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Friday, March 2, 2007

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 2, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1000)

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-36, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (for the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development) moved that Bill C-36, as amended, be concurred in.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (for the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in this place today to speak to Bill C-36. I should let you and members of this place know that I am pinch-hitting for my colleague, the parliamentary secretary to the minister, who is storm stayed in the bowels of Pearson airport with many of our other colleagues.

In any event, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to this very important bill. I say it is important because Canadians, particularly seniors, look to our excellent public pension plan for the income security they need and deserve in their retirement years.

It is important for Canada's new government as well. This legislation is part of the commitments we made to Canadians during the last election.

Delivering on that commitment is a way in which we reinforce the trust Canadians have in their government. This is an important change. Canadians are happy to have a government that is following up on what it promised by getting it done.

This bill is also important because it strengthens the public's faith in the government's capacity to serve as a good steward of the Canada pension plan and the old age security program.

Canada's population is aging at an unprecedented rate. The number of seniors is expected to double in the next few decades. It has been urgent for some time that governments develop the policies, programs and services that will meet the evolving needs of seniors, both for today and in the future.

Our government, through Bill C-36, is doing just that. We introduced a number of important amendments to the old age security and the Canada pension plan. At this stage of the bill, it is important to acknowledge the progress we have made.

While this government and the Prime Minister have shown tremendous leadership in delivering what we promised, I am pleased to acknowledge the cooperation of all parties in providing input on the bill before us today. I want to thank each member of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities for their excellent work and collaboration in advancing this bill. While there were some proposals that did not make it into the bill, we are all better informed by the contributions of the members for Chambly—Borduas and Hamilton Mountain.

Ultimately, the bill we have before us benefits Canadian seniors and long term contributors applying for CPP disability. I think they will be pleased with the collegial work that took place on their behalf.

I was watching the news on Tuesday night, and in fact, right after the committee's consideration of Bill C-36. There was a segment on the latest Statistics Canada report entitled "A Portrait of Seniors in Canada". The news story was very positive. Seniors in Canada today are healthier. They are living longer. They are much more active. Many are exercising three or four times a week. And seniors well into their seventies want to keep working.

Government Orders

Seniors have a powerful voice, and this government is listening. What resonates with me is their strong belief in remaining able and active members of Canadian society. I was so proud when at the end of the news report a man said, "I have my old age pension and I have my Canada pension plan...what more do I need?"

We as parliamentarians should not rest on our laurels. We have a responsibility to ensure our pension programs remain stable, sustainable and generous. I believe, and I think members of this House would agree, that we are accomplishing exactly that through this bill.

This bill comes from Canadians. They were the ones who, through their letters, their emails, their meetings with us and their organizations, made a point of saying that they needed these changes. They are changes that will make a difference in their lives, changes that will alleviate some of their frustration and changes that recognize their unique circumstances. They are changes that make sense to all members of Canadian society and treat them all fairly while ensuring that we maintain their trust in their public pensions by remaining fiscally responsible, transparent, and accountable, accountable to them, the seniors of this country.

Our public pension system is something we can rightly take pride in. It plays a vital role in ensuring the economic well-being of millions of Canadians. Public pensions deliver over \$54 billion to Canadian seniors each year.

We are proud of the fact that our pension system has been an important part in dramatically reducing the level of poverty among seniors. In 1980, almost 21% of seniors lived on low incomes. Today that number has dropped to less than 6%. Like our health care system, our public pension programs are part of the Canadian way of life. They are defining features that we all cherish.

This bill will improve the delivery of pension benefits for seniors and enhance eligibility for Canadian pension plan disability benefits for long term contributors to the plan. Frankly, it will improve access.

My biggest sense of pride as a parliamentarian, and I am sure this sentiment is shared by all parliamentarians, comes from participating in a democratic process whose end result makes a meaningful difference in the lives of Canadians. These changes go a long way to doing just that.

●(1005)

In particular, the proposed lifetime application process for the guaranteed income supplement means that seniors will never have to reapply for the benefit each time their income increases or decreases. This will greatly ease the frustration of certain seniors and will ensure that those who file their income taxes will receive their benefit in a timely manner.

When a person applies for his or her old age security pension or Canada pension plan, that person is establishing a relationship with us that will last for the rest of his or her life. Expanding the group of third persons who can assist seniors with their pension benefits means that extended family members will be able to play a more active role and assist their loved ones whose first language is not English or French or who may have trouble reading or writing. I think seniors will very much welcome this change.

However, easing eligibility rules for long term Canada pension plan contributors will assist thousands of individuals to qualify for disability benefits in future years. This means that applicants with a long history of attachment to the labour force who become severely disabled can count on CPP disability to be there when they need support. I am particularly pleased that this important change is a result of federal-provincial-territorial collaboration.

Clearly, we always need to need to do more. I want to thank my colleagues and the witnesses who appeared before committee, who offered excellent suggestions on ways in which to improve our outreach activities and who acknowledged that legislative changes only go so far. There is clearly a responsibility, aside from our legislation, to get the word out to explain our pension programs and to work closely alongside community groups.

Seniors are valued members of our society. They are the reason we enjoy our country as we know it today. After their lifetime of hard work, we want to ensure that seniors can continue to have a good quality of life without having to constantly worry about their financial security. They deserve our utmost respect and consideration. We have an obligation to ensure that public pensions respect their needs.

Ultimately, I think this bill goes a long way in effecting the kinds of changes that seniors need and have asked for. I am grateful to all members for their support in moving forward on this bill expeditiously.

●(1010)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for outlining Bill C-36. However, he did touch on the issue of Canada pension plan disability. I wonder if he shares the same frustration that we have had as members of Parliament when constituents come to us looking for help with their CPP disability.

Virtually everybody who applies for CPP disability gets turned down on the initial adjudication, no matter what the merits of their case would be. It is only on appeal, and usually on appeal with the help of their member of Parliament, that we ever break through this barrier, this complete wall that has been put up in terms of access to CPP.

I do not say this as a criticism for the current government. This has been the case for a decade or more. Somebody, somewhere within Canada pension plan disability, sent a memo around to the adjudicators saying to deny every claim and that if applicants want to come back and appeal, maybe they will consider the merits of it then. I defy anyone to show me a single Canada pension plan disability claim that has ever been granted on initial application. It does not exist.

I would like to know what specifically the government could do about this or what it even may be doing in Bill C-36. If there is some progress to be announced in association with the eligibility for CPP disability within Bill C-36, I would like to hear about it.

Government Orders

Also, briefly, would he not agree that at this point in regard to the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board it is time for beneficiary representation on that board?

An 11-person board now controls investment worth \$140 billion on behalf of Canadians and we have no representation on the board. It is made up of patronage appointments, largely, people who have no particular experience with investment banking. In fact, one of those 11 people is the Liberal that I beat in the 1997 election. His soft landing was to get put on this new Canada Pension Plan Investment Board. He was a history teacher.

I wonder if there is not some interest in putting a labour representative, a beneficiary representative, somebody to represent the Canadian public, on this all important investment board that is investing our money.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that my hon. colleague from Winnipeg Centre is storm stayed in Ottawa with the rest of us until we try to make it out tonight.

My friend and colleague raises two important points. One is about the level of frustration that many seniors feel when they apply for CPP benefits. Most seniors with whom I have spoken have gone through the same frustration levels of applying, being denied, appealing and finally getting their benefits.

Something we, as a government, have been trying to achieve since we were elected is to streamline government services. Quite frankly, we are a government that believes in leaner, meaner, more efficient governments. I wish we could this overnight but we cannot. However, I think over time we will be able to streamline some of the processes of government and ease the frustrations and access to benefits that most seniors richly deserve. We will be working hard on that.

I would point out to my friend and colleague from Winnipeg Centre that in our latest cabinet shuffle we announced that there would be a minister responsible for seniors. The government House leader in the Senate has now been appointed the minister responsible for seniors. I know she is taking an active role in the files to benefit seniors on every level. This will be one of the areas that she will be investigating. My commitment to my friend is that I will be speaking with the minister responsible to see if we can giddy-up the process and streamline it as quickly as possible.

The other point my friend makes concerns the investment board itself and the patronage appointments that have been predominant on that board and other boards within our country over the past decade or two. I do not believe that is something that we should ignore.

As my friend knows, having worked with me on the legislative committee on Bill C-2, the accountability act, appointments to all boards and commissions must be made on merit. We felt very strongly about that when we developed the context of Bill C-2, the accountability act. I know it is a file that my friend is very familiar with because he played an integral role in getting many components, including the merit based component of boards and commissions and the appointment of a commissioner to oversee these appointments, into the bill itself.

I can assure my friend and colleague that we will be ensuring in future as we go forward, once various aspects of Bill C-2 have

received royal assent and come into force, that appointments for all boards and commissions will be based on a go forward basis on competency and merit and not on patronage.

•(1015)

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know our seniors are an integral part of our communities. Could the member please comment on what he and the committee feel are the strongest points in this bill to help seniors live better lives?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, the thing all Canadians need to realize is that the bill was a result of consultation with seniors. Seniors themselves were the ones who encouraged us and members of the committee to enact the changes that we see before us in Bill C-36.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, not all of their proposals are contained in this bill but a majority of them are. The primary benefit is to streamline the benefits that seniors will receive. It has been for too long a very convoluted and complicated process.

My colleague from Winnipeg Centre earlier mentioned the frustrations that many seniors feel and experience when applying for benefits. The primary purpose of the bill is to streamline the process and the ability for seniors to receive those benefits they richly deserve.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments regarding patronage and our mutual interest in putting an end to patronage but how does he explain the fact that we do not have a public appointments commission in place and up and running at this point in time after the good work we all did on the Federal Accountability Act which was given royal assent on December 12?

We have now learned, from the budgets that were just circulated, that the Public Appointments Commission Secretariat has been up and running since April 21 of last year with an executive director, salaries, a budget, administration officers and a physical infrastructure. However, it has been doing everything but vetting patronage appointments. In fact, officials have been running off to Europe. They have only written one report. With a budget of \$2 million, the Public Appointments Commission Secretariat has only produced one report. It actually gave advice to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to not use merit as the appointment consideration for the IRB but to appoint whoever the government wanted. The leadership of the IRB was so offended that they tendered their resignation.

If we are concerned about the Public Appointments Commission and appointing based on merit, how does he explain that we have no commissioner and no board of commissioners but we do have the Public Appointments Commission Secretariat burning up public money and doing nothing but generating one nuisance report that has caused us all embarrassment?

Government Orders

•(1020)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, let us go back to a brief period in history to ensure all Canadians are aware of what the government tried to do initially. It tried to establish a director of appointments. We had put forward the name of an extremely qualified individual by the name of Gwyn Morgan. He is the executive who most Canadian businesses have looked to as the leader in terms of managerial experience, fairness and competency. He was lauded from coast to coast to coast by editorial boards as probably being the finest possible appointment to this position.

What happened? It went to committee and members of the opposition, including members of the NDP, who my colleague represents, turfed him. What was the reason? It was nothing more than political partisanship, gamesmanship. They denied Canadians the right to have one of the most qualified individuals in the country head up a commission to make appointments to boards and commissions based on merit and competency. It was that member and his party, as well as other members of the opposition, who turfed Mr. Morgan. They said that they did not want him.

How can the member stand in this place and accuse us of not bringing forward changes, which we both want to see, when in fact it was his own party, among others, who stopped the appointment process from going forward, stopped the commission and the commissioner who we wanted to appoint from doing the job that we wanted on behalf of all Canadians?

I have great respect for my colleague but this, quite frankly, is the height of hypocrisy to stand in this place and complain about a function that could have been established by now if it were not for the actions of his party and other opposition parties.

Hon. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems unfortunate this morning that we came here with great intent to speak to Bill C-36, with the primary purpose of improving the lives of pensioners, those Canadians who have been unfortunate to receive or be a victim of disabilities and yet the parliamentary secretary introduces into this debate discussion on political appointments.

He seems to think that the great purists are on his side of the House but I am sure if Canadians were to review the appointments that his party has made, even the reference to his recent person, there certainly are political affiliations with most of those appointments.

However, today we are talking about Bill C-36. We know that every day, workers contribute to a healthy public sector and to private sector success. What they expect in return from our governments and within society is that their efforts will be respected and rewarded, both now and in later life.

In 2021, Canadian seniors over the age of 65 will constitute approximately 18% of our population. That compares to the year 2000 when seniors were only about 12.5% of the population of Canada. We do have a serious problem with demographics and, hopefully, as our country grows, we will see more new Canadians, larger Canadian families and the fact that we can maintain the demographics that are needed for a good society.

Today the federal government is addressing key issues affecting older workers and tomorrow's seniors. The income security of future

retirees must be protected by good, sound public pension plans. I am proud to say that to address the evolving needs of Canada's seniors, the Liberal government made significant investments to ensure this over the last number of years. In fact, in 1997 the government restructured the Canada pension plan to meet the increased demands of an aging population to ensure its future sustainability and to stabilize contribution rates. Experts were called in and they determined that changes were needed to make the Canada pension plan sustainable for at least the next 75 years.

Those reforms were carried out by our government at the time and they made Canada one of only three countries in the world that offered a public pension plan that was sound and would be available into the far future.

As a government, we put our wallet, our money, the finances of this country, into this plan. We invested more than \$28.5 billion into old age supplements and guaranteed income supplements on a yearly basis. We pledged to increase the guaranteed income supplement for seniors by some \$36 per month for single seniors and \$58 per month for couples. This was a promised \$2.7 billion investment that directly benefited some 1.6 million Canadian seniors.

As a government, we also committed more than \$2 billion annually in direct tax credits, such as the old age credit and the pension income credit. As Liberals, we also created a new employment insurance benefit, the compassionate care program, which allows family members to take time off work to provide care for seriously ill loved ones without suffering sudden income or job losses.

Also, it is probably interesting to note that in terms of our EI legislation, the member for Sydney—Victoria has a private member's bill that would enable those who become sick or are off work for long periods of time because of sickness, to draw EI benefits for more than the 15 weeks allowed at present.

As well, under the new horizons program, we offered funding for community projects to reach out to valuable seniors and to keep seniors active in their communities.

As a Liberal government, our commitment to seniors could not be clearer. We felt that seniors were a very important part of our group and that they must be paid the proper respects for the efforts that they make and have made on behalf of all Canadians.

•(1025)

Income security is just that, security for seniors. I join today to make every effort to ensure that all eligible Canadians receive their benefits in a timely and efficient manner.

As a party and as a member of Parliament, I am very pleased to support Bill C-36 and its provisions for simplifying access and a better delivery of benefits to seniors. Working Canadians need government action to ensure that every citizen has the right to retire with dignity, comfort and enjoyment.

Today's seniors deserve the best care we can give to them with unqualified financial security. Our party has always worked in that regard. We strongly support Bill C-36. Hopefully, we can proceed with the legislation and have it made the law of our country.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important bill, so I am surprised that nobody has asked the other members who have been talking about Bill C-36 any questions. It will give some of our seniors a better future while others, who are not included in this bill, will face a worse one.

You know how much I care for our seniors in both Quebec and Canada because my family, my father is from Saskatchewan. I therefore have a very close connection to people living in the rest of Canada outside of Quebec. In my opinion, all seniors who have contributed to making Canada and Quebec what they are today should be given due consideration and be enabled to experience the end of life with the dignity they deserve in return for all they have given us in the past.

For a long time now, we have been asking the government to improve access to the guaranteed income supplement. For a long time, we have been demanding that the government make it easier for seniors to top up their revenue with the supplement. Previously, people could not get the guaranteed income supplement unless they made a formal request every year. Many people just could not collect it.

The committee that studied this issue in 2001 found that more than 380,000 people in Canada were not exercising their right to ask for the guaranteed income supplement because they were illiterate, or unable to see well enough to read the forms, which were difficult to understand. They may not have had access to resources to help them understand their rights, or they were simply speakers of other languages who did not understand their rights with respect to the guaranteed income supplement to the old age security program.

Bill C-36 will correct some of the problems facing our seniors. However, it does not correct all of them. We would have liked to have had the government and the Liberal Party on our side, in order to be able to correct some serious inadequacies. Some amendments were even made to the bill, to the effect that, now, some Canadians and Quebecers who were entitled to the guaranteed income supplement no longer are.

Yet, these are people who are Canadian citizens, people who contributed to our society, people who came here believing they would find justice and fairness, in many cases, unlike their experiences in their country of origin.

Today, we realize that the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party did not want to admit that the amendments would restrict access to the guaranteed income supplement for Canadian citizens who are sponsored by someone else.

I find this quite deplorable, since we are talking about the most underprivileged people of all. Simply because an individual is sponsored by someone else does not always mean that that individual has better living conditions. Often, people are sponsored by individuals who, in good faith, wanted to bring them here to give them a better life. We are now seeing that, over the years, many jobs have been lost due to the ineffectiveness of the governments in place. They have failed to act in files such as the textile and manufacturing sectors. Furthermore, it has often been those Canadian citizens who

are from somewhere else, who were born elsewhere, who have suffered those job losses.

Despite their best intentions, these people cannot always meet the needs of the relatives they brought here in order to give them a better life. I find the situation deplorable because these people contribute every day and pay taxes like everyone else. If they suddenly cannot meet their families' needs, it is not because they are not trying.

● (1030)

It is because our government was not smart enough and did not take the necessary steps to ensure that the manufacturing sector and the textile sector could provide decent jobs for these people over the long term.

This bill seeks to increase the number of third parties who can receive confidential information.

The government and the Liberal Party have refused to support the Bloc's amendment, which would not allow an increase in the number of third parties with access to confidential information. The law already provides for an authorized representative. Now, the bill refers to "any other individual authorized".

I worked with seniors for many years. Many times, I saw children, siblings or neighbours of seniors cruelly abuse this right. They blackmailed the senior into signing documents that would give them access to information. Not only were they able to obtain relevant information, but they could also access bank documents and so on.

I do not understand why the government wants to expand access to seniors' confidential information to include any authorized individual.

Despite everything, this bill is sufficiently beneficial that we support it. However, we will have to be very vigilant and make sure that, in future, we have the opportunity to amend these clauses that seem slightly abusive to us.

Vulnerable seniors have no recourse available to them. They have no voice. We here, in Parliament, are their voice. We are the only ones who can help them get what they are entitled to. We should not abdicate that responsibility. It is a responsibility we must accept respectfully and vigorously.

If we do not, your mother, my mother and the parents and relatives of everyone here in this House will suffer and be deprived, because as a government, we did not do our best for them.

We have been fighting for a long time for seniors who have been mistreated and unable to receive the guaranteed income supplement. This bill is designed to further limit seniors' chances of obtaining retroactive guaranteed income supplement benefits.

Government Orders

Last year, on the eve of the election, the government voted by a majority for full retroactivity to be granted to older persons who were entitled to the guaranteed income supplement. Unfortunately, I no longer sense this desire for fairness, I no longer sense this desire for justice from the members of the government. This surprises me greatly because the position of the Liberal Party was very clear on this not so long ago. However, we no longer see this desire for fairness.

I hope that we can discuss this issue further and that the people who were swindled out of this money, some \$3 billion, can receive this money. Some \$13 billion has just been invested in weaponry and \$3 billion and change in airplanes. Furthermore, it wants to invest a few billion dollars in procuring jeeps.

Do those who provided us with the life we have today not deserve to have some money spent on them? Do these people not deserve some of the money we have in such abundance? There are surpluses every year. Annually, the government ends up with staggering surpluses, which it applies to the debt.

• (1035)

Of course some of this money can go toward the debt, but it is essential that we recognize the importance of the older persons who came before us, who allowed us to be here today, who, because of their actions and their courage, are the reason we are here today.

I do not see that in many of my colleagues in the government or in the Liberal Party, and that disappoints me tremendously. I would hope that this changes over the coming year. I am just one person, but all my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois feel the same way I do, that we have to render justice to our seniors, to those who are isolated, alone and have no voice. We have to render justice to all those who came before us. We have to ensure they get justice. I can guarantee that most hon. members in the government and in the Liberal Party would sleep a lot better at night if we could render justice to these people.

When the committee conducted its study, it discovered a number of very disturbing things as far as older persons are concerned, a number of things that were more than disturbing because some seniors were living in total denial. Today, a very high number of older persons choose to die than simply survive or just get by.

More and more seniors are committing suicide, and this is unacceptable in a society like ours. It is unacceptable in a society as rich as the one we live in. It is awful to think that some seniors believe that suicide is better than living, that there is nothing left worth living for. I am ashamed to see that we do not care more than that, that we do not make an effort to give our seniors what they deserve. This bothers me and makes me very uneasy. We have comfortable lives, we cannot deny that. How many of our seniors can live comfortably?

In Laval, where I am from, there are 40,000 seniors, and 38% of those 65 and up are over the age of 75. This segment of society is the worst off, because these people do not usually receive the Quebec pension plan, do not receive any pension, do not receive anything. This category of people is increasing exponentially. In my riding of Laval alone, 12,000 people are over 75. There are more than 12,000

people between the ages of 75 and 90, even 100. One woman even recently celebrated her 104th birthday.

Quite often, these people may have retired 20 or 30 years ago. At the time, they thought they would live until the age of 70 or 75, because back then that was the life expectancy. So, they thought that if they lived until 70 or 75, they would be OK with what little money they had.

Now, they have reached the age of 90 or 95, and they have been without an income for 20 years. They thought they would die 20 years ago, but they are still around and they have very little income. Those with some capital can earn 1%, 2% or 3% in interest. That is not nearly enough for a decent living.

The cost of rent, food and drugs has increased. These people must visit the doctor more often and, since they no longer drive, they must do so by taking a taxi. This means that their related costs, their daily costs are very high, yet, a number of these people do not get the guaranteed income supplement and only get a pittance from the old age security program.

• (1040)

That is not how I want to grow old. That is not how I want my life to end. That is not how I want my mother to go.

I hope that everything we said about our elderly will be taken into consideration. I hope that people will think about this issue.

Yes, I do want Bill C-36 to be passed, because the part of the bill where it says that the guaranteed income supplement will automatically be renewed after the first claim is important. Many people did not know that they had to present a new claim every year. At least, they will get that. We have been asking for this for a long time, and I am pleased that, at last, it is included in the legislation.

The government could have gone further and be more generous. It has the means to do so. It chose not to. Still, the Bloc Québécois will continue to lead the fight, so that those who are entitled to it get full retroactivity. We will continue to lead the fight, so that the elderly are treated in a fair, responsible and respectful manner by this government.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I share many of the concerns raised by my colleague from Laval. I would like to ask her views on one detail, though.

Government Orders

Many of us have just gone through RRSP season. Many Canadians invest some of their hard-earned moneys in one of the few tax breaks that is allowed to us. However, many of us specify, in purchasing RRSPs, that we want them invested in an ethical way. We do not want our RRSPs invested in things in which we ourselves do not believe. Some do not want their investments in tobacco. Some do not want their investments made in military expenditures. There is any number of ethical screens we can apply to our RRSP. Statistically, we do not have to accept a lower rate of return to have an ethical investment plan. We can in fact enjoy a good rate of return and still apply ethical screens that reflect our values.

The Canada pension plan investment fund is specifically barred from taking into consideration any ethical screening whatsoever. Its mandate is strictly to get the highest rate of return at all costs, even if it means investing in a plant in the third world that uses child labour or tobacco farming, to which the Government of Canada is opposed. The government is trying to get everybody to quit smoking, yet money is being invested in tobacco.

Does she agree with me that we should mature as a society and apply the same type of ethical screening of our investments for the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board as many Canadians do to their own investment financial portfolio?

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Mr. Speaker, as a society, because of everything happening in the world today, we must consider very carefully how we invest our money.

Through my RRSPs I have invested in ethical funds, green funds, responsible funds. That is a personal responsibility.

However, I am not surprised by the actions of this government, which is currently led by the Conservatives. First of all, this government does not believe in the virtues of ethics, responsible funds, ethical funds or in sustainable development.

I understand completely why those who manage pension funds do not consider avenues that could be very rewarding and that could also create employment. It could also allow a large portion of the population to be more involved in taking up the challenges awaiting our society as we enter the era of climate chaos, in light of greenhouse gas emissions and everything else. We must do something.

I am not an economist. I do not know a great deal about these matters, particularly funds. I always ask my advisor at the credit union to help me because I do not know anything about it. Quite often, after she has finished her explanation, I am no further ahead.

I hope that the people who sit on these boards will have the wisdom to debate this point. It is a very important point and I thank my colleague for having raised it.

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague. Once again, she has shown just how much she cares for society's most vulnerable members.

I would like to revisit the issue of seniors who almost never received the guaranteed income supplement even though they were entitled to it. In some cases, they were entitled to the full amount.

My colleague was not in this House when our colleague who has since left us, Mr. Gagnon, began his crusade to identify seniors who had not received the guaranteed income supplement they were entitled to.

In my previous life as an accountant, my regular clients sent me their parents' or their old aunts' tax returns, and I noticed that those people were entitled to the guaranteed income supplement. Lots of seniors were entitled to the guaranteed income supplement, but they never asked for it. And the government never pointed it out to the people who sent in their tax returns. Even though it knew that these people should have been receiving the guaranteed income supplement, the government never gave it to them.

I had the opportunity to hold a meeting in my riding. Nearly 400 people—either seniors or people caring for seniors—attended. We did the math, and in some cases, we found that people would have been entitled to the supplement from the time it was created up until about four years ago. This would have been a lot of money for these people, as much as \$90,000 in today's dollars. The government took away these people's rights.

Do you know what this means to seniors who are only collecting old age pension but who should be getting the guaranteed income supplement? It means isolation and a life of poverty. They cannot go out because they cannot afford to. They live shut in, especially if they do not have any family. This is an injustice.

Despite the \$13 billion surplus, the Liberal and Conservative governments have not agreed to give these people back everything they sacrificed to directly finance the government. The \$13 billion was used to pay off some of the debt. The real debt we owe is to these seniors who were cheated of their guaranteed income supplement.

I would like to ask my colleague why the Conservative government is doing this. Perhaps they are just following the example set by the Liberal Party when it was in power. Why do these people not want to pay the debt they owe our seniors?

• (1050)

Ms. Nicole Demers: Mr. Speaker, that is the million-dollar question. I do not know why this is the situation. I would like to answer this question confidently, but I cannot answer it since I do not understand.

However, in many cases, it may be someone in their family, it may be one of their friends, it may be one of their neighbours, it may be someone who lives nearby. There is no doubt that they know these people would fully benefit from retroactivity.

Government Orders

I already said that in my work I have done checks in seniors' residences. There were no pets in these apartments, but in their cupboards were boxes of cat food. These seniors had no choice but to pay for their medication and eat cat food. This is unacceptable.

I do not understand why the government refuses to give seniors what they have earned. I do not understand. This is beyond comprehension. It must not have any understanding of poverty, or human dignity. I hope that one day it will have an epiphany, that it will see the light and understand that we owe seniors complete respect and dignity. I hope we will give them the money they deserve.

[English]

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I share the outrage of my colleague from Laval. I appreciate the concern she brings here and the passion with which she portrays it.

If a person owed money to Revenue Canada, Revenue Canada would hound that person to the ends of the earth to get every nickel of that money going back three, four, five, seven years. Yet when the inverse is true and the Government of Canada owes this tiny pittance of money, the guaranteed income supplement, to a senior citizen, it will only pay 11 months in retroactivity. That is some magic figure it has pulled out of the air. After 11 months Canadians are cut off, even if for 20 years they have been shortchanged the money that should be rightfully coming to them. For some reason the government has pulled this convenient figure of 11 months out of the air. It is such a glaring contradiction that it makes my blood boil when I think about it.

I do not understand the logic or the reasoning, other than pure miserly, cheap bitterness on the part of the government that it would deny this money that is rightfully owed to seniors as the guaranteed income supplement. The reasoning the government used—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I interrupt the hon. member as the time has actually expired. I will give a few moments to the hon. member for Laval for a response.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Mr. Speaker, once again I thank my colleague. I realize that he is as outraged as I am.

In my opinion, we are dealing with the Grinch. Everyone is familiar with the Christmas story of the Grinch. Everyone knows how miserly he is. That is what is happening here. The government does not want, under any circumstance or for any reason, to give these individuals the money they are owed.

Once again, I hope that all colleagues in this House will see the light and that no one in their family will have to suffer because of the government's lack of conscience.

That is truly my hope because it is terrible to see what is happening to disadvantaged and isolated seniors.

• (1055)

[English]

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I am disappointed by what is not in this bill.

[Translation]

Listening to the Conservatives, you would think that this bill is going to address the real causes of poverty and that it will solve the problems with our social security system. That is not at all the case. At the very most, this bill will resolve a few administrative difficulties and eliminate one obstacle to obtaining the guaranteed income supplement. It is for this reason alone that we will support this bill.

[English]

Earlier this morning the parliamentary secretary mentioned that there was a new report suggesting how much better off Canadians are. There has been some progress certainly, but there is still a huge prosperity gap.

Over a quarter of a million Canadian seniors live under the low income cutoff or, as we say, below the poverty line. For the 465,000 seniors who have no income other than OAS or GIS, this bill will do nothing. They will continue on an average income of about \$12,400. There is a lot of talk about seniors being able to live with dignity and respect, but sadly, there is little action to make that a reality in this legislation.

Parliament approved the NDP's seniors charter by a vote of 231 to 52. The government voted in favour of it. One would have thought this law would have implemented some of its principles. One of the rights promised was the right to income security.

As I read this bill, I thought of seniors in Victoria and what this will do to address some of the issues they have raised with me. They are worried about the adequacy of their pensions to deal with their expenses. Here are some of the issues they have raised with me.

They are facing exorbitant rents. They said that rent controls are needed for seniors and those on disability pensions. "I just cannot afford my rent", one said. This speaks of income security. Another said, "I am an 86-year-old senior and in need of home support. I would like to stay in my home, but it is becoming increasingly difficult without home support". Another senior said, "I am among the working poor with no retirement fund. I am worried about how I will ever be able to retire". Another said, "I need dental care and cannot afford it".

This legislation was an opportunity to fulfill some promises. The bill was presented as a piece of legislation aimed at fixing problems with income support and yet it does nothing to deal with the real causes of poverty.

Nor will the income splitting that the Conservatives have proposed be helpful for the woman whom I spoke to yesterday whose husband recently died. He had been induced to invest in income trusts during the last election as a result of the promises of the Prime Minister. She is now alone and worried about her future. Pension income splitting will not help her, and saying that a minuscule GST cut is the government's way of helping her is a cruel joke.

Earlier I conceded that one positive amendment in this legislation was worth voting for in terms of removing the barriers in the application process.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but she has 16 minutes left in her time. It is time for statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

REG KRUEGER

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Mr. Reg Krueger of Wiarton.

Reg came to the area in the late 1940s to play baseball and was a member of the Shallow Lake Ranchers when they won the OBA junior championships in 1949 and 1950. Reg was a great fastball and hockey player. After his junior years in Shallow Lake, he moved to Wiarton and was a key member of the Wiarton Redmen senior fastball team which won consecutive all Ontario titles in 1951 and 1952.

Reg was a successful small businessman. His work in the community earned him the Wiarton Lions Club citizen of the year award.

Until recently, Reg still sharpened skates for young hockey players.

Reg recently completed 55 years as a volunteer firefighter with the Wiarton fire station, something that he and the community are very proud of.

Reg is in the Wiarton Hospital as we speak. I ask all my colleagues in the House to join me in wishing Reg a speedy recovery. Our prayers are with him.

* * *

SEAL HUNT

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a motion that the Government of Canada ban the importation of all deer and wild boar products from Germany.

In Germany 1.2 million deer and over 500,000 wild boar are cruelly slaughtered annually, most of which are killed for sport.

This past Monday, February 26, Germany's agriculture minister announced plans to introduce in the German Bundestag a bill to prohibit the importation of all seal products from Canada. If the German agriculture minister is going to take a high moral stand with respect to Canada's legitimate seal hunt, then he should clean up Germany's own backyard first.

As a parliamentarian representing thousands of sealers in my riding, I am deeply disappointed by the actions of select

Statements by Members

parliamentarians from European countries who are being led by the blatant misinformation and distortion of animal rights groups.

If European parliamentarians are so determined to reject the science and the sustainable use principles that govern Canada's seal hunt, they should look again to their own backyards and clean them up.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on March 8, we will celebrate International Women's Day. Events to mark women's contribution began in Europe in 1910, but it was not until 1977 that the UN established Women's Day.

The theme adopted by the Fédération des femmes du Québec to mark this 30th anniversary of Women's Day is "Toute l'égalité. L'égalité pour toutes", that is, full equality; equality for all. Although women are equal to men in the eyes of the law, they are not yet equal in fact.

International Women's Day is a time to remember the battles waged and the victories won and to make people aware of just how much work still remains to be done. In 2003, for example, the average salary for women was \$28,200, compared to \$39,700 for men.

My Bloc Québécois colleagues and I stand in solidarity with women and demand that the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women give women back the programs that will help them achieve equality.

Happy International Women's Day.

* * *

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on January 30 the Native Women's Association office in the Northwest Territories received an email showing disturbing photos of three nude non-native women and a partially nude aboriginal woman with the subject line "Pictures—can you spot Miss NWT?" The source was Michael Hurst, director of the Yellowknife district office of Industry Canada. He sent this message out to at least 30 other recipients as a joke.

NWAC and the Status of Women Council declare these photos hurtful, disrespectful, sexist, racist and a disgrace to all women regardless of culture or race.

NWAC immediately wrote to the Minister of Industry outlining this flagrant abuse of power and calling for the immediate dismissal of the employee.

To date, the minister has ignored these concerns and let the issue be shoved under the carpet. Michael Hurst continues to work as a director with his only punishment being some community service.

Statements by Members

NWAC, the Native Women's Association of NWT, and the Status of Women Council of the NWT continue to push for a response from the minister. They ask:

In light of all of the circumstances highlighted, why has this senior civil servant not been permanently removed from his job as Director of the Yellowknife District Office, Industry Canada—”

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to have seven first nations communities in my constituency of Souris—Moose Mountain: Sakimay; Cowessess; Kahkewistahaw; Ochapowace; White Bear; Ocean Man; and Pheasant Rump Nakota.

I, along with the Minister of Health and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, had the pleasure of meeting FSIN Vice Chief Guy Lonechild of White Bear, Chief Denton George of Ochapowace, Chief Louis Taypotat of Kahkewistahaw, Chief Pat Sparvier of Cowessess, Heather Bear and Dr. Bonita Beatty. They were joined by Lorne Rygh and Ted Barnes, Chair of the Dialysis Initiative Committee.

I am getting to know them as friends and I am honoured to have had them here as my guests.

They have formed a working partnership mixed with community trust and fellowship among first nations, towns, villages and RMs. They have joined together in one goal and that is to bring a satellite dialysis unit to Broadview, Saskatchewan for the use and benefit of all first nations and community residents. It is an idea they hope to pilot, one which I am sure will be a template for use across this great nation.

We want to bring the equipment to where the people are and not the people to where the equipment is.

* * *

• (1105)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, March 8 is International Women's Day. Instead of celebrating achievements on that day, women across Canada are organizing conferences, seminars, marches and rallies to protest the Conservative government's attack on their rights.

Activists throughout the country are putting together a range of events. For example, in Halifax there will be a mock trial of the Prime Minister, in Vancouver a march, in Regina a rally on the steps of the legislature, and in Rimouski an equality reception.

Women are determined to send the message that they will not remain silent. They will continue fighting this anti-female and anti-equality government, and will not rest until equality is put back on track.

Putting equality back on track means that the cuts and changes to the Status of Women must be reversed. The women of Canada deserve no less and will accept no less.

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Honoré-Mercier certainly does not deserve a medal for what he said yesterday in this House about Vancouver 2010.

He mentioned the report on the place of French in the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. Let us be clear: our government is studying the recommendations in the report from the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages tabled this week. There is no doubt about it. Concrete action was taken well before this report was tabled.

Our government and the Olympic Games organizing committee are committed to fully integrating both official languages in the planning and running of the 2010 Olympic Games.

The Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages has shown leadership by asking Fondation Dialogue and the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique to produce a national action plan on the contribution Canada's francophone community can make to the success of the 2010 Vancouver games.

We have taken action, and we will continue to take action. We will keep our promise.

* * *

GRANDE-BAIE ALCAN FACTORY

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the management and employees of the Grande-Baie Alcan factory recently ranked third in the world and first in North America for their health and safety record, out of all the aluminum factories of Alcan Primary Metal.

These employees can be proud, because it was a collective success. The factory is now a world leader in workplace health and safety.

I would like to congratulate the members of the Grande-Baie factory health and safety committee: Claude Desmeules, Mario A. Bouchard, Gilles Lessard, Mario Desjarlais, Carol Imbeault, Jeannot Bélanger, Fernand Boudreault, Michel Gauthier, Jeannot Savart, Marc Lavoie, and Caroline Veillette.

In recent years, the Grande-Baie factory has demonstrated a firm commitment to promoting the health and safety of its employees. Today, if the number of injuries has substantially decreased, it is because of the contribution of each and every person, without which this would never have been possible.

* * *

[*English*]

FALLEN FOUR SOCIETY

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the second anniversary of the death of four brave police officers in Mayerthorpe, Alberta. RCMP officers Leo Johnston, Peter Schiemann, Anthony Gordon and Brock Myrol were killed March 3, 2005, in the line of duty in a senseless act of violence.

Statements by Members

All four officers exemplified the best of Canada, the best of Alberta, and the best of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The families of these courageous men and many other concerned citizens have started the Fallen Four Society, which is dedicated to building a memorial for these foremost of our fellow citizens and police officers around the world.

This weekend Canada's new government will honour these four with a financial gift for the Fallen Four Society to ensure that Canadians never forget their sacrifice.

I salute these men's memories, I salute their families, and I salute the brave men and women around the world who wear the red serge of the RCMP or the blue uniform of other police forces. God bless them all.

* * *

[*Translation*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, March 8 is International Women's Day, but Canadian women will have little to celebrate, thanks to the regressive measures taken by the Conservative government.

Six Nobel Prize winners wrote to the Prime Minister to condemn his attacks on women's equality, and to ask that Canada continue to fulfill its leading role in the promotion of women's rights.

These recipients said that, for the past number of years, they could count on the Liberal government's leadership regarding these issues. They added that the actions of this Conservative government are very disturbing.

I am asking the government to heed this message and to revert back to policies that promote women's rights. One solution would be to ensure that the newly proposed agency for women at the UN get the necessary funding and is independent. It is time to act.

* * *

• (1110)

[*English*]

UKRAINIAN CANADIANS

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore shamefully took credit for a Conservative initiative to recognize the internment of Ukrainian Canadians during World War I.

The member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette for years spearheaded the fight for that recognition. Our party had to drag the Liberals kicking and screaming, and the member knows that.

Why did he take credit for a Conservative initiative?

Was he trying to make amends for previously writing that he had difficulty taking Ukraine seriously and calling himself a great Russian while Ukrainians were merely little Russians and phony Cossacks? Or was it when he considered Ukrainian Canadians pathetic for protesting communism over the Bolshoi Ballet?

The Conservative Party recognizes the great contribution to Canadian society by the Ukrainian Canadian community even under trying wartime circumstances. Their concerns are being addressed in deliberations that we hope will reach resolve.

The Conservative Party is the party of multiculturalism. Nobody is fooled by the member's new-found epiphany for the Ukrainian Canadian concerns and the attempt—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the past year I have learned that the best part of being a member of Parliament is working with community members and with ordinary Canadians on issues that are important to them.

Earlier this year I received a request from the EarthCARE team at Richard Pfaff Secondary School asking me to join them in their effort to stop the licence renewal of a company that was responsible for releasing tritium, a radioactive form of hydrogen, into the Ottawa River. They were most concerned with what the effects would be on public health and the aquatic ecosystem.

Their actions and the actions of other concerned environmentalists resulted in the rejection of the licence renewal from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission for the company responsible for the emissions.

Congratulations to the enthusiastic environmentalists from Richard Pfaff Secondary School for proving that we can make a difference and we can get results if we make our voices heard.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, International Women's Day reminds us that women's rights are human rights and that there are no human rights which do not include the rights of women, and that women's rights must be a priority on our agenda as a matter of principle and policy.

Regrettably, the government has dismantled the institutions that promote and protect women's rights, including the court challenges program, the Law Commission of Canada, Status of Women Canada, the early learning and child care program, the Kelowna accord and the protection of aboriginal women.

Moreover, the government has ignored or rejected initiatives that would protect women's rights, including pay equity, income security, a comprehensive and sustainable legal aid plan, and adherence to CEDAW and our international commitments.

[*Translation*]

The government has turned its back on women's rights.

[*English*]

For the Conservative government, women's rights are not human rights, and human rights do not appear to include the rights of women.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

MERCIER BRAVES

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Braves, the Mercier team that won the Bantam B hockey tournament held in Windsor from February 16 to 18, achieved a rare feat.

Indeed, spectators and parents were stunned to see the Braves win the final game with only nine players, including the goaltender. According to fans, this had never happened in 30 years.

With breaks of about 30 seconds, these young hockey players played the whole game, and literally hung on to their opponents, because they were exhausted. Still, their determination took them into overtime, and they eventually won the game by shutting out the other team, much to the delight of the fans.

I salute the courage and perseverance of these young teenagers. Through their dedication to their sport, they make the people of Mercier and all the residents in my riding of Châteauguay—Saint-Constant proud. They showed that team spirit can take us very far. It can make us surpass ourselves.

Congratulations to the Mercier Braves.

* * *

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as International Women's Day approaches, the Ad Hoc Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights is calling for a united opposition to the anti-equality policies of the Conservative government.

For several months, women across the country have been speaking out for women's equality. From Yellowknife to Corner Brook, from Vancouver to Moncton, from Halifax to Quebec City, women have organized rallies, letter writing and postcard campaigns, meetings and demonstrations, and even bra burnings and mock funerals for equality.

Women have written to newspapers, participated in talk shows, lobbied members of Parliament, set up websites, and equality hotlines to get the message out that women's equality will be set back 20 years if the ill-thought out decisions of the government are not reversed and soon.

I call upon all members of the House to rally behind the efforts of the ad hoc coalition to put equality back on track by continuing the fight for change.

* * *

● (1115)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week I made some comments about extremism in the Liberal Party, but I had no idea how bad things really were over there.

Not only has the Liberal leader caved to extremists and voted against his own anti-terrorism law, now he has been forced to flip-flop on the carbon tax.

Dr. Dolittle confirmed this week that he changed his mind and now supports a \$100 billion carbon tax on Canadians. This would mean taxes of \$12,000 for an average Canadian family of four.

We know Dr. Dolittle and the radical left now support thousands of dollars in new taxes for average families. From flip-flopping on terrorism, to waffling on Afghanistan, and now a \$100 billion carbon tax that he once opposed.

For the love of our troops, for the sake of our security, and for the good of Canadian family budgets, let us not go back.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again this morning, as over the last several days, media reports are concluding that it is difficult to believe what the government says because it often distorts the truth. Today we need the truth about Afghan detainees.

Does the Minister of National Defence know where these three men are right now and if not, how did he lose track of them? How did that happen?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is an ongoing investigation by the National Investigation Service. When it reaches its conclusion, that conclusion will be made public.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for both security reasons and human rights reasons, not to mention Canada's international reputation, the whereabouts, condition and status of these detainees is a serious matter. Now the investigations, which the minister refers to, could well be in jeopardy.

It appears that Canada's formal agreements with both Afghanistan and the International Committee of the Red Cross have been violated.

What specific contact has the minister had himself, directly and personally, with the Afghan government and with the Red Cross to get some real answers on these issues about these three men?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of interfering with the investigative processes ongoing right now. The National Investigation Service will investigate this matter and will come to a conclusion, and then we will all know the conclusion.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the three detainees cannot be tracked, the investigation itself may be nullified. The agreements between Canada and Afghanistan require that both countries keep accurate written records accounting for all detainees.

Oral Questions

Can the minister produce the written records pertaining to these three detainees? Has he seen them? Where was their last known location and circumstance, and when were all the Canadian records last checked against the records kept by the Afghan government and by the Red Cross?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, I will not interfere with the investigations. We will let the investigations go their course and whatever the result will be, it will be published and made public.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the request of a Liberal MP, the Auditor General is going to examine the recent awarding of billions of dollars in military contracts without any tendering process.

Why did this government not take the time to do things right, in a transparent fashion, for such significant procurements? And please spare Canadians the gratuitous personal insults in the response.

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, the process we used is called advance contract award notices.

If my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine does not agree with that process, she should know that this process, which we used to purchase the C-17 planes, is the same process that was used 3,264 times by the Liberal government. If she has problems with the process, she did not say anything about it when her government used the process more than 3,000 times.

• (1120)

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was the Auditor General herself who said that this process does not allow for competition. The government should have known that there would be problems with appointing a former representative of an arms merchant as Minister of National Defence. It is like asking a pyromaniac to be a fire chief. Sooner or later, people are going to wonder.

How could the government appoint a lobbyist for the arms industry as Minister of National Defence?

[*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, this process is competitive, it is effective, and my hon. colleague knows that. She knows that because when the Liberals were in power they used this exact same process in fiscal year 2005-06. In that fiscal year, they used this exact same process 3,264 times. If this process is unfair, then my hon. colleague said nothing 3,264 times when her own government used this process.

We are going to re-equip our military after 13 years of Liberal cuts and we are going to do it in an effective, transparent way, and we are going to be damned proud of it.

[*Translation*]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to avoid antagonizing their federalist friends in Ottawa, the Quebec Liberals are lowering the bar for the Conservatives and curtailing their demands regarding the Boeing military contract spinoffs for the Quebec aerospace industry.

Does the government intend to act responsibly and ensure that Quebec will receive its fair share of the Boeing contract, which should be about 60%?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is determined to maximize the economic benefits of our investments in the army. The crux of the matter is that the military needs new equipment after having been neglected by the Liberal government for 13 years.

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago Minister Bachand acknowledged that Quebec's share of the aerospace industry is about 60%. Today, to please his Conservative friends and prevent them from losing face, he is lowering the bar and would be satisfied with fewer spinoffs.

Does the Minister of Industry plan to stop repeating his mantra of having confidence in the capabilities of the Quebec aerospace industry and instead concentrate his efforts on ensuring that this sector obtains its fair share of 60%?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government believes that the aircraft are needed to support our troops found throughout the world.

However, the Bloc Québécois feels otherwise. In fact the member for Saint-Jean said that the purchase of aircraft was a needless waste; but now he would like to benefit from it. I am somewhat confused.

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in Sherbrooke, in Jean Charest's riding, people are mobilizing in order to tell the government they deplore the lack of guaranteed spinoffs for Quebec in the C-17 procurement contract. Some 75 people who work for AMF, the Machinists Union, ICP Sherbrooke and Sherwood-Drolet have sent letters in which they speak out against the lack of commitment by the Conservative government in this matter.

Can the Prime Minister explain to this House why Quebec will not receive the 60% of spinoffs it deserves?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remind everyone in the House that this procurement will give the military people who serve Canada the equipment they need. If it were up to the Bloc Québécois, how many new planes would we have for Canada? It would be zero. How many jobs would we have for the Quebec aerospace? Absolutely zero. How many economic benefits would we have for Canadian industry? Zero.

Oral Questions

The government is committed to giving the best equipment to our men and women who serve us proudly in the Canadian armed forces.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are people who truly do not understand the questions, who understand absolutely nothing.

Workers in Sherbrooke are calling on the government to intervene in order to get assurances from Boeing that the Quebec companies will get 60% of the industrial benefits from the C-17 procurements.

Do they have to be any clearer, or will the minister finally understand what the people of Sherbrooke and Quebec are asking for?

•(1125)

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's new government is finally doing what it needs to do. If we can remind everybody, we are standing up for the military and for our industries across the country.

Our armed forces right now fly around in 40 year old Sea King helicopters and Hercules cargo planes that are just as old. Literally, flights have to be booked in such a way that these aircraft do not hit their maximum flying hours while in the sky. Maintenance for these has become a \$60 million cottage industry unto itself. The next hangar for these Sea Kings and Hercules are at the War Museum. We want to provide our honourable men and women who serve our country—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is arguing against equality and safety for first nations children. The minister told reporters last week that the government already gave an awful lot of money to first nations. However, his department determines how that money can be spent, and it is not spent on preventative programs for children's security and well-being.

Why does the government continue to discriminate against status Indian children living on reserve?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the member is incorrect in her statement. Our government is very supportive of first nations children on reserve. In fact, there is a federal funding project for \$445 million in the years 2006-07 for the purposes of supporting children on reserve in relation to CFS.

We will continue to act where the previous government did not. I look forward to being part of that process.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is continuing evidence of the government turning its back on Canadians living in poverty. Of the \$125 million announced for first

nations children and family services, \$16 million of that funding pays the department's own costs each year.

How can the taxpayers trust the government when it increases pay for more bureaucrats, not for more services?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, unfortunately, the member does not have her facts correct. We have pursued with a model that continues to be modified. We are looking at other provinces in Canada that have seen success in dealing with first nations reserves in the area of child and family services.

However, our project does bring \$417 million into first nations reserves throughout Canada, and we will continue to be very active on this front.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government seems to find bilingualism irritating.

In the armed forces, senior officers will no longer be required to be bilingual.

An hon. member: Shame.

Mr. Marcel Proulx: The Minister of National Defence's reaction is worrisome. He said that the only reason there are bilingual and francophone brigades is to comply with the Official Languages Act.

When will the Prime Minister realize that there are two official languages in Canada?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Official Languages agrees with us that the previous government's comprehensive approach failed. After 13 years of the previous government's inaction, the commissioner is expecting results and this government will deliver. We believe in linguistic duality and we are working toward that goal.

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence does not care about French. Now, the Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages' failure to act is even more insulting.

The Commissioner criticized how slow this government has been to implement the official languages plan, a plan designed to double the number of bilingual Canadians, not halve it. Why is the minister, who supported the action plan, now saying that it will take years for the Conservative government to put this plan into action?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this makes no sense, but it looks like the previous government does not even have enough charisma to tell the truth in this House.

An hon. member: Come on.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: This is your track record we are talking about, sir. The Canadian Forces' transformation model follows up on ten of the Commissioner of Official Languages' recommendations. The previous government's record on this issue was one of complete failure.

* * *

● (1130)

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in three separate cases the Supreme Court of Canada was clear that the federal government had a duty to consult with first nations. Despite these rulings, the government has refused to conduct meaningful consultations. It imposes arbitrary deadlines that prevent real discussions from taking place: Bill C-2; Bill C-44; Bill C-45; nationhood; and now only seven days for consensus building on matrimonial real property.

Why does the government insist on taking such a father knows best attitude?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the member could not be more wrong. In fact, her government had the opportunity to act on behalf of first nations for 13 years.

When we look at Bill C-44, it will actually bring human rights to first nations people on reserve who are unable to take advantage of the human rights laws in Canada today. That is something the government of the hon. member had the opportunity to do. It chose not to do so. It is something we will do.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it would help if the minister spoke to first nations and to the groups.

The court is clear. Consultations must be done in good faith. The Chiefs of Ontario have withdrawn from the matrimonial real property consultations because they cannot agree on the arbitrary deadlines imposed by the government.

An hon. member: You're against it.

Hon. Anita Neville: No, we very much support it.

Why does the government insist on running roughshod and short-changing the consultation process in violation of the Supreme Court rulings?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this exemption has been in place for some 30 years now. If that is not enough time for consultation, I am not sure what is.

If the Liberal Party would like to vote against matrimonial real property and against having human rights on first nations reserves, they can choose to do that.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in committee yesterday, the Commissioner of Official Languages said that the best a unilingual francophone could hope for in the armed forces is to be an infantry soldier at Valcartier.

How can the Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages be satisfied with the proposed transformation model, when it is clearly possible for a unilingual anglophone to attain the rank of brigadier general?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it always makes me smile when the Bloc talks to me about la Francophonie, when everyone in this House knows very well that the Bloc is the only party that voted against Bill S-3.

The new model sets out a strict timeframe. More than three quarters of the objectives should be achieved by the end of 2007.

I would like to reiterate that, as far as the government is concerned, linguistic duality within the armed forces is a priority.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Official Languages also said:

it is nearly impossible for a unilingual francophone to have a rewarding career in the Canadian Forces.

What is this government waiting for to call all our armed forces to order once and for all, and put an end to this shameful discrimination against francophones?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I can only smile as the Bloc throws its little temper tantrum. It is the only party that did not vote to support Bill S-3 and that does not believe in la Francophonie outside of Quebec.

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IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, even though 52 out of 156 positions are still vacant, the government is continuing to systematically reject candidates proposed by the selection board to fill immigration commissioner positions. As a result, the backlog, which was heavy to begin with, is getting heavier.

Will the Minister of Immigration abandon her ideological approach and show a little more empathy for the thousands of people who are waiting for their files to be processed by filling the 52 vacancies?

● (1135)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's new government is committed to putting an end to the Liberal culture of entitlement at the IRB.

Oral Questions

We asked a non-partisan official to look at the appointment process. He submitted nine recommendations to make the process more open and more accountable. I have accepted the recommendations, and I am going to act on every one of them.

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are hardly ones to talk. They are the ones who appointed their political organizers' wives.

Instead of trying to stack the selection board, does the minister not think she should accept the board's recommendations so that the Immigration and Refugee Board can do its job properly and clear up the backlog?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new merit-based appointment system will be more effective, more efficient, more transparent and more accountable.

What does the opposition have against a merit-based appointment system and greater accountability?

* * *

[English]

INCOME TRUSTS

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister keeps changing his story on income trusts. First, he said that he acted because of a huge revenue loss from Bell and Telus, but then—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Markham—Unionville has the floor. We want to know what the question is. I am sure the government is eager to answer it.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, his first story was it was all because of a huge revenue loss from Bell and Telus, but then those companies said that they would not pay any tax anyway. So he went on to his second argument. He said that it was all because of tax leakage, but then all the experts said that his numbers were totally wrong.

Why should Canadians believe the bullying minister's third rationale, whatever that might turn out to be?

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my friend will see the supreme irony in suggesting that the government has changed its story on income trusts. The Liberal Party has had at least three positions on income trusts and still cannot decide where it wants to come out.

The assertions made in his question are completely inaccurate. There was huge support for the government's tax fairness plan, including support from every finance minister in the country and the preponderance of evidence that we heard before the committee.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the parliamentary secretary, just like the minister, stands up grinning like a Cheshire cat when, because of the government's totally incompetent policy and its broken promise, hundreds of thousands of hard-working Canadians, who took the Prime Minister at his word, have lost \$25 billion of their life savings.

Why, when they stand up to answer a serious question, do the parliamentary secretary and the Minister of Finance stand grinning like Cheshire cats when in fact—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think one only descends to personal attacks when one has nothing better to say, which is what we have seen happen far too often.

What the member himself said about the government's tax fairness plan is "It was absolutely the right thing". However, if he does not want to listen to himself, maybe he wants to listen to the former deputy prime minister of the Liberal Party who said that reversing the income trust decision would:

—run afoul of espoused Liberal principles, by promoting a tax loophole for a select few, financed by the rest of us. As finance minister, [the member for Wascana] was warned that tax revenue losses on income trusts were too great to ignore.

I think the Liberal Party should show a little honesty about this difficult issue.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after only a year of this neo-con government, we appear to be into another round of Mulroney economics due to the government's fiscal irresponsibility.

This morning's *The Globe and Mail* says that the Canadian economy limped to its slowest pace in three years.

Instead of more tax increases, will the Minister of Finance use his budget to take the basic tax rate down to 15% where it was before he started all this silly social engineering?

• (1140)

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): My goodness, Mr. Speaker, Liberals against social engineering. This is a new mark in Canadian politics.

I know the Liberals did not get done what needed to be done even though they were in office for 13 long years. They rightly say that there is more that needs to be done to fix the Canadian tax system.

We gave \$20 billion in tax relief in the last budget to individual Canadians. There will be more tax relief in this coming budget. I am sure we can expect strong support from the Liberal Party for budget 2007.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, is that not just precious? Neither the parliamentary secretary nor the minister appear to know the difference between up and down: 15.5% is higher, 15% is lower; 15% is lower, 15.5% is higher. These basic concepts in economics and mathematics appear to be lost on both the minister and the parliamentary secretary. It is very disturbing.

When *The Globe and Mail* reports that the economy is rapidly decelerating, Canadians have every right to be worried about the competence of this government—

Oral Questions

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. Budget 2006 provided \$26 billion in tax relief for Canadians, \$20 billion of that to individual Canadians. That is over two years.

Budget 2007 will provide further tax relief. The tax relief offered by our government took 655,000 people off the tax rolls, over half a million people who will no longer pay tax because of our tax relief.

This is a government that is delivering for Canadians, unlike the incompetent government that we replaced.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fisheries critic from Sackville—Eastern Shore says that he defends fishermen while, in the same breath, says that he would kill the new Fisheries Act in a heartbeat. His own province of Nova Scotia says that the new Fisheries Act is overdue and it supports it.

Would the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans tell the House whether Nova Scotians want a new Fisheries Act or do they believe it should be killed?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right about Nova Scotia's support for the new act, and this is not just coming from the government. In a recent press release, Nova Scotia's fisheries minister, Ron Chisholm, said:

We have been talking with many fishermen over the past few weeks and almost all agree that we need a new Fisheries Act. There are concerns but most are based on a lack of detail about what the new act will do, or misinformation.

Much of that misinformation is coming from the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore. It is about time he stood up for Nova Scotia's billion dollar fishing industry and supported the new act.

* * *

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been waiting for the long promised public appointments commission, one they expected would be accountable and transparent. Well, that did not happen.

Instead, we learned that a Public Appointments Commission Secretariat was quietly created on April 21 with terms of reference that are completely different from those in the Federal Accountability Act.

Could someone explain on behalf of the Prime Minister why he will not follow his own rules and give Canadians an appointments process that is truly transparent and end cheap pork barrel, rum bottle, patronage politics?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it looks like somebody has already passed the rum over to the NDP members because it is they who held up the implementation of a public appointments commission when they savagely attacked the reputation of Canada's most respected business leader.

We were in the process of setting up a public appointments commission at the time but, because of the partisan attacks that were led by Liberals, separatists and socialists, we were not able to do that.

We are now working hard to get that public appointments commission in place. We are putting in new bans on political patronage and we will ensure that all public appointments made by the government are qualified.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it sounds like a hamster on a wheel that has drunk too much rum. The Prime Minister is the minister responsible for the secretariat that has been operational since last April.

Since taxpayer money has been invested in the secretariat, Canadians have a right to know who is minding the store. Where is the money going? Let us look at the equation: no merit, no accountability and no transparency equals no difference.

Will the government promise Canadians again to do things differently and give the real public appointments commission, the one that we fought for in the Federal Accountability Act, the attention it deserves and put it in place now?

• (1145)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, mixed metaphors aside, we are working hard to implement the Federal Accountability Act. I note that we have opposition members, particularly in the Liberal Party, who are now demanding to have it implemented after they delayed it for many months.

We will implement the act as quickly as possible. It does take time to get it right. We have put in place a schedule that was in the act. Do members know who voted for the schedule? It was the NDP.

Now the NDP should support the government in implementing the Federal Accountability Act. We are keeping our promises, we are keeping the faith and we are doing what is right.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a callous manner that is both uninformed and misleading, the German minister of agriculture has condemned the Canadian seal hunt and wants to ban seal products in Germany.

All parties in the House support the seal harvesters on the east coast but yet the Prime Minister has said absolutely nothing about this situation. When will he act and when will he say something to condemn Germany for its actions?

Oral Questions

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from the fisheries critic for the Liberal Party. We have been waiting with baited breath for some questions.

Over the past year, the government met with EU parliamentarians, ambassadors, senior officials and media to dispel myths and make them aware that Canada's seal harvest is sustainable and humane.

The minister has been very active on this file, as well as foreign affairs, and we will continue to be.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to ask questions when one does not get a decent answer whatsoever. I would implore the parliamentary secretary to push hard on this one.

Each year, Germany slaughters over one million deer and over half a million boar pigs, including the young. It attacks our seal hunt with lies and conjecture and now is the time for us to fight back.

Will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and his colleagues unanimously support my motion to ban the importation of deer and pork products from Germany?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, our government is taking a very proactive role. The member has taken a wrong-headed approach. Instead of trying to demonstrate to Europeans that it is a sustainable and humane harvest of seal products, he wants us to say that ours is not as bad as theirs, and this is just wrong-headed.

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TRANS-LABRADOR HIGHWAY

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the last election campaign, the Prime Minister promised to cost share the completion of the Trans-Labrador Highway.

The provincial transport minister, John Hickey, said last fall that a cost sharing agreement must be signed by the end of October or the first of November. One does presume he meant October or November in 2006. At one point he even said that the deal was signed and sitting on his desk. And there it is was, gone.

It is now March 1. Would the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities tell the House what the hold up is, what he is waiting for and where the deal is?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact it is March 2 and we are working with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. I have had the opportunity to meet Minister Hickey to discuss this issue with him and the discussions are ongoing.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery is in crisis. Sealers are being targeted. Small boat fishers are being hung out to dry. The inshore fleet is depleting before our eyes.

Now banks are taking over people's licences and the minister is missing in action.

Even the minister's predecessor, John Crosbie, who was a Progressive Conservative, had the guts to stand up and fight for the fishery.

When will the minister stand on his own two feet at the cabinet table and provide assistance to the many fishers who need his help and stop the banks from taking their licences?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House will know that nobody has stood up more for the fisheries industry in Newfoundland and Labrador than our current fisheries minister, certainly more than anything that was done in the last 13 years.

If the Liberals really want to support the fishery in Newfoundland, they ought to get behind Bill C-45 and come up with a new Fisheries Act that actually modernizes and supports the industry there.

* * *

● (1150)

[*Translation*]

AVIATION SAFETY

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities indicated in this House, with regard to Mr. Moshansky's testimony on aviation safety, "This expert's testimony could not have been clearer. He said that the proposed system, the system that is now in place, will improve transportation safety".

How can the minister ignore the fact that this same expert said, on the contrary, that Bill C-6 will create the perfect conditions for other aviation tragedies?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I said yesterday in this House. The new system is an add-on, an umbrella, that provides more safety for those travelling in Canadian skies.

It is obviously in addition to the many inspectors already in place. Contrary to what the hon. member is saying, the number of inspectors has not decreased, but increased during this same period of time.

I understand that there are concerns about this, but I want to reassure my hon. colleague that we continue to be extremely vigilant in this matter.

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister can keep defending his safety system, but that does not change the fact that he is completely ignoring the recommendations of Mr. Moshansky on the need to have adequate human and financial resources as far as inspection is concerned.

Will he finally realize that a safety management system necessarily goes hand in hand with an effective inspection system, as strongly recommended by this expert?

Oral Questions

Why is the minister so bent on eliminating the inspection system that is currently in place?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, I want to reassure my colleague that such is not the case. As for the proposals or comments by the expert who testified the day before yesterday, I refer him to the “blues”. I will read the question my parliamentary secretary asked him:

[English]

“So if we would have had a safety management system that we’re proposing today, plus the existing regulatory oversight, the incident at Dryden would not have taken place”.

The answer is that it is very unlikely that it would have.

We are continuing with our program.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL OPTICS INSTITUTE

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this minority government will soon table its budget and everyone is talking about which programs and organizations will be targeted by the government.

One of Quebec’s gems is the National Optics Institute, which is a leader here and abroad. Canada must invest in knowledge. That is the key to development in the era of globalization.

What does the minister intend to do about INO’s request for \$32 million in funding?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has supported the National Optics Institute for many years.

Last year, we renewed a funding agreement of \$6 million annually over a three-year period. The announcement was made six months ago. I was at the press conference. Naturally, they are asking for additional funds. All organizations tend to ask for more from the government. However, we also have budget constraints and we have entered into discussions with the Minister of Industry to determine how we can further support the National Optics Institute in Quebec City.

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[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next Thursday marks the 30th anniversary of International Women’s Day. Established in 1977 by the United Nations, this important day provides an opportunity to celebrate the progress made to advance women’s rights and to assess the challenge that remains.

Canada’s theme this year is “Ending Violence Against Women: Action for Real Results”. Could the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women share with the House what actions our government has taken to provide real results in eradicating violence against women?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the priority of this government is to take concrete steps to end violence against women and girls. Our government has increased funding to on reserve family shelters. We are supporting the Sisters in Spirit initiative. We are helping victims of human trafficking. We have put forward legislation to raise the age of protection and to put an end to conditional sentencing for serious sexual offenders.

On March 8, I encourage all Canadians to celebrate women’s achievements and to reaffirm their commitment to take real action to end violence against women.

* * *

● (1155)

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today’s families are working longer hours but not getting ahead. Working mothers are juggling jobs, trying to find child care, worrying about who is going to take care of their parents when they get sick, and worrying about the cost of drugs and dental care.

To make it worse, working parents are about to pay taxes on their family allowance.

When is the government going to start providing the services that ordinary Canadians desperately need and deserve?

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact this government has moved to provide all kinds of new services, including the universal child care benefit that goes to 1.4 million families on behalf of 1.9 million children. That is a tremendous help to many, many families, and that comes on top of a universal reduction of the GST, which puts money in the pockets of every Canadian.

Even today we were to be debating Bill C-36, which extends benefits to the disabled and helps seniors. This government is moving to help Canadians of all kinds while the previous government failed on every front to do that.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, top executives in this country earn 200 times more than the average employee. The richest of the rich got 30% richer while working families are feeling left behind, being squeezed, paying more, getting less and not getting ahead. It is grossly unfair.

Why is the government using the money of hard-working families to subsidize the richest and the oil companies instead of helping working families find child care and pay tuition fees?

Privilege

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member has it exactly wrong. In fact, what we are doing is taking all the taxes that come from big corporations and from wealthy Canadians and we are using them to provide a \$10 billion benefit, the universal child care benefit, to Canadians to help them raise their children.

We have reduced the GST, which helps all Canadians. In fact, it helps Canadians who do not pay income tax, and that is 30% of people.

We are moving to help vulnerable Canadians on many, many fronts. We are acting where the previous government failed to get the job done.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been shocked to learn that nine-year-old Kevin, a Canadian citizen, is being held with his parents at a detention centre in Texas criticized for its deplorable conditions, abusive behaviour towards detainees, lack of privacy and inadequate health care.

Like Kevin, over 170 children and their parents are currently detained under such deplorable prison-like conditions in what has been described as a draconian system. This is not the way young Kevin, a Canadian citizen, should be treated.

Could the Prime Minister tell us what the government is doing to help this Canadian boy and his parents?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government takes very seriously its responsibility for all Canadians. Canadian consular officials are providing consular services to the child in question. The Canadian government does provide consular services to all Canadians who need help abroad.

This is, however, a sensitive, private matter. For reasons of confidentiality, I cannot comment any further, except to say that the family has explicitly requested that their privacy be respected.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again Canadians can be very proud of their new government for the leadership role we have assumed in protecting Canada's environment and the health of northerners.

Yesterday the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the parliamentary secretary and the Minister of the Environment participated in the launch of International Polar Year.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development give the House more details on this program and Canada's contribution to it?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud. Yesterday was the official launch of International Polar Year, the largest ever international research

program focused on the earth's polar regions, with \$150 million in federal funding, 44 Canadian research projects, including one from my alma mater, the University of Manitoba, and thousands of scientists participating in more than 60 nations.

Two major priorities, of course, are climate change impacts and the health and well-being of northern communities.

Canada's new government demonstrates leadership once again. We are getting things done.

* * *

● (1200)

PRIVILEGE

RESPONSE BY MEMBER FOR CALGARY SOUTHEAST TO ORAL QUESTION

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Yesterday in the House the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism used the cover of parliamentary privilege to slander my reputation by stating that I uttered, in his words, "a complete, blatant and I believe deliberate falsehood" after I questioned him about the Conservative cancellation of an historic \$12.5 million acknowledgement, commemoration and education agreement signed by the previous Liberal government and the Ukrainian Canadian community.

Parliamentary privilege is a right that members use to assist them in getting at the truth and should not be used as cover to slander other members. I will give the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism the benefit of the doubt that he really is not aware that \$12.5 million from the ACE program, which was cancelled by the Conservatives, was dedicated to the issue of internment of Ukrainian Canadians. If he tables in this House page 4 of the "Sources and Uses Table" from the Department of Finance, dated November 24, 2005, he will see that the funding was budgeted.

I request that the member fully retract his slanderous statement so as not to further sully this House with his verbal vulgarities and to salvage his own reputation.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am confident the Speaker will find that this is not a question of privilege. Perhaps the member could have raised this as a point of order yesterday following question period. He chose not to. It is clearly not a question of privilege. I think that in fact it is a point of debate.

In that respect, I stand by my remark yesterday in this place. The member said at page 7506 of *Hansard* that:

—the Liberal government signed an historic agreement for \$12.5 million with the Ukrainian Canadian community....

I have that agreement in my hand and I quote from page 2 of that agreement:

The Government of Canada plans to provide an initial amount of \$2.5 million to the Shevchenko Foundation....

Routine Proceedings

This agreement in principle does not mention \$12.5 million. The budget does not mention \$12.5 million. None of the three Liberal budgets in the year 2005 mentioned \$12.5 million for Ukrainian redress with respect to wartime measures.

Yesterday the member said that there was a \$12.5 million agreement. This is the agreement. It says \$2.5 million. He was wrong by 500%. Perhaps he could explain to the community why he is not telling the truth.

The Deputy Speaker: If there are no more interventions, the two members have had an interesting debate as to the facts of the case, but nevertheless the fact of the matter is that the hon. secretary of state is recorded in *Hansard* as accusing the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre of “a complete, blatant, and...deliberate falsehood”, which the hon. member knows is not parliamentary language.

He may want to continue to argue about the facts with the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre, but accusing another hon. member of a deliberate falsehood is a no-go zone and I offer the hon. member an opportunity to retract.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the words.

The Deputy Speaker: I heard the hon. member retract the words that I asked him to retract. He has done so. The matter is closed. The hon. members can continue to argue about the facts.

The hon. member for Wascana.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

RESPONSE BY PRIME MINISTER DURING ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a different example of the same sort of problem. Yesterday the Prime Minister personally attacked another member of Parliament and her spouse, but today we learn that the Conservative member for Medicine Hat, in his previous capacity as minister of citizenship and immigration, wrote to that very spouse on his departure from the IRB and said this:

[*Translation*]

—I am writing to express my appreciation for your years of service...I was always able to count on your hard work and your dedication.

You can certainly take enormous satisfaction in and be extremely proud of the contribution you made while acting in the best interests of Canada and the individuals you represented.

• (1205)

[*English*]

I wonder if the Prime Minister would now withdraw his attack against the member of Parliament and that particular spouse. I wonder if the member for Medicine Hat remembers signing that letter.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged that fine correspondence has taken place. However, I did not hear any attack by the Prime Minister yesterday. I heard a statement of fact that the individual who had a relationship as a spouse was appointed by the Liberal government to that position.

I do not know what his view of accountability is. There are very competent people who are related to me. However, we all know that under the rules we have in place right now, I cannot appoint them, regardless of their merits, regardless of their quality, regardless of their talents. That is what conflict of interest is.

There was no attack in question; it was simply a question of fact, that the previous Liberal government had regularly engaged in appointments of family members to government posts.

The Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to allow this to go on because really nobody is being accused of saying anything unparliamentary. People are being accused of saying things which are untrue, which is different than unparliamentary. Therefore, I do not see any profit in the House to continue on this particular point of order.

The opposition House leader is free to contend both in the House and outside the House with the facts of the matter as presented by the government and vice versa. I do not see any point of order here. Therefore, I would ask the hon. member to move on unless he has another point of order.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, in light of what the government House leader just said moments ago, I simply want to confirm with him that he is now confirming to the House that the appointment process to which he is referring was perfectly in order and 100% proper.

The Deputy Speaker: I am absolutely sure that was not a point of order, but he did manage to sneak it in.

Does the government House leader have something he would like to sneak in on a point of order?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I am quite happy to say that the appointment process that was in place at the time was the appointment process in place at the time. We obviously think it was not perfect because we are changing it.

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)(b) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to eight petitions

* * *

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC MARKS ACT

Hon. Jay Hill (for the Minister of Industry) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-47, An Act respecting the protection of marks related to the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games and protection against certain misleading business associations and making a related amendment to the Trade-marks Act.

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, as a new minister, this is the first occasion I have had to introduce a government bill on behalf of a cabinet colleague. Therefore, it is a great pleasure for me to rise today to introduce the Olympic and Paralympic marks act, an act to protect marks related to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This bill will help to ensure that the 2010 winter games in Vancouver-Whistler will leave lasting memories for all Canadians and an enduring legacy for our athletes.

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

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, October 4, 2006, your committee has considered Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to DNA identification and agreed, on Thursday, March 1, 2007, to report it without amendment.

● (1210)

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled "Question of Privilege".

The committee has reason to believe that a potential breach of privilege has occurred and has asked the House to investigate.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-410, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (victim — trafficking in persons).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I must admit that it is truly a great honour for me to introduce this bill to amend section 24 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act by adding subsection (3).

It is important to underscore one aspect of this subsection: an immigration officer will no longer be able to take into account the possible participation of a victim of trafficking in persons in a criminal investigation or proceedings in respect of the criminal offence.

Allow me to take a few moments to explain what this means: currently, under the legislation, when a person claims to be a victim of human trafficking, the immigration officer takes into account whether the alleged victim will collaborate or not in a criminal investigation into the criminal offence. The problem is that these victims are so traumatized that often they do not have the physical,

psychological or mental ability to participate in an investigation or possible criminal proceedings.

I have already submitted petitions with thousands of signatures by Canadians and Quebeckers, calling on the government to amend this legislation. The government has not taken any action, hence my bill.

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

* * *

SPECIAL IMPORT MEASURES ACT

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ) moved for leave to introduce C-411, An Act to amend the Special Import Measures Act (domestic prices).

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to table a bill to amend the Special Import Measures Act.

Canadian trade legislation is outdated, and it does not adequately protect manufacturing companies when they are victims of unfair competition. The proposed legislation will set out the conditions required for deeming whether domestic prices in a country are substantially determined by the government of that country and there is sufficient reason to believe that they are not substantially the same as they would be if they were determined in a competitive market.

We know that among the prohibited activities is dumping, or selling a product for less than its fair value. The passing of this bill will help set out what exactly is dumping, and how to calculate it.

By passing this bill, the Canadian parliament will update trade legislation, give a helping hand to companies suffering from the explosion of imports from emerging economies, help limit the damage caused by the laissez-faire attitude of the government, which has abandoned our manufacturing industry, and surely help save a number of jobs.

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

* * *

● (1215)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions between all parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for two travel motions today.

The first motion is in relation to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. I move:

That, in relation to its study on the Canadian Seal Harvest, twelve (12) members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to the Magdalen Islands, Quebec, in March/April 2007, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second motion is with respect to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. I move:

Routine Proceedings

That, five (5) members of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs be authorized to travel to Vimy, France to attend the 90th anniversary of the Vimy Ridge Memorial Commemoration, from April 5 to 10, 2007, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food presented on Wednesday, February 28, 2007 be concurred in.

It is with great concern that I rise to speak to the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food which recommended the following: one, that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food immediately rescind the questions released on January 22, 2007 upon which barley producers in western Canada are expected to vote on their future relationship with the Canadian Wheat Board; and two, immediately implement the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food by placing before wheat and barley producers of western Canada on their relationship with the Canadian Wheat Board the questions contained within that report.

I agree with this report tabled in the House, however, my concern arises from the fact that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and this dictatorial, non-responsive government have shown not only contempt for farmers who posed the questions that are in that sixth report, but also contempt for the House which passed by a majority vote the sixth report, the questions recommended by the farm community for a vote on single desk marketing through the Canadian Wheat Board.

I guess we really should not be surprised. There has been an absolutely relentless campaign fostered out of the Prime Minister's office against the Canadian Wheat Board, because the Canadian Wheat Board system of marketing in empowering producers, against the multinational grain trade and against the grain trader, in empowering producers is against the Prime Minister's ideology. He does not believe in that kind of marketing and so he is absolutely driven by any means, even by any undemocratic means, to establish a process to undermine that marketing power through the Wheat Board.

The end result of this process, if the Prime Minister gets his way, will be the loss of marketing power for western Canadian farmers through the Canadian Wheat Board, marketing power that has maximized returns to producers.

The Wheat Board, in its report to the minister's stacked task force, said that the net benefit to Canadian farmers as a result of single desk selling ranges between \$530 million to \$655 million annually. Members opposite say, "Oh, well, we will have a voluntary Wheat Board". Farmers know, even though they are being propagandized otherwise, that it is really the single desk authority of the Wheat Board that makes it possible for them to maximize returns back to Canadian producers annually of \$530 million to \$655 million. It is as a result of having the Wheat Board in place.

It is interesting, because there has been some debate that if the Wheat Board is changed as a result of the manipulations by the government and its undemocratic procedure in doing that, can another government bring it back? It is difficult to do, because one of

the key conditions of bringing the Canadian Wheat Board single desk selling back would be that we would have to compensate the multinational grain trade for future lost profits. That in itself should tell us why the Canadian Wheat Board having single desk power within Canada is important to retain, because the difficulty in getting it back will be that we will have to compensate grain corporations around the world for their future lost profits.

The bottom line is that we would be taking current day profits out of farmers' pockets and transferring them to the international grain trade. That is what the government on the other side of the House wants to do. It is absolutely crazy.

● (1220)

The Canadian Wheat Board does give market power to farmers, but the government fails to listen and continues to ignore facts.

The minister yesterday responded to a question from the member for British Columbia Southern Interior about why he would not meet with a group called Real Voice for Choice. He kind of made a humorous joke of it by saying he really did not want to meet with the "real voice for change" group and misrepresented what was really said. That is what he said in the House. It is on the record. Instead of calling the group by its real name, Real Voice for Choice, the minister tried to make a mockery of it by calling it "real voice for change". This group—

Mr. Ted Menzies: All six of them.

Hon. Wayne Easter: The member says there were six of them. The group claims it represents 70% of the farmers in western Canada. The minister would not meet with this group. It is a non-partisan group. There are Conservatives, Liberals and even NDP supporters in that group, and it represents a good cross-section of farmers.

I will put on the record some of the comments members of the group wanted to raise with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, who would not meet with them. Their principles are, reading from their paper, that the future of the Canadian Wheat Board and single desk powers should be decided by farmers themselves. That is not what is happening. What we have is a biased, manipulated and divisive question. What we have is a manipulated voters list. What we have is a ballot that is marked and can be traced. Farmers are clearly not being given the opportunity to decide on a question with clarity.

They go on to say that farmers must be allowed to vote in a fair vote on wheat and barley, a clear question with an appropriate voters list.

They say that they would have loved to present to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, who does not want to hear from the other side that supports the board, what the single desk benefits to farmers are and that market power is the key issue. Farmers marketing all together through their one organization, the Canadian Wheat Board, gives them market power. The single desk gives more marketing clout to farmers.

Routine Proceedings

Price and cost risk management through pooling of sales proceeds and cost of sales, that the Wheat Board manages, is better for farmers as is farm marketing flexibility with the Canadian Wheat Board. In other words, there is a range of wheat and barley pricing options available for farmers that offer more choice.

It is kind of ironic. The Prime Minister, who basically uses his ministers as props to do his bidding, talks about choice and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food talks about marketing choice, but the reality is if the farm community were to go that way, and no doubt the government will try to bully it into it or engineer it by other means, if that were to happen, the reality is, sadly, that there would be less choice for farmers. Then it would be to which grain company do they sell to. There would be an open market. They would not have the pricing options that are now in place through the Canadian Wheat Board.

They go on in the paper to say that effective market development linked directly to sales efforts by the Wheat Board gives them credibility in the international market. In other words, they service the marketplace and it gives credibility in terms of Canadian quality, reliability of supply, and other countries know they can count on that quality of supply. They talk further about the advocacy for farmers on marketing issues through the Wheat Board, which is a very important point.

Dealing specifically with the barley issue, they say that single desk marketing of barley alone earns farmers \$60 million in extra revenue per year. The federal government wants to take away farmers' single desk selling for barley marketing and we know that.

• (1225)

There is concern about the medium and long term agenda of the federal government toward the single desk of wheat, that is for sure. There is concern over the government process during the plebiscite, and I will speak more on that in a moment.

They go on to say that no farmer single desks means reduced farmer marketing power and look at the concentration that is in the grain industry. Why would we give up something that gives producers marketing power?

I could go on with their paper, but the bottom line is they are saying that the government process appears to be exclusive, with only a few farmers who support the government who have been consulted. The minister and the government have been determined to move to a voluntary Canadian Wheat Board from the beginning. Farmers' opinions are not important.

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order which arises from the comments just made by this hon. member in which he alleged something to a colleague of mine, a minister, from question period yesterday which clearly the minister did not say. I want to give the member the offer to retract his statement and correct the record as soon as possible.

Clearly, at page 7503 of yesterday's *Hansard*, in response to a question from the NDP that the member referenced, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food said:

Mr. Speaker, I heard about the real voice for change group. They met the other day. I think there were about 30 of them who got together. It was a completely non-

partisan event. David Orchard introduced the Leader of the Opposition and it just went on from there.

At no place, Mr. Speaker, you will notice, did he say that he refused to meet with this group. That was the allegation the member made. He should check his facts and ensure that he is always truthful in this chamber when he makes those types of allegations against other members.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, on that point of order, the member actually makes my point. I said that the minister referred to "real voice for change" when he really knows it is Real Voice for Choice. The group felt it had an agreement on a meeting in his office and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. It appears that this is more a point of debate than a point of order. The points have been made.

I recognize the hon. member for Malpeque to continue.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, it is not unusual, in terms of the government's position toward the Canadian Wheat Board as it tries to undermine it. We have seen every undemocratic principle possible and just on the previous argument, the facts are that the government does not want to meet with people who may oppose its position.

Let us turn to some of the misinformation that the government is in fact pursuing. Yesterday at committee, we saw a spectacle that I never thought I would see at a committee meeting. The CEO from the Canadian Wheat Board, appointed by the government after it fired the previous CEO because he disagreed with the government's position but had the full confidence of the elected board, sat before the committee and the parliamentary secretary, who also has some responsibility for the Canadian Wheat Board, sat beside that gentlemen, and both provided different information. Both cannot be right in terms of this issue. Here is what the CEO said:

However, when factual inaccuracies about the CWB's performance find their way into a public forum, I believe it is my right and my duty to correct that information.

Let me just stop there for a moment. Why is he saying "however"? It is because he is doing this with a little bit of fear. The reason is because the previous CEO, who had the full confidence of the board, was fired because he disagreed with the government. He was doing what the board of directors asked him to do, a farmer-elected board of directors, and that was to establish the facts on what the single desk does. He was fired and that is why this gentleman had some fear. He went on to say:

One example of such an inaccuracy relates to the CWB's business relationship with Algeria and I understand that is the reason I was called here before you today.

A number of parties, including Members of Parliament, have recently stated publicly and in printed material that the CWB has been underselling the market for durum wheat. This information is not factual—

Routine Proceedings

That non-factual information is in fact coming from members of the government's side. In fact, that non-factual information is coming from the parliamentary secretary. In fact, I will read a quote from the *Rutherford Show*: "Just like in the papers the other day, the Algerian Minister, over in their state buying enterprise, was saying, "Well, we love dealing with Canada and we get a real good deal".

• (1230)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Cypress Hills is rising on a point of order?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I am actually not sure if this is a point of order or a question of privilege. I believe the member opposite just called me a liar and I take great exception to that. I would ask him to withdraw the comments and to apologize if he could possibly be good enough to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I must admit that I did not hear the hon. member say that. I will review the blues, unless the hon. member wishes to—

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, when you review the blues, you will see that I did not accuse the member of being a liar. What I said was there was not-factual information. That is what the CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board said.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): We are into points of debate at this point. There are two and a half minutes left in debate.

The hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, in any event, the statement on *The Rutherford Show* came from the minister. The CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board said clearly that the Canadian Wheat Board had achieved premiums over our competitors in the Algerian marketplace. Members opposite are using information to try to discredit the Wheat Board, and that is wrong, especially when one is the parliamentary secretary who has some responsibilities for the Canadian Wheat Board.

However, since I am running out of time, let me review quickly the process that we have seen from the government in terms of moving toward the vote.

First, we are in major discussions on the Wheat Board. The people who really know the facts are the farmer directors who are elected to the Wheat Board. What has happened? Gag orders have been placed on those boards of directors. The board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board have lost their freedom of speech.

At the same time, as I just said a moment ago, members of the governing party are using their privileges through ten percenters in the House to continue to perpetuate misinformation about the Canadian Wheat Board. That misinformation was cleared up yesterday by the CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board. The Conservatives appointed the CEO, and either the CEO is right or he is wrong. If he is wrong, then they have an obligation to fire him because he is saying different stuff than they are saying. On the other hand, if they are wrong, they should apologize to Canadian farmers.

We have seen a manipulation of the list of voters. We have directors fired and the appointment of people who ideologically oppose and hate the Wheat Board. We have seen the firing of the former CEO, who had the full confidence of the board. We have

fraudulent and biased questions and now a marked ballot. I never thought I would see the likes of this in a democracy called Canada.

It may be from their point of view, it is only farmers and their marketing institution that gives them power, but those are the reasons why we need to support the report. What we have out there is an ideological campaign. We have a Prime Minister who is doing nothing less than trying to bully farmers into accepting his ideology. That is wrong. It should be a clear question—

• (1235)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a farmer and as a member of Parliament, I have followed this issue very closely and I have been involved in it. It is so ironic to hear the hon. member across the way talk about inaccuracies and whatnot. I have sat in on the discussions and I cannot believe some of the comments from over there.

The hon. member over there, when he was actively dairy farming, sold his milk the same way a farmer in Quebec, in Ontario and in Alberta did. As a beef farmer, I sell and market my beef the same as a beef farmer in Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Quebec. However, as a wheat or barley producer in Ontario, I can also sell my product like that. It is the same in Quebec, the east coast and parts of British Columbia. However, in the west, where I have a lot of friends, relatives and colleague, farmers do not have the freedom of choice that I have.

How in the world, as somebody who professes to stick up for the agricultural community and for farmers, say that this is fair to the wheat and barley producers and other producers in western Canada? Why can they not have the same option as the rest of us do in the rest of Canada?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, it has been the privilege of my life to work for the farm community, having travelled the farm community for some 22 years as a farm leader.

What is needed in the farming industry is power in the marketplace for farmers. The Canadian supply management system gives us that. The Canadian Wheat Board gives western farmers that.

In response to a question of his yesterday to the CEO of Wheat Board, he went on with this issue of "Oh, well, it is only in the west". The fact is the west grain industry is all together different than the Ontario industry. Farmers in Ontario have a domestic market. Farmers in the west are up against the international grain trade. Do members not realize we export most of those grains and the Canadian Wheat Board is one of the largest sellers in the world. It is up against Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland and others? Because of its clout through marketing power and through the single desk, it is able to compete head on with those folks.

The CEO yesterday said, "The Canadian Wheat Board sells into the Ontario marketplace at a premium to what Ontario producers get".

Routine Proceedings

The members talk about spot prices, but they misrepresent the issue. The Ontario Wheat Board returns more money to primary producers as a result of the single desk.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Malpeque on making this motion in the House. Hon. members know that the Bloc Québécois supported the motion in committee. Of course, we will do the same now that the motion is before this House.

I would like to tell the member that as recently as yesterday—because the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is meeting here at present—I met again with a number of farmers from western Canada, who are very concerned about what is happening to the Canadian Wheat Board.

We know that the Conservatives decided long ago, even when they were the Canadian Alliance, that the Canadian Wheat Board as we know it today was finished and that the single desk model was not for them. This is an ideology that the Prime Minister obviously shares, because when he was in the Canadian Alliance, he himself made a motion in 2002.

The last election campaign showed us that the Conservative Party had taken up where the Alliance left off. The government set up a task force and only hired or offered positions to opponents of the Canadian Wheat Board. There was the famous ministerial order to muzzle the people at the Wheat Board and prevent them from defending themselves. There was Bill C-300 and, finally, the dismissal of Mr. Measner, the former CEO.

I would like to ask the member what he thinks of the following statement, which comes from a press release issued by the Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec and refers to the federal government's stubborn determination to weaken the collective tool that is the Canadian Wheat Board. This is what the Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec said: "Is this stubborn determination...not consistent with certain statements by the government spokesperson...who, just before Christmas, questioned the future of collective marketing and supply management in Canada?" This is referring to the statements made by the Minister of International Trade.

Does the hon. member believe that people in western and eastern Canada should be concerned about what the government is doing?

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, regardless of the minister, the Prime Minister, who is ideologically driven and who believes everything from his podium and his teleprompter, is bringing Republican standards to Canada. We see that in his judiciary process. With the Prime Minister's approach, nowhere else do we see the tactics as bad as we do with the Canadian Wheat Board. The member reviewed some of those points, gag orders, loss of freedom of speech, manipulation of the list of voters, a faulty question, et cetera.

The member is from the province of Quebec. The bottom line is the government is going to great lengths to let on it is in support of supply management these days, but there is a principle at stake here. Farmers want to make a collective choice to market through a single

desk. If we allow choice outside that system, we undermine the system. The same principle applies to supply management. If the Prime Minister is going to apply the principle of allowing some farmers to market outside the system of single desk in the west, then the same thing is going to happen with supply management. Big producers that may want to market outside the system will start a campaign for choice too, and away will go the supply management system, which has been a pillar of the Canadian farm economy.

We are seeing a move toward destroying two pillars in terms of farmers. First is the orderly marketing for the Canadian Wheat Board. Second is the supply management through supply—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I put on a puppet show to try to illustrate an issue in which I was interested. I did not know the government was trying to put on its own puppet show at the agriculture committee down the hall, which in actual fact seems to have backfired on it. From all accounts, the CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board was not willing to be a puppet for the government. He stood on his own two feet, just like the previous CEO did, and spoke his mind and accurately represented the views of the democratically elected board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board, instead of parroting and being pushed around and bullied by the government.

I am proud of the fact that the current CEO has clearly planted his feet and will stick to his ground to accurately reflect the wishes of producers and the democratically elected board of directors. This is a setback in the ideological crusade on the part of the Conservative government to undermine and to sabotage this great Canadian institution.

I serve notice today that those members are in for the fight of their lives if they think they can destroy this great Canadian institution without push back from the Canadian people. The Conservatives have tried everything from pure jackboot fascism to doing away with the democratic right to vote. It was the left that smashed—

• (1245)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Malpeque has one minute to respond.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member's words. I said previously in the House that what we were seeing from the government opposite was a Stalinist approach to this issue. The word sabotage is also correct because the government is trying to confuse the rest of Canadians by claiming it is having a plebiscite or a ballot. However, the ballot in terms of its whole structure is faulty.

The House passed the Clarity Act. The Clarity Act puts a series of questions that could be accepted by the federal government with respect to a referendum on the future of the country. Why should farmers be treated the way they are? The vote is not clear. It is confusing and misleading. The Prime Minister is trying to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard the member ranting and raving about the questions. I want to read out the three questions that western Canadian producers have been asking. I know our farmers are smart enough to understand them but I will take some time so the member can understand them. The first question is:

The Canadian Wheat Board should retain the single desk for the marketing of barley into domestic human consumption and export markets.

I think the member can understand that. The second question is:

I would like the option to market my barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or any other domestic or foreign buyer.

I think that is pretty clear, even to the member for Malpeque. The third question is:

The Canadian Wheat Board should not have a role in marketing barley.

Farmers in western Canada have the choice between those three questions.

I could maybe understand why the member opposite would be confused given some of the things that he has pulled off here today. He was making up comments about the Minister of Agriculture right out of the blue. Our House leader challenged him on them but he would not back down.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I quoted directly from the statement of the Minister of Agriculture. I should not be accused—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The member for Malpeque is rising on a point of debate, not a point of order. There will be plenty of time at question period later on to make those points. Meanwhile, I would like to hear the hon. parliamentary secretary and, as much as possible, without interruption.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Macleod who is very competent in this area. I know farmers will want to hear from him.

I want to read what the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food actually said yesterday. He stated:

Mr. Speaker, I heard about the real voice for change group. They met the other day. I think there were about 30 of them who got together. It was a completely non-partisan event. David Orchard introduced the Leader of the Opposition and it just went on from there.

That is all he said. The member for Malpeque need only check *Hansard*. The member accused the minister of saying that he refused to meet with them and that is just not true. I think farmers are getting used to that member making things up.

This issue is obviously an obsession with him. Those of us on the agriculture committee have been trying since last October to deal with other important issues in agriculture, such as our business risk management planning, the APF issues that are going on and farm income support issues, but the member has consistently insisted that we come back to one issue. He is completely obsessed with it. We can see that by the motion that was put forward today.

If members take the time to read the motion, they will see that the minister the other day referred to him through his tinfoil hat. Members will see that it makes absolutely no sense for this motion to

be in place right now because the barley plebiscite is underway. Thousands of ballots have already been sent back and farmers are responding to the plebiscite questions. If we have thousands of ballots back, it is probably evidence that the farmers actually do understand the questions.

Just as the ballots are coming back, the member comes forward with a motion that says we should call back all those ballots and replace them with something else. The motion does not make sense.

I hear the member referring to things like collectivism. It is a clear sign that he does not understand western Canadian agriculture in any way, shape or fashion. He laid out a lot of rhetoric today. He talked about there being more choice under the Wheat Board than there would be without it. He knows that is just ridiculous, that it is foolishness.

The CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board appeared before the agriculture committee yesterday and, as he gets paid to do, defended the Canadian Wheat Board. He rolled out the rhetoric that western Canadian farmers have heard forever, which is that the Wheat Board is doing a good job, that it gets premiums wherever it goes and that farmers should trust it. One of the reasons western Canadian farmers actually do not trust the Wheat Board is that for years they have asked for information but the Wheat Board has not been required to provide it. The farmers have said that they are smart enough and they want the information to sort it out for themselves.

This government has moved to bring the Canadian Wheat Board under the Access to Information Act so that western Canadian farmers will finally be able to find out what has been going on at the board, how their money is being spent on things like communications, advertising, promotion and what polling companies are being hired.

We know the former prime minister's campaign chair for the national campaign was hired by the Canadian Wheat Board in the past to do polling. That was a good gig for him, especially after the failure that the Liberals have shown in the elections.

The member says that if we open the board up there will be a problem with the grain companies having influence in the market. I do not think he realizes that the grain companies already sell over half the grain that is marketed in western Canada. There is a whole list of companies that are called accredited exporters. They market half the grain for the Canadian Wheat Board. Farmers do not need to be scared of a situation where they are dealing with grain companies. They deal with them in lots of other areas with other crops as well.

Yesterday in the agriculture committee, the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound raised a very important point. The member said that Ontario premiums were at a discount to the western Canadian premiums but one needs only to look at what is happening in the market. In the agriculture committee yesterday, we talked about the fact that Ontario wheat was going into the United States and that the Ontario market was backfilling its market from western Canada.

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If we were to think about that in any kind of economic terms, we would think that Ontario wheat was going into the higher priced market and the lower priced wheat was coming in to fill the gap that is left by the wheat that has gone out. We should take a closer look at what is going on and what advantage western Canadian farmers are getting from this system.

At the CFA reception last night, I spoke to a western Canadian dairy farmer who is very well respected in western Canada. He has been involved in the industry for a long time and has been successful at it. He found it to be quite a joke that people were trying to tie supply management to the Canadian Wheat Board. I asked him if he knew why they were trying to do that and he said yes, that it was a political thing. He was willing to acknowledge that the two systems were not even comparable. He got a bit of a kick out of the fact that the opposition was trying to tie these two things together.

I believe it is a sign of the opposition's desperation that it is far more willing to put its political ideology ahead of farmers' interests. We see that continuously.

• (1250)

I was disappointed today to hear the member's descent into personal attacks. I think he realizes that since his arguments are not sufficient he needs to resort to personal attacks. I guess I am getting used to that.

One of the points I should make is that there is no gag order on the directors of the Canadian Wheat Board. The member should be in western Canada to see the number of letters to the editors that three or four of the directors of the Wheat Board have written. One would almost think there was an organized campaign for them to get their message out into the papers. The Canadian Wheat Board was told not to continue to be involved politically in this and to get out and market grain. Yesterday, the CEO told us that they have been doing that. I think everyone in western Canada is comforted by the thought that the Wheat Board is trying to market grain rather than trying to influence things politically.

One of the other things we found out yesterday that was very interesting came from some events that happened a couple of months ago. When Mr. Arason, the new CEO was appointed, several directors on the board were indirectly attacking him by saying that his salary was higher than the salary of the previous CEO. We found out yesterday that the compensation Mr. Arason is receiving is definitely not higher than what the previous CEO was getting.

I am really concerned about the fact that those directors knew that what they were saying was not accurate. Farmers are calling me and saying that if the directors were lying about that kind of thing, they wonder what other things they have been misleading them on. There are a lot of questions in western Canada about what some of these directors are doing in their representation on the board. Farmers would like some answers to that as well.

We believe that western Canadian farmers need to have the freedom to choose how they market their grain through a strong, viable and voluntary Canadian Wheat Board.

Last fall, a task force on implementing marketing choice for wheat and barley had this to say about choice:

Marketing choice implies an open market in which CWB II, as an entity operating in that open market, will be a vigorous participant through which producers could voluntarily choose to market their grain. To achieve this, the existing CWB will need to transform itself over a transition period into CWB II. For this 'choice' to occur, CWB II needs to have a high probability of success in an environment where it will have to compete for business. One of our focuses has been on creating the environment for a high probability of commercial success for CWB II.

In closing I just want to say that it is the board of directors that has the opportunity to set the future direction for the Canadian Wheat Board in a voluntary system. There are some things they could do that would allow them to maintain their position in the industry and to move ahead and give farmers choice. I look forward to some of the options that they may come up with in the near future.

• (1255)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that there is no personal attack by me on the member. I am talking about his responsibilities as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board

Yesterday, the CEO said:

Making inaccurate statements about sales values and our relationship with specific customers is damaging to our business....

As I said earlier, he talked about the factual inaccuracies by members of Parliament in that member's party. Standard & Poor's has lowered the credit rating of the Canadian Wheat Board and it named the government 11 times as the reason for its lowering.

I would just ask the member opposite, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, whether he agrees with the following statement by the Wheat Board on the ballot. It reads:

The option asking farmers if they would prefer to sell their barley to any buyer, including the CWB, creates an unrealistic expectation that the CWB can continue to offer the same value to farmers without its single desk.

Does he agree or disagree with that statement on the agency's responsibility—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I wish I had more time and that I had actually come more prepared, because yesterday I read a statement into the record at the agriculture committee about how in the 1920s there was a movement among farmers to form voluntary pools. They were able to set up the wheat pools.

The wheat pools survived very successfully through the 1920s. They actually commanded over 50% of the market at one point. So we have historical documentation, if we can call it that, about the ability of voluntary pooling systems to operate in Canada, and we expect that the Wheat Board, given its position right now as one of the biggest players in Canada, would be able to participate and successfully operate in an environment like that.

Again, I just want to point out the three questions the member mentioned. I will read them out one more time so he can understand that they are not complicated at all.

First: "The Canadian Wheat Board should retain the single desk for the marketing of barley into domestic human consumption and export markets". That is pretty straightforward.

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Second: "I would like the option to market my barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or any other domestic or foreign buyer". That is very clear.

Third: "The Canadian Wheat Board should not have a role in the marketing of barley". I know that my farmers are smart enough to figure out that question.

If farmers are really interested in finding out what went on at the committee, I think they should look at the Wheat Board site and read the *La Liberté* article on Algerian grain sales, from December 2006. They will begin to see why we had concerns.

• (1300)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. Specifically, through the very report in which my colleague from Malpeque has moved concurrence today, the 11th report, which we are debating, I will try to stay exactly on topic.

My question is for the parliamentary secretary. In the event that we do vote concurrence in this report, which is what I expect when the debate concludes following the two week break, the parliamentary secretary and his party will lose the vote on the debate taking place on this report. I expect that the majority of members of Parliament will vote concurrence in this report. If the parliamentary secretary has any respect whatsoever for Parliament, will he honour items one and two of the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, which call upon the government to rescind the questions released January 22 to barley producers, and implement the sixth report of the standing committee and the questions therein?

Will he honour the will of Parliament and do that? Or does he have disrespect for Parliament in the way that he is disrespecting prairie producers?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, of course I have absolutely no disrespect for Parliament. I respect it. It is a great honour and privilege to be here. I also have respect for my farmers. I respect their ability to make decisions. For that reason, I am one of the people who believes they have the ability to make those decisions and should have the choice to make them.

We look forward to the opportunity of giving producers those options, the same options, as my colleague mentioned, that farmers have across the rest of this country.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, please do not let the way I am introduced precede the fact that I am a farmer.

I farmed for 30 years before I came to the House. I need to preface my remarks by reminding the members of the House that I am a farmer. I have lived under this board's jurisdiction. I am one of the farmers from western Canada. If I farmed in any other place in Canada, if I was a beef producer, a pork producer or a dairy farmer, I would not be faced with having my wheat and barley for human consumption confiscated from the moment that it is put in the ground. That is no exaggeration.

As a farmer, I make all the decisions. I make the decisions as to what I am going to grow, how I am going to raise it, what the fertility program is for it, and how I shall harvest it, but while I am growing it

and harvesting it I know full well that I have no choice, no choice whatsoever, in how it is sold, where it goes, or what I am going to get for it.

As my farm grew over the years and grew to produce less and less volume of wheat and barley for human consumption, that was replaced with non-board grains, as we refer to them in western Canada: peas, lentils, chickpeas and feed barley. Those crops took the place of wheat and barley for human consumption simply because I had no control over the price and no control over when it was sold.

For many years I waited 18 months to see the returns from my wheat and barley. For example, one year we had a great crop of hard red spring number one, the best wheat in the world. Probably 40% of that wheat sat in my bin all winter. I had the opportunity, if I could have sold it into the United States in Shelby, Montana, of getting \$1.35 more a bushel than what the Wheat Board was offering in its pool return outlook, but the board did not even sell it. The board did not even offer the wheat that I could have sold in Shelby, Montana for \$1.35 more a bushel than I was offered, for more money in my pocket, money not received because it was not sold. I missed that opportunity because I had a monopoly, a monopoly forcing me to deal with someone who did not have the obligation to move that wheat.

That was my obligation, my requirement under the law, or else I would have been dragged away in leg irons like those who felt the wrath of the former finance minister of the previous Liberal government when he was agriculture minister. Those farmers tried to receive more money for their wheat, but they were dragged off in leg irons and thrown in jail. I chose not to break the law. I chose to come here to try to help make that change. For western farmers, it is only fair.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board and the Minister of Agriculture and I share a common passion for this injustice. Why should we not have the same choice as every other industry in this country?

I put the argument forward that we have a strong and vibrant auto industry in this country. What if that auto industry had come to the government and had said that it would like to set up an auto industry in Canada and the government of that day had said to Ford, Chrysler, General Motors or whoever to go ahead and manufacture those cars and trucks, but they could only sell them to one buyer?

That is what the Canadian Wheat Board is. It is not a single desk seller. It is a single desk buyer. When it goes out on the international stage, there are many other sellers of wheat, so the single desk seller argument holds no water with me.

• (1305)

To go back to the auto industry, we would not have had an auto industry if we had told automakers that we would provide a monopoly buyer of their products and that we would tell them whether or not we were going to take their products, when we would take their products, and what they were going to get paid for their products.

This is a plain and simple argument. It is a choice that is not allowed the farmers in the Wheat Board district.

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It is a very sad day when we see members on the opposite side of the House arguing against freedom. That is all it is. The hon. member for Malpeque has made this an emotional and sad debate. I would argue that he has never dealt with this issue the way that my hon. colleague and I have. We represent an awful lot of people who deal with the same issue.

I never have suggested that we should take away the option of the Canadian Wheat Board. We believe very firmly in the farmers who want to use the selling opportunities that the Canadian Wheat Board may bring to them having that choice, and we wish them the best, but we also wish that we had the same choice to market our wheat and barley for human consumption that we do for our other crops that we grow.

Let us look at the organics industry. That was raised in committee yesterday. I have many friends who are organic farmers. They have been frustrated over the years. They have taken the initiative to find a niche market, and a very sustainable niche market, but they had to buy back their grain from the Canadian Wheat Board, which never had any intention of selling it. The word "buyback" should never have been in this equation. They paid the Canadian Wheat Board to market their grain and they knew it was never going to market their grain because the Canadian Wheat Board had the monopoly over wheat and barley for human consumption. It does not make sense.

But then there was an epiphany. The Canadian Wheat Board decided to market organic grains this year. All it managed to do was go to the markets these industrious organic farmers had already set up and say, "We are going to undercut what you used to get". The intermediary is reducing their margins. It is absolutely unbelievable that this could happen in a democracy.

The hon. member for Malpeque talks about marketing power. I reference the fact that the Canadian Wheat Board is simply a buyer, not a seller. We would like to argue that we grow the best wheat in the world. I will argue that until the day I die, but I know factually that there are a lot of other countries that will say the same thing.

However, the Canadian Wheat Board is using the argument that it is the board, the monopoly Canadian Wheat Board, that returns all these wonderful profits to farmers in western Canada. No. It is the farmers, and do not let any member of the House take that away. I have heard hon. members say that it is the power of the Canadian Wheat Board that provides returns to Canadian farmers in western Canada.

Let us look at the options that have been provided by pulling oats out of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is an absolute success. Canola is another one. Those are the crops that are sustaining farmers in western Canada. They are the reasons that we are actually able to sustain profitability on our farms, because we are able to grow and market our grains. I can market my grains at any time of the day or night. I can lock in a futures price on all of my other grains. I can hedge for next year, locking in a profitable price if I see it, but not on my Wheat Board grains. I have no idea whether the board is going to market my grain for me or whether my bins will be full and I will have to go back to the bank to borrow more money. My choice should be to market the grain.

● (1310)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, another parliamentary secretary who spent his whole speech attacking the Canadian Wheat Board and not dealing with why his party has shown contempt for this House in not living up to the motion on the sixth report of the agriculture committee that was passed by a majority of this House.

My question relates to the ballot itself, which is biased and misleading. The Canadian Wheat Board, in a statement released the same day as the ballot, said:

The option asking farmers if they would prefer to sell their barley to any buyer, including the CWB, creates an unrealistic expectation that the CWB can continue to offer the same value to farmers without its single desk.

It is clearly saying that the middle option on the ballot cannot be done. In fact, the minister's own task force said it is not possible.

What is the member's response to that question? Why does he not have a ballot that has clarity?

Mr. Ted Menzies: Mr. Speaker, I take offence to that question. There is no reason that the hon. member should suggest that farmers in the west are not bright enough to understand those three simple questions. I think that most of my constituents would find it quite offensive. They are three simple statements. I will read them one more time. Perhaps I should read them very slowly so the hon. member for Malpeque can actually understand them.

The Canadian Wheat Board should retain the single desk for the marketing of barley into domestic human consumption and export markets.

That is option number one.

I [as a farmer] would like the option to market my barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or any other domestic or foreign buyer.

That is option number two. That is great.

The Canadian Wheat Board should not have a role in the marketing of barley.

That is option number three.

Some farmers will choose option three because of the years of frustration. The leg iron marks on their ankles perhaps would be enough of a reason for them to vote for option number three. The most important point is they are clear, concise questions that I think any farmer would be completely able to understand.

I should tell members I have actually filled out my ballot and returned it. It did not take me long. The language was quite clear. I am not sure why the hon. member for Malpeque cannot understand clear choice language.

● (1315)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it would appear that Canadian farmers need a clarity act the way all Canadians needed a clarity act when it came to obfuscation and deliberate manipulation of questions around the last referendum because this three part option is anything but clear.

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When the leader of our party and I met with the board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board, at that time they predicted, "I bet you ten to one they will come up with a three part system that is based on the premise that a voluntary wheat board is viable".

It is not viable. A dual desk, voluntary wheat board is doomed before it starts. Those guys know it. It is disingenuous to even imply that that is a viable option for farmers to vote for.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Mr. Speaker, I would actually like to reread the three options, but I will not, out of due respect. I believe they have been read often enough that all hon. members can understand.

I do need to address the suggestion that the Canadian Wheat Board cannot function without monopoly powers. I am going back to my hon. colleague's comments that 60% of the grain in western Canada is actually marketed by the private trade, the Canadian Wheat Board simply facilitates the paperwork. There are grain companies in western Canada that own no assets. They market grain. They do not even own a port terminal. The model is built. It can be done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, only time for a direct question.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the member very quickly. The member often yells out across the floor, "They broke the law. They broke the law".

I would ask my hon. colleague if maybe that member has not heard of civil disobedience in times past where individuals had to oppose an unjust law. I believe that morally this is an unjust law where people go off in shackles—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Macleod. There is only time for a direct answer.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Mr. Speaker, absolutely that is correct. As I commented earlier, one individual farmer who chose to move his grain across the U.S. border simply to get more money did end up in leg irons. It is unfortunate that that would ever happen.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me begin where the previous speaker left off in the questions and comments portion. He was demanding I suppose that we concede his point, that a voluntary dual marketing system is in fact viable. I was raised on the Prairies. I grew up within a stone's throw of the Canadian Wheat Board. I now represent the offices of the Wheat Board.

I ask my colleague to look back a bit in history if he believes that a voluntary wheat board is viable. He should not take my word for it, but John Morriss, the editor of the *Farmers' Independent Weekly*, asks us to recall the voluntary central selling agency run by the pools in the 1920s, and then the voluntary Canadian wheat board which began in 1935. Both had spectacular bankruptcies; in fact, they were probably the two biggest business failures in Canadian history at that time. The voluntary Canadian wheat board at that time lost \$62 million in 1938-39 which was an enormous sum of money at that time. It seems like a frivolous amount of money today, but it is not. It was devastating to the prairie economy, especially in the 1930s.

The reason that dual market will not work is obvious to many of us who have considered this. I respectfully ask my colleague to entertain this as a legitimate argument at least. If the open market is

higher than the initial payment, then the board gets few deliveries because people would go to the open market. If the initial payment was higher than the open market, it would get all the deliveries, but it would have to sell them at a loss. Is that not a predictable consequence of a voluntary dual market?

It seems obvious to me, but by the same token, perhaps the only honest thing we can say about this whole debate is that my colleague has strongly held views and I have strongly held views and in that situation, we have a solution for that kind of impasse. It is called free and open exchange of debate and a free and democratic vote. That would decide things. That should be the way we deal with a legitimate disagreement between two factions, two rival views on the Canadian Prairies.

What is wrong with having a free exchange of information? That would be great, except the government intervened and put a gag order on one side. Imagine going into the next federal election if one party was statutorily prohibited from exchanging its points of view with the Canadian public. People would rise up in the streets and say it was a violation of basic democratic principles.

It is even worse because the advocates of smashing the Wheat Board are using public funds to mail out—I will not say misinformation; I will say their point of view—to mail out 10 percenters and bombard the voting area with their point of view. At the same time the Canadian Wheat Board is being gagged from communicating with its members with its point of view, even though it is not public money, it is private money. That is an interference that should never be tolerated.

If the Canadian public understood how significant that was, they would be outraged. That is the first problem. To have a free exchange of ideas and then a democratic vote, and then we both stipulate ourselves to live by the decision, may the best man win as it were, or woman, or person, seems fair.

The Conservatives have interfered with the free communication of ideas and the free debate by gagging one side of this legitimate argument and debate. Then for the vote they have also, we argue, interfered with the right to a free and open vote by first of all, rigging the question by making it one which is so vague. They will argue that it is very clear, but the three part vote option is not a clear question. As my colleague from Ottawa Centre said, we need a clarity act to determine perhaps what is a fair question.

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Really we need to know whether people support the single desk monopoly sales system or whether they want to see it eradicated. Those are the only two choices farmers have, because leading authorities, far more scholarly than I on this subject, have determined the dual market idea is chimera. It is not based in fact. It cannot work for the very reasons that I outlined.

• (1320)

I could not put it any more clearly than John Morriss who said simply that if the open market is higher than the initial payment, the board would get few deliveries. All the farmers would sell their product on the open market. If the initial payment happened to be higher than the open market, the board would get all the deliveries, but they would have to sell them at a loss and they would be bankrupt within a year or two.

That is how it is going to happen. I am not predicting that is how it is going to happen. I am asking us to look back to what actually happened when there was a voluntary Canadian wheat board. We have to acknowledge history or we are doomed to repeat it.

We watched the first agricultural casualty on the Prairies that I represent. It was the prairie wheat pools when they corporatized hoping to surf on the private American market, just like the free traders here hope to surf on it. Instead, they surfed on losses and they put the Canadian Wheat Board on a predictable timeline.

Then the free trade agreement happened. Guess what? The ink was not even dry on the free trade agreement before the Americans began to challenge the Canadian Wheat Board. Since then the Americans have grieved the Canadian Wheat Board 11 separate times claiming unfair competition and unfair subsidies, and 11 separate times they lost and we won. We have a right to market our grain and it does not constitute a violation of the FTA or NAFTA.

This is an example of the Conservatives doing the bidding of the Americans. The Americans are still bound and determined to undermine this advantage that we have, the methodology by which we choose to market our grain. In unity there is strength and in unity we can compete on the biggest open international marketplaces. Divided we cannot. We will be gobbled up. We will be insignificant.

Is it fair for the minority of free traders within the Canadian Wheat Board to deny the monopoly advantage to the majority of the member producers in the Canadian Wheat Board? That is happening here. The Conservative Party is representing a minority of farmers, and the Conservatives know it is a minority, otherwise they would put a fair question before them and we would get a meaningful result. The Conservative Party is putting at jeopardy the monopoly advantage.

There is one study that came up at committee. In fact, it constitutes a part of the sixth report which we are calling upon the government to recognize. It is a price comparison done by western Canada's top farm economists which found that prairie producers benefit by \$10 to \$13 per tonne, or about \$300 million annually, from having the Wheat Board monopoly. That remains the standard bearer among studies. Some find the advantage significantly higher; some find it marginally lower. The generally accepted study has this finding.

We would lose that advantage as soon as we start chipping away at unified single desk bargaining. I had the honour of sitting at that single desk when I visited the Canadian Wheat Board. There is such a desk. There is a single desk that the senior trader uses. We should recognize the dedication and commitment of the good people at the Canadian Wheat Board and the job they do in trying to get the very best prices for our prairie producers. They are dedicated, committed, earnest and smart. We attract the best and the brightest and they are on our side.

Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland have some very bright traders too, but they are on the other side. They are trying to get the best advantage for their employer. The guys at the Wheat Board work for the Canadian producer. It is a team that is second to none around the world and well respected. All of that is up for grabs. It will be jeopardized and lost.

Do the Conservatives even care? Can they look past their ideology for a moment to even consider that it is not just the monopoly that they are dealing with? This will change forever marketing and grain handling, the grain delivery system, perhaps the grading system, producer cars, risk management. All of these elements and components are up in the air too.

• (1325)

The port of Churchill is of critical importance to Manitoba. Do not think for a moment that the grain will be delivered.

Could I be down to one minute already, Mr. Speaker? That seems impossible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): You actually have 10 minutes left, but of those 10 minutes there are only two for this afternoon.

Mr. Pat Martin: I see, Mr. Speaker.

Let me say in the strongest possible terms that I condemn the Conservative government. I condemn the Prime Minister. I condemn the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, who I consider to be an ideological zealot. I condemn the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board for ignoring the democratic rights of farmers to have a free voice and an election that affects their livelihood. I condemn the way they have placed a gag order and rigged this election.

It should not even be recognized by any international standard. There should be observers sent here from Zaire or some other third world banana republic to observe this election because third world countries conduct their elections in a more fair way than the Conservative government is by foisting this on the Canadian Wheat Board.

We will not stand for it. As the member of Parliament who represents the headquarters of the Canadian Wheat Board in downtown Winnipeg, I serve notice that we will not tolerate this interference. The western Canadian residents and citizens will rise up in opposition to this infringement by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, who we call Il Duce because Mussolini has nothing on this guy in terms of trampling the civil rights of ordinary producers.

It was the left that smashed the fascists in Franco Spain in 1937. It is going to be the left that is going to smash fascism in this horrific example today.

• (1330)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings on the motion at this time. Accordingly, the debate on the motion will be rescheduled for another sitting, at which time there will be eight minutes left for debate for the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre and, of course, 10 minutes for questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from January 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-280, An Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (coming into force of sections 110, 111 and 171), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the constituents of Fleetwood—Port Kells and Canadians recognize and are very proud of our country's responsibility to provide refuge and protection to those in need. In the past year alone, we have welcomed 32,000 refugees.

Recently, the minister was at an event in London to announce that Canada will be accepting an additional 2,000 Karen refugees. This is further to the 800 we announced last summer.

It is no secret that Canada is a world leader when it comes to providing refuge and protection to those in need. Just a few months ago, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees praised our current refugee determination system as being one of the fairest and most generous in the world.

In addition, the Canadian Council for Refugees has noted the high quality of the decision making process of the Immigration and Refugee Board. The reason for the high praise from the Canadian Council for Refugees and UNHCR is because Canada provides protection to those who need it.

Canada has been welcoming tens of thousands of refugees each year. The Government of Canada has ensured that the first level decision makers and the decisions they make are fair, compassionate and competent. As well, if the fair minded, first level decision

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makers determine that a claimant is not a refugee, the current system offers several avenues both to revisit the decision and to apply to stay in Canada.

The proposed legislation, Bill C-280, revisits Parliament's decision in 2001 to delegate to cabinet the timing for implementing a refugee appeal division. To reiterate, RAD would be a paper based review of the refugee determination record. It may confirm the initial decision, set it aside, or refer the case back to the refugee protection division of the Immigration and Refugee Board.

It will not streamline existing processes in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act since it would be a de facto right of appeal. Failed claimants would still be able to apply for judicial review at the federal court.

The implementation of the RAD would be cumbersome and a very delicate task that would involve \$2 million in startup costs alone, in addition to systems costs.

Despite the fact that this Conservative government has just added \$307 million in new funding for settlement services, it will be the provincial and territorial governments which will bear much of the responsibility for the welfare of refugee claimants while they await the determination of their claim and the hearing of their appeals.

Of the estimated annual \$32 million that it will cost to implement, approximately \$12.1 million will be the cost to the federal treasury. The provinces would be expected to carry approximately \$21 million annually to fund social services and legal aid for another level of legal process.

Ordinarily, the federal government would engage in consultations with the provinces and territories before it acts to impact their treasuries to the tune of \$20 million-plus. Imagine the howls of protest from the opposition, especially the Bloc, if the situation were different and the government implemented these sections unilaterally without talking to Quebec or the other provinces first. It is not surprising that the Bloc and the NDP, two parties not used to making decisions in government, are errant in this responsibility.

It should also be noted that in order to implement the RAD, the IRB itself has said that the skill set of members of the RAD would need to be different from other IRB members. The IRB stated that the selection would have to reflect the tasks of an appellate decision-maker, require a stronger legal and analytical capacity, and some prior adjudicative experience. The IRB further stated that the only workable way to implement this would be to have a date of implementation 10 months to one year after royal assent, so that there would be a full complement of members, training and a case tracking system.

Private Members' Business

•(1335)

Many reasons were taken into consideration when Parliament decided to delegate the decision to implement RAD to cabinet. Rather than calling for its immediate implementation, these considerations included: the existing backlog at the Refugee and Immigration Board; the practical and administrative matters involved in setting up a new tribunal such as the appeal division, opening its offices, hiring staff, finding qualified decision makers and developing procedural rules; the need to provide the appeal division with appropriate budgetary allocations; and the opportunity to assess the success of the system that was created by the IRPA and all the measures and protections it provides without a refugee appeal division.

For instance, if an individual's claim for refugee status is denied by the Immigration and Refugee Board, he or she has the right to apply for a leave or a type of permission to request a judicial review from the Federal Court. When leave is granted, the court will proceed with the judicial review.

Historically speaking, 76% of negative cases from the IRB apply for leave and only 15% get the authorization to proceed by the Federal Court of Canada. This speaks to the high quality of the first level decisions at the IRB.

It is important to note that in fact the Federal Court considers both errors in law and errors in fact when reviewing IRB decisions. Should the Federal Court uphold the IRB decision, claimants can exercise their right to apply for a pre-removal risk assessment. This process addresses situations where there is new evidence or a change in circumstances.

The Government of Canada has an obligation under international law not to expel or return any individuals to a country where they may face a risk of torture or ill-treatment. This obligation is taken very seriously. In fulfilling these obligations, we assess claims made by refugee applicants who would, if removed from Canada, face a substantial risk of torture or ill-treatment. The risk assessment must be completed before the individual may be returned to his or her country.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act provides another avenue, allowing refugee claimants to apply for permanent residence in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. The purpose of humanitarian and compassionate discretion is to allow flexibility to approve deserving cases not anticipated in the legislation.

In 2006, more than 8,900 people were accepted under humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Many of them were failed refugee claimants. This discretionary tool is intended to uphold Canada's humanitarian tradition.

Many claimants are in the system for many months and even years as they exercise their rights to apply for a review. When approved, often newcomers land in Canada two or three years later. Rejected cases are not ready for removal before two to three years.

Ordinarily, claimants remain in Canada while the review is conducted and have access to a range of benefits in all provinces, including education, and medical and hospital services through interim health funding and welfare systems. The requirements and

benefits may vary from one province to another, but they are applied evenly to all residents of that jurisdiction.

While we are all proud of our generous and fair system, we also expect it to work efficiently as well as effectively. In fact, it was the former Liberal critic, the member for Laval—Les Îles, who stated that the current process allows delays by failed claimants ad infinitum and does not want to see RAD implemented without tinkering with other parts of the system.

We must consider whether creating yet more processes will enhance what is already regarded as one of the best and most generous refugee determination systems in the world. Furthermore, we must question whether there is an actual legitimate reason to implement the RAD at this time.

These questions must be asked within the context of the recognition that Canada's current refugee determination system meets all legal requirements, provides adequate protection to all those who need it, and provides a number of opportunities for decisions to be reviewed.

•(1340)

Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will note that the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells is on the citizenship and immigration committee. She and I had the occasion to tour the country in 2005, when we did a cross-Canada tour on citizenship and immigration matters.

I have been on the citizenship and immigration committee since 1998. I have been parliamentary secretary, chair of the committee and vice-chair of the committee. I have always tried very hard to take a non-partisan role because I believe that immigrants and refugees are the lifeblood of this country. The issue should be one where all the parties should work together and we should keep partisanship out of it as much as possible.

I have disagreed with my ministers at various times. In fact, I resigned as parliamentary secretary to the minister of citizenship and immigration in 2000 because I disagreed with her profoundly on the Citizenship Act.

I mentioned that we travelled the country. We travelled the country in 2003 as well. At the time, the member for Calgary—Nose Hill, who was the critic for the Alliance Party, had intimate knowledge of citizenship and immigration matters. When the Liberals lost the last election and the Conservatives formed the government, I hoped, along with the other critics, that she, being the most knowledgeable person on that side of the House on these issues, would be appointed as minister because the department faced many challenges. That did not happen.

We have had two ministers in less than year who have appointed to the position with no previous experience at all in terms of immigration and citizenship matters, which is not doing what is best for the country.

As I mentioned before, I try to take very a non-partisan approach. I very much appreciated the critic for the New Democratic Party and his perseverance on issues of human rights and civil liberties. I will say the same thing for the member from the Bloc who has been the critic on it.

Private Members' Business

Overall, probably the least partisan committee in Parliament was in the last Parliament. We put partisanship aside and worked on numerous reports that we hoped would be implemented. When the new government came in, that did not happen. We instead have too much partisanship in the committee, and I think it is to the detriment of Canadians.

The whole issue of the refugee determination system was set up under the Brian Mulroney Conservatives on the ruling of the Singh decision of the Supreme Court. Initially we used to have two board members who used to hear refugee cases. If one board member concurred with the applicant, just one out of two, then refugee status was granted.

In 2001 new legislation was put in place, the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The two member board became a one member board. What was supposed to happen was the refugee appeal division was to be put in place, but that did not happen. I fought with my government to try to make that happen, which was the position of the opposition parties as well.

We are in the situation now that we have a one member board. If that person makes a mistake, the applicant is really out of luck.

I will use an example of one case that caused me a great deal of problem. It led me into a major confrontation with my minister at the time, to whom I was parliamentary secretary.

This situation involved a young woman who was living in the former state of Yugoslavia, Vojvodina. She had applied for refugee status. She was a reporter. She realized she could no longer read and report on the propaganda and lies of the regime at that time. When she came under threat, she fled for her life and came to Canada. She had the misfortune of going through a refugee hearing that consisted of only one panel member. She did not have very good legal advice and agreed to be heard by a panel of one board member.

• (1345)

What troubles me about the decision he wrote, when he turned her down for refugee status, was he did not believe there was a collusion among the media, the police and the government. That was his decision and his reasoning for turning down her refugee status.

We are talking about the former state of Yugoslavia. Milosevic was taken up before The Hague on war crimes and crimes against humanity. He was running a dictatorship. There was a member on the Refugee Board who did not understand that. He turned down her application and she very easily could have been sent back to her death. In fact, the thing I find very ironic is this. When she was to be sent back in October 1998, she would have arrived in Belgrade in the former Yugoslavia just two hours before NATO was to begin bombing.

Clearly that process did not work well. It shows the shortcomings of the system. The shortcoming was that qualified members were not being appointed. The other shortcoming was that the risk assessment and the humanitarian and compassionate grounds did not work.

I have mentioned that many of the appointments were partisan. That is exactly what they were. I invite members to read the chapter on the former prime minister in *On the Take: Crime, Corruption and Greed in the Mulroney Conservative Years*. That is an important

point of reference for people to read. I think it will show how corrupt the whole system of appointments was. Wives, girlfriends, friends and people, who knew very little about the system, were appointed.

Something else has happened in the last week which has caused me even greater concern. In 2004 the Liberal government did something that was very good. The previous government stopped political appointments to the system, which was a very positive step. It was done under the leadership of Jean-Guy Fleury, the chairman of the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Unfortunately, Mr. Fleury tendered his resignation because he could not agree with the government's new policy where the minister, once again, would be involved in appointing members to the Refugee Board.

The Refugee Board deals with life and death matters, as I outlined before. Many people, who are wrongfully turned away, end up going back to torture or to their death. As members of Parliament, no decision making is more difficult than trying to deal with failed refugee claimants. When they are wrongfully turned down, their hope of finding refuge in our country is greatly diminished.

This is probably the most important assault on the Refugee Board that we have had. To turn back the clock, where once again politicians will be making appointments to the Refugee Board, is totally wrong.

Mr. Fleury is recognized country-wide, by all the groups that deal with refugee matters, for his outstanding leadership. I can only say that the road we are going down is terrible.

We will be having hearings at the citizenship and immigration committee on the issue of political interference in the Refugee Board and what happened to Mr. Fleury. Witnesses will be called before the committee. I can only ask members of Parliament and people watching to focus attention on this issue. If no attention is paid to it, people will be sent to countries where they will be subjected to torture, imprisonment and very well could well lose their lives. Canada is not about that.

As parliamentarians, we have an obligation to make some issues non-partisan, and this is one of them. We have to stand behind RAD, pass it and make our refugee determination system independent of political interference.

• (1350)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments, many of which I would echo, and for his intervention and work over the years.

We need to deal with this issue straight up. Canada has a record of being a beacon for those whose rights are oppressed and for those who are living under dictatorships. Those people see Canada as a place of freedom and a place where they will be treated fairly.

We need to have a process in place to ensure that the rights of those who come to our shores, those who have been oppressed and are seeking refuge, will be honoured. It is important to have a process that determines one's status based on merit and on arguments that are put forward in a reasonable fashion.

Private Members' Business

We know the games that have been played over the years with the appointments process. We know that people who were not qualified were appointed to determine whether someone stayed or was sent back to a place where the person's life or the lives of the person's family would be put in danger. The fact is that we were not able to put in a process that made sense. However, in the bill before us today, we now have a reasonable and sensible method of doing that.

Our appointments process is important because it is integral to this issue. The NDP had put forward the suggestion of a public appointments commission that would ensure all appointments were merit based and that they had oversight, not just of the government but of independent officers to ensure that what should be done was being done. My colleague from Winnipeg Centre fought tirelessly for that amendment to be put in the Federal Accountability Act. He wanted to ensure that we did not go back to the old partisanship of pork barrel politics, or rum bottle politics, as my friend says, but that we go forward and make appointments based on merit. We must remember that these appointments determine whether refugees are allowed to stay in this country and, if not, whether they will survive if they are sent back to a country where they may live in tyranny or worse, be killed.

What we were trying to do was to deal with the taint in our political culture and history of appointing people based on who they knew and what party card they had and not based on the merit and skills of the person being appointed.

When we deal with this issue, it is extremely important to acknowledge that this commission must be put in place. If we try to deal with this one off, try to deal with one appointment at a time, and say that this person is nice and this person is credible, it will not deal with the problem. We have a structural deficiency in our body politic. We are still waiting for the government to set up the public appointments commission. As I mentioned in the House earlier today, it has not acted on it and in fact has put in place a parallel process.

My colleague from Burnaby—Douglas has worked on this issue to deal with refugee protection and ensure we have what is known as RAD. We must not play with people's lives. We must ensure there is a fair and just process. What he has done consistently in committee is to push the government, be it the former government or the present government, and tell it that this is not something that we should be playing around with, that this is something we should enact immediately.

The member has consistently pointed out that this is not a cost issue, that it will not cost a lot of money. We have qualified people to do this. In fact, once we put out a fair call for people to apply for these positions, as we asked for in the public appointments process, I know many people will be able to serve because they are qualified for the job and they want to work on this important issue. In fact, I know people from coast to coast to coast who are qualified for this.

● (1355)

What the NDP has consistently called for is the implementation of RAD. It is not a theory. It is not something that needs to be studied. It is not something that we have to lecture other jurisdictions on. It is something that we have the know-how to do at present. We should do it immediately.

As I mentioned, it is not costly. In fact, we will save money. We know that every time people have to seek sanctuary or call for others to help them on their behalf, it becomes a very costly process. To think smartly on this issue, to make sure we have a process that is going to serve the justice that we all want, and to make sure we have a system that is fair, we should implement the RAD process.

I know that the previous government was not able to do that. Sadly, we saw the opportunity to put it in place missed time and time again. All of us in opposition, when the former government was dragging its feet on this issue, were unanimous in calling on the then Liberal government to get going on this. We know there was dissension in the ranks, and that some people, as was mentioned by the previous speaker, actually resigned their positions because the government was not taking action.

It was the present government when it was in opposition that joined the chorus of those who asked the government to get on with the job and get moving because it was not right to leave people behind. It was not right to not allow them to be heard and to force them into sanctuary. We will recall that there was even a discussion on whether sanctuary would be legal in this country under the former government. Can we imagine that?

Seeking sanctuary is a desperate measure, to be sure, but it is something that goes back to the middle ages. When people did not have the opportunity to seek safety with the justice system of the regime at the time, they at least had the ability to go into a safe, secure place in sanctuary, usually in churches and places of faith.

The government actually challenged that notion, but thankfully that was put aside. It was the present government that joined the chorus of those who were critical. What we are asking of the government now is that it simply do what it said it would do in opposition and put in a process that is fair, just and right.

I hope we see some movement on this. I hope the government decides to learn from experience, to go back and do the things it said it would do in opposition, and to look at the fact that RAD is a smart thing to do. It is cost efficient and the right thing to do. It is the Canadian thing to do.

If we do not do use this as a tool to deal with the refugee situation, what we are saying is that these people do not matter. We will not be surprised when we hear of more persons having to go into sanctuary. Probably in the next week we will see more people having to go into sanctuary, be it here in Ottawa, where we have seen cases, or across the country.

Then what will the government say when people are in sanctuary? It will say that it had no other choice. What will be its answer? Will the government say it is going to study it more or that it does not have the money? We know the answers are there. Studying it was done before. We know what the answer is.

At the end of the day, this should not be about political partisanship. It should not be about one-upmanship. This should be about getting this problem solved and solved immediately, because the problem with the appeals that are required of refugees is something we have to deal with today. I will not be surprised if next week we hear that someone else has sought refuge and sanctuary because we did not have a system to deal with it. That would be a sad thing.

• (1400)

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-280, which seeks to create a refugee appeal division. The Bloc Québécois has asked repeatedly for such a body, and it is far from being the only one to have done so. Others include the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Committee against Torture, the Canadian Council for Refugees, the Canadian Bar Association, Amnesty international, the Civil Liberties Union, and the KAIROS group.

What is a refugee? The definition of a refugee or an asylum seeker has long been established in international conventions. For example, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted by the United Nations in 1951. Under that convention, Canada cannot directly or indirectly return a person to a country where he will be persecuted. Article 1 of the convention defines the term “refugee” as follows:

—owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country;—

Furthermore, article 33 defines the responsibilities of governments with respect to the protection of refugees, and I quote:

No contracting state shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

This definition is limited and applies only to political refugees, and not to those who have suffered a humanitarian crisis such as flooding or famine. Nevertheless, this constitutes a major legal obligation.

A proper appeal process for refugee claimants ought to have been put in place as soon as the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act took effect in June 2002.

This act includes three sections that create a refugee appeal division, to be administered by the Immigration and Refugee Board. Citizenship and Immigration briefly defines the refugee appeal division as follows:

The refugee appeal division will provide failed refugee claimants and the minister with the right to a paper appeal of a decision from the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Establishing the refugee appeal division is a matter of justice. The failure to do so allows a situation that is unfair to asylum seekers to continue. For four years now, the federal government has been stubbornly postponing the establishment of the refugee appeal division, as called for in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Private Members' Business

The federal government claims that a safety net already exists, consisting of the opportunity to request a pre-removal risk assessment, a judicial review by the Federal Court, or permanent resident status on humanitarian grounds. Unlike a refugee appeals division, they do not offer any protection for refugees.

There are four reasons why the refugee appeal division should be established. These four reasons were presented by Mr. François Crépeau who teaches international law at the Université de Montréal. They were also cited in a report by the Canadian Council for Refugees.

The first reason is efficiency. A specialized appeal division for refugee matters can deal much more efficiently with unsuccessful claimants than the Federal Court, an application for pre-removal risk assessment or requests on humanitarian grounds. The refugee appeals division can do a better job of correcting errors of law and fact.

The second reason is consistency of the law. An appeal division deciding on the merits of the case is the only body able to ensure consistency of jurisprudence both in the analysis of facts and in the interpretations of legal concepts in the largest administrative tribunal in Canada.

• (1405)

In other words, an appeal mechanism helps the system to make decisions by establishing precedents that will be applied to lower court rulings when the facts are exactly the same.

The third reason has to do with justice. The decision to refuse refugee status has extremely serious consequences, including death, torture, detention, and so on. As in matters of criminal law, the right to appeal to a higher tribunal is essential for the proper administration of justice. Because human errors occur in any decision-making process, it should be normal to have an appeal process to offset the fact that decisions are made by a single person.

The fourth reason is political. By not establishing the refugee appeal division, the federal government is going against the will of Parliament and the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, which have called for such an appeal division.

We must never forget that when a person applies for refugee status, they are in a state of vulnerability and helplessness. They have left a situation where their life was in danger because of persecution. They arrive in a country where, in many cases, they do not understand the language, neither French nor English, and they are in a precarious economic situation, sometimes with only the shirt on their back.

Canada has a moral duty to make sure these people are treated with the utmost compassion.

Even though the refugee appeal division is included in the legislation, neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives have wanted to implement it.

Yet in April 2005, the Conservative Party released a report entitled “National Consultations on Canada’s Immigration System”, containing the following recommendation:

Private Members' Business

The appeal process must be reviewed. There is no real appeal process. The refugee appeal division has to be set up. Decisions have to be made by more than one person.

The Conservatives were in favour of a refugee appeal division when they were in opposition. Now, they must keep their promise.

The refugee appeal division has no equivalent. A pre-removal risk assessment does not provide for a substantive review of the application. The Federal Court can conduct reviews of technical legal issues only; it cannot review the facts of a case.

Applying for permanent resident status on humanitarian grounds can be extremely complicated for someone from another country who has no representation in Canada, and it is therefore difficult to claim that this is a substitute for the refugee appeal division.

For all these reasons, and many more besides, Bill C-280 on implementing a refugee appeal division must be adopted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate.

I am now giving the floor to the hon. member for Laval. I would also inform the House that following her intervention, we will end the debate because this is her right of reply.

• (1410)

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as I close out the debate, I will not talk about Bill C-280. Nor will I talk about the hundreds and thousands of refugees who, in the absence of a refugee appeal division, will be denied full Canadian citizenship and will be sent back where they came from.

I will not talk about them because today, after listening to the debate all day, I realized that this government is so mean-spirited that it is using all kinds of people to deny other people their rights. It is using women to deny women their rights; farmers to deny farmers their rights; people born elsewhere to deny the rights of refugees; and francophones to deny the rights of francophones.

It has been going on about the previous government ad nauseam, saying it was they who did nothing. Now this government has been in power for over a year. It made its promises over a year ago. When the Conservatives were in opposition, they said that there would be a refugee appeal division, but now they want nothing to do with it.

This is not right. The Conservative members from Quebec, who spend their time denying people their rights and denigrating other members from Quebec, have done nothing as part of the government. They have done nothing for their ridings, nothing for their citizens, nothing for Quebec and nothing for Quebeckers.

Next week, when we vote on this, will they decide to do nothing for refugees? I hope that all Canadians and all Quebeckers with immigrant ancestors will remember this.

We have been asking for this appeal division for years. The UN has even said a number of times that it is incredible that it still has not been implemented.

This is not just a whim or a passing fancy the Bloc Québécois came up with for political gain; we are talking about lives, people, women and children who are living in churches today, who do not

even have the opportunity to go out in the storm because they cannot even leave their home in a church, where they have been shut in for more than a year in some cases.

This is not right. I wonder what the government is doing. We are still waiting for rights to be reinstated and for fairness and justice to be restored. We are not talking about billions of dollars, we are not even talking about hundreds of millions of dollars.

The hon. member from the government side spoke earlier. The government interferes in every provincial jurisdiction when it suits its own interests. However, when it does not suit the government, it talks about the millions of dollars. But it wants to invest those millions of dollars in fighting cancer or Alzheimer's, wherever its own interests are served.

It is a matter of political will to restore fairness and justice for people who have the right to be heard, listened to and validated in their quest for freedom.

[*English*]

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 the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, March 21, 2007, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[*English*]

It being 2:15 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, March 19, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:15 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

MR. JAMES MOORE

MR. JOE PRESTON

HON. KAREN REDMAN

HON. LUCIENNE ROBILLARD

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
ShIPLEY, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Simard, Hon. Raymond	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Skelton, Hon. Carol, Minister of National Revenue	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	BQ
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	BQ
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin—KapusKasing	Ontario	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	Lib.
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	BQ
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Ontario	Lib.
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC

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

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

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

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche.....	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Hubbard, Hon. Charles.....	Miramichi.....	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic.....	Beauséjour.....	Lib.
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Fundy Royal	CPC
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest.....	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	Lib.
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Byrne, Hon. Gerry.....	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East.....	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.....	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	CPC
Manning, Fabian.....	Avalon	CPC
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott.....	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor.....	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis.....	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Hon. Scott.....	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark.....	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald.....	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Central Nova	CPC
McDonough, Alexa.....	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West.....	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore.....	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert.....	West Nova	Lib.
NUNAVUT (1)		
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut.....	Lib.
ONTARIO (106)		
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alghabra, Omar.....	Mississauga—Erindale.....	Lib.
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook.....	CPC

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

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform.....	York—Simcoe.....	CPC
Volpe, Hon. Joseph.....	Eglinton—Lawrence.....	Lib.
Wallace, Mike.....	Burlington.....	CPC
Wappel, Tom.....	Scarborough Southwest.....	Lib.
Watson, Jeff.....	Essex.....	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon.....	Richmond Hill.....	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys.....	Etobicoke Centre.....	Lib.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Easter, Hon. Wayne.....	Malpeque.....	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence.....	Cardigan.....	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe.....	Egmont.....	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn.....	Charlottetown.....	Lib.

QUÉBEC (73)

André, Guy.....	Berthier—Maskinongé.....	BQ
Arthur, André.....	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.....	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard.....	Manicouagan.....	BQ
Bachand, Claude.....	Saint-Jean.....	BQ
Barbot, Vivian.....	Papineau.....	BQ
Bellavance, André.....	Richmond—Arthabaska.....	BQ
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Industry.....	Beauce.....	CPC
Bigras, Bernard.....	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.....	BQ
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec.....	Jonquière—Alma.....	CPC
Blais, Raynald.....	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.....	BQ
Blaney, Steven.....	Lévis—Bellechasse.....	CPC
Bonsant, France.....	Compton—Stanstead.....	BQ
Bouchard, Robert.....	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.....	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages.....	Beauport—Limoilou.....	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane.....	Terrebonne—Blainville.....	BQ
Brunelle, Paule.....	Trois-Rivières.....	BQ
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities....	Pontiac.....	CPC
Cardin, Serge.....	Sherbrooke.....	BQ
Carrier, Robert.....	Alfred-Pellan.....	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis.....	Bourassa.....	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin.....	Mount Royal.....	Lib.
Crête, Paul.....	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska— Rivière-du-Loup.....	BQ
DeBellefeuille, Claude.....	Beauharnois—Salaberry.....	BQ
Demers, Nicole.....	Laval.....	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne.....	Laurentides—Labelle.....	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition.....	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.....	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles.....	Laurier—Sainte-Marie.....	BQ
Faille, Meili.....	Vaudreuil—Soulanges.....	BQ
Folco, Raymonde.....	Laval—Les Îles.....	Lib.
Freeman, Carole.....	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant.....	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane.....	Québec.....	BQ

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Batters, Dave.....	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Lib.
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Merasty, Gary	Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River	Lib.
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism).....	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Skelton, Hon. Carol, Minister of National Revenue	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of March 2, 2007 — 1st Session, 39th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:	Colin Mayes	Vice-Chairs:	Jean Crowder Nancy Karetak-Lindell	
Harold Albrecht	Rod Bruinooge	Yvon Lévesque	Todd Russell	(12)
Larry Bagnell	Marc Lemay	Anita Neville	Brian Storseth	
Steven Blaney				

Associate Members

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Diane Ablonczy	Norman Doyle	Ed Komarnicki	Scott Reid
Mike Allen	Rick Dykstra	Daryl Kramp	Lee Richardson
Dean Allison	Ken Epp	Mike Lake	Gerry Ritz
Rob Anders	Ed Fast	Guy Lauzon	Gary Schellenberger
David Anderson	Brian Fitzpatrick	Pierre Lemieux	Bev Shipley
Charlie Angus	Steven Fletcher	Tom Lukiwski	Joy Smith
Gérard Asselin	Cheryl Gallant	James Lunney	Kevin Sorenson
Dave Batters	Yvon Godin	Dave MacKenzie	Lloyd St. Amand
Leon Benoit	Peter Goldring	Fabian Manning	Brent St. Denis
Dennis Bevington	Gary Goodyear	Pat Martin	Bruce Stanton
James Bezan	Jacques Gourde	Tony Martin	David Sweet
Sylvie Boucher	Nina Grewal	Irene Mathysen	Myron Thompson
Garry Breitkreuz	Helena Guergis	Ted Menzies	David Tilson
Gord Brown	Art Hanger	Rob Merrifield	Bradley Trost
Patrick Brown	Richard Harris	Larry Miller	Garth Turner
Paule Brunelle	Luc Harvey	Bob Mills	Merv Tweed
Blaine Calkins	Laurie Hawn	James Moore	Roger Valley
Ron Cannan	Russ Hiebert	Rob Moore	Dave Van Kesteren
Colin Carrie	Jay Hill	Rick Norlock	Peter Van Loan
Bill Casey	Betty Hinton	Deepak Obhrai	Mike Wallace
Rick Casson	Rahim Jaffer	Brian Pallister	Mark Warawa
Nathan Cullen	Brian Jean	Christian Paradis	Chris Warkentin
John Cummins	Randy Kamp	Daniel Petit	Jeff Watson
Patricia Davidson	Gerald Keddy	Pierre Poilievre	John Williams
Dean Del Mastro	Tina Keeper	Joe Preston	Lynne Yelich

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

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Glen PearsonJim Peterson
Scott ReidBruce Stanton
Dave Van KesterenRobert Vincent
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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair: James Bezan

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

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Hedy Fry
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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

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Vice-Chairs:

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 Barry Devolin
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 Rahim Jaffer

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 Ed Komarnicki

 Bill Siksay
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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Bob Mills

Vice-Chairs:Bernard Bigras
Geoff ReganMike Allen
Nathan Cullen
Luc HarveyMarcel Lussier
David McGuintyAnthony Rota
Francis ScarpaleggiaMaurice Vellacott
Mark Warawa

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