Why does the hon. member and his colleague, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, continue to stand on side with the lobbyist lawyers, who they have dragged before committee over and over again? They are the only ones who have won with litigation and they are only ones who will win if this deal does not succeed.

• (1530)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, if I had a question like, I would wear a bag over my head. She is telling us the U.S. lumber lobby will come back after us and hurt us. What should we do? Roll over and give it everything it wants so it will leave us alone? What kind of government policy is that? Of course it will come after us. It comes after us in steel, it comes after us in wheat and it comes after us in hogs. The job of the government is to stand up to it, not back down.

Then she said that I did not realize the committee heard from people. It did not hear from the people being affected. To talk about us standing with lobbyists, when that member will not go out to the communities to meet the workers and the people in the industry who are affected, is a joke. Talk about standing with the lobbyists; she is standing with the U.S. lobbyists.

Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite interesting to hear the member for Timmins—James Bay talk about what he did and what he could do. The fact is, as a member of the fourth party of the House, there is not much he can do.

He had an opportunity to support some of the work the Liberals did. He talked about a deal for training and cogeneration plants for communities to ensure they could deal with high hydro costs. He talked about research and technology to ensure that companies could move forward, and he wanted support for all that.

He got all that in a forestry package that the Liberals put together. His answer will be that we did it at the very last moment. He knows that is not the case. I announced it would be within six months and we were within two weeks of doing that.

Would he sooner have the deal that Liberals proposed, which was something and it would be on the ground, or would he sooner have the softwood deal we have now?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I find the member's use of math interesting. Six months before the election, we were meeting with the mayors of northwestern Ontario, who were in Ottawa. We were talking with them and asking the Liberal government to give us a signal. We never heard a peep.

I cannot remember the Liberals ever promising this big package until the eve of the election when they pulled out the big deathbed red book and crammed in all the promises that they had never delivered year after year. They pulled it out and said that if Canadians gave them one more term, if they were re-elected them, they would help all the little children around the world and they would give them all the stuff they never gave them before. No wonder Canadians never fell for that.

When he talks about high—

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak again about Bill C-24, this time as part of the review of the second group of amendments proposed following the clause-by-clause study of the bill in committee.

I would like to begin by commenting on what was said by my colleague, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, whom I have the great pleasure to work with on the Standing Committee on International Trade and whose competence I value.

Sometimes, we have similar opinions. At other times, we disagree, on issues such as the recognition of Quebec as a nation or how attentive the Bloc Québécois is to the needs of our industries and unions.

Since the debates began in this House, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster has said several times that he and his party have consulted representatives of the industry and forestry workers on numerous occasions to hear their objections to Bill C-24.

However, we in the Bloc Québécois have also consulted industry representatives and workers in Quebec. They have asked us to support this agreement, because the industry has been brought to its knees by the constraints that have been imposed on it for so many years. That is why we support this agreement.

Government Orders

We must not forget that from the very beginning of this long and difficult conflict four years ago, despite the Bloc Québécois' many questions and its pressure on them, both the Conservative and Liberal governments refused to take action in this House to ensure better financial health for our forest industry and stable jobs for thousands of workers.

The Liberal and Conservative governments forgot—or probably chose to forget—one major thing: the importance of preparing a plan to support the forest industry and forestry sector workers by, for example, establishing a loan guarantees program to help some of them avoid bankruptcy. But despite multi-billion dollar surpluses, neither government did or is doing anything to support our industries.

Unfortunately, for more than 40 months, the Liberals stubbornly refused to provide any kind of assistance program and the Conservatives, who probably wanted to prove that they could be just as obstinate as the Liberals, decided to take the same approach.

Sometimes, when we put forward proposals to help our Quebec industries, we hear them laughing. The Liberals were stubborn. However, the Conservatives' refusal is not surprising. We know that in terms of economics, they prefer a laissez-faire ideology. They are not aware that their vision is doing a lot of damage to our forest industry.

During the last election campaign, the Conservative leader stated several times that he would help the forest industry by providing loan guarantees. The Conservatives made a commitment. They promised to support the industry with loan guarantees. After the election, they did not keep their promises about an independent employment insurance fund, the fiscal imbalance, or an assistance program for older workers, to name just a few.

Subsequently, the Prime Minister signed an agreement with his new friend, President Bush—an agreement that gave away \$1 billion in duties illegally collected by our neighbours to the south. He gave President Bush a \$1 billion gift. Of that \$1 billion, \$500 million will go to the American companies that started the conflict in the first place.

● (1535)

It is possible that this money will be used to modernize their companies and even used by these same industries to start a new legal war against the Quebec and Canadian forest industry.

This is an agreement and a bill that we support, but unenthusiastically.

During this entire dispute, it seemed obvious to me that the United States won with their strategy of dragging out litigation as long as possible.

Short on financial resources and abandoned by the Liberals and now the Conservatives, the forest industry was on its last legs and could no longer continue to fight in the courts, even though it won the many cases that were heard.

The industry, without support, asked the Bloc Québécois to recover some of this money that the U.S. government withheld illegally. Yes, illegally, since Washington was never able to show in

any court that its companies were adversely affected, or that its claims, that Canadian wood was subsidized, were founded.

Where are we now? Government representatives are saying that the Quebec and Canadian industry is getting its money back, as though this were an unexpected gift to the industry. This money is not a subsidy. This is industry money, only part of which is being recovered. But politics being what it is sometimes, the Conservatives seem to be claiming that they are subsidizing the forest industry with their own money.

A number of times we heard the Minister of Industry and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, with whom I enjoy working, tell us that the return of these duties represents a new cash injection, which will be very beneficial to the softwood lumber industry. There is no cash injection and no program of action to support the industry. It is false to say that this is a gift or a new cash injection since the industry paid this money in countervailing duties. Our industry is only recovering some of the money illegally withheld by Washington.

It is in this context that the industry and representatives of Quebec's forestry workers are reluctantly asking us to support the agreement, that the Bloc Québécois, as the party accountable to these industries, these unions and these constituents, has decided to take this direction.

However, since the beginning of the dispute, it is obvious that we would have preferred the government to support the industry in order to help its workers get through this very difficult period.

With the government's support, this industry could have developed and become more competitive, which would have minimized job losses. But, no, this federal government—whether Conservative or Liberal—chose to do nothing. It apparently did not have the money. It has a surplus of \$13 billion, \$14 billion or \$15 billion, yet it cannot support industries. It says it does not have the means. This has led us to where we are today.

As we have stated repeatedly in recent months, the Bloc Québécois supports this bill because the forest industry and the representatives of workers in Quebec have asked us to support the agreement. The NDP is still questioning us about this, namely, why we support this agreement. We constantly repeat: because we are close to the people who work in our industries and close to our unions. That is why we support this agreement.

However, since the very beginning of the dispute, we have maintained that the government must intervene. We cannot pretend, as the Conservative government maintains, that this agreement will solve all the forest industry's problems.

● (1540)

We know that it will solve very few of them.

As I mentioned, the forest industry has become vulnerable because of the lengthy softwood lumber dispute and it now faces an unprecedented structural crisis.

Clearly, the forest industry has been unable to overcome the tremendous difficulty it has been facing in recent years because of the softwood lumber dispute with the United States.

Government Orders

According to the Quebec Forest Industry Council, more than 7,000 jobs have been permanently or temporarily lost in Quebec since spring 2005. By refusing to act, the Conservatives—like the Liberals—have demonstrated blatant irresponsibility in this file. They must now assume their responsibilities.

If the government is still not convinced that an assistance program is necessary, it need only look at the number of jobs lost. The industry needs a support program, older workers need a support program, and the employment insurance program must be improved. We are waiting for this government to act.

[English]

Ms. Helena Guergis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the hon. member that the Prime Minister made a promise and delivered on that promise. He delivered a deal to the softwood lumber industry that he promised during the campaign. This deal is for seven to nine years free of litigation and it returns over \$5 billion American to the industry so that it can survive.

I notice that the member has acknowledged today that the previous Liberal government was unable or unwilling to solve this dispute and to give something back to the industry, but surely he is here voting in favour of and supporting the deal. Can he please tell us why he is supporting it? Surely it cannot be as bad as he has suggested. He knows there are some good things in it. He knows that Quebec is supporting it. He knows that the industry in Quebec is supporting it. Perhaps he could enlighten us as to why he has decided to support the deal.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Mr. Guy André: Mr. Speaker, in this House, we have to repeat ourselves endlessly in order for some politicians to understand the reasons why we support or oppose certain measures.

As we mentioned, we asked for a loan guarantee program to support the forestry industry while the trade dispute with the United States was ongoing. The Liberals were ineffective and did nothing. When the Conservatives campaigned in the last election, they said they would support the industries with loan guarantees. When the Conservatives were elected, they forgot about it. They forgot all about it just like they forgot to support the industry. They signed an agreement on July 1 which, unfortunately, meant major losses for the Quebec industry.

[English]

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary said the Prime Minister delivered on a deal, but the truth of the matter is that he did not deliver on a deal. He simply caved in to American pressure.

I want to remind the member for the Bloc that I chaired the committee on international trade. The issue we focused on was softwood lumber. The members from the Bloc at that time agreed, given the presentation from the lumber industry. I have pointed out in my presentations in the past that representatives from his beautiful province of Quebec asked for financial support. The report, supported by the members from the Bloc and all, said to provide funding for final arbitration, which we felt we were going to win.

Had it not been for the betrayal of the NDP and the Bloc Québécois, the funds were there to continue. Simply, it is important for Canadians to know this.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy André: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has just made comments about the reasons why we supported this agreement. However, I would like him to remember the needs of the Quebec industry, the Quebec nation and the Canadian nation regarding softwood lumber when he was in government.

We asked questions of the Liberals in the House. We asked them on many occasions—pressed them hard on this issue—to provide loan guarantees to these companies so that they could weather the dispute with the Americans as it went before the courts, NAFTA tribunals and all other avenues, and they did nothing. Today, he is asking why we are supporting the softwood lumber agreement. The industry was on its knees, was losing money and human and financial resources. It was no longer able to ride out the never-ending storm. The Liberals did absolutely nothing in this regard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Questions and comments.

[English]

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster will want to know that there is less than a minute for both the question and the answer.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thought it was interesting that the Liberals said earlier that we should not support the agreement, when they did everything they could in committee to make sure the agreement went through. As usual, I very much appreciated the speech and the presentation by the member for Berthier—Maskinongé. I also appreciated his comments about our work together.

Nevertheless, we have to ask ourselves some questions, including the following question. In Quebec, 2,000 jobs have been lost since this agreement took effect on an interim basis. We are talking about 2,000 jobs. With all the policies in the agreement, Quebec is losing the ability to manage its own forest policies effectively. The question arises: why does the Bloc still support an agreement that is taking away Quebec's powers and has led to massive job losses in Quebec?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé will want to know that the time is up, but I will give him a few minutes to respond.

Mr. Guy André: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer the question from the member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

We had a lengthy discussion in committee about the question he is asking me. I will repeat what I said then, and I know that he knows the answer I am going to give him.

Government Orders

Quite simply, we also have to respect the analysis that our industries have made of this agreement. I have told the member for Burnaby—New Westminster that. We must not believe, as the member for Burnaby—New Westminster seems to think, that our unions and our industries do not understand the issues this agreement involves. They, too, understand the issues. They have their own lawyers and their own human resources, and they are telling us to support this agreement—

● (1550)

[English]

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

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to again have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-24, the softwood lumber agreement. I have done so on several occasions this session because this is very important legislation. It is very important to people in my riding of Burnaby—Douglas. It is very important to the people of British Columbia, as indeed it is to people all across Canada.

I have to say that this is a very badly botched deal. It is a very badly botched deal and this is a very badly botched piece of legislation to enact that deal. There is always more to be said about the ineffective nature of this bill and its discrepancies and the problems with this piece of legislation and this deal.

I want to begin by paying tribute to my colleague, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, for the outstanding work he has done on this legislation and this deal, which includes his hard work, the hours he has put in and the dedication he has shown to getting the best possible deal for the people of Canada, for the lumber producing communities in this country and for the people who work in the lumber industry.

He has put in the hours. He has done the work to get a decent deal for Canadians and to then have a piece of legislation that actually was effective and worked. Unfortunately, at the end of the day, we have ended up with neither of these, because the government botched the negotiations to begin with and because the legislation has been so badly prepared.

The member for Burnaby—New Westminster was the one who fought to have summer hearings. He was the one who was prepared to come back from his summer vacation, to come back to Ottawa in the summer, which is no joy, as I am sure hon. members will know. We are from British Columbia and we enjoy the cool summer weather, while here in Ottawa there is none of that. To work through an Ottawa summer is giving up a lot when one is from British Columbia. It was something that he was prepared to do to take on this important work. Those hearings did go ahead. We were able to hear from people who had concerns about this legislation.

As well, during those hearings in the summer there was a further promise to have hearings in the regions. There was a promise to have hearings in Quebec, in northern Ontario and in B.C. A promise was made to go to the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, to Thunder Bay and to Vancouver to hear from communities that were directly affected. We were to hear from the people who were directly affected, the elected officials who represent those communities

locally, the companies located in those communities, and the other businesses affected by this deal and this dispute.

Unfortunately, those hearings were cancelled. After the member for Burnaby—New Westminster worked so hard to get those hearings for the people in the regions of Canada that are directly affected by this legislation, after he got it on the agenda, the committee later turned around and cancelled those hearings.

The member for Burnaby—New Westminster fought so hard to get those hearings and I think that was a despicable turn of events. Those people needed to have the opportunity to sit face to face with members of Parliament working on this issue and tell them about the problems they were having with the deal and this legislation. That opportunity was snatched away from them. There is no excuse for having backed out on that promise that was made by the committee.

I also have to say that I think the process the standing committee undertook when it was looking at this legislation, the process that shut down debate on the legislation in committee, is one that I think is particularly reprehensible.

My colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster, over the course of his hard work on this legislation, came up with 98 proposals on how this legislation could be improved and clarified. He worked hard to develop those 98 amendments and get them on the agenda of the committee.

Unfortunately, the committee decided to limit his ability to put them forward, to limit the debate in the committee, and to put time limitations on how long he had to address his proposals before the committee. The first limitation was a three minute limitation on each amendment.

Mr. Pat Martin: That's bad enough.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Yes. The member for Winnipeg Centre is right when he says that three minutes is bad enough. My colleague had only that much time to address each of these important issues he was raising with regard to this legislation.

Then the committee decided that the three minute amount of time was too long and should be reduced to one minute, but in one minute members can barely get the topic they are addressing out on the floor. A member cannot make a serious argument in one minute about what is important in an amendment and why that change needs to be made.

● (1555)

Even that was too long for the committee and the members moved to eliminate the ability to address any of the amendments all together. What a travesty of the parliamentary process. What a ham-fisted attempt to just shut down any discussion and any serious attempt to address the problems of this legislation.

Government Orders

I have very serious problems with what happened in that committee. A member, who was taking his responsibility seriously to represent the people of Canada, to represent people in forest communities, to represent workers in forest communities, to represent their families, to represent other industries affected by this agreement and this legislation, was shut down and did not have the opportunity to raise those concerns and speak for those Canadians and those communities.

I cannot imagine why that was done. What possible good did that serve, to shut down someone who had done that work and brought those concerns to the committee? In fact, in doing that, over half of the bill was not even considered by the committee in any serious way. The committee only heard from two witnesses in this process. Other witnesses were suggested by the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. They were key witnesses and trade experts who could talk about the problems with this legislation, who could try to fix some of the very serious issues that have not been addressed in this legislation. They were shut down as well.

Between the time limits, the refusal to hear key witnesses, and the refusal of the committee earlier to travel the country, I think a real disservice has been done both to Parliament and to the people of Canada.

I am also very disappointed that at this stage of the debate in the House, which is the report stage, there was a limitation placed on the member for Burnaby—New Westminster and his ability to table amendments at this point in the process.

We know that many of his amendments were not considered seriously and were not considered at all in the committee process when the committee was doing the clause by clause review of this legislation. He attempted to have the House, as is his right, address those issues here during the report stage debate. Unfortunately, most of his amendments were ruled out of order.

I do not know how we in this place could say that an effective and complete debate took place in committee when many of those amendments were not considered. I would think that a standard would be that if a committee had a chance to have a reasonable discussion of an amendment then maybe there would not be a reason to have that discussion here in the House, but unfortunately that was not the decision that was made.

I think the problems with this debate, the problems with this process, and the problems that were made respecting the democratic process of this institution continue with this phase of the debate as we are looking at amendments at report stage in the House.

I know that the argument is always made that a committee is a master of its own destiny, a master of its own decisions, and it can make those decisions in committee. However, when a committee clearly limits debate or fails to consider amendments, I believe that opportunity should exist here in the House for a member who did not get that chance in committee. I am disappointed by that decision as well.

Some 4,000 jobs have now been lost because of this agreement, because of the way this agreement was negotiated, and the botched nature of this agreement. That has affected people all across Canada. It was a bad agreement because Canada was on the verge of a

victory. We know that the appeals were coming to an end. We know the decisions that were made all along the process were favourable to Canada. There was no need for Canada to cave in, to put our tail between our legs and run from this process to try and get justice for the softwood lumber industry in Canada and for the Canadians who work in that industry in those communities.

There was also no reason to give away \$1 billion of illegally collected tariffs by the Americans. We know that half of that went directly to the White House and the other half went to the American lumber industry to mount its next campaign against the Canadian industry. That is just unacceptable.

In my own region recently there were almost 300 layoffs at Western Forest Products in New Westminster. Yet another forest community, another softwood lumber community, is affected by this bad deal and by this bad legislation. Another 300 people are out of work because of this bad deal and this bad legislation. There is no excuse for that. This has been happening time and time again across the country.

• (1600)

This is a botched deal. It is botched because even the government had to introduce an amendment because it forgot to deal with the maritime exclusion appropriately. It is botched because of the punitive taxes that are in it. It is botched because of the oversight it gives the Americans.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the hon. member's speech and I have been watching the debate unfold for weeks now in the House of Commons. The NDP continues to spread the gospel message from the U.S. lobbyists. I just do not understand why the NDP is working with the U.S. lawyers and the U.S. labour groups who are opposed to this deal.

The reality is that this is a great deal. This is a deal that will put litigation behind us once and for all. The U.S. lawyers are of course upset about this and they have got into the minds of the NDP members, which is not that difficult to do, and have them being their puppets up here in Canada.

All the NDP cares about is keeping this in the courts, never coming to a deal, and keeping our communities and our lumber industry up in the air without any final result. The NDP has a lot of explaining to do when jobs are at stake here in Canada. The lumber companies in Canada want this deal. They want it finalized. They do not want any more politics and games being played by the NDP.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Mr. Speaker, I do not know who is making the lawyers for the lumber lobby in the United States happier. I have a feeling that it is probably the government, which gave them a bonus payment of \$500 million, so that they can pursue their next plan and their next attack on Canadian industry. We have seen them do it time and time again. We have seen them do it with the forest industry. We have seen them do it with steel. We have seen them do it in the agriculture sector. So here we have given them \$500 million to pursue their next campaign against our industry, against our jobs, against our communities, and against our families.

Government Orders

I will not take any criticism from that side of the House for making Americans happy about this because we know that the big smile on their faces came directly from the actions of the government on that issue and the big paycheque that came from the government when it caved in on this deal. We were on the verge of winning every step along the way and all of a sudden we up and caved in. We caved in and we sent them a big cheque along with it.

That is absolutely unacceptable in this corner of the House. Frankly, I do not think that anything we are doing is making much joy in the lumber industry in the United States.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the presentation from the member for Burnaby—Douglas. Like so many of his colleagues, our colleagues, this corner of the House is the only corner of the House that is making sense on the softwood sellout.

What we have is a court judgment. On October 13 it said that the United States had to pay back every single dollar of the illegally taken tariffs. We have the Conservatives giving a birthday gift to George Bush of half a billion dollars and a birthday gift to the lawyers for the American softwood industry of another half a billion. A billion dollars in total was given away frivolously, shovelled off the back of a truck because the Conservatives just did not understand what was at stake.

I have a question for the member for Burnaby—Douglas. We had Conservatives and Liberals combining to force this bad deal through, including Conservatives and Liberals from British Columbia. B.C. has been the most impacted by this bad deal, this softwood sellout, and in fact, we have seen hundreds of lost jobs as a result in the last five weeks when it was put in place provisionally. Why does the member think Liberals and Conservatives in British Columbia were so willing to sell out the B.C. softwood industry and softwood community, and when did these Liberals and Conservatives stop representing B.C. and start representing their political leaders from Ottawa in British Columbia?

• (1605)

Mr. Bill Siksay: Mr. Speaker, I wish I could understand the motivation of Conservative and Liberal members from British Columbia when it comes to this deal.

In fact, the other day I was here in the House when the debate was going on and I heard a Conservative member from Vancouver Island recounting how people in Port Alberni were counting the number of trucks leaving that community with raw logs on the back of the trucks that had no post-logging production and no value added production on that lumber. They were counting those trucks leaving day after day and in the port of Port Alberni raw logs were being loaded on to ships to be exported out of Canada, again, with no further production of that wood into anything secondary.

It is unbelievable that the member could stand there and report this kind of activity when we know that is one of the flaws with this deal. It does nothing to stop the export of raw logs from British Columbia. That will be a huge—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier to Bill C-24 and I could not help, as this debate is closing, but to take the 10 minutes that I am accorded to add my voice to this most difficult situation. I want to use this opportunity to tell Canadians some of the facts that occurred. We come to this honourable chamber to deal with facts and not innuendoes.

When we sit in this honourable chamber, we sometimes say things that are not accurate. I do not want to use the words “not truthful” because that is unparliamentary language, but members say things that are not accurate. Yet, we walk out of the chamber feeling pretty comfortable. I choose not to take that position, but to take this opportunity as the debate closes on Bill C-24 to put some facts on the table.

As the member for Burnaby—Douglas concluded his remarks he said that we were on the verge. I assume he meant we were on the verge in final arbitration to once again have a ruling in Canada's favour.

I had the privilege, if I may say, to chair the committee that addressed this issue. As I mentioned in the past and I will take the opportunity once again, the entire industry literally came before the committee and gave testimony. Members from the Bloc spoke about this earlier. Let me put on the record who attended. The committee heard from the Québec Forest Industry Council; the BC Lumber Trade Council, mentioned by the New Democratic representative who just spoke; Canfor Corporation; West Fraser Timber Co. Ltd.; and Weyerhaeuser Company. We are talking about all the industry representatives.

What did they tell us in committee? They thanked us for the support that the Liberal government had been providing throughout this ordeal. They were here to tell us that they needed our financial assistance and government support because they knew they were going to win and they wanted to be there.

We do not just cut cheques. Obviously, there has to be a committee inquiry and we have to hear from witnesses. As a committee we have an obligation to summarize all the findings and make recommendations, which is exactly what we did. There were recommendations which are here in the report.

The parliamentary secretary and the member for Burnaby—Douglas were present. The member for Burnaby—New Westminster was also on the committee and knows very well the recommendations. He heard them firsthand. There were recommendations from the New Democratic Party that members from the Bloc approved. The recommendations from the Liberal government of the day included a provision to provide financial support.

Having said that, the response will be that I am still upset. No, I am not upset with what happened. Canadians spoke in the last election. Liberals respect the outcome and we have to work with it.

The member for Burnaby—Douglas said that we were on the verge. If we were on the verge, why did the Conservatives betray the lumber industry and overthrow the Liberal government prematurely when there was a commitment to have an election at some point in time as the then prime minister indicated? There is no question. I agree with the NDP and the Bloc Québécois that this is a bad deal.

Government Orders

When the Minister of Industry signed the agreement and members of the community and the industry did not agree, the new Conservative government, as it wishes to be called, turned around and said it had been muzzled to put this deal together and asked how to do it. This is how it put the deal together. It went to the players in the lumber industry and said that if they did not accept this deal, the government would tax them on top of it.

• (1610)

Let me quote from the newspaper. It says here, “Ottawa plans to tax holdouts”. In other words, if they do not accept the deal, the government will tax them on top of that. It does not matter that it has taken over \$5 billion their money.

On the money, there is great concern. I challenge the parliamentary secretary, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Industry. I am hopeful that one day they will show us a cheque for over \$4 billion. Quite frankly, the people I speak to and I hear from do not feel that money will come to Canada. That is a challenge I hope they will pick up on and some day stand proudly, if they have that cheque, and say that they got our money back. I do not think that money is coming.

During the presentations, over and over again, we talked about the NAFTA dispute mechanism. We know very well there are some problems in it. When the deal was first put together, it was put together with the thought of that day. Along the way, things change, such as environments and conditions, and on an ongoing basis we try to refine and improve it.

Unfortunately, what has happened is that in the middle of the game, the Americans decided to change the rules. They are trying to punish us because we have developed a very efficient and cost effective product where we can put our lumber out to the international community and compete fair and square.

What I am upset about, as are many of my constituents, is they are going to hold over \$1 billion of our money of which they say half a billion is going to go to supporting the Katrina fund. That is an honourable thing to do. However, as we know, parliamentarians and Canadians responded to the call of the Katrina disaster. We raised money. I do not think that was a wise decision. On the other hand, we do not know up to this very day where the half a billion dollars will go.

Would the parliamentary secretary get us some information on this? Canadians want to know where their money is going.

From the day the deal was supposedly made until now, it has been almost a year. If an average Canadian had over \$5 billion in the bank, that would provide him or her with some interest. Is that interest coming to Canada, or is that interest going to stay in the United States of America? That is another question Canadians are asking.

The member earlier said that this was a great deal. Canadians are still asking what the deal is all about. Why is this deal so great? Is it great because we have been robbed of over \$1 billion? Is it great because if conditions change overnight, the Americans can change the rules? Is it a great deal because it has already cost us jobs? I want to know what is so great about this deal so I can tell my constituents.

It does not affect me personally, coming from an urban riding such as Scarborough Centre, but it does affect the peripheral industries around me, whether it is housing, et cetera. Directly it does not affect employment in my riding, but it affects my province of Ontario as a whole. However, when it affects the province of Quebec and the province of British Columbia, rest assured it affects each and every Canadian, and I bring that to the attention of the Conservative Party and the Prime Minister.

I want to thank the member from New Westminster, who really did work hard on this file during committee, and the members from the Bloc. I am sad today because they do not reflect on what happened and what the recommendations were in that committee. They know very well, as the member for Burnaby—Douglas said, we were on the verge of putting this deal properly where it belonged.

Unfortunately, and I am not going to go into it, the government was no longer there. Here we are today, succumbing to the pressure of the Americans, giving up well over a billion dollars, and it is costing us jobs on top of that.

• (1615)

Ms. Helena Guergis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my Liberal colleague talk about a deal that his party was not able to secure. When we became the new government and secured this deal, we found out that the Liberals were willing to sign on for only \$3 billion to be returned to the Canadian industry. We arranged for over \$5 billion being returned back.

The hon. member is bragging about something that he and his Liberal Party were unable to achieve. After 13 years, they were unable to do anything for the industry to the point where the industry is now in a desperate state. That is why we needed this deal. That is why we see so much support from the industry, from all the provinces and from the Bloc. I appreciate the comments of members of the Bloc when they talk about the inability of the previous Liberal government.

I also point out that we heard from a very important witness, Gordon Ritchie. He told us that in the very beginning when NAFTA was negotiated, softwood lumber was carved out in a memorandum of understanding because the Americans did not want it included. It would not work within a dispute mechanism system. There is a new dispute mechanism within this deal that will work. It is taking it out of U.S. trial law and bringing it into international trade law.

Would the hon. member perhaps comment as to what he thinks about this process which the industry very much supports?

Mr. John Cannis: Mr. Speaker, in a constructive way, the parliamentary secretary does not have a clue what she is talking about. If there had been a deal for \$3 billion, we did not want it because we knew it was a bad deal. If we thought it was a good deal, we would have accepted it.

Ms. Helena Guergis: You did nothing. You should apologize.

Mr. John Cannis: Apologize for what? We have nothing for which we should apologize. It was a bad deal then and we did not accept it, and it is a bad deal today.

Government Orders

The parliamentary secretary should read the report. I am sure she has not read it because her question tells me that she has total ignorance of what happened in committee. It was confirmed by the member for Burnaby—Douglas when he said, “We were on the verge”. Industry testimony is on the record. All the people that the parliamentary secretary referred to are on the record.

The Liberal government chose in its wisdom to do two things. First, it decided to support the industry with financial support, but unfortunately the government fell. Second, it chose to walk away from that proposal of \$3 billion because it was a really bad deal as is the Conservative deal.

We did not muzzle the industry. We did not tell the industry that if it did not accept the \$3 billion deal, we would penalize it. We made the decision, unilaterally, because it was a bad deal for Canada, a bad deal for the industry and we said we would not take it.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is quite a sight for Canadians who are watching to see the Liberals and Conservatives fighting out who has the worst deal. It was the Minister of International Trade, the soon to be ex-member for Vancouver Kingsway, who had the deal with the Liberals, took it across the floor to the Conservatives and received about 3¢ on the dollar better. All the other components were there. Both deals are sellouts and both deals will be rejected by Canadians. When Canadians in softwood communities across the country get the chance, they will vote against Liberal and Conservative candidates who sold out our country this fall by trying to push through this deal.

I always appreciate hearing the member for Scarborough Centre speak, but today he used a very interesting term. He talked about the election of January 23 as being an overthrow of the government. That is a very curious term. This is a sense of entitlement that goes quite beyond belief, that a democratic election is an overthrow of the government. It was not that. It was a chance for Canadians to judge the government of the day. We will see the same judgment on the Conservatives in the next election as we saw on the Liberals on January 23.

We were on the verge of winning on October 13. In fact, we did win. Why did the Liberals cancel the hearings in regions across the country? Why did the Liberals cancel hearings in Ottawa? Why did the Liberals force this bad bill through committee?

• (1620)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Scarborough Centre has 25 seconds to reply to those three questions.

Mr. John Cannis: Mr. Speaker, in those 25 seconds I want to talk about the deal. I have great respect for the member, but I believe he is being intellectually dishonest with the wording he is using. He said “a deal”. There was a proposal under the Liberal government. We in our wisdom saw that it was wrong and did not even propose it. We did not have a deal. The Conservative Party had a bad deal and it accepted it.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for that warm welcome and for this opportunity to convey some of the concerns the good people of Winnipeg Centre have about this bill.

Let me start by taking a moment to recognize and pay tribute to the valiant work done by my colleague, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, who perhaps above all others, who dealt with this long, complicated piece of legislation, actually stood up for Canadians. He has tried every possible angle he could think of to negotiate a better deal for Canadians and to sound the alarm that what we are doing today is fundamentally wrong on so many levels that it constitutes a betrayal of the best interests of Canadians.

I have learned a great deal from my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster about this softwood lumber deal, or sellout as he is fond of calling it, throughout the process. He has been a tireless champion not only in the House of Commons, not only at the standing committee, in spite of a conspiracy to silence him at the committee, but around our caucus table and throughout meetings across Canada, in which he spoke to concerned citizens. They are mystified. Their minds are boggled by why on earth we would do this deal at this time at this fragile point in the history of the softwood lumber industry in our country. It is beyond reason.

Reason and logic do not seem to enter into it, as I understand it. Listening to speakers from the other two opposition parties, I am no further ahead. I still do not understand their motivation in helping the Conservatives to complete this deal and to sell it out.

On this conspiracy to silence the truth about this deal, I do not know if they met in backrooms or if they woke up with some Jungian collective unconscious or something, but they conspired to undermine the best interests of Canadians. At the very least, they owe us an apology. In fact, they owe us about \$1 billion because that is what it costs in real material terms.

In actual fact, more harm was done than just the damages that we have suffered in a monetary way. The real damage, perhaps the less measurable and less tangible damage, was the way they bastardized democracy and undermined the rights of my colleague, his privileges as a member of Parliament, and denied him the opportunity to do his job at the standing committee.

My colleague from Burnaby—Douglas outlined the atrocious conspiracy. Members on that international trade committee should hang their heads in shame for the way that they treated my colleague, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. I witnessed some of it and I was ashamed. As a long-standing veteran member of Parliament in this chamber, I have never seen anything like it. I have never seen a chair abuse his privileges as a chair. I have never seen such a bunch of cowards on the other side, the members of Parliaments who fell in line and took part in this conspiracy to silence my colleague.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Lemmings.

Mr. Pat Martin: What a bunch of lemmings, as my colleague from Ottawa Centre says.

Government Orders

I know, Mr. Speaker, you follow Parliament carefully. You are a scholar of parliamentary procedure and history. Have you ever, in all your life, heard of moving closure at committee to the point where speeches are only limited to three minutes? That was a first. I have never heard of such a thing. I myself suffered closure at committee one time to 10 minutes per speech, and the hue and cry across the land among scholars and academics was horrific, that people were being silenced to only 10 minute speeches per amendment. My colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster was silenced to three minutes per amendment.

He introduced 98 amendments in a diligent and valiant attempt to do due diligence on this bill. He introduced those amendments to try to salvage this train wreck of a bill, but that was not good enough. When he started to exercise his rights, his democratic parliamentary privilege to speak to these amendments, to convince his fellow colleagues, they said that it was not good enough and they silenced him to one minute speeches per motion.

That set a record in draconian, bad behaviour at committees. Nobody has ever heard of that. That was history making. That will go down in the books as the most draconian, Fascist move in parliament history in committees.

• (1625)

That was not good enough. When they were too annoyed and did not want to hear a one minute speech to introduce complex amendments to an enormously complex bill that was costing us \$1 billion, they decided to silence him even further and say that there were no comments allowed.

Have we ever heard of muzzling someone to that degree? We might as well tie people up. We might as well handcuff them too. We might as well put duct tape on their mouths and hold them in the basement until the Conservatives can ram this piece of legislation through, because that is how draconian this is.

No one has ever heard of this, Mr. Speaker, and I ask you—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre has the floor. He is at the other end of the room and the Chair occupant needs to hear what he is saying, which means that the people between the two of us should also pay attention. Thank you very much.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that ruling, because it was very difficult for me to keep my thoughts together with all that brouhaha. I am glad you can hear me now, because I was asking you if you have ever heard of such a thing.

To muzzle a democratically elected member of Parliament at a House of Commons standing committee and not allow him to speak to the very motions that he was putting forward to amend a bill: is there a precedent anywhere in the free world for that? I do not think so.

We may hear of such a thing in some third world banana republic, but we have not heard of that in this country before. We made history with this bill and it is nothing to be proud of. It is to the great shame of this House and the new Conservative government. And it is to the great shame of those spineless opposition MPs who would not

support a colleague on the opposition benches and who complied and cooperated with this draconian measure.

I cannot overstate how disappointed I am with the way that my colleague was treated at that committee for trying to stand up in the best interests of Canadians and trying to save us \$1 billion. He was doing the Canadian public a service. So much for standing up for the little guy and standing up for Canadians. We had someone who had the courage to put his career on the line and stand up on his hind legs and fight at a standing committee for the best interests of Canadians and he was silenced.

I cannot understand why the Bloc Québécois supported the Conservative government in this sellout. I have asked my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster to explain to me why he thinks the Bloc would tolerate a piece of legislation that is clearly a deal managed of, by and for the American lumber lobby. I cannot understand why the Bloc would tolerate this bill, in which a supposedly sovereign nation has signed on to an unprecedented clause which requires that the provinces first vet any changes to forest industry policy through Washington.

As for my colleagues from the Bloc, if nothing else, they understand the notion of sovereignty. This is their *raison d'être*. They understand the concept of sovereignty. Why, then, would they sign on to a bill that compromises the sovereignty of this great nation and the provinces? The provinces will not be able to make changes to their own softwood lumber policy without first vetting them through Washington, D.C. Why would my colleagues from the Bloc agree to that intrusion into their jurisdiction? They are always talking about the federal government trying to intrude in their jurisdiction. Why would they tolerate this?

I hope they traded that support for a big, big wheelbarrow full of money. I hope they got barrels of money. I hope the fiscal imbalance will be solved and all of their dreams will come true, because it cost us a great deal of money. It cost us dearly.

The most outrageous thing is the \$1 billion that we have left on the table, of which the Americans will get to keep \$450 million of these illegal duties and which will grease the wheels of the protectionist Republicans, essentially so they can challenge us. We will be subsidizing the ongoing illicit attack on our own softwood lumber industry.

Canadian money will be used to grease the wheels of the American machine that is in full flight and attacking us on this and other trade fronts. That is appalling. The other \$500 million will go to the American softwood lumber industry, and again, it will carry on its unfair practices against us.

Time does not permit me to express fully how disappointed I am with this House of Commons and its treatment of Bill C-24. Canadians—

• (1630)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Speaking of time, it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

Government Orders

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): As always, Mr. Speaker, the speech of the member for Winnipeg Centre on the softwood sellout makes a great deal of sense. When he intervenes in this House, what he says makes a great deal of sense and I think resonates with the public at large.

Before I ask the member a question, I want to read into the record a letter sent to the Conservative member for Cariboo—Prince George. This is a letter written on behalf of approximately 10,000 workers in the softwood industry in the central and northern interior of British Columbia, most of them in the forest industry. It states: “These members and their families do not support the proposed softwood lumber agreement and on their behalf we are writing to urge you to oppose the proposed legislation that would enact this agreement between Canada and the U.S.”

So here we have a Conservative member who has been written to by 10,000 softwood workers and the member has stood up in the House and has said quite frankly that he will still support the softwood sellout, as all Conservatives have. Not one Conservative has stood up to say that this is an egregious betrayal of softwood communities across the country.

The member for Winnipeg Centre has had a long experience in this House and has been very dedicated. My question for him is a simple one. Why would a member betray the interests of his own community? Why would 125 Conservatives, whether they are in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta or British Columbia, betray the interests of softwood workers from across western Canada? I am asking him as a fellow representative from western Canada.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, if my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster will allow me, I will paraphrase his question somewhat. What I understand him to mean by that question, if I can summarize it in brief, is that it is really the question of which side we are on.

The Conservative members of Parliament are ignoring the will of the grassroots people that they are sworn and duty bound to represent, ignoring it for the interests of the American softwood lumber industry and George Bush and his gang. They are selling out Canadians. The damage done is greater than simply the monetary impact of losing the \$1 billion. The betrayal is ignoring the best interests of the people they represent by abandoning them.

I will point out an item in a very helpful document that my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster put together, which I think all members should read. Of the 25 good reasons to oppose the softwood lumber agreement, item 16 points out that the softwood lumber agreement actually discourages the value adding of manufacturing in the softwood lumber deal. It actually goes in the opposite direction of where we should be going.

My father, who was a wise man, used to say that shipping a raw log out of this country is tantamount to economic treason, because we all know that is where the jobs are and that is where the real value is. It is in value adding, not in us being hewers of wood and drawers of water. It is in us being manufacturers, high tech preferably, and even just down to lumber.

Some hon. members: Time.

Mr. Pat Martin: I do not know why the Bloc wants me to stop talking, but it actually leads me to want to carry on talking because a little respect is in order in the House of Commons sometimes. Respect is what makes the world go round.

• (1635)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Questions and comments? Resuming debate, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to participate in this critical debate on an issue that is important for the future of our country.

We are talking today about Bill C-24, the softwood lumber agreement, and we are talking about a legislative process that ran amok, despite the best efforts of the New Democratic Party caucus and particularly those of our trade critic, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

I want to add my congratulations for the member's steadfast work on this very important issue over many months. Despite the many obstacles that were put in his way, despite all kinds of intimidation by other members in the House, this single member persevered and resolved to fight to the very end to stop this bad deal. That deserves commendation. It deserves noteworthy recognition in this House.

I want the member to know that we appreciate the long hours he has put in, especially at the committee level, where in fact he single-handedly tried to provide the constructive criticism needed to improve this bill, despite the fact that the other opposition parties and critics had abandoned this matter and left the whole issue for the Conservatives to pursue, as they determined was appropriate for their own agenda.

We know the story. In fact, we know what our critic, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, went through as he attempted hold the committee to task for its commitment to hold cross-country hearings on this critical issue. There was an all party agreement for that process, but somehow, somewhere in the deep recesses of this place, the Conservatives got through to the Liberals and the Bloc, who willingly gave up this commitment, who kowtowed and allowed themselves to abandon a public consultation process. That is unforgivable.

A commitment was made. Canadians across this country were waiting for those hearings. We ought to have fulfilled our obligations. In fact, I can remember that in August of this year when our caucus was meeting in Thunder Bay there was an absolute demand across the board for those hearings and for an opportunity to participate in the process. People have a lot to say and have very deep reservations about the softwood deal. They have been denied that opportunity.

If that was not enough, the committee dealing with Bill C-24 then proceeded to try to shut down my dear colleague, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, despite the fact that he put in hours and hours of research and developed very constructive amendments. In fact, he developed 96 amendments.

Mr. Pat Martin: Ninety-eight amendments.

Government Orders

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: I stand corrected by my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, who is no slouch when it comes to filibusters. He knows the importance of standing up on principle and in fact he worked very hard in a previous Parliament to try to stop regressive legislation in the area of aboriginal affairs. He did a great service to this country.

My colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster tried the same with respect to softwood lumber. But for the fact that his colleagues from the other opposition parties let him down, it would have been a completely successful overhaul of this legislation. Clearly we are now debating a small number of those amendments that did make it through the committee process before the other parties decided to clamp down, to stop my colleague from speaking, to silence him on this very important issue.

That is regrettable. This place should always be open to hear constructive debate and criticism. He did that by way of these amendments. We know that the amendments were not deleterious or trivial. They were all substantive and would have made the legislation much, much better.

• (1640)

As it is, at almost the final stage of the bill, we are left debating a most imperfect piece of legislation. The bill will do enormous damage to this country in all aspects of our sovereignty as a nation, may I suggest, at a time when we are discussing the whole definition of what it means to be a nation.

While we have stood in the House and recognized that the Québécois and the Québécoise form a nation within a united Canada, at the same time we have acknowledged that under the present government and the previous government, we have lost our sense of nationhood in terms of Canada as a country. We have given away so much of what is important to this country that we have been left to scramble and try to piece together a meaningful definition of what it means to be a nation.

This is why. Here is a bill where we are giving away our sovereignty. We are kowtowing to the Americans. We are giving the Americans a billion dollars because we would not stand up to the Americans and ensure justice was done in terms of our own lumber producers and manufacturers. This is a serious situation. That is why we are debating it today with our every breath and we are trying to bring some sense into this process.

It is important at this moment to bring forward the latest evidence, the most important study yet done in this area in terms of the economic impact on our country of Bill C-24. Today's *Quorum* contains an article from today's *Globe and Mail* which has the headline, "Lumber deal will devastate B.C. mill towns". The article says, "The Canada-United States softwood lumber agreement will devastate British Columbia resource towns if parliament ratifies the deal". That is according to a report done by the very prominent and credible organization, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which has produced accurate reports in many instances.

I say it is credible and reliable because it is the organization that over the last six or seven budgets has accurately forecast the surplus available to the government. It has been far more accurate than the officials in the Department of Finance. If we look at the statistics

over the last six or seven budgets, the government, mainly Liberal, I might add, forecast a surplus of about \$23 billion for that whole period. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives forecast a surplus of \$75 billion for that period of time. Would anyone care to guess what was the actual surplus for that period of time? It was \$70 billion. Which was closer, the Government of Canada at \$23 billion, or the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives at \$75 billion? CCPA was right on the money.

Let me put on record its conclusion. After an in-depth study about this issue, the CCPA said that the softwood lumber agreement is a bad deal. It said that combined with forest policy changes that the B. C. government made in a failed attempt to appease the softwood lobby, it harms the province's ability to generate much needed jobs in resource dependent communities. It said that before it is too late, political leaders should speak to block its final passage into law. Today we appeal to all members in the House to block the passage of Bill C-24.

• (1645)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the presentation by the member for Winnipeg North, particularly with respect to provincial forestry practices. She outlined how some provincial governments have capitulated on this deal and it is something that Canadians should take notice of.

She mentioned British Columbia where a Liberal government obviously took the money it was getting out of the export tax and which leads to massive job losses in British Columbia as more important than actually standing up for softwood communities. We have seen the same thing occur with the Alberta Conservative government. It took the money rather than follow the wishes of the softwood lumber industry, which very clearly expressed the view this summer that this would lead to job losses in Alberta. In Ontario we have seen the same thing. There have been massive job losses in northern Ontario. The Ontario Liberal government supports the deal.

But two provincial governments stand out, and they are Saskatchewan and Manitoba. They have actually raised serious concerns about the softwood sellout. They have raised concerns about the fact that now the Bush administration in Washington has control over any changes to provincial forestry practices. It is the same in Quebec and British Columbia. What it means is provincial governments have to go cap in hand to Washington to get approval for forestry practice changes here in Canada.

My question for the member for Winnipeg North is very simple. Why are governments in Manitoba and Saskatchewan understanding the problems with this deal when the other provincial governments seem to just want to take the money and run?

Government Orders

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, the answer is rather obvious. In fact, if one looks at the responsible governments in this day and age, one would quickly come to the conclusion that it is the NDP governments of Saskatchewan and Manitoba that have been the most fiscally responsible. That is something that has been acknowledged by the Minister of Finance's own department in a study done of all provinces. It was concluded that Manitoba and Saskatchewan were the only two governments that ensured balanced budgets, responsible expenditures and careful planning. They are NDP governments.

On an issue such as this one on softwood lumber, it is clear that the approach by the governments in Saskatchewan and Manitoba is one of not bending or kowtowing to big money interests for starters and certainly not to the United States for the answers to all of our problems. We are dealing with a question of responsible government that operates in the best interests of the people it serves. That is what we are talking about today: putting people's interests ahead of corporate interests. It is putting Canadian interests ahead of American interests.

In all of this there is a real lesson for the present Conservative government. There certainly is a lesson for the B.C. Liberal government which, as the CCPA mentioned in its report, has a duty to the public to explain how it intends to maximize social benefits from publicly owned resources in the years ahead. That is an absolute requirement on the part of the B.C. government and another reason that we are very skeptical about the merits of this bill at all.

Hon. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will make my question simple. I ask my colleague from the NDP why it is that when she talks about people being impacted by this legislation she and her party are in support of very high-priced trade litigation lawyers and the ongoing dispute. That is the alternative Canada is facing. For the men and women who depend on the lumber industry for their livelihoods, that is the alternative they are facing if this deal does not go ahead.

• (1650)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, by way of an answer, I will simply read from a letter which was sent to our colleague on the Conservative side from the USW, which states, "We are writing on behalf of approximately 10,000 USW members in the central northern interior of B.C., most of them in the forestry industry. These members and their families do not support the proposed softwood lumber agreement and on their behalf we are writing to urge you to oppose the proposed legislation that would enact this agreement between Canada and the United States".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The question is on Motion No. 6. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 7. 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: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*English*]

The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 8, 15, 16 and 22.

The next question is on Motion No. 13. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Government Orders

[Translation]

The next question is on Motion No. 14. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 17. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

• (1655)

[Translation]

The next question is on Motion No. 19. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 28. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The recorded division on Motion No. 28 stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, there is agreement that the vote be deferred until the ordinary hour of adjournment on Monday, December 4.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Accordingly, the vote is deferred until Monday, December 4.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you would find, if you seek it, unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m..

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 5:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, December 4, at 11:00 a.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, November 9.

(The House adjourned at 4:58 p.m.)

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