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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, March 28, 2007

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 28, 2007

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another promise made, another promise kept.

Now, for the first time in decades, farmers in my riding of Red Deer will get to enjoy the advantages farmers in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes have always had: the right to choice in marketing their own barley.

Backed by a resolution made to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce by the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce, a whopping 79% of farmers in Alberta decided they, not the Canadian Wheat Board, would be better at marketing their own barley.

Farmers in my riding have, in past years, been thrown in jail by Liberal governments simply because they wanted to sell their own grain. Today these enterprising farmers will never again have to live under that Draconian threat. Today the farmers jailed for selling their grain have been vindicated.

I congratulate our hard-working prairie farmers for making a wise and brave choice.

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THE BUDGET

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the budget tabled last week by the Conservative government is a devastating blow to those Canadian attending university and those families with children planning on attending university. The budget

will be especially harmful to undergraduate institutions and students attending those institutions.

In December 2006, the Prime Minister cut \$2.9 billion to grants and scholarships for post-secondary students, as well as improvements to student financial assistance and billions more from workplace skills development programs and youth employment programs.

Budget 2007 does nothing to fill the gap left by these cuts. What little funding for graduate student research it did include will leave undergraduate students totally out in the cold. As my friend from Labrador says, a big fat goose egg.

Investment in post-secondary education is one of the best investments a society can make for its future. It is a democratic right. It is an equalizer in society.

Last week the government condemned thousands of undergraduate students to unmanageable debt loads. It has shown complete contempt for our country's post-secondary students.

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[Translation]

LAC POUCE CENTRE

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Domaine de l'Amitié, known as the Centre du Lac Pouce, in Laterrière, provides services to young people aged 5 to 17. This centre offers vacation camps, either during the day, on weekends or during holidays, and integration camps for young people with autism.

After a fire tore through the main cabin in 2001, the directors did not give up. There are now 25,000 people attending the centre every year. Their determination was rewarded when they received the Prix d'excellence "Développement 2006" from the Association des camps du Québec. The centre just received the highest rating in the vacation camp category, and a four-star rating from Tourisme Québec.

Congratulations to all the directors of Domaine de l'Amitié for their hard work. They have my full support as they continue to work with the volunteers and fight to keep their funding from the Canada summer jobs program.

Statements by Members

[English]

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the Conservative government, British Columbia does not matter.

British Columbia has been experiencing the loss of good jobs in softwood lumber because of the appalling sellout and, now recently, in the aviation industry with the layoff of over 700 highly qualified personnel in Vancouver.

The Conservative government refuses to take any action to keep quality Canadian jobs in Canada, including in B.C. It refuses to provide even a penny for the World Police and Fire Games held in B.C.

B.C. is not even included in the government's definition of Canada. The Minister of Finance, during his budget speech, defined Canada as ending at the Rockies.

Yes, there is life west of Banff, with the exception of the B.C. Conservative caucus, and there are pressing needs to address the hemorrhaging of good quality jobs, the pine beetle devastation, the crisis in affordable housing, west coast fisheries, leaky condos and the highest child poverty rates in Canada.

The government has taken British Columbia for granted and British Columbians will remember.

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 8 of this year, I will be calling on all Renfrew county fiddlers to get out their fiddles and strike up the tune of happy birthday for legendary Renfrew county fiddler, Joe Quilty of Calabogie, who will be 90 years young.

It was only fitting that 150 family and friends packed Pembroke's Shooter's Bar & Grill to pay tribute to Joe by raising nearly \$1,000 to go to Calabogie Home Support, an organization that offers services in the Calabogie area, which Joe and his wife Madge helped start.

Born in Admaston township, Joe moved around before the lure of the Ottawa valley called him home. Once back in the Ottawa valley, Joe, along with Tom Sharbot, who is affectionately known as the Fiddling Mohawk, and Ed Mayhew, helped found the Renfrew County Fiddlers Association.

In tribute to his long association with the fiddle, Joe was presented with the following certificate, "We honour Joseph Quilty who will be ninety in the spring. He has fiddled with the best of them and still can make it ring".

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[Translation]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to support the members of the environmental committee at Félix Leclerc secondary school in my riding. This

group of students believes that the Government of Canada should support and honour the Kyoto protocol.

To show their support for Kyoto, the members of the committee—Saranya Danasekaran, Dominique Brown, Stéphanie Trottier, Miguel Degiovanni, Véronique Bader and their teacher, Louise Major—sent me a petition signed by 350 students, teachers and administrative personnel at Félix Leclerc.

Like most members of the House, I support this call to action. I therefore urge the government to pay attention to what young Canadians are telling it and to show some international leadership on this critical matter.

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● (1410)

HEC MONTRÉAL

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to sincerely congratulate and pay tribute to HEC Montréal, Canada's first university-level business school, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The school has trained generations of entrepreneurs and managers who have been recognized for their talent and dedication, not only in Quebec and Canada, but around the world.

Around here, it is not often that a teaching institution celebrates 100 years in the business. We must therefore take advantage of this opportunity to highlight the pioneering spirit of this school, which continues to be an institution dedicated to innovation, a characteristic it is emphasizing with its 100th anniversary theme: Always at the forefront.

As Quebeckers and Canadians, we can be proud of the accomplishments of this great business school, which has strong roots in the community and is open to the world. That is why our new government, especially the Conservative members from Quebec, would like to sincerely congratulate HEC Montréal and its representatives here in the House today on a century of excellence and innovation.

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RURAL PRODUCTS

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, March being nutrition month, let us extend a special congratulations to all the workers in the agri-food industry. In Quebec, efforts have been ongoing for years to promote rural products.

Each region offers consumers a wide variety of healthy and delicious products that did not need to be shipped from afar. Take for example blueberries from the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, cranberries from the Bois-Francs region, lamb from the Charlevoix region, honey from the Gaspé, herring from the Magdalen Islands, the *Ancêtre* raw milk cheese from Nicolet-Bécancour.

To all of you who are involved in locally producing safe food, allowing us to enjoy a diversified, eco-friendly and ethical diet, the Bloc Québécois says hats off. To the entrepreneurs, workers, nutritionists and dietitians who foster better health through quality eating habits, we extend our congratulations for all your efforts.

Statements by Members

[English]

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last evening I wound up debate on my motion on improving transportation to and from the island of Newfoundland.

In my motion, I call for an improved Maritime Atlantic gulf ferry service. I also call for a fixed tunnel link between the Island of Newfoundland and mainland Canada in southern Labrador.

Key to the fixed tunnel link is the completion of Highway 138 on Quebec's north shore which would allow people on the island to drive to southern Labrador, down Quebec's north shore, on to Quebec City and central Canada.

For the first time since the Quebec-Labrador border was established in 1927, the mayors on both sides of the border have come together in support of this project.

The railway was a national dream that opened up the Canadian west. The tunnel and Highway 138 is another national dream that would open up the Canadian northeast.

I call upon the House to make this dream a reality.

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[Translation]

CLAIR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 25, I had the honour of attending the annual general meeting of the Clair chamber of commerce in my riding of Madawaska—Restigouche. At this event, I underscored the importance of the small and medium businesses in the region that have developed and have considerably diversified our local economy.

Today I want to acknowledge in this House four local businesses that are celebrating their 25th, 30th and 40th anniversaries this year.

I want to congratulate Homéride and Nicole Michaud, owners of Méric Garage, which has been open for 25 years; Guilles and Sandra Corriveau, owners of Industries Corriveau, open for 25 years; Robert and Madonna Michaud and their son Marco, owners of Mich Meat Market, open for 30 years; Nelson and Marie-Paule Soucy, owners of Nelson Soucy Transport—Soucy Brothers Ltd., which has been open for 40 years.

All of these people have put their energy into ensuring the vitality of our region by starting businesses in order to contribute to the success of our region.

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[English]

CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canada Council for the Arts, Canada's national arts funding agency.

The Canada Council has given Canadians access to their own stories through the imagination and creativity of artisan creators across the country.

Canada's new government recognizes the vital role that arts play in enriching the lives of Canadians and their communities. That is why in our very first budget the government was proud to include \$50 million in additional funding over two years for the Canada Council for the Arts. We believe in the contribution that our artists and creators make to our country and want to ensure that adequate support for the arts is realized through both private and public collaboration.

The Canada Council has been a real success story, one that Canada's new government will continue to champion and support.

I ask all members to please join me in congratulating the Canada Council for the Arts on reaching this important milestone.

* * *

● (1415)

CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canada Council for the Arts. We applaud the contributions of men and women across Canada who help us express the deep, rich, diverse character and soul of our nation. In a thousand forms, their works inspire a vision for our country, inspired by hope and imagination, not by today's politics of fear.

We salute the 50 artists gathered on Parliament Hill, symbolizing 50 years of Canada Council achievements.

Every Wednesday, our New Democrat caucus, 41% of us women, shines the spotlight specifically on women. Today, we delight in celebrating the special contributions of women artists, such as: our beloved Wendy Lill, playwright and parliamentary champion of arts and culture; Marie Chouinard, dancer and choreographer extraordinaire; Sarah Diamond, videographer and president of the Ontario College of Art and Design; Inuit musician Lucie Idluit; visual artist Wanda Koop; and Judith Marcuse, artist driven by her passion for social change.

We welcome these representatives to Parliament and, through them, express our deep admiration for all Canadian artists.

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ZIMBABWE

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Zimbabwe is poised to descend into a new hell. Once the breadbasket of Africa, it is now its basket case. Its despotic President Robert Mugabe's thugs just beat and tortured the head of the Movement for Democratic Change, Morgan Tsvangirai, and tortured his twinned MP Job Sikhala.

With the world looking the other way, Zimbabwe's now on the precipice of a bloodbath for Mugabe just imported 2,500 members of an Angolan paramilitary death squad. He is going to unleash this force against his own people, much as he did when he ordered the slaughter of 18,000 civilians in Matabeleland in 1983.

Oral Questions

To prevent this massacre from occurring, I call on our government to expel the Zimbabwean High Commissioner to Canada. I call on the African Union, especially South Africa, to strongly sanction Mr. Mugabe and his cronies and increase aid to Zimbabwean NGOs and human rights groups.

There is little time left. We must exercise our responsibility to protect and prevent a bloodbath from occurring in Zimbabwe.

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[*Translation*]

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since 2001, the state of human rights in the Philippines has seriously deteriorated. Amnesty International's Melo report, dated August 15, 2006, and the preliminary conclusions of the UN special rapporteur on the extrajudicial executions unanimously denounced the systematic political assassinations taking place in the Philippines, and emphasized that Gloria Arroyo's government failed to conduct effective, impartial investigations and to punish the perpetrators of those political assassinations. The majority of the victims have been journalists, lawyers, union leaders, peasants, aboriginals, and human and religious rights activists.

The Government of Canada, which gives aid to the Philippines, should be pressuring Ms. Arroyo's government to take the necessary steps to remedy the situation, to stop the political assassinations and the impunity, so that democratic elections worthy of the name can be held in May 2007.

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RAYMOND BRUNET

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Construction Association has elected Raymond Brunet as chair of its board of directors for 2007-08. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Brunet and wish him tremendous success in his new role.

Raymond Brunet is an active member of the Outaouais community. He is president of Ed. Brunet & Associates Inc., a large institutional and commercial construction company that has been at work in the Outaouais for over a century.

In addition to working with the Canadian Construction Association, Mr. Brunet has chaired the Gatineau United Way campaign, served on the board of directors of the City of Gatineau economic development corporation, and now sits on the board of the Ottawa airport. He was also named personality of the year for 1999 by the Gatineau chamber of commerce.

I invite my colleagues to join me in commending this active citizen and dynamic entrepreneur.

* * *

● (1420)

[*English*]

CHILD CARE

Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC): Mr. Speaker, between 1993 and 2005, the Child Care Advocacy

Association of Canada received a mind-numbing \$2.2 million from the previous Liberal government.

Last week, its executive director, Monica Lysack, appeared before the human resources committee and tried to defend her organization, saying that the Liberals gave her \$600,000 of that windfall to “monitor whether or not government investments in child care are actually being spent on child care”. What a typical Liberal manipulation.

By Ms. Lysack's own admission, her organization has never created one single care space, but the Liberals gave it \$2.2 million and then asked it to track down organizations, like its own, that received taxpayer dollars and did not create child care spaces.

Fortunately for Canadian families, the days of Liberals' big talk and zero action on child care are over. With nearly \$5.6 billion invested in children and early learning for the next year, the new Conservative government is clearly getting the job done for all Canadian families.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wraps himself in the so-called Federal Accountability Act and now his senior confidant, John Reynolds, a lobbyist he named to the Privy Council, is the subject of a police investigation.

Will the Prime Minister do the prudent thing and ask Mr. Reynolds to resign now as Conservative campaign chair and cease any contact with him?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly the definition of scandal has changed. A scandal used to be when someone wanted a patronage appointment and he or she was bought off by the government.

In this case we have an individual whose claim is that he wanted to be bought off and could not find anyone in the government who was willing to buy him off. That is how this government operates.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at least for now it is not the question of what was offered by the government. It is the question of what Mr. Reynolds asked for and to whom he spoke in government.

Will the Prime Minister do the prudent thing and ask Mr. Reynolds to resign as the Conservative campaign chair right now and cease any contact with him?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says that it is not a question of anything the government did, so I will obviously take that one to the bank.

Once again, I note in the newspapers that Mr. Reynolds has denied even knowing the individual in question. In fact, Mr. Reynolds has no authority in any case to make government appointments. They are made by the government, and that is the case.

This government will not buy people off with patronage appointments.

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[Translation]

MINISTER OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Reynolds affair is a very serious issue that is being made light of by the Prime Minister. Even more serious is the situation of the Minister of Public Safety who is responsible for the RCMP.

Will the Prime Minister ask his Minister of Public Safety to step down until the RCMP gets to the bottom of Jim Hart's resignation?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that goes back seven years. These allegations are unfounded. There is a major difference now. The party over there is tainted by scandals and it seriously damaged national unity. We have a government that is free of scandals and we have seen a great improvement in national unity.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has created a culture where puffery and bluster pass for debate, but which conceal ugly realities.

We have a Prime Minister's adviser and Conservative campaign chair under police investigation. We have a Minister of National Defence who has made a habit of misleading the House. We have a Minister of Public Safety who refuses to step aside while the RCMP, the police force he manages, investigates his conduct.

When will the Prime Minister face reality, do the right thing and bring this ugly behaviour to an end?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has brought in the most sweeping anti-corruption reforms in the history of the country. So clean is this government that the opposition has to reach back for stories that are seven years old, for scandals that never took place. None of this is going to be able to cloud the sorry record of that government.

We see that Canadians are responding to the new clean government we are running on this side.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was a tired tale if I have ever heard it.

[Translation]

Canadians must have confidence in our public institutions. The RCMP must appear to be free to investigate any wrongdoing without fearing any consequences.

Oral Questions

Why is the Minister of Public Safety putting his own reputation ahead of that of the RCMP? When will he step down?

[English]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, there is nothing to that story. It is seven years old.

Far be it for me to quote the polls, but it appears the only institution Canadians are losing confidence in is the Liberal Party of Canada.

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[Translation]

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in February alone, the manufacturing industry lost 33,000 jobs in Quebec.

Yesterday, the Gildan company closed its two plants in Montreal, causing the loss of 450 jobs. The accelerated write-off for the manufacturing sector announced in the latest budget is clearly insufficient to deal with the scale of the crisis.

Does the Prime Minister realize that the manufacturing industry needs an overall recovery plan and while the measure announced in the latest budget is a good measure it is far from enough?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the loss of jobs is always a sad story. However, our economy is continuing to create many new jobs. In the budget, there is new investment and there are new measures to reduce the cost of capital investments for the manufacturing sector. A great many other measures will help workers and this sector.

Once again, I thank the Bloc Québécois for having supported this budget.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the future of the textile and clothing industry lies in the development of new, specialized niche markets that will enable the industry to compete with emerging economies such as China's.

It is the government's duty to help the industry instead of cutting support programs for the industry, as it did last fall.

Why doesn't the Prime Minister put in place a real plan to support modernization of the clothing and textile industry, to support research and development as the Bloc Québécois has suggested? We would certainly support such a plan.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, who, along with my colleagues from the government party, voted unanimously in the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, to propose a solution to the government to help the manufacturing industry.

The solution that we have put forward will enable Canadian and Quebec companies to write off their investments in machinery over a period of two years. My colleague in the Bloc Québécois supported the budget. I thank him for that. What is also important is that we have received many messages of congratulations from the manufacturing sector for this budget measure.

Oral Questions

Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government acted on one of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Industry, Sciences and Technology, namely the one dealing with accelerated capital cost allowances. However, that is not enough. There is a lot more to do.

Will the Minister of Industry agree that the measures included in the budget are incomplete and that other solutions are necessary, such as improving the tax credit for research, introducing a tax credit for training, and implementing well targeted assistance plans to accelerate the modernization process of industries that are experiencing difficulties, so as to preserve jobs here at home?

• (1430)

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of our latest budget, because we have included measures that reflect what Canada's manufacturing sector and entrepreneurs have asked us to do.

I would like to quote Jean-Michel Laurin, the vice-president of the Quebec manufacturers and exporters association. In reference to our budget, which helps the manufacturing and textile industries, he said that the government had heeded the call of the manufacturing sector. He added that, "targeting investments is precisely what needs to be done".

And this is what we have done.

Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is telling us that we should be content with the measures provided in the budget, when plants and employment in the manufacturing sector are being bled to death. If the government waits too long, if it loses itself in all sorts of reviews and studies, companies will have disappeared by the time measures are taken.

Is the minister aware of this situation, namely that companies will disappear and that hundreds and thousands of jobs will not come back for workers who are often too old to find another job?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I am aware of is quite simple. The Bloc Québécois has spent 13 years fighting for the manufacturing industry. During those 13 years, the Bloc Québécois has been useless in its efforts to defend the interests of Quebec. The Bloc Québécois has shown for 13 years that Quebec's interests are best protected by the Conservative Party and by this government.

I am proud that the Bloc Québécois supports our budget, but at the same time it is showing Quebecers that the interests of Quebec and of the manufacturing sector are best protected by a Conservative government.

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[English]

EQUALIZATION FORMULA

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has shown that he will say just about anything to get elected and turn around and do exactly the opposite once he is elected. One example is the income trust situation. Another example

is the revolving door of lobbyists that we continue to see. Now of course it is equalization.

He promised that he would exclude the resource revenues from the formulas and then he did not do it. Now the premier of Newfoundland and Labrador is having to take out advertisements all over the media in order to condemn the broken promise.

My question for the Prime Minister is, why did he break his promises?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have not broken promises on that matter. There is full exclusion in the calculation of natural resources in the new equalization formula. As for the Federal Accountability Act reforms and the tax fairness package that included the changes on income trusts, they were supported by the New Democratic Party.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that he would end this fighting about fairness in the federation, so how is he doing so far?

First of all, there is a premier taking out advertisements all over the place condemning his actions. The people of Nova Scotia are wondering when the ministers that they elected turned out to be Ottawa's spokesmen in Nova Scotia instead of the other way around. In Saskatchewan, people are scratching their heads wondering why they bothered to send 12 Conservatives here in the first place.

I am going to meet with the premier of Saskatchewan to talk about fairness and I am wondering why the Prime Minister is not having these kinds of meetings too. It is because he does not get it. He has not even had a meeting of the first ministers of the federation since he was elected. Why not?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that of course is also not true, but in any case, I note that Premier Danny Williams of Newfoundland is today saying there is a cap on the Atlantic accord. That is not true. Under the budget, Newfoundland and Labrador is getting 100% of what it was promised in the Atlantic accord without a cap.

What we are seeing is confrontation for the sake of confrontation. I agree with opposition leader Reid in Newfoundland and Labrador who says that this kind of confrontation is damaging the business investment climate in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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[Translation]

BUDGET

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative budget did not bring harmony to our country. It has divided instead of uniting. It has divided provinces, regions and even citizens. Take a worker who earns minimum wage and works 40 hours per week, earning \$16,000 per year. According to the budget, this worker is not eligible for the working income tax benefit.

How can the Minister of Finance explain this injustice? Why did he not help the most vulnerable people in our society?

•(1435)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talks about division. I can say that this government has succeeded in uniting the people of Quebec in favour of our budget and against the centralist philosophy of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again he gives us slogans instead of answers.

[English]

The Conservative budget has divided the country. At least five provinces are angry. The finance minister said that this would be the end of discord between the provinces, but he has split them right down the middle, with provinces launching full page ads and court cases as a result of the budget.

How does the finance minister dare say that the bickering between the provincial and federal governments is over? Is he dreaming?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. We have to be able to hear the minister. He has the floor to answer the question that was asked. We will have some order please. The Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Jim Flaherty: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite rises in the House today and complains about fiscal imbalance not becoming fiscal balance. Mr. Speaker, do you know what she said just a few days ago? The member for Westmount—Ville-Marie said, “It’s a budget that will make Quebec federalists happy”.

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EQUALIZATION FORMULA

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an impasse that needs to be resolved now is on equalization.

For 14 months, provinces have operated believing that 100% of non-renewable natural resources with no caps will be out of the equalization formula. Second, they believed that no province would be adversely affected by the Prime Minister’s directive. Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan, however, are being negatively affected by a broken promise to the tune of over \$1 billion.

Will there be full compensation to Newfoundland and Labrador, to Saskatchewan, to Nova Scotia, and to B.C., yes or no?

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the member should realize if he read the budget, which some of his colleagues did not and which the premier did not before he commented, is that Newfoundland was given a third choice, to hold on to the benefits of the Atlantic accord without any cap, the very agreement Premier Williams himself negotiated. Not one jot, not one tittle, not one cent, Newfoundland has not been a loser here. It is the biggest winner because it held on to the Atlantic accord.

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker. What was said was no small print, no excuses, no caps. Why?

Oral Questions

Conservative Party literature in 2004 clearly stated that to put a cap on equalization would keep Newfoundland and Labrador “a have not province forever”.

Why are provinces as expendable as promises?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. We are going to have a little order.

There seems to be some papers that people are waving in the air today for some reason. I do not care what they are. Hon. members know that props are not permitted in the House. This sets a very bad example that can only lead to future trouble. I would urge hon. members to refrain from waving any kind of paper around in the House.

Second, there is excessive noise. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has the floor. I could hardly hear the last question, and I want to hear the answer. The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has the floor. We will have some order.

•(1440)

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thought it was a surrender because those members are so wrong on this.

When the member said a commitment was made that there would be no cut, no cap, that was to the Atlantic accord. He is right. He is dead on. There was no cut to the Atlantic accord. There was no cap on the Atlantic accord. The Atlantic accord was negotiated by Premier Williams.

We will deliver the benefits under the Atlantic accord to the province as was committed with no cap.

* * *

[Translation]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Saint-Hubert Pratt & Whitney plant in Longueuil is another example of how dithering and delay in making decisions is threatening to result in high-quality jobs being lost and moved abroad.

Are the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec aware that they have to act quickly, or many jobs in key aerospace industries are going to be exported somewhere else in the world?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member has asked that question several times now. Over the last few days, I said that we were going to be looking at this matter. We have examined it in a little more detail in recent hours. In fact, what the department is being asked for is \$70 million out of a total budget of \$200 million. Obviously, allocating \$70 million to this project would mean depriving all the other regions of Quebec. I believe that the promoter should instead take a look at the strategic infrastructure program.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to stop the ministers from thinking outside their bureaucratic box and still being responsible.

When we know that they have billions of dollars at their disposal, would it not be a better idea to model their programs and budgets on what the needs are, and not the reverse, as is still the case?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am entirely open to looking at the framework of the new infrastructure programs. We are currently reworking the architecture of those programs so that they will in fact reflect the needs of our regions and communities, and so when we know what the new programs will be, we will be happy to inform our colleagues in the House.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the Bloc Québécois asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women about the changes made to the funding criteria, the minister said, “that the government understands the difference between supporting not only organizations but real women”.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women tell us who these “real women” are that she is referring to?

[*English*]

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the women that I meet in my constituency, the women that are in their families raising children, the single mothers who are struggling every day to offer the best for their children and their futures, the senior women who are struggling to meet their bills, many of them who are alone now, these are the women that have to be supported, that we know have contributed and will contribute and will pass on to the next generation, their children, the best that Canada has to offer.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all women deserve the title “real women”; we are not inferior beings.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Laval.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women is not saying is that there is group called REAL Women of Canada that the minister met with shortly before changing the funding criteria at Status of Women Canada.

Can the minister deny that this ultra-conservative group challenges women's right to abortion and their right to flourish throughout our society and that it wants to limit the role of women to domestic affairs?

• (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes that women are taxpayers, that women are the owners of businesses, that women educate our children, that women are caregivers, that women

participate in their communities. This government also recognizes that there are fine women who serve Canadians by sitting in this House.

Consequently, this is why this government wants to ensure that all women have an equal opportunity to participate in Canada and Canadian life.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I realize it is Wednesday, but the noise in the chamber today seems excessive. It is very difficult for the Chair to hear the questions or the answers. We have to be able to hear in case somebody says something they should not.

The hon. member for Sydney—Victoria now has the floor. We will have a little order, please.

* * *

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the province of Nova Scotia is prepared to sue over the Conservatives' promise-breaking budget and it appears the government does not care. Yesterday in the House the foreign affairs minister in a stunning us versus them betrayal of the people who voted for him said that he would see them in court.

Why are the people of Nova Scotia forced to sue the government in order to get the Prime Minister to keep his promise?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what my colleague from Newfoundland and Labrador—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I have just recognized the Minister of Foreign Affairs. We must have some order so we can hear his answer. The member for Sydney—Victoria is on the edge of his seat waiting to hear the answer. How can he hear with this kind of noise? The Minister of Foreign Affairs has the floor. We will have some order.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat today what I said yesterday. If in fact a court case is launched, of course we will deal with that inevitability, and I also said yesterday that it is not our preference.

What we have done in the budget is present to Nova Scotians a good option, an option which, if it were the subject of a court case, would be a very difficult case to make, a case saying, “Take more money or take even more money”. That would be an interesting case.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, may I remind the minister that Ottawa is not the capital of Nova Scotia? He stands in the House and refers to his own people, the people of Nova Scotia, as “they”, essentially telling Nova Scotians that they can take it or leave it.

The government may well face a lawsuit for not meeting its obligations. Is the minister prepared to continue this game of chicken with the people of his own province?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the capital of Nova Scotia is Halifax, for the hon. member's edification, and I will remind him, as I know he is not the best at arithmetic, that it is more money any way we slice it, any way we add it up: the province of Nova Scotia will receive more federal money, money from the federal government to the province of Nova Scotia.

The hon. member should do the math and figure it out. It is good for Nova Scotia and it is good for everyone in the province, including Cape Breton.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is an inspirational woman. Beyond being the first woman democratically elected president of an African country, she and her administration have taken sweeping steps to rid Liberia of corruption.

Why did the Prime Minister yesterday refuse an official request to meet with the president of Liberia while she is in Ottawa?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows full well, this was a private meeting arranged by the president of Liberia. I met with her in my office for almost an hour. We discussed important issues of development and debt reduction. We had a very informed and very useful discussion on how Canada can continue to help the people of Liberia. We have been there for them in the past. We will be there for them in the future.

This is a very inspiring woman, one in whom the Government of Canada places a great deal of respect and a great deal of hope for the future of the people of Liberia.

•(1450)

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed with that answer. The Prime Minister yesterday had an opportunity to meet with hockey players. That is very nice, but unfortunately the president of Liberia deserves better from the Prime Minister.

As we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, why will the Prime Minister not take time from his schedule today to meet with the president of Liberia? Does he not care?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was not aware until yesterday that the president of Liberia was here. I am certainly prepared to check with my office, and if there is a request for a meeting, I would be delighted to have a meeting.

Oral Questions

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2004, the residents of Kashechewan in northern Ontario have been forced to leave their homes due to flooding. The community has reviewed the options outlined in the Pope report and has come back with its preferred choice.

Can the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tell the House what he plans to do about Kashechewan?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, approximately 10 days ago Chief Solomon of the Kashechewan community advised me that his community's preference was to relocate to a site that has been described as site five. I promised the chief at that time that I would consider his request and would report back to him by the end of this week. I intend to do that once the department has completed its preliminary assessment.

I can advise the House, however, that in the meantime we continue to make sure that the people of Kashechewan have a safe water system. There has been \$2.8 million expended on that and we continue to spend \$13.2 million to ensure that there are housing and mobile home improvements for the people who are currently in Kashechewan.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is the 50th anniversary of the Canada Council, but sadly there was little to celebrate in the government's budget when it comes to the arts.

In Toronto, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Conservatory, the National Ballet School, the Canadian Opera Company and the Gardiner Museum are all looking for funding from the federal government.

Will the heritage minister finally tell Toronto's cultural sector when it can expect the help it has been asking for?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the arts community knows, this government has made a significant commitment to the arts. We contributed \$50 million to the budget of the Canada Council. We have introduced tax incentives.

In fact, a tax incentive last year contributed \$20 million in donations to the arts. We extended that tax measure to private foundations and we know that it also is going to contribute to the arts.

In addition to that, we have contributed \$60 million for local arts and heritage activities.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister should read her own budget.

Our culture is what makes us Canadian, but our culture is at the bottom of the priority list for the government.

Oral Questions

Artists were looking for recognition in this budget, but what did they see? Nothing. Stable funding for the Canadian Television Fund? Nothing. Reversal of the cuts to museums? Nothing.

Investment in the arts has huge economic benefits for Canada's cities, like Toronto. When will the minister finally do her job and invest in the cultural sector?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in asking her question the member did not check her facts. In fact, we did commit \$100 million for two years, which is \$200 million, to the Canadian Television Fund.

I ask the member to ensure that she is accurate because the people who are involved in the arts know that this government supports them and recognizes their contributions to Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to parliamentary inquiries and numerous media reports, safety at our ports and airports is still a major concern. For the second week in a row, a Senate committee has found that Transport Canada is unable to do the bare minimum with respect to this matter, and is thereby endangering public safety.

How, then, can the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities keep saying that everything is fine? Why is he still endangering public safety?

•(1455)

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague should not be getting his information from the Senate committee. Instead, he should be getting information from the source, such as the testimony given by people in my department and by the people who represent air safety administration authorities. These people are in a position to say what a big difference this government has made compared to the last one.

That is why I am not at all ashamed to say that we are doing what needs to be done for our public transportation network.

[English]

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps he might want to take a look at what the facts are. He has been absolutely disinterested in security and safety.

CATSA, for example, has collected \$250 million more than it spends on security and the minister is silent.

On rail safety, he leaves the private sector to resolve the problems.

For two straight weeks the Senate committee has highlighted breaches in safety and security in our ports and still the minister says nothing.

In fact, nothing is what is available in the budget for transportation.

Does the minister have a plan or is he waiting for the Prime Minister to appoint somebody with influence around the cabinet table in his place?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): I can see, Mr. Speaker, that my hon. colleague is going on here and making things up, because as a matter of fact had he looked at what has occurred over the last couple of months, he would see that we have appointed a board. We have appointed a board to make sure that we can look at rail safety in this country. We have done that. We have done that when for five years the Liberals did nothing, zilch, nada. We are getting the job done.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the result of the government's tainted plebiscite on barley is in and, due to the Minister of Agriculture's meddling, the victim in fact is democracy. Never before has Canada seen such a farce, fraud and betrayal of core democratic values, with traceable ballots, no available voters lists and no transparent scrutineers to monitor.

The government is mocking democracy and does not seem to be concerned. When will the government give farmers an honest vote on an honest question?

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Finally, Mr. Speaker, an agriculture critic I respect. What we also respect are the results from the plebiscite.

What a great day for western Canadian farmers. Sixty-two per cent of barley producers said they want freedom of choice to market their own barley. Sixty-two per cent said that. We campaigned on it, we promised, we consulted, and they delivered the votes: 29,000 farmers voted and 62% said choice.

We are going to give them the choice that farmers demanded.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is some spin. The minister knows, if he is being honest, that the proposal he put forward today, based on his false choice and fraudulent vote, is the open market for barley, nothing more, nothing less: the open market.

In fact, let us examine the numbers: 86.2% want the Wheat Board and only 13.8% want the open market. That open market is what the minister is trying to drive down their throats. Why will the minister not accept defeat and listen when farmers have clearly told him they do not want the open market?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think we are making progress. I think I heard the member accepting that the plebiscite was good. That is a move forward.

When we look at the numbers, we see that 62% of people who voted, the barley producers themselves, say they want marketing choice. We are going to move forward with regulatory change. We are going to move forward on marketing choice. As for the member for Malpeque, it is time to act like a man: listen to the farmers.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

PALESTINE

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the signing of the Mecca agreement, which allowed for the creation of a Palestinian government made up Hamas, Fatah and other groups, there is renewed hope for resuming negotiations with Israel. Many countries, the European Union and even the American consulate in Jerusalem have met with non-Hamas ministers of the Palestinian government. However, the Minister of Information, Mustafa Barghouti, a non-Hamas member of the Palestinian authority, is in Ottawa today and the Minister of Foreign Affairs refused to meet with him.

By refusing this meeting, is the Minister of Foreign Affairs perhaps not missing an excellent opportunity to contribute to the resolution of this dispute—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while I was speaking with President Abbas about this particular situation I reminded him that we are in fact very closely following developments in the peace process. This is a very sensitive issue, as we all know, and there is much progress that is being made.

I advised the president that we continue to support his efforts to bring peace, in particular to the territories, but until such time as we see progress in the area of the quartet principles, which call for the recognition of Israel, which call for the cessation of violence and which call for the road map to be adhered to, we are not going to deal directly with a terrorist organization, namely, Hamas.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that Minister Barghouti is not a member of Hamas. He is a member of another group.

If Condoleezza Rice was able to meet with Mahmoud Abbas and other non-Hamas members, why is it that Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs cannot meet with them? Is his approach not too dogmatic? If we hope to contribute to the resolution of a dispute between two parties, we must be able to communicate with both parties. I repeat, the minister is not a member of Hamas.

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the righteous indignation. Perhaps she did not hear me. I do speak directly with the president. I speak with Mr. Abbas quite regularly about the situation and his efforts. I commend him. On behalf of the Government of Canada, I have expressed support for the work he is doing.

This is an ongoing process. We hope that we will see the unity government express in a more forthright way its respect of and adherence to the road map, to the principles the quartet has clearly laid out. I know the members opposite do not want to hear the answer, but I will tell them again. We will deal directly with President Abbas. We will continue to support the Palestinian people through aid. We will continue to support the peace process.

* * *

EQUALIZATION FORMULA

Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 4, 2006 the Prime Minister wrote Premier Danny Williams promising to remove non-renewable natural resources revenue from the equalization formula.

The Prime Minister also sent Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a brochure promising 100% of oil and gas revenues. He promised no small print, no excuses, but most importantly, he promised no cap.

Regrettably, budget 2007 tells a very different story. Why did the Prime Minister lie? Why this betrayal?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member is an experienced member. He knows that the use of that kind of language is not proper in questions. I know he will want to withdraw that allegation following question period.

If the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans wishes to answer the question, he may do so.

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member well knows that a commitment was made to the people of Canada and to all the premiers of Canada that this government was satisfied to take out non-renewable resources from the formula.

The premiers said, "No, that is not what we want. We want a different formula". They got one, but Newfoundland and Labrador was protected. We kept the Atlantic accord. There were no cuts: not a cent, not a jot, not a tittle. As was promised, as was negotiated, it is ours to keep.

The Speaker: That will bring to a conclusion our question period for today.

I call now on the hon. member for Random—Burin—St. George's to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that events have transpired the way they have. I have literature here from the Prime Minister. I have letters and brochures that clearly illustrate what he said to Newfoundland and Labrador, and I have read the budget.

If I were to stand here in my place today and tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that the Prime Minister honoured his commitment, I would be lying to them. I am not prepared to do that.

• (1505)

The Speaker: Well, the hon. member is going to have trouble speaking in the House.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of a group of distinguished Canadian artists, poets and writers who are here to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 20

The Speaker: I understand there is unanimous consent to proceed with a ways and means motion now rather than at the end of routine proceedings.

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC) moved that a ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled on March 19, 2007, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[Translation]

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER OF CANADA

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada on the administration of the London North Centre and Repentigny by-elections held on November 27, 2006.

[English]

This document is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Speaker: I also have the honour to lay upon the table the 2006 annual report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(e), this document is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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[English]

NUNAVIK INUIT LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement, signed December 1, 2006.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 16 petitions.

* * *

NUNAVIK INUIT LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT ACT

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-51, An Act to give effect to the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

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

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Russ Hiebert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House a report from the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, concerning the parliamentary visit to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, held in Georgetown, Guyana, from January 7 to 13, 2007.

* * *

• (1510)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources dealing with a question of privilege.

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-419, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (closed captioning).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce this bill that would amend the Canada Elections Act to compel all political parties to include closed captioning in their political ads during a federal election. This would apply to all television ads and political advertising on the Internet.

Hearing impaired Canadians do not have full access to the democratic process in the event of a federal election. That is a shame. We need to change that. In many provinces political parties agree to do closed captioning and in some provinces it is legislated. Federally it is not. It should be to ensure equality for hearing impaired Canadians.

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

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-420, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (special benefits).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a bill to amend the Employment Insurance Act regarding sick benefits to increase them from 15 weeks to 30 weeks.

This issue was brought to my attention by a woman in my community named Natalie Thomas who was recovering from breast cancer surgery and treatment. Although she had not fully recovered from the treatment she had been given, she was forced to return to work because her benefits had ended. This is entirely unacceptable.

People recovering from a serious illness should not have to be so worried about paying their bills that they are forced to return to work before they have fully recovered and are healthy.

Before this Parliament we now have eight private members' bills to extend employment insurance benefits and another 11 that would amend the act. Clearly, there is a problem with employment insurance, something that the government should get busy on and fix. Change is needed. I am pleased to introduce this bill and ask that all members of the House support it.

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

* * *

AN ACT TO AMEND CERTAIN ACTS IN RELATION TO DNA IDENTIFICATION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for two different motions. The first motion is in relation to Bill C-18. I move:

[Translation]

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to DNA identification, be deemed to have been amended at the report stage as proposed in the report stage motion in the name

Routine Proceedings

of the Minister of Justice on today's Notice Paper, be deemed concurred in at report stage and amended and deemed read a third time and passed.

The Speaker: Does the hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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AN ACT TO AMEND THE NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT, THE CRIMINAL CODE, THE SEX OFFENDER INFORMATION REGISTRATION ACT AND THE CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second motion is in relation to Bill S-3. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when the House begins debate on the second reading motion of Bill S-3, An Act to amend the National Defence Act, the Criminal Code, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the Criminal Records Act, a member from each recognized party may speak for not more than 10 minutes, following which the said bill shall be deemed read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at the report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

● (1515)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

SUMMER CAREER PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present another petition on behalf of citizens of Richmond—Arthabaska. This petition concerns the cuts to the summer career placement program.

Routine Proceedings

In my riding, a movement was born out of people mobilizing to protest the Conservative government's cuts to this program which was working well. The name of the program has been changed for "Canada Summer Jobs", but the cuts have remained. The new criteria have also been denounced, because in the future everything will be centralized in Montreal and Ottawa.

I have personally met with groups which are affected by and completely disagree with these decisions. I am presenting on their behalf a petition containing more than 1,000 signatures.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present in this House a petition from several citizens in my riding regarding the elimination of the early learning and child care program by the Conservative government.

This program would have resulted in lower costs for parents, higher wages for day care workers, and better facilities and books for children.

This petition is being presented because \$116 million was proposed for the province of New Brunswick. An agreement was signed in good faith by the former Liberal government and the Province of New Brunswick. We are asking the government to honour this agreement.

[English]

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from many working families concerned about the lack of a national child care program. They are concerned that Canada is dead last of all OECD countries in its investment in early learning and child care. They want all children to have access to child care, as high quality child care is a benefit to all children. It enhances their health and school readiness, reduces family poverty and promotes social inclusion and workforce productivity.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to achieve multi-year funding to ensure that publicly operated child care programs are sustainable for the long term, and to protect child care by enshrining it in legislation with a national child care act to be a cornerstone of Canada, like the Canada Health Act.

AGE OF CONSENT

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present, on behalf of my constituents and others, a petition calling upon the government to protect children from sexual predators and to do that by raising the age of sexual consent from 14 to 16 years of age, something this government has been attempting to do and, of course, the opposition parties have been resisting.

[Translation]

SUMMER CAREER PLACEMENTS PROGRAM

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to table in this House a petition signed by more than 1,000 young people and organizations from all over Quebec. They are calling for the return and enhancement of the summer career placements program, which was very beneficial for the regions and particularly for my riding.

[English]

TECHNICAL PROTECTION MEASURES

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to bring forward a petition signed by people from across Canada concerning the issue of technical protection measures, known as TPMs.

TPMs are implemented by some copyright holders because they can violate end users' privacy rights; prevent consumers from enjoying content on devices and software of their independent choice; circumvent or compromise the security of computers, including rendering them vulnerable to attack—and we remember the well publicized fiasco of the Sony BMG rootkit; that TPMs can be applied to both content and devices; that the copyright holder and the owner of the device have rights that must be respected; that copyright holder's own rights on the protected work and private citizens usually own the devices that access these works; that TPMs can be abused to harm the interests of the copyright holder and/or the device owner; that numerous Canadian organizations have opposed the legal protection of TPMs supplied to copyright holders or manufacturers of devices, including, but not limited to, the Canada's Privacy Community, the Digital Security Coalition, the Canadian Music Creators Coalition, Appropriation Art Coalition, Canadian Federation of Students, Canadian Library Association, Canadian Art Museum Directors' Organization and several thousands of Canadian citizens already signed these on such a position; that we are looking for Canadian legislation, such as the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act which prohibits the condition of the supply of a product or service on a person waiving their rights; and that the section 77 of the Competition Act regulates against the exclusive dealing in tied selling.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling upon Parliament to prohibit the application of a technical protection measure to a device without the informed consent of the owner of the device and to prohibit the conditioning of the supply of content to the purchase or use of a device, which has a technical measure applied to it. Further, they call upon Parliament to recognize the rights of citizens to personally control their own communication devices and choose the software based on their own personal criteria.

Routine Proceedings

● (1520)

[Translation]

CANADA SUMMER JOBS

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, for the fourth time, a petition by several hundred citizens of my riding of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord and the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region opposing budget cuts to the summer career placements program, which impacts my region. There have been about 450 student jobs lost. The summer career placements program is being replaced by the Canada summer jobs program.

These individuals are opposed to the new program and also to changes in the criteria and the fact that decisions will no longer be made in the riding of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord nor in my region, but rather in Montreal and Ottawa. This was a power given to MPs and it is being transferred to another level of government, either in Montreal or in Quebec City.

I am tabling this petition on behalf of these citizens and I am requesting that the Conservative Party in this House take it into consideration.

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. One is on behalf of some 300-plus citizens from the Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge area.

The petitioners are concerned with regard to the Employment Insurance Act in that given that time spent with children is important, employment insurance only kicks in once a child is born and does not recognize that some children must stay in the hospital for some time because they are either premature or sick.

The petition is calling for an amendment that would allow parents some provision to look after their sick or premature children while they are in hospital without their unemployment insurance kicking in.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from citizens of Dundas, Hamilton, London and Tavistock, Ontario who are asking the government to consider positively the private member's bill, Bill C-375, put forward by a member of our caucus to establish a federal minimum wage and set it at \$10 an hour.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, question No. 141 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 141—**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:**

With respect to the placement of federal government advertising: when will the government ensure that more government advertising is placed in ethnic media

publications to ensure that Canadians whose mother tongue is not French or English are made aware of federal government initiatives and programs?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada recognizes the value of ethnocultural media to effectively communicate with Canadians and ethnocultural publications, as well as ethnocultural radio and television, are some of the means used by government departments to reach out to new Canadians whose reading abilities in English or French may be limited.

Since 2003, following major expenditure reductions in government advertising, extraordinary efforts have been made to develop more efficient and effective advertising campaigns on government programs and services.

Despite this overall decline in government advertising, advertising in ethnic and official languages media has increased. In 2003-2004, spending in ethno-cultural media (print, television and radio) represented 3.4% of advertising expenditures. In 2005-2006, it was 4.8% and the trend continues. As of December 2006, government expenditures in ethnic media totaled \$1,575,420, or 5.6% of expenditures, and more activity is planned. More specifically, as of December 2006, ethnic print represented 9.8% of all government print placements.

The responsibility for media planning rests with government departments responsible for implementing the advertising campaigns. Departments make decisions based on campaign objectives, audiences and resources available.

Through consultations and review of information produced by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Statistics Canada, and data such as circulation information and language of the papers, departments determine the optimal media mix within the budget allocated. With developments in ethnocultural electronic media, government can now access new communication channels to provide timely information to targeted ethnic communities in their mother tongue. With the right mix of print, radio, television, Internet and outreach activities, government is continuously improving toward its objective to effectively reach Canadians while ensuring transparency, accountability and value for money.

Government departments like Service Canada and Citizenship and Immigration also offer information at their points of service, or through service providers.

Government Orders

Advertising is but one vehicle used by government to inform Canadians. Service Canada is piloting a multi-language service, MLS, initiative aimed at aboriginal Canadians and at newcomers, people living in Canada for less than five years, who speak neither English nor French and who face significant language barriers when it comes to accessing government programs and services. The purpose of MLS is to help ensure these segments of the population receive the right information about government benefits and services available to them, in their native tongue. A related goal of the initiative is to make it easier for newcomers to adapt to life in Canada by integrating more quickly into Canadian community life and the labour market.

Pilots of the national MLS Initiative are being conducted using a range of service delivery approaches including outreach, in-person and three-way telephone interpretation services to deliver multi-language service. Basic information materials on Service Canada and the frequently-accessed programs and benefits it offers, for example: Canada pension plan, CPP; guaranteed income supplement, GIS; old age security, OAS; employment insurance, EI; social insurance number, SIN; and universal child care benefits, UCCB, have been developed. Based on an assessment of the priority needs of Service Canada's clientele across the country, these materials will be translated into 12 foreign languages: Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, Spanish, Russian, Korean, Tagalog, Persian, Gujarati, Tamil, and nine aboriginal languages by the end of March 2007.

[*English*]

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think if you would seek it, you would find unanimous consent of the House, because there has been consultation among parties on the wording of this motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, during tonight's debate on the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food, the Chair will not receive any dilatory motions, quorum calls or request for unanimous consent; and, at the end of the debate, all necessary questions to dispose of this motion be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until the end of government orders on Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

● (1525)

The Speaker: Does the hon. whip of the Bloc Québécois have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

QUARANTINE ACT

The House resumed from March 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Quarantine Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: When the House was last debating this matter, the hon. member for Surrey North had the floor. She has 18 minutes left in the time allotted for her remarks. I therefore call on the hon. member for Surrey North.

Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think it is a one line amendment and I am sure that I can talk for some time about the amendment. Although it is a very small amendment it would have a life-saving or potentially-life threatening effect if we do not carry it forward.

As I said the other day, this is really an amendment to the Public Health Act. It is a very interesting act. It was written in 1872. I do not need to give any history on it because the last time we did anything with it was in 1872.

Here we are now 135 years later. The House was full at the time and I think everybody did support it. It was probably right after a small pox epidemic which, in those times, was very frightening and killed many family members. We should never make fun or ridicule that kind of tragedy that occurs to families when there are diseases of epidemic proportions.

When this act was written people were concerned about the illnesses they saw in their countries. People died of small pox and the plague. They were concerned about what happened within their cities or their towns. They never conceived of the fact that a disease would travel to a country or a continent that they had never seen, never heard of and were never going to see. No one would have believed that a disease could be transmitted in that kind of way.

We find ourselves, 135 years later, in a very different kind of health environment. We need to take very seriously the fact that the potential for communicable diseases to move from country to country is significantly heightened.

We only need to look at the last few years and what we have seen in Canada to be reminded of that. Anyone who was part of responding to or living in a city where the SARS epidemic was so tragically seen, will know that the responses to that particular disease were late starting and we were not able to respond in the kind of quick fashion that we all would have liked.

Government Orders

If I were to be biased toward British Columbia, my home province, I would say that British Columbia actually led the way in many of the innovations that came about as a result of SARS.

I have a few concerns I would like to raise. I certainly support the amendment but it seems to me that there are one or two pieces missing in it.

What it does is it adds to the Quarantine Act the reporting responsibility to be expanded to include aircraft and commercial watercraft. Anyone operating an aircraft or commercial watercraft has the responsibility to report any person who has died or any person they believe has a potentially communicable disease or any cargo they believe is suspect.

What about one of the main ways in which people and products are transported around the country and into the country, which is by truck or by rail? This does not include either people or products transferred by rail.

• (1530)

From living in British Columbia, I know the truck traffic, and I assume it is the same in many other provinces, that goes back and forth across our border is lined up for miles. On any holiday weekend, we can turn on our radio and hear that there is a two hour wait at the border because so many cars are lined up to come into Canada from the United States.

The fact that rail and road traffic are not included in this causes me considerable concern. We have seen several times in the last year or so an alert not to buy a produce that has come across the border because of the concern it may be contaminated. I am concerned we have not covered off all of the potential ways in which a communicable disease could be transmitted.

This is particularly important in this day and age because we discover, on an annual basis, viruses that nobody has ever heard of before. I think there was a stage when people thought they had identified most of the kinds of viruses that affected particularly people. However, we now know that those viruses transmute until we have differing versions on a pretty continuous basis. Therefore, we have to be incredibly rigorous and vigorous in our actions to protect the population of Canada against in any way being susceptible to a communicable disease.

The whole issue of quarantine reminds me of what happened before people were immunized. There may be some people in the House who remember when people had the whooping cough, or diphtheria or whatever, their whole home was quarantined. Then we developed immunizations for many of those diseases for which we previously would have been quarantined.

What now has happened, which causes me concern because it is about quarantine and communicable diseases, is we do not know what our immunization rates are really like across the country. There is no mandatory reporting by any province of their immunization rates.

I know in certain parts of my province of British Columbia immunization rates of diseases, which have been designated communicable, are dropping. Therefore, we have the potential of seeing a disease we thought we no longer had to quarantine or we

thought we had an immunization for it. However, if for whatever reason fewer families choose not to immunize their children, we could very well see another bout of some communicable disease that we thought was long behind us.

For a long time people thought that tuberculosis was a communicable disease with which we no longer had to deal. That is one that was quarantined for a long time. We not only learned how to treat it, but we also learned how to immunize against it. In many parts of the country, particularly in aboriginal communities and in urban centres where people live in conditions that are less than healthy for anybody, we see an increase of tuberculosis. We thought it was behind us, now it is not.

• (1535)

There is no mandatory reporting of that. Surely the federal government has a national leadership role to play in having that information available so Health Canada, CIHI and all health organizations, which have a responsibility for public health threats, have an ability to see a trend. If we only look at what is happening in our own provinces, we will not know if this is some kind of trend happening across the country that requires some national leadership.

We have seen SARS, the West Nile virus and avian influenza. All those things have caused the public health community to work well together, to develop better procedures, protocols and surveillance at least in the provinces, but I still am concerned that is not a mandatory responsibility of provinces to report potentially communicable disease.

This bill would broaden the coverage of the Quarantine Act, and that is a good thing. It would also help us meet our World Health Organization obligations as a signatory to the revised international health regulations. These regulations ensure maximum security against the international spread of disease, with minimum interference with global travel, and I know that is very hard to do. However, our first responsibility is to the health and safety of Canadians, but also a much more humanistic and moral way to the health and safety of people who live anywhere in the world.

Those WHO regulations are scheduled to come into effect in June of this year. This regulation would then put us in compliance, as we would wish to be, with the World Health Organization. It will know we are doing all we can in Canada to meet that health obligation.

There will be a creation of different kinds of responsibilities for people. There will be quarantine officers, which is a good step. Previously officers were designated by the minister, as was stipulated in the act. These quarantine officers will have very specific education and responsibility to collect information, to know how it should be disseminated and, wherever possible, to get ahead of something that might happen.

We are very concerned that this tool be able to be used by the Public Health Agency of Canada. It came from the report that Dr. Naylor did after the SARS epidemic.

Government Orders

I remain concerned about the lack of rail and truck cargo being included in this and about the fact that other communicable diseases, which are being less immunized for, are not reported nationally. There is no national database for that and we may put a next generation of children or potentially a current generation of adults, who are not immune to what we think of as children's diseases, at risk.

While I am speaking to the issue of communicable diseases and immunization, there is also a national leadership role. There is certainly a provincial role. I understand perfectly that provincial governments deliver health care services, but there may be a national leadership role that can be played by the federal government in terms of disseminating more education information or working with public health officers in each province to ensure that standardized information is getting to all the parents.

• (1540)

People take their new babies for their first immunization shots. Everybody does that because it is a good thing to do. A smaller percentage take them back for their second set of immunizations. If I were to go around Parliament and ask people if all their immunizations were up to date, I expect the majority would say no. We do not know the fact that we do not stop being immunized at age four. There are immunizations that we must continue to get throughout adulthood to protect ourselves from certain kinds of diseases.

There is a national leadership role that can be taken, working with public health officers in each province who have that responsibility, to ensure that we have a more vigorous initiative of getting out standardized information not only to parents of newborns, who get very good information about immunization, but to all Canadians so they know immunization should continue through adulthood in order for them to be safe. If adults are not safe, they may put their families at risk as well.

I support the amendment. I have expressed some concerns about the fact that it could go further. I also have expressed concerns about other things we could do around communicable diseases. For example, we could have mandatory reporting. Diseases we had previously quarantined may be at risk of being quarantined again if we do not vigorously address immunization like used to do, and more so under the Quarantine Act.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Surrey gave a very thorough overview of the bill we are speaking to today regarding quarantines. I want to pay tribute to the long experience that my colleague has as a former minister of health in the provincial government of British Columbia and the very worthwhile comments that she made today.

My comments and my questions to her are in the context of the role of the national Chief Public Health Officer in the context of quarantine protection. Also I would like to expand for a moment on the need for grassroots community involvement in the important work that the national Chief Public Health Officer does and the national institute of public health in the province of Quebec.

I would like the member to comment on an incident in Winnipeg. The riding of Winnipeg Centre is host to the only level four virology laboratory in the country where testing is done on the most

dangerous diseases, such as Ebola virus. Any outbreak of a disease that needs attention if it were to be a national epidemic situation comes to Winnipeg.

The citizens surrounding the virology lab were very concerned because that virology lab was sent to Winnipeg Centre as a booby prize. Really what we wanted was the CF-18 airplane maintenance contract back in the Mulroney era and we all know what happened to that. It went to the highest bidder because that bidder happened to be in Quebec. To try and calm down the people on the Prairies who were so outraged, insulted and offended at losing the CF-18 contract, he gave us a disease lab, we called it then, now the virology laboratory.

To begin with, people were not thrilled to get a level four disease laboratory in the middle of a residential neighbourhood in the heart of my riding of Winnipeg Centre. There were great concerns about the security issues associated with having the most deadly microbes and viruses in the world being analyzed next to a school and next to a low income residential neighbourhood. We pulled together a citizens committee to deal with the federal government. We got some guarantees in place that the highest safety protocol available would be used in the transfer of the deadly viruses, germs and microbes.

We were not too concerned with what was happening within the four walls of the virology laboratory because they were two feet thick concrete walls. They were bomb proof. There was bulletproof glass. But how would the microbes, the germs or the viruses get from the point of origin to the laboratory for study and analysis? We were guaranteed that it would be done by Brinks armoured car. There would be three of them in a row and only one would be carrying the product; the other two would be dummies to fool terrorists, et cetera.

There is an incident I would like the member to comment on in the context of how important it is to have community involvement. It turns out there was a car accident on the corner of Arlington and Logan, right near the virology lab, involving a FedEx truck. Out of the back of the FedEx truck popped a bunch of vials of anthrax and Newcastle disease and all these deadly microbes that were on their way to the virology lab.

It turns out that in spite of the commitment and the promises that were made to us that the highest safety protocol would be used, anthrax was being shipped by FedEx. The pimple faced kid who was driving the FedEx truck drove it into a pole and the stuff spilled out into the street. That is not the highest security and safety protocol. What is next, Ebola by bicycle? There was anthrax by FedEx, so there might as well be Ebola by bicycle courier because that is about as secure as these materials are.

The Chief Public Health Officer has an obligation and a duty to oversee epidemics and runaway viruses to quarantined areas, but surely he has a duty and an obligation to listen to the best interests of the people in the community as well.

Government Orders

• (1545)

Ms. Penny Priddy: Mr. Speaker, I was not here when that happened, but it seems that the hon. member had asked for a plane maintenance centre and something else landed in his riding that was not what was actually requested.

By the way, the lab to which the hon. member referred does superb work. I want to congratulate the people who work there. It is a very challenging job. The hon. member is right that they work with highly contagious and life-threatening diseases.

I did not hear of the incident that the hon. member mentioned. I will certainly raise the question with the Chief Public Health Officer.

At the time that the chicken farms were being cleared out in British Columbia and other parts of Canada, great care was taken. Neighbours and schools in the area were extremely concerned about the waste material, not only about where it would go, but how it would be collected. They were concerned about whether it would be wind driven or otherwise disseminated around the neighbourhood.

People in the member's community have every right to know that not only will the viruses and microbes be treated safely when they are inside the building, but also that they will be transported safely.

There have been all kinds of discussions about transportation of hazardous materials up and down the coasts of our country. Certainly on the west coast, the transportation of very dangerous materials by water up and down the coast is a subject of almost constant discussion.

It is not just the people in the hon. member's community that should be concerned. I would assume that the microbes and viruses are being transported across the country to the lab in Winnipeg. It is a Canadian service doing a service for Canadian people. Everybody deserves to know that it is being done safely, not only at source, but along the way.

I will raise that particular incident with the Chief Public Health Officer. I will ask him what the responsibility is of his office. I will get back to the member.

• (1550)

Hon. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask you to seek unanimous consent that notwithstanding any Standing Order or special order, the debate scheduled to take place later today on the motion to concur in the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food be deemed to have already taken place, the question deemed put, and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to the end of government orders on Wednesday, March 28.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her unique contribution to Bill C-42. It is easy to simply read legislative notes or extracts of the bill, but to bring some firsthand experience is always very helpful.

When we think about it, the bill exists as a consequence of events that transpired in Canada in recent years having to do with SARS, West Nile virus, avian flu. Indeed in responding to the SARS outbreak, a special committee was put together to make recommendations on how we could better respond. One of Dr. Naylor's recommendations and the committee's recommendation was to update the Quarantine Act.

That was back in 2003-04. It is now March 2007 and I would have thought that public health and safety in regard to possible pandemics of flu or other risks to the Canadian public would have been a higher priority for the government. I am wondering why after 14 months we are still only at second reading on a bill that should have been here in the first place.

Ms. Penny Priddy: Mr. Speaker, my general experience is that if governments want bills brought forth quickly because they are important, they bring them forth quickly.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-42. It is an important bill.

I have had the opportunity to be a member of the Standing Committee on Health and to work on a number of issues which relate to public health and safety. I participated on a committee with regard to HIV-AIDS. There was quite an education for all members of Parliament who had that opportunity.

As I indicated in the question that I posed to the hon. member who just spoke, recent events in Canada's history in fact are the reason Bill C-42 is now before us. The significant public health threats that I am referring to are the SARS outbreak, the West Nile virus, the avian influenza. They have prompted the medical community and policy makers to work together to respond in a better fashion to public health threats.

If we were to look at the results of the assessment of how the SARS situation was responded to, we would find there were very serious problems. Many of those problems were related specifically to the lack of preparedness. There was a lack of a number of procedures which would normally be in place, as any reasonable person would consider with regard to public health and safety matters.

When I talk about the Government of Canada of the day, I am talking more specifically about the departmental part of the government. When we talk about the Government of Canada, sometimes people look at it solely in the context of the party that currently forms the governing party. The Government of Canada is an enormous institution with enormous responsibilities involved in virtually every aspect of Canadian life.

Government Orders

If we were to look at some of the history, we would find that virtually every department of the Government of Canada, every bureaucracy, had a website section on SARS updates. That has to tell us something about the way the machinery of government looked at things in approaching an issue such as SARS. There were, I believe, 17 different websites that Canadians were asked to look at if they wanted an update. If it was industry, the government had an industry perspective. If it was health, obviously it was health related issues. Seventeen different websites were established in the Government of Canada.

That tells us that within the culture of the bureaucracy there seems to be a lack of continuity, a lack of cooperation and a lack of sharing of information. Continuity, cooperation and information sharing are vital in terms of national emergencies as they relate to public health and safety issues. In this case that we are debating, with regard to health issues, they are extremely important.

In responding to the SARS outbreak, the government of the day established a national advisory committee on SARS and public health. Its mandate was to provide a third party assessment of the current public health efforts and lessons learned relating to ongoing and future infectious disease control. That committee was chaired by Dr. David Naylor.

The committee made several recommendations for legislative changes to better address the risks emerging from public health threats. One of those recommendations back when that group was started in 2003 was to make amendments to the Quarantine Act. As a consequence of the SARS outbreak, it was detected that there were circumstances created in which public health and safety were not protected to the appropriate extent that one would expect.

● (1555)

The good news is that Dr. Naylor did his job. The bad news is that we are here in 2007, some two or three years later, and a bill of this importance is still at a very early stage in the legislative process. We have to ask ourselves why that is. Why is it that when we have an important issue it does not get priority?

In fact, there is an explanation, and it also shows what can happen when in fact we do move too quickly on a bill. What happened as a consequence of the recommendations was that a bill was brought forward. That bill was passed and received royal assent, but one of the things we found was that the bill passed by Parliament in some haste was inoperative in some respects.

As a consequence, we now have before us Bill C-42, which is going to correct the inoperative provisions and in fact bring that recommendation to fruition in terms of a complete piece of legislation that is going to better address the needs of Canadians.

The modernization of this act addresses urgent issues because the act that was passed and given royal assent was inoperative in some aspects, and the act obviously is in respect to communicable diseases in Canada and abroad.

It also represents a complementary step, one that we may want to revisit, but the reality is that there was a series of legislative initiatives to strengthen Canada's public health system. We do not have a comprehensive way of dealing with public health and safety

issues. We have a series of things. We tend to chunk things down into smaller pieces.

I can make an assessment of or give an opinion on whether or not those legislative initiatives in fact represent the most efficient mode in terms of legislative productivity or effectiveness, but notwithstanding that, we do have a number of legislative initiatives to strengthen Canada's public health system, initiatives that also include the creation of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer.

Having been a member of the health committee and even having had private members' initiatives, I had at one point recommended the creation of something akin to the U.S. Surgeon General. I thought that we should in fact have a physician general of Canada, the reason being that over the years Health Canada has become involved in a broad range of very controversial issues and has become somewhat of a political football when it suits people's needs.

When we have activists, I think of things like the hepatitis C issue, the blood issue, and the reproductive technologies issues, where there is a political debate about the propriety of making certain legislative changes or initiatives. Health Canada as an organization has become somewhat politicized by the various activities that have gone on, not by its own choice, but certainly that has affected, I would suggest, the public's perception of Health Canada and what Health Canada represents and can do for Canadians.

I can recall visiting the U.S. Surgeon General's website on many occasions. If members were to do that, one of the things they would find is that there are sections for young people, for children and youth. There is another section for seniors, a section for women and so on. If there are health and safety issues related to a particular demographic, there is a portal to go through. It is very user friendly.

● (1600)

That same kind of user-friendliness would not be found at the Health Canada website. People have concerns about issues that come out, whether it be how they protect themselves against infectious diseases or what a quarantine means. For example, Mississauga's Trillium Hospital just had a significant outbreak of *C. difficile*. People died of the most serious and dangerous strain of *C. difficile*. What were they doing about it, people ask, and how do they find out about it?

We know that hospitals and the delivery of health services are through the provinces, but the Government of Canada has a broader responsibility because sometimes we have these breakouts of infectious diseases. It was shown that the particular cases in Mississauga were related to the very serious outbreak that took place in Quebec. Now we have found out that there has been a migration, in one way or another, from Quebec to Mississauga and in fact to northern Ontario, where some cases of this particular deadly strain of *C. difficile* have been found.

Government Orders

This, as we can imagine, would raise a lot of questions for ordinary Canadians about their safety and security. They want to know if they have to be concerned about going to those hospitals. Answers to such questions would be found at the U.S. Surgeon General's site, but we would not find the answers at Health Canada's site. As a matter of fact, we would find it very difficult to navigate that site.

If Health Canada is monitoring the debate on this bill, I would suggest that it have a very careful look at the user-friendliness of its website. In recent years there have been some serious problems with regard to contagious diseases and the kinds of things that may be transported in a number of fashions, but I am not sure that on Health Canada's public website we would find what we are doing and how we are caring for Canadians' best interests.

If that is the case, and I believe it is, then this bill is not going to really be as effective as it could be, because we do not have the linkage to deal with Canadians directly in plain and simple language to give them the assurances they are looking for.

I raise this because it is an important issue. It is very likely that these are going to be continuing occurrences. Certainly the West Nile and the avian flu are not going away. I suspect that C. difficile is not going away. I suspect that SARS, whatever it is, is not going away in terms of the possibility of it being migrated into Canada. There are things that we do have to protect ourselves.

In terms of looking at the bill in some specificity, one thing members will note is that it creates two classes of officials, environmental health officers and screening officers. These officials, along with quarantine officers, oversee the screening, assessment and, if necessary, the detention of people, vessels, goods and cargo that represent a public health risk. The presence of these officers strengthens our national preparedness, obviously, for future potential public health risks, including an influenza pandemic.

As we can see, the bill in itself is not terribly complicated, but it does have a couple of issues associated with it that make the current bill, which did receive royal assent, operable. That would be a good thing to do. It would have been a good thing to do at the beginning of Parliament, not 14 months after an election.

• (1605)

With all due respect, I question very seriously whether or not the government has its eye on the ball for the safety and security and priorities of Canadians, particularly when we see some of the things that are on the table. We have been jumping around all over the place. In fact, one thing we see, and which has been discussed in this place many times, is a series of justice bills, and every one of those bills is a very discrete item that has an amendment to the Criminal Code of Canada.

In past Parliaments, we have come forward with omnibus bills. There are a number of initiatives that could be amended or updated in the Criminal Code and they could have been brought forward, but politically it looks a lot better if we bring in 10 bills to do something that could be done in one, because then members can say, "Look how active we have been".

What it does, and this is the real shame, is grind the system to a halt. The justice committee can do only so much work. It can deal

with only so many bills at a time. It has to work through these bills, but many of the same witnesses will be there over and over again. I think Canadians should know that there is a little bit of game playing going on in terms of the legislative process. I am sure that we will hear more about this in the coming days.

I want to also comment on the principal provision, which is an amendment to section 34 of the current Quarantine Act. As I have indicated, the Quarantine Act had initially been part of the health protection legislative renewal package, but this new bill has to provide some technical amendments to bring into order section 34 of the Quarantine Act, which has already received royal assent.

More specifically, on section 34 of the Quarantine Act, clause 1 proposed amendments to section 34 and established the duty of operators of certain conveyances to report to authorities: (a) any reasonable grounds to suspect that persons, cargo or other things on board could cause the spreading of communicable disease listed in the schedule appended to the bill; (b) if a person on board has died; or (c) any prescribed circumstance that exists.

When we look through the rest of the bill, we see a couple of other cleanup items, which effectively relate to the reporting responsibilities of the operator of the vessel. Indeed, it basically means reporting to the point of nearest entry, but there are some circumstances. For instance, if a plane going from London to Toronto had a problem on board, it probably would land in Newfoundland, the nearest point of landing.

Interestingly enough, and some people may wonder why, there is a proviso in the bill as the legislation now stands that the reporting obligations are limited to marine and air community supports. The rationale is that approximately 94% of international flights arrive in Canada through six international airports where there are established quarantine stations and the presence of a quarantine officer. They are Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax, although there are as well other airports that have such facilities.

Finally, the bill has an amendment to schedule which in fact lists the various matters that are subject to be reported under this bill. Clause 5 provides that the proposed amendment to section 34 comes into force on the day that Bill C-42, this bill, comes into force.

I believe we are going to find that there is support from all parties for this bill, but knowing that a particular bill was rushed through and had some technical problems, it bears repeating that there should be some concern that such a bill could not have been brought forward to the House in a more expeditious fashion to show the true priority that Canadians place on public safety and health.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question. This legislation that the member told us about in the last few minutes is extremely important to prevent certain pandemics.

Why does he think that it took so long—14 months after the beginning of this new Parliament—to develop this bill and to introduce it in the House?

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, I think parliamentarians should reassess. There are certain things that happen in this place and we wonder why. There have been so many changes on the order paper even with regard to important justice bills.

The government has, for instance, suggested that someone is delaying the agenda of their items. Yet, when we ask for unanimous consent for some of the bills, for which all parties support, to have them deemed complete at all stages and referred to the Senate so it can go through the next legislative process, the government disagrees or denies unanimous consent. It plays games. We were supposed to debate a couple of those justice bills today. We are not. We are somewhere else.

I thank the member for raising this. I believe it is disrespectful of not only the hon. members in terms of their preparatory work to participate in debate in the House, but it is a reflective of a lack of vision of priorities set by the government.

• (1615)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mississauga South for his expansive and wide-ranging overview of Bill C-42. I know my colleague is a long-standing and well respected member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health. His contributions to this debate have been invaluable.

I was particularly interested in an aside he introduced, which was the notion that perhaps Canada would benefit from a public health officer or a senior health official along the lines of the American surgeon general. There is merit in this even in the context of Bill C-42.

It struck me, as my colleague suggested, that there is very little way for the people of Canada to deal with Health Canada. There is no way to get there. There is no conduit or advocacy. There is no particular way that we can access Health Canada even though it is a behemoth of an institution, which does not administer a single hospital. That is the jurisdiction of the provinces.

In the United States the surgeon general plays a valuable role in providing information and providing a conduit or a mechanism. One of the things that could be addressed by an institution like a Canadian version of the surgeon general is the public health as it pertains to quarantines, although we do have a national Chief Public Health Officer.

In the protection of people from being exposed to harmful elements, be they germs or chemicals or other products, we need to be minimizing that exposure in some coordinated way. A lot of people would be shocked to learn that the greatest industrial killer in the world is asbestos and Canada is the second leading producer and exporter of asbestos in the world.

Quarantine is the idea of isolating people who are ill so others are not exposed to this harm. We need to take a different approach with other harmful elements, asbestos most notably, to try to isolate and minimize the exposure of Canadians to it. However, the Canadian government has just introduced new regulations that expressly allow asbestos to be put into children's toys, for heaven's sake. It is trying to make the case that asbestos is so benign, so friendly and good for

us, I suppose is the argument, that it says it should go into drywall mud, which people have to sand in order to finish, and they get exposed to it. I get frustrated when I think of it.

If the purpose of the debate today is to minimize exposure to harm, we should have a much bigger debate on minimizing exposure to harm in all kinds of contexts. If we are to really address the public health, the single greatest industrial killer the world has ever known is asbestos. More people die from asbestos than all other industrial causes combined. Yet we promote it, we flog it, we dump it internationally into third world countries. It makes me furious to think about this.

Even though it is a little bit off topic, would my colleague address the idea of perhaps this being one of the roles this new Canadian surgeon general could play? I am meeting with the deputy surgeon general of the United States this weekend in Philadelphia, at the Drexel University College of Medicine, to talk about asbestos and the role he is playing nationally and internationally to ban this product forever. Canada should follow the rest of the world and ban it as well.

• (1620)

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his kind remarks. The issue that came to mind during the SARS was that Health Canada had to establish 17 different websites or so to provide information, updates and ongoing information to interested stakeholders. It does not make sense. It is not pragmatic and it is not workable.

At that point, I remember putting forward a private member's motion. It called on the government to establish the position of physician general of Canada, who would be the principal public contact.

The House may recall the big debate about women's hormone therapy and whether it was advisable. We can imagine how women were concerned about who was telling the truth. Self breast examination was another one, about whether it was useful. Now we have changes in things like the resuscitation techniques. Should we use the mouth or things like that?

There is no mechanism within Health Canada now to opine on that, to say in plain and simple language to Canadians, who are interested in doing the right thing or getting information from people who they believe are people of integrity, respect and professionalism, who will give them good information.

Those are the kinds of things that may come out of discussions like this. It happens to be linked only to the extent that it was spawned from an infectious disease problem. However, communication to Canadians about the risks of their health, whether it be communicable diseases or industrial risks to Canadian public health and safety, are always relevant in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on Bill C-42, an act to amend the Quarantine Act.

Government Orders

I would like first, though, to make a few comments about what my hon. colleague in the NDP has had to say about the CF-18 maintenance contracts. It is very clear to the Bloc Québécois and all Quebecers that the Canadian aerospace industry is centered in the Montreal metropolitan area.

When Mr. Mulroney was the Prime Minister, he helped to consolidate this centre by giving it the CF-18 maintenance contract. In the Bloc's view, this was a perfectly normal thing to do. Southern Ontario, for example, is the heart of the automobile industry.

I would like to say something about asbestos as well. It is true that asbestos is a hazardous product, but it can be used safely, especially in the form of chrysotile asbestos. I always say that it is like water. Water is essential for life, but people can also drown in it. We are able now to use chrysotile asbestos safely. The Standing Committee on International Trade recognized as much a few months ago. So far as I know, even the NDP member voted in favour. I would add that substitute products are just as hazardous to health as chrysotile asbestos.

We are now facing heavy pressure to ban chrysotile asbestos from the lobbies for substitutes for it. We need to work on developing safe uses for chrysotile asbestos. Those were my two preliminary remarks. I noticed that my friend in the NDP took advantage of these questions to raise issues that are hotly debated in Quebec these days.

I want to say something as well about the CF-18s, and then I will get to the heart of the matter. We are currently criticizing the Conservative industry minister because he refuses in the case of the C-17 contracts given to Boeing for Canadian air force planes to require Boeing to ensure that subcontracts are awarded in the greater Montreal metropolitan area in proportion to its weight in the Canadian aerospace industry, that is to say, between 50% and 60%. The federal government made the mistake of spreading the aerospace industry to Winnipeg. I know as well that since Boeing is located in the western United States—especially in Seattle—it will necessarily favour its usual subcontractors.

Various studies including the one done by Yves Bélanger of UQAM show that, if things are left as they are, only 30% of the economic benefits will go to the greater Montreal area. Once again we see a federal government that does not really have Quebec's interests at heart and that plays on words.

Bill C-42 does not really deal with these issues, even though any discussion about Boeing, planes and aircraft does have something to do with this bill. The bill proposes adjustments and technical amendments to the Quarantine Act passed in 2005, except in the case of one section, section 31, dealing with conveyances.

I believe everyone will agree that the bill before us is rather limited in scope, but it is necessary nevertheless. Like others, I wonder why it has only come up for debate almost a year after its introduction in April 2006. As I was saying, the bill is relatively limited in scope, but it is necessary to reflect the new realities.

I can say at the outset that we, in the Bloc Québécois, support the principle of the bill although we are being extremely vigilant when it comes to areas under Quebec's jurisdiction. Quarantine has to do with health. The Bloc will continue to ensure that Quebec's jurisdiction is respected with regard to health as well as a number

of other areas such as education and social solidarity. Speaking of respecting jurisdictions, I will certainly not be the federal government's thurifer.

I will remind members what a thurifer is. I know that the member for Repentigny and you, Mr. Speaker, are aware of that, but perhaps those who are watching us today have forgotten that concept. The thurifer was the cleric holding the thurible, or censer, during religious ceremonies.

• (1625)

Obviously, by extension, a thurifier also refers to someone who flatters. You will understand that I do not wish to play the role of flatterer for the Conservative government when I see that in the budget and in all the policies of the Conservative government they do not respect Quebec's jurisdiction, despite their fine speeches.

Let me give some examples. In the area of family policy, in the previous budget, they created a new cheque to be paid to Quebec and Canadian families, according to federal criteria, without taking into account Quebec's family policy, which is extremely progressive. It is not yet fully developed, but since 1998, the Government of Quebec has worked very hard. Here, they not only invaded a field that is the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec, but, in addition, they did so without taking account of the Quebec reality.

I will give another example that we have been talking about this week during question period. There is an illogical, incomprehensible, and unfounded desire to push ahead with a pan-Canadian securities commission while telling us that it will not be a federal agency. However, when we read what it is all about in the budget, Quebec would have just one seat at the table. Therefore, the rest of Canada would decide how the commission would work, and, obviously, by that very fact, it would weaken the role played by the Montreal Exchange, in Quebec, as a North American financial centre.

That is also a field of jurisdiction that is very clearly spelled out in the constitution as belonging to Quebec. Why are they persisting? It is in the budget, it was in the update from the Minister of Finance and the people of Quebec do not want it, all parties agree, along with the business and securities communities. There is also a reality in Quebec that the Minister of Finance is ignoring, namely that we have two legal systems, the common law and the civil code. That does not exist anywhere else but in Quebec. In addition, as I have already mentioned it cannot be done on constitutional grounds.

Here is another example. In education, the government is creating a federal agency to evaluate foreign credentials. To a large extent, that is the responsibility of professional bodies. The responsibility for education rests with the governments of Quebec and the other provinces. It makes no sense to propose that. What role can the federal government play in declaring whether the credentials of doctors, lawyers, engineers, or psychologists, who belong to professions that fall under the jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec, are valid? Once again, it is the incessant pressure of the federal government—whether it is Liberal or Conservative, only the label changes—that keeps wanting to interfere in the jurisdictions of the provinces and of Quebec.

Government Orders

I will give another example. Page 120 of the budget plan 2007 talks about the Canada Social Transfer, which affects—as you know—not just social solidarity, but also post-secondary education. One of the proposals, one of the objectives of the federal Conservative government, which is supposedly a government that is open to a more flexible federalism, is to identify federal transfer support within the Canada Social Transfer, based on current provincial and territorial spending patterns and existing child care agreements, for each priority area: post-secondary education, social programs and support for families. What is important here is that they talk about increasing the transparency of federal support for these shared priorities. First, these are not shared priorities or shared jurisdictions and, second, the federal government has no business interfering. It transfers money and Quebec and the provinces decide what to do with that money. But no. The government wants to ensure its visibility. This visibility will be achieved at the expense of consistency and Quebec's desire to implement a post-secondary education system that is unique in North America and that responds to the needs and challenges of our society and economy.

We must dispel the myth that the Conservatives are different from the Liberals. Rest assured, we will do our best in the coming months to make that clear.

A little further, on page 130, having to do this time with labour market training, post-secondary education and labour market training being the exclusive jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec, we read the following:

The government is prepared to consider providing future growth in funding for labour market programs after consultations with provinces and territories on how best to make use of new investments in labour market training and ensure reporting and accountability to Canadians.

In other words, the federal government is telling the provinces it will transfer money to our jurisdictions, will consult with us on the criteria, but we will be accountable and report to it. This in no way respects the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec.

• (1630)

This is a centralizing federalism, maybe in a velvet glove, but it is the same centralizing federalism as was practised by the Liberals under Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Jean Chrétien, and now the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

Job training falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec. The federal government has to recognize this in a number of areas, even though it has retained some components that we would like to see transferred to Quebec, such as the youth component.

This document, the Budget Plan 2007, is riddled with intrusions into areas that are under Quebec's jurisdiction.

As I said, we have to be vigilant, even regarding the Quarantine Act. Certainly in this case we are dealing with amendments that, while they are not cosmetic, are not fundamental. As well, as I also said, the Quarantine Act has existed for an extremely long time—I will be coming back to this—and it needs to be modernized.

We are well aware of the fact that today, just as before and perhaps more than before, because of the means of transportation that have been developed, infectious diseases like SARS and West Nile virus do not stop at borders. The means of transportation can be

a ship, a truck or an aircraft. As we know, an aircraft does not just mean an airplane; it can also be a helicopter, or a hot air balloon. And an aircraft can in fact transport contagious diseases. Because of that, we will be supporting the bill in principle.

The adjustments that are proposed in Bill C-42 relate mainly to section 34, as I said earlier, dealing with operators of watercraft and aircraft, but are not limited to them. These amendments are largely technical, and meant to give effect to section 34.

In fact, as I said, when the bill that preceded the Quarantine Act received royal assent, on May 13, 2005, this section 34 was not included. Now, Bill C-42 has been introduced to revive it.

As I said, this act goes back a very long time. In fact, the first Quarantine Act dates from 1872. At that time, of course, when people travelled long distances they mainly travelled by ship, and so the Quarantine Act originally emphasized the marine aspect of travel, and it still does to some extent. This is the heritage that we still see in the present act.

Since we are aware that these days, most travelling is done by airplane, and a lot is by truck, the Quarantine Act and all legislation have to be amended to reflect this fact. I would note that at the time, quarantine was carried out by isolating a ship and the people who had been carried aboard it, along with animals, plants and all goods on board. They were isolated for 40 days—whence the word “quarantine”—to ensure that people coming from countries where there were contagious diseases were not carrying the virus for those diseases.

The proposed legislation would help protect the people of Canada and Quebec from the importation of dangerous and contagious diseases and prevent the spread of these diseases beyond Canada's borders, because the proposed legislation applies to arriving and departing conveyances. It is interesting to note that all the legislation was to have been amended, as I said, to take into account the fact that air transport is much more important than marine transport, or even land transport, in particular for the movement of people. The plan was to amend a whole series of laws to protect the health of Canadians. For example, the Food and Drugs Act, the Hazardous Products Act, and the Radiation Emitting Devices Act were to be replaced by a new Canada Health Protection Act.

There was a terrible breakout of severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, in 2003, which hit Toronto particularly hard. The government wanted to act quickly to deal with the most urgent matter. At that point, in 2003, it wanted to amend the Quarantine Act. In 2005, following a process, an amendment was made, but adjustments were still needed. These can be found in Bill C-42.

Government Orders

•(1635)

As I was saying, the bill's purpose is to complete and update it in order to give effect to section 34, which establishes a requirement for operators of certain kinds of conveyances to inform quarantine officers about any risk or suspected risk that diseases are being spread on their conveyance. This is an extremely important responsibility. Sections 63 and 71 as well as the schedule have also been amended to bring them into line with this new section 34.

Generally speaking, the bill repeals the Quarantine Act and replaces it with legislation intended to prevent the introduction and spreading of contagious diseases. It applies to people and conveyances that enter Canada or are preparing to leave it. As I said, the intent is both to protect us against the outside world and to protect the outside world against any epidemics there might be in one part or another of Canada or Quebec.

The bill provides for certain measures such as screening, health assessment and medical examination of travellers to detect the presence of contagious diseases. It provides as well for certain measures to be taken to prevent the spread of such diseases, such as referral to public health authorities, detention, treatment and disinfection.

The bill also provides for the inspection and decontamination of conveyances and cargo to ensure that they are not a source of communicable diseases. It determines as well the kinds of inspections that will apply—I admit that this is a bit macabre—to the importing and exporting of human organs and remains, although this too is reality.

In addition, the bill allows personal information to be collected and communicated if necessary to prevent the spread of a communicable disease. Finally, it authorizes the minister to issue orders in case of a public health emergency and to require that certain measures be taken to ensure that the law is enforced.

This in short is the Quarantine Act. What we are discussing, though, is section 34 and the provisions in Bill C-42 that apply to section 34. The current section reads as follows:

Before arriving in Canada, the operator of a conveyance used in a business of carrying persons or cargo, or of any prescribed conveyance, shall report to the authority designated under paragraph 63(b) situated at the nearest entry point any reasonable grounds to suspect that any person, cargo or other thing on board the conveyance could cause the spreading of a communicable disease listed in the schedule; a person on board the conveyance has died; or any prescribed circumstances exist.

That is the report on arrival in Canada.

Subsection 34(2) concerns the report of operators departing from Canada:

Before departing from Canada through a departure point, the operator shall report to the authority designated under paragraph 63(b) situated at the departure point any circumstance referred to in paragraphs (1)(a) to (c) that exists.

As I said, this applies when the operator suspects that part of the merchandise or anything else on board the conveyance may spread a communicable disease.

What will be changed here is the fact that the operator must inform a quarantine officer as soon as possible. The current act says: "the authority designated under paragraph 63(b)". This bill creates a

responsibility and identifies the person responsible. Subsection 34(2) of the act will also be amended as follows:

As soon as possible before a conveyance arrives at its destination in Canada, the operator shall inform a quarantine officer or cause a quarantine officer to be informed of any reasonable grounds to suspect that

Those are the facts I listed.

Subclause 34(3) reads as follows:

As soon as possible before a conveyance departs from Canada through a departure point, the operator shall inform a quarantine officer or cause a quarantine officer to be informed of any circumstance referred to in paragraphs (2)(a) to (c) that exists.

I will conclude with subclause 34(4):

No operator contravenes subsection (2) if it is not possible for the operator to inform a quarantine officer or cause a quarantine officer to be informed before the conveyance's arrival at its destination in Canada, as long as the operator does so on the conveyance's arrival at that destination.

It is clear that these amendments will clarify the obligations of watercraft and aircraft operators before entering or leaving Canada. As I said earlier, the Bloc Québécois will support these amendments.

•(1640)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Windsor West, Foreign Aid; the hon. member for Don Valley East, Status of Women; the hon. member for Laval—Les Îles, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Joliette, who used the word "thurifier" quite well.

While reading Bill C-42, I was a little concerned by something: if we keep designating certain diseases as communicable, I am afraid that we will exclude and reject certain people.

I recall that, in the 1980s, when I was a young priest, HIV-AIDS was a new disease. I recall how people with AIDS were being treated. They were often rejected by their family and their friends. Even in hospitals, we were prevented from visiting them. I remember having to wear plastic so I could visit them. I think there is always some panic when it is learned that a disease is communicable. I do not know whether this legislation will protect these people, because there are people with AIDS even today. I know that the disease is not as bad as it once was. It cannot be cured, but these people's lives can be extended. However, it is still communicable. I am concerned that, in the legislation, these people will be identified once again, they will be prevented from coming to Canada or from going elsewhere if they travel by air or boat, they will be reported by the operator or the pilot and they will be prevented from travelling. I do not know whether the member for Joliette can enlighten me on this. I believe it is important.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Repentigny for his question.

Government Orders

First, we must situate the Quarantine Act as one of a group of laws that protect human rights. We must also recognize that the prime objective of the act is to prevent the introduction of disease into Canada or Quebec through lack of knowledge of the situation. It is not necessarily to prevent the entry of individuals, but rather to ensure that we are aware of a certain number of situations. Depending on the gravity of the situation, one could clearly prevent a person from entering—that is provided for—or steps could be taken to ensure that the person receives medical treatment or the necessary medical support to ensure that the disease does not spread. That can also be done by information communication.

Having said that, I believe the member is absolutely right. If we take a strictly defensive view of the protection of the Canadian and Quebec population from the onset of communicable disease, we will not get very far. In that respect, it is the responsibility of Canada, as it will be Quebec's responsibility when it is sovereign, to contribute to the prevention of these diseases and epidemics on the international level. In particular, Canada must now make a commitment to achieve 0.7% of gross national product by 2015. That objective was suggested to us not only by the UN, but also by Prime Minister Pearson. All the G-7 countries, except the United States and Canada, have made that commitment. Even Great Britain, Italy, France and Germany, who are in difficult financial situations, have made this commitment. As a country, we have the means to meet this commitment. This public support funding could make it possible to have more aggressive programs for preventing disease and epidemics. That is not the case at present. As my colleague knows, some diseases often take precedence over others. For example, we know that very strong measures have been taken against HIV-AIDS in western countries but relatively little has been done in Africa. Likewise, some diseases cause great suffering over entire continents but receive no attention in western countries, where there are no programs to assist them. I am thinking, in particular, of malaria. In that regard, prevention is always the best method of protection against the entry of communicable disease into Canada and Quebec.

• (1645)

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague, the member for Joliette, for having taught us a little something about the French language, as well as a few other things.

This is a matter about which I do not need to be convinced. Nevertheless, it would be useful to have more details for some of our colleagues who either do not see the light at the end of the tunnel or do not understand necessarily what is really going on.

At the beginning of his speech, the member did specify that health care is a Quebec jurisdiction. Therefore, even if one supports the bill in principle, there is a need to point out that this jurisdiction must be protected in some way. I suppose that this is not just a whim.

Thus, I would let the member give us some explanations or details, so that our colleagues from other parties can understand that this has nothing to do with a whim, nor with a narrow vision of things.

I believe that we must emphasize again how important it is to protect our jurisdictions. They are in a way protected by the Constitution, but they are not necessarily protected when a

government wants to look strong or wants to impose its views at some point in time.

I believe that health care is a very sensitive matter. When a government like the one we have now or the one we had before wants to act like this—fortunately they were a minority government, which allowed us to slow them down—I think that it is necessary to hear more details about what the member for Joliette has to say.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I think this is extremely important, and it is the source of a major misunderstanding between Quebecers and Canadians.

I travelled all across Canada when the Standing Committee on Finance was holding hearings as part of the pre-budget consultations. Everywhere I went in the rest of Canada, someone suggested to us that a federal department of education be created, with national standards. And every time, I felt that my colleagues from the rest of Canada thought this was an excellent idea. If the federal government were to take charge of this and ensure that the provinces were spending based on the real priorities, they would be very comfortable with this.

We are always presented with the example of Mike Harris or Ralph Klein, who spent the money allocated for social programs on other things.

In Quebec, we know our citizens can be trusted to judge their governments' accomplishments. In fact, we saw this on Monday with health care. Mr. Charest had made commitments that he did not honour, and he was severely punished for it.

The federal government often uses real problems to push centralizing solutions. For example, we are told that diseases do not stop at provincial borders, and that is true.

In Quebec, we are prepared, obviously based on our priorities, our choices and our way of doing things, to share our expertise with the other Canadian provinces and with the entire planet, and to look elsewhere for expertise that might be useful to us. However, we do not want to be told how to manage our hospital system by Ottawa, because Ottawa does not manage a single hospital, apart from veterans hospitals and those for aboriginal people, with the less than glowing success we have seen.

The same is true for education. This is a particularly sensitive subject in Quebec because education is how the values and identity of Quebecers are transmitted. On that point, it has in fact been recognized that there is a nation, a territory, a land base—Quebec, the nation of Quebec, which includes all Quebecers, regardless of where they come from. But it is important to us to be able to transmit the values of the Quebec nation, and the French language, which is the common public language of our nation, and our specific history, and our culture, from generation to generation, with the contributions made by the people who come to us from all over the world, and to be able to do this through the education system.

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However that is not how the federal government sees it. To the federal government, Quebec culture is a regional component of Canadian culture. There is no future in this, just as there is no future in a Canada-wide vision of education. In fact, our institutions, like the CEGEPS, do not exist anywhere else in Canada. Another example is in health care, as I said, where we have the local community service centres. They have now been merged with other entities, but they were innovations created by Quebecers. This began with grassroots health clinics, and the government thought this was a good idea.

To conclude, our child care system, for example, is not a public system; it is a social economy system that was established by parents to meet the needs, in particular, of—

• (1650)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Joliette on another eloquent speech, and I am pleased to rise after him to address Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Quarantine Act. As my colleague mentioned, the Bloc Québécois supports the principle of this bill, since diseases know no boundaries. Still, we have to remain very vigilant regarding jurisdictions. As we know, health is Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction. The member for Joliette made a very compelling presentation on that, and there is no need for me to dwell on this issue, but I will nevertheless get back to it later on in my speech.

So, as a party, we agree with the principle of this bill. I should remind the House and those who are watching us about the purpose of the amendments in this bill. This enactment repeals the Quarantine Act and replaces it with another act to prevent the introduction and spread of communicable diseases. It is applicable to persons and conveyances arriving in or in the process of departing Canada. It provides measures for the screening, health assessment and medical examination of travellers to determine if they have communicable diseases. It also provides measures for preventing the spread of communicable diseases, including referral to the public health authorities, detention, treatment and disinfection. It also provides for the inspection and cleansing of conveyances and cargo to ensure that they are not a source of communicable diseases. As we can see, the provisions of this act, which goes back many years—and I will get back to this a little later on—have been tightened up somewhat.

It provides for controls on the import and export of cadavers, body parts and human remains. Earlier, my colleague said that it is not pleasant talking about it, but we must realize that a family may wish to repatriate the body of a person who has died abroad. If this person died in the jungle, or in a country such as China, no matter where or how they died, we must determine how they died and ensure that illnesses are not being transported along with the remains.

It also provides for the collection and disclosure of personal information if it is necessary to prevent the spread of a communicable disease. We must remain very vigilant here also, just as in the case of jurisdictions. We must ensure that this will not happen for all manner of reasons because it would be too easy to disclose personal information. However, in certain cases, to prevent

the spread of communicable diseases and to protect public health, these provisions will have to be applied, but only if necessary.

The bill enables the minister to make regulations in the event of a health emergency and to order that measures be taken to ensure compliance with the act. In brief, that is where we are going with Bill C-42.

Earlier, I was speaking about the history of the Quarantine Act, adopted in 1872. Naturally it should be updated because, as we know, at that time most travel was by ship, especially the longest trips. People also got around by horse, on foot, by canoe and so forth, but transatlantic travel at the time, for example, was all by ship. Naturally, travel was slower. We are talking about weeks and weeks of travel. Today, the same distance can be covered in a matter of hours by plane. Even if we do travel by ship, it does not take as long as in those days. This is also obvious.

Consequently, the spread of communicable diseases was often more localized. It took longer for diseases to spread. There was less movement of people and goods, and it was much slower than today. The invention of air transportation completely changed our way of travelling. Travel is now much more frequent and quicker as well. The movement of people and goods from one area to another has increased considerably. That is the difference between our era and the era in which the act was written, about 1872.

Thus, updating the Quarantine Act is totally appropriate. We all agree on this.

Canada, Quebec and the provinces are not immune to the outbreak of diseases.

• (1655)

In 2003, the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) really hit us. This is a painful memory, but we must still remind people about it. There were victims. Reports that were released after this tragedy clearly indicated that improvements had to be made at borders and all across the country to deal with the threats to public safety.

The World Health Organization also got involved because of the outbreak of SARS world wide. In Canada, we must put restrictions on everything that is related to these communicable diseases, but this is unfortunately not the case in all other countries. If all countries do not have measures that are as restrictive as ours, we must be even more vigilant and rigorous to deal with the fallout. I think particularly of China, which flatly denied the existence of SARS on its territory and the fact that there were victims. It took a ridiculous amount of time before China finally admitted that it had had cases of SARS. This does not help at all to maintain public health on its territory. Unfortunately, diseases always manage to spread to other countries.

Government Orders

Avian influenza also poses a threat. In Quebec, the health care and agricultural communities have taken steps to address this threat. I would remind the House that Quebec's department of agriculture, fisheries and food, in cooperation with Quebec's poultry producers' federation, has implemented quota and containment measures for poultry. Obviously, this is not always easy for certain producers. It causes problems for those who are accustomed to raising their poultry outdoors. However, public health and our collective well-being prompted authorities to act before any harm is caused. Quebec has been lucky so far. It is called prevention. All of Quebec's authorities—whether in health care, agriculture or other affected sectors—are working hard to ensure the protection of public health.

“Preparing for an influenza pandemic and other public health risks remains a priority. The enactment of the new Quarantine Act represents a huge step forward in this task”. This is what Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer, said on the matter. Dr. Butler-Jones is quite right. We were almost backward, since the act had not been updated in so long. It was time to take action.

The West Nile virus constitutes another threat. Other infectious diseases could emerge and strike us. This is why it has become so crucial that we enforce public health measures at our exit and entry points.

The update to the Quarantine Act provides for the screening of travellers by customs officials or detection devices. It also provides for the referral of travellers to a quarantine officer who may conduct an initial health assessment, order a medical examination, vaccination or other prophylactic measures, order travellers to report to a local public health authority, or detain any person who refuses a medical examination, vaccination, and so on. It also ensures the inspection of conveyances such as airlines and cargo ships, and orders decontamination, disinfection, and so on. Finally, it provides that passengers and conveyances may be detained until there is no longer a risk to public health.

The new powers also include diverting an aircraft to another landing site, establishing a quarantine station at any place in Canada and preventing the entry into Canada of persons or cargo from certain countries to prevent the introduction and spread of diseases. We have truly adapted to the new reality. We hear a lot about economic globalization, but the fact that people—and goods—travel more and more and that all borders are now open has significantly increased the level of risk with regard to the spread of diseases.

● (1700)

There is no need to panic and to become completely paranoid. Nevertheless, this kind of legislation helps us put in place the tools we need to protect public health, as I have been saying from the outset.

As my colleague from Joliette mentioned earlier, Bill C-42 gives effect to a specific section, namely section 34, which sets out the obligations that apply to the operators of certain conveyances in terms of informing quarantine officers of known or suspected risks of disease spreading on board their conveyances. This means ships, aircraft, trains, all motor vehicles, trailers and containers entering or leaving the country.

Obviously, if we want to protect ourselves, it must be understood that we do not want to spread to other countries diseases that may be present in our country. I am thinking of our neighbours to the south and any other country that could be affected. Our international reputation would certainly be tarnished if, for lack of due diligence, we allowed a disease to spread from our country to other countries.

The legislation stipulates that the operator must report anything unusual to the quarantine officer as soon as possible. The wording of section 34 stipulates, among other things, that an operator of a conveyance must report to the quarantine officer if he has any reasonable grounds to suspect that any person, cargo or other thing on board the conveyance could cause the spreading of a communicable disease, listed in a schedule of the legislation, explaining which type of disease is involved, or if a person on board the conveyance has died.

As I was saying earlier, as far as cadavers are concerned, when someone dies there is not necessarily a doctor on board or someone who can perform an autopsy quickly enough to determine the cause of death. We have to be certain that the person did not die from a disease that could be contagious and then, having come across our border, infect not just the passengers in the conveyance, but anyone that might come in contact with the cadaver, etc. Diseases do spread and that is where the danger lies.

Section 34 clarifies the obligations of the operators of ships and airplane pilots, namely upon their arrival and during their departure.

As my colleague from Joliette did so well, I want to remind this House that health is a jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. That is why, although we are in favour of the bill in principle—because disease knows no boundaries—we will be very careful to ensure that this new legislation does not go against Quebec's legislation on public health. We understand that Canada must also comply with the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations by June. There is a deadline. If Canada meets its obligations while respecting Quebec's legislation, we will continue to support Bill C-42.

● (1705)

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for making an excellent speech on a subject that, let us face it, can be rather dull. Since we are debating a health-related topic, I would like to take advantage of the fact that he is very familiar with the chrysotile issue to have him respond to our NDP colleague who said earlier that asbestos—without specifying which kind—is a health hazard. I then said that water could also be a health hazard, because if we are not careful, we could drown in it, but we still need it to live.

Given that it is in his region, even if it is not in his riding, I would like him to respond to the false representation that any use of chrysotile is dangerous.

Mr. André Bellavance: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Joliette for having gone to the trouble of asking a question that is important to my riding. At the outset, I would like to clarify that there is a mine in my riding, in Asbestos, so this question affects me personally.

Government Orders

We may lose sight of the fact that the member for Winnipeg Centre is obsessed with this. Today we are talking about communicable and contagious diseases, and as soon as the member for Winnipeg Centre had a chance, he began to talk about asbestos and criticize this file.

All of these products have to be handled carefully, just like all other dangerous goods, such as chemicals and even fuel. But asbestos is not a disease. Today, chrysotile asbestos is being used very safely. There are laws and guidelines for working with it and handling it that make it absolutely safe for both workers and users.

Obviously, it has to be handled safely. Experts from Quebec will go to other countries where chrysotile asbestos is being used to explain to them how to use it safely. Things are not like they were in the 1950s and 1960s, when people did not protect themselves.

When chrysotile asbestos is used in road construction, as it is currently used in Quebec—not nearly enough, in my opinion, because it should be used more—the workers who spread the asphalt must be well protected just so there are no health problems. Nobody is denying that there have been health problems among workers. Users have also had some health problems related to home insulation.

However, as with all dangerous products, they did not know then what we know now. Today, things are much better. Asbestos has become a much safer product. Moreover, biopersistence studies have shown that it is less hazardous than products being substituted for chrysotile asbestos in Europe and South America. It can be used in sewer drains. It is used a lot in construction. When used safely, it is a real asset in those areas.

• (1710)

Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska and I learned a great deal. I also listened to the member for Joliette earlier.

When I hear a speech like that, I wonder about reporting diseases. If we are talking about objects or animals, it is easy enough to kill chickens or other animals. We can seize objects to prevent them from becoming a danger to the public. But when it comes to people, I am always wary of exclusion and rejection. I know that some people can be contagious and that they can transmit diseases.

I would like to hear my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska talk about the measures we should take when a person has a communicable disease and it must be reported.

Mr. André Bellavance: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Repentigny for his question and I appreciate his great sensitivity not only to the people of my riding but also to all human beings. He may have been conditioned by his previous career.

Obviously, it is always awkward to quarantine people. Internment is even considered for those who refuse vaccination, for instance. I think that the greatest of respect has to be shown throughout the process. There is no question of excluding anyone. But at the same time, we must never lose sight of the collective good. If someone is suspected of entering the country with a disease, that is what quarantine is for. The idea is not to lock people up in chains, but rather to ensure, using modern medical technology, tests, vaccination

and so on, that the individuals are not a danger to themselves or to others.

Sometimes, coming home from abroad, people just want to get home without any hassle. They have a touch of fever, but feel that it is no big deal. For their own protection, however, if they are suspected of carrying the germ of a communicable disease, we have to make sure that they will not die from it. We also have to ensure that they will not spread some disease to family, friends and possibly an entire community. All these actions have to be taken in a very respectful manner, while we ensure that public health is properly protected. That is why we need quarantine legislation. I have a feeling that, if it came to be known that quarantine officers or the people at Health Canada were not showing people proper respect, someone would blow the whistle on them and we would be the first ones to denounce such conduct.

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by mentioning the beautiful light that shines on this side of the House. This is not a coincidence. The sky is blue and God is a sovereignist. We are going to take advantage of this light to enlighten our colleagues, the members opposite, who form the government. I hope they will be wise enough to listen.

I could not help but smile when I saw that this legislation was coming back here to be amended. Let us not forget that, at the beginning of this session, a bill was rammed through the House, namely Bill C-2. We felt that this issue had not been debated long enough to ensure that this legislation would provide measures that could be implemented, and that it would be responsible and meaningful for our fellow citizens, whom we represent here.

Today, I see that we have to go back to Bill C-12, which was passed in 2005, when I was still a new member in this House. In fact, this bill was my first experience with the legislation here. I had to learn how to debate it in the Standing Committee on Health, along with my colleague, the member for Hochelaga, who was then our party critic on health issues. Even at that time we had serious reservations about the provisions that the government wanted to include in the bill, because we often felt that they were too intrusive or not logical enough to allow for concrete, easy and effective implementation.

We have to be very cautious and serious when we talk about infectious and communicable diseases, about viruses and bacteria that proliferate. We have to take our role seriously. At the time, we deplored the fact that people would be accountable to an authority designated by the Minister of Health, because we felt that this was a somewhat complex process that would prevent the bill from being an effective piece of legislation.

Government Orders

When I saw the bill and saw that there was a move to amend this section, that is, section 34, I thought to myself, "Two years later, people are finally seeing that, once again, the Bloc Québécois was right." Naturally, it was members of the Bloc Québécois who were the first to oppose that part of the legislation, which called for an authority designated by the minister. We did so because we believed that the bill encroached too much on provincial jurisdictions, especially in the area of health.

In Quebec, our department of public health is very effective and takes great care to protect us against all communicable and infectious diseases. I know that this is not necessarily the case everywhere. A hospital in Vegreville had to close its doors this week. Also, in Loyds, hundreds of patients had to be informed that they had probably contracted HIV or hepatitis, because the doctor had not reported, as one must, these diseases to public health authorities.

It is not enough to simply enact legislation. That legislation must be respected, obeyed and enforced, and we must be able to use that legislation effectively to protect ourselves against what we could call barbarian invasions. Any mention of tuberculosis, west Nile virus or SARS is sure to arouse fear. I would remind the House that the original Quarantine Act was drafted around 1872, if I understood my hon. colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska correctly.

● (1715)

We know that diseases crossed borders with the influx of pioneers who came here to start a life for themselves and become proud citizens of what was then Lower Canada and Upper Canada, in other words, the Quebec and Canada of today.

Infectious diseases did not stop crossing our borders just because we passed this legislation in 1872. In the early 1900s, around 1910 or 1918, right here in Hull, on the other side of the river, a very serious Spanish influenza outbreak killed many people. It decimated entire families. We still see traces of those families today in the names of the hon. members sitting in this House and the people nearby, who live in Hull, in Gatineau. These people probably have in their lineage, among their ancestors, people who died from the Spanish flu. At the time, even though the legislation existed, we did not have the means to enforce or apply it.

As far as such epidemics are concerned, we have to think about all these soldiers we send abroad. Often we pay more attention to what is going on over there in terms of equipment, tools and armament, and not pay much attention to what they might be bringing back with them when they come home. This can be very dangerous for them. These days, a number of women take part in these missions. Many of them come back and can also spread infectious diseases to their families and children because they did not receive the necessary care when they were abroad on a peacekeeping mission or, unfortunately, at war.

It is not enough to have laws, we also need the political will to apply them. We have to start resolving the problems in our own backyard. We currently have tuberculosis epidemics in a number of our first nations communities. It is unthinkable that in 2007 there are still people suffering from tuberculosis. That is the direct responsibility of the federal government. It is a responsibility that it neglects far too often and which it has not respected because the epidemic is spreading, not stopping.

In Kashechewan, people may be forced to leave their homes and to be relocated because their water is not potable. However, they cannot do it today because there is no money. If we have billions of dollars to invest in arms, we should at least have a few million to invest in providing safe, healthy housing where individuals can live with dignity and respect. At present, this is not the case. It is much easier to adopt a laissez-faire attitude. Hundreds, even thousands of individuals will suffer from these illnesses, including tuberculosis and other diseases. They will contract them because of unhealthy living conditions. Nothing is being done about that.

The previous government ratified the Kelowna accord. We all voted in this House to honour that accord. However, the government decided otherwise and is not making any further commitments. That is most unfortunate.

First nations communities, Inuit communities, all these communities find it difficult to carve out a place for themselves in our society. It is difficult for them to have access to adequate health care, appropriate education, and affordable, healthy, safe housing. It is difficult for them, but they have been abandoned even though it is our first responsibility to help them. We abandon them, we do not invest in these societies. Why? Why is there constant encroachment, to the tune of millions of dollars, on provincial responsibilities and jurisdictions when we do not even take care of our own responsibilities?

● (1720)

I do not understand. And yet, some small countries who have very little do much more for their citizens. I regularly visit Cuba, because I love the island and the people. Someone will say to me that they do not have a great deal of freedom, but I sometimes wonder which one of us has more freedom. I know that they have first class health care. All Cubans can study as much and as long as they wish. Education is free. Later, the government assigns the doctors it has trained to various countries to work for humanitarian causes. These doctors are very well trained.

Whenever I go to Cuba, I am never afraid of getting sick. I know I will be taken care of. When we went to Taiwan last fall, my travelling companion got a toothache on Taiwan's national holiday. The person I was with had a toothache. We had to go to a hospital because there are no dental clinics. At the hospital, two doctors took care of us. In under 10 minutes, my companion was in a chair and personnel had administered a sedative and something to take away the pain, and all of this happened on Taiwan's national holiday. Of course, thousands of people live there and their hospitals do not have all the equipment we have here. But their government chooses to invest in human resources to provide a standard of care and services that we rarely find here.

Private Members' Business

That service standard is rare here largely because of our provincial governments. Why do our respective governments not have enough money? Because previous federal governments cut transfer payments. Beginning in 1994, cuts to provincial transfer payments, including payments to Quebec, resulted in the sorry state of our health care systems today compared to those of some small countries that have much less than we do, but that care about their citizens' health.

We support the principle underlying this bill. We are not against it. Obviously, we cannot be against what is right, but today, as we study this bill, we must ask ourselves a question. Will this bill provide enough money to train quarantine officers? Will enough money be invested in training customs agents and all of the front-line staff who meet people at the border?

That was one of the concerns expressed by the Standing Committee on Health in 2004-05. We were not certain that all steps would be taken in order to enforce Bill C-12. After two years, we see that enforcing it is very difficult indeed, and that it was not really being enforced because there were flaws in the bill. In the years to come, we will likely find other flaws in the bill, given that the Standing Committee on Health had considerable reservations about approving the bill, which was adopted on division.

If we all minded our own business, there would likely be fewer bills of this kind to review. For example, despite what the government thinks, Bill C-2 was adopted very quickly, and a number of its sections are still not in force.

Why are we asked to debate bills that seem so important to the government, only to then have it dismiss everything we determined, everything we decided, everything we wanted to be able to give to our citizens as members of Parliament here in this House? We wonder why.

• (1725)

I do not know. I only hope that, in the future, we will be more careful. If it is true that Bill C-42 is crucial to the proper enforcement of Bill C-12, through the amendment of section 34, it is also true that there are several other sections of the bill that should be reviewed. In enforcing—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member. She will have another four minutes to continue her speech the next time this bill comes before the House.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The House resumed from March 22, consideration of Bill C-293, An Act respecting the provision of official development assistance abroad, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motions at report stage of Bill C-293.

Call in the members.

• (1750)

[*English*]

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The question is on Motion No. 1.

• (1800)

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 141*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Barbot	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Bonin	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brison
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
DeBellefeuille	Demers
Deschamps	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Gravel
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Holland
Hubbard	Ignatieff
Jennings	Julian
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keeper	Kotto
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
Layton	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemay
Lessard	Lussier
MacAulay	Malo
Maloney	Marston
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Matthews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau
Neville	Ouellet
Owen	Pacetti
Pallister	Paquette
Patry	Pearson

Private Members' Business

Perron	Peterson
Picard	Plamondon
Priddy	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simard
Simms	St-Cyr
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Steckle
Stoffer	Stronach
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks
Turner	Valley
Vincent	Wasylcia-Leis
Wilfert	Wilson
Wrzesnewskyj	Zed— 166

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Arthur	Baird
Batters	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Boucher	Breitreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Day
Del Mastro	Devolin
Doyle	Dykstra
Emerson	Epp
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lemieux	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Manning	Mayes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
Nicholson	Obhrai
O'Connor	Petit
Oda	Prentice
Poilievre	Rajotte
Preston	Richardson
Reid	Schellenberger
Ritz	Skelton
Shipley	Solberg
Smith	Stanton
Sorenson	Strahl
Storseth	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Sweet	Tilson
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Trost
Toews	

Tweed	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Williams
Yelich— 121	

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I declare Motion No. 1 carried.

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think that if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent to apply the results of the vote on the motion just taken to the additional seven amendment motions, report stage, and third reading of Bill C-293.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Does the chief government whip have unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 142)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Barbot	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Bonin	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brisson
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
DeBellefeuille	Demers
Deschamps	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Gravel
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Holland
Hubbard	Ignatieff
Jennings	Julian
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keeper	Kotto
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
Layton	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemay
Lessard	Lussier

Private Members' Business

MacAulay
Maloney
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen
McCallum
McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville
Owen
Pallister
Patry
Perron
Picard
Priddy
Ratansi
Regan
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St-Hilaire
St. Denis
Stoffer
Szabo
Temelkovski
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Turner
Vincent
Wilfert
Wrzesnewskyj

Malo
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse
Matthews
McDonough
McGuire
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Nadeau
Ouellet
Pacetti
Paquette
Pearson
Peterson
Plamondon
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Scott
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Amand
Steckle
Stronach
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Valley
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wilson
Zed— 166

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Verner
Warawa
Watson
Yelich— 121

Norlock
Obhrai
Petit
Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Schellenberger
Skelton
Solberg
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Wallace
Warkentin
Williams

PAIRED

Nil

(The House divided on Motion No. 3, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 143)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Angus
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Barbot
Beaumier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bellavance
Bevilacqua
Bigras
Blaikie
Bonin
Boshcoff
Bourgeois
Brown (Oakville)
Byrne
Cardin
Chan
Chow
Coderre
Comuzzi
Crête
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner
DeBellefeuille
Deschamps
Dhaliwal
Dion
Duceppe
Eyking
Folco
Fry
Gaudet
Godin
Graham
Guarnieri
Guimond
Hubbard
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keeper
Laforest
Lalonde
Layton
Lee
Lessard

André
Asselin
Bachand
Bains
Barnes
Bélanger
Bell (North Vancouver)
Bennett
Bevington
Black
Blais
Bonsant
Bouchard
Brisson
Brunelle
Cannis
Carrier
Charlton
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Crowder
Cullen (Etobicoke North)
D'Amours
Demers
Dewar
Dhalla
Dryden
Easter
Faille
Freeman
Gagnon
Godfrey
Goodale
Gravel
Guay
Holland
Ignatieff
Julian
Karygiannis
Kotto
Laframboise
Lavallée
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lussier

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Arthur
Batters
Bernier
Blackburn
Boucher
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie
Casson
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Doyle
Emerson
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKay (Central Nova)
Manning
Menzies
Miller

Ablonczy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Baird
Benoit
Bezan
Blaney
Breitkreuz
Brown (Barrie)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casey
Chong
Cummins
Day
Devolin
Dykstra
Epp
Finley
Flaherty
Galipeau
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
Merrifield
Mills

Private Members' Business

MacAulay	Malo
Maloney	Marston
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Matthews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau
Neville	Ouellet
Owen	Pacetti
Pallister	Paquette
Patry	Pearson
Perron	Peterson
Picard	Plamondon
Priddy	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simard
Simms	St-Cyr
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Steckle
Stoffer	Stronach
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks
Turner	Valley
Vincent	Wasylcia-Leis
Wilfert	Wilson
Wrzesnewskyj	Zed- — 166

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Arthur	Baird
Batters	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Boucher	Breitreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Day
Del Mastro	Devolin
Doyle	Dykstra
Emerson	Epp
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lemieux	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Manning	Mayes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Petit
Poilievre	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Richardson
Ritz	Schellenberger
Shipley	Skelton
Smith	Solberg
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Williams
Yelich- — 121	

PAIRED

Nil

(The House divided on Motion No. 4, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 145)***YEAS**

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Barbot	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Bonin	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brison
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
DeBellefeuille	Demers
Deschamps	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Gravel
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Holland
Hubbard	Ignatieff
Jennings	Julian
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keeper	Kotto
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
Layton	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemay
Lessard	Lussier

Private Members' Business

MacAulay
Maloney
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen
McCallum
McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville
Owen
Pallister
Patry
Perron
Picard
Priddy
Ratansi
Regan
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St-Hilaire
St. Denis
Stoffer
Szabo
Temelkovski
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Turner
Vincent
Wilfert
Wrzesnewskyj

Malo
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse
Matthews
McDonough
McGuire
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Nadeau
Ouellet
Pacetti
Paquette
Pearson
Peterson
Plamondon
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Scott
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Amand
Steckle
Stronach
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Valley
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wilson
Zed— 166

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Verner
Warawa
Watson
Yelich— 121

Norlock
Obhrai
Petit
Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Schellenberger
Skelton
Solberg
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Wallace
Warkentin
Williams

PAIRED

Nil

(The House divided on Motion No. 5, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 146)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Angus
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Barbot
Beaumier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bellavance
Bevilacqua
Bigras
Blaikie
Bonin
Boshcoff
Bourgeois
Brown (Oakville)
Byrne
Cardin
Chan
Chow
Coderre
Comuzzi
Crête
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner
DeBellefeuille
Deschamps
Dhaliwal
Dion
Duceppe
Eyking
Folco
Fry
Gaudet
Godin
Graham
Guarnieri
Guimond
Hubbard
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keeper
Laforest
Lalonde
Layton
Lee
Lessard

André
Asselin
Bachand
Bains
Barnes
Bélanger
Bell (North Vancouver)
Bennett
Bevington
Black
Blais
Bonsant
Bouchard
Brisson
Brunelle
Cannis
Carrier
Charlton
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Crowder
Cullen (Etobicoke North)
D'Amours
Demers
Dewar
Dhalla
Dryden
Easter
Faille
Freeman
Gagnon
Godfrey
Goodale
Gravel
Guay
Holland
Ignatieff
Julian
Karygiannis
Kotto
Laframboise
Lavallée
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lussier

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Arthur
Batters
Bernier
Blackburn
Boucher
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie
Casson
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Doyle
Emerson
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKay (Central Nova)
Manning
Menzies
Miller

Ablonczy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Baird
Benoit
Bezan
Blaney
Breitkreuz
Brown (Barrie)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casey
Chong
Cummins
Day
Devolin
Dykstra
Epp
Finley
Flaherty
Galipeau
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
Merrifield
Mills

Private Members' Business

MacAulay	Malo
Maloney	Marston
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Matthews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau
Neville	Ouellet
Owen	Pacetti
Pallister	Paquette
Patry	Pearson
Perron	Peterson
Picard	Plamondon
Priddy	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simard
Simms	St-Cyr
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Steckle
Stoffer	Stronach
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks
Turner	Valley
Vincent	Wasylcia-Leis
Wilfert	Wilson
Wrzesnewskyj	Zed- — 166

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Arthur	Baird
Batters	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Boucher	Breitreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Day
Del Mastro	Devolin
Doyle	Dykstra
Emerson	Epp
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lemieux	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Manning	Mayes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Petit
Poilievre	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Richardson
Ritz	Schellenberger
Shipley	Skelton
Smith	Solberg
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Williams
Yelich- — 121	

PAIRED

Nil

(The House divided on Motion No. 6, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 144)***YEAS**

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Barbot	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Bonin	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brisson
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
DeBellefeuille	Demers
Deschamps	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Gravel
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Holland
Hubbard	Ignatieff
Jennings	Julian
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keeper	Kotto
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
Layton	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemay
Lessard	Lussier

Private Members' Business

MacAulay
Maloney
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen
McCallum
McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville
Owen
Pallister
Patry
Perron
Picard
Priddy
Ratansi
Regan
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St-Hilaire
St. Denis
Stoffer
Szabo
Temelkovski
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Turner
Vincent
Wilfert
Wrzesnewskyj

Malo
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse
Matthews
McDonough
McGuire
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Nadeau
Ouellet
Pacetti
Paquette
Pearson
Peterson
Plamondon
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Scott
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Amand
Steckle
Stronach
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Valley
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wilson
Zed— 166

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Verner
Warawa
Watson
Yelich— 121

Norlock
Obhrai
Petit
Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Schellenberger
Skelton
Solberg
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Wallace
Warkentin
Williams

PAIRED

Nil

(The House divided on Motion No. 8, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 143)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Angus
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Barbot
Beaumier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bellavance
Bevilacqua
Bigras
Blaikie
Bonin
Boshcoff
Bourgeois
Brown (Oakville)
Byrne
Cardin
Chan
Chow
Coderre
Comuzzi
Crête
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner
DeBellefeuille
Deschamps
Dhaliwal
Dion
Duceppe
Eyking
Folco
Fry
Gaudet
Godin
Graham
Guarnieri
Guimond
Hubbard
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keeper
Laforest
Lalonde
Layton
Lee
Lessard

André
Asselin
Bachand
Bains
Barnes
Bélanger
Bell (North Vancouver)
Bennett
Bevington
Black
Blais
Bonsant
Bouchard
Brisson
Brunelle
Cannis
Carrier
Charlton
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Crowder
Cullen (Etobicoke North)
D'Amours
Demers
Dewar
Dhalla
Dryden
Easter
Faille
Freeman
Gagnon
Godfrey
Goodale
Gravel
Guay
Holland
Ignatieff
Julian
Karygiannis
Kotto
Laframboise
Lavallée
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lussier

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Arthur
Batters
Bernier
Blackburn
Boucher
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie
Casson
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Doyle
Emerson
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKay (Central Nova)
Manning
Menzies
Miller

Ablonczy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Baird
Benoit
Bezan
Blaney
Breitkreuz
Brown (Barrie)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casey
Chong
Cummins
Day
Devolin
Dykstra
Epp
Finley
Flaherty
Galipeau
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
Merrifield
Mills

Private Members' Business

MacAulay	Malo
Maloney	Marston
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Matthews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau
Neville	Ouellet
Owen	Pacetti
Pallister	Paquette
Patry	Pearson
Perron	Peterson
Picard	Plamondon
Priddy	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simard
Simms	St-Cyr
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Steckle
Stoffer	Stronach
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks
Turner	Valley
Vincent	Wasylcia-Leis
Wilfert	Wilson
Wrzesnewskyj	Zed- — 166

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Arthur	Baird
Batters	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Boucher	Breitreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Day
Del Mastro	Devolin
Doyle	Dykstra
Emerson	Epp
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lemieux	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Manning	Mayes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Petit
Poilievre	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Richardson
Ritz	Schellenberger
Shipley	Skelton
Smith	Solberg
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Williams
Yelich- — 121	

PAIRED

Nil

(The House divided on Motion No. 9, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 147)***YEAS**

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Barbot	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Bonin	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brison
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
DeBellefeuille	Demers
Deschamps	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Gravel
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Holland
Hubbard	Ignatieff
Jennings	Julian
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keeper	Kotto
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
Layton	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemay
Lessard	Lussier

Private Members' Business

MacAulay
 Maloney
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
 Mathysen
 McCallum
 McGuinty
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Ménard (Hochelaga)
 Mourani
 Murphy (Charlottetown)
 Neville
 Owen
 Pallister
 Patry
 Perron
 Picard
 Priddy
 Ratansi
 Regan
 Rodriguez
 Roy
 Savage
 Scarpaleggia
 Sgro
 Silva
 Simms
 St-Hilaire
 St. Denis
 Stoffer
 Szabo
 Temelkovski
 Basques)
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Turner
 Vincent
 Wilfert
 Wrzesnewskyj

Malo
 Marston
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 Masse
 Matthews
 McDonough
 McGuire
 McTeague
 Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
 Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
 Nadeau
 Ouellet
 Pacetti
 Paquette
 Pearson
 Peterson
 Plamondon
 Proulx
 Redman
 Robillard
 Rota
 Russell
 Savoie
 Scott
 Siksay
 Simard
 St-Cyr
 St. Amand
 Steckle
 Stronach
 Telegdi
 Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
 Tonks
 Valley
 Wasylcia-Leis
 Wilson
 Zed— 166

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Nicholson
 O'Connor
 Oda
 Poilievre
 Preston
 Reid
 Ritz
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Toews
 Tweed
 Van Loan
 Verner
 Warawa
 Watson
 Yelich— 121

Norlock
 Obhrai
 Petit
 Prentice
 Rajotte
 Richardson
 Schellenberger
 Skelton
 Solberg
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Tilson
 Trost
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Williams

PAIRED

Nil

● (1805)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I declare Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 carried.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.) moved that Bill C-293 be concurred in at report stage.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 148)

NAYS

Members

Abbott
 Albrecht
 Allison
 Anders
 Arthur
 Batters
 Bernier
 Blackburn
 Boucher
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Bruinooge
 Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
 Carrie
 Casson
 Clement
 Davidson
 Del Mastro
 Doyle
 Emerson
 Fast
 Fitzpatrick
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Goodyear
 Grewal
 Hanger
 Harvey
 Heam
 Hill
 Jaffer
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lemieux
 Lunn
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Manning
 Menzies
 Miller

Ablonczy
 Allen
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Baird
 Benoit
 Bezan
 Blaney
 Breitreuz
 Brown (Barrie)
 Calkins
 Cannon (Pontiac)
 Casey
 Chong
 Cummins
 Day
 Devolin
 Dykstra
 Epp
 Finley
 Flaherty
 Galipeau
 Goldring
 Gourde
 Guergis
 Harris
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hinton
 Jean
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Khan
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lake
 Lauzon
 Lukiwski
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 Merrifield
 Mills

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
 Angus
 Atamanenko
 Bagnell
 Barbot
 Beaumier
 Bell (Vancouver Island North)
 Bellavance
 Bevilacqua
 Bigras
 Blaikie
 Bonin
 Boshcoff
 Bourgeois
 Brown (Oakville)
 Byrne
 Cardin
 Chan
 Chow
 Coderre
 Comuzzi
 Crête
 Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
 Cuzner
 DeBellefeuille
 Deschamps
 Dhaliwal
 Dion
 Duceppe
 Eyking
 Folco
 Fry
 Gaudet
 Godin
 Graham
 Guarnieri
 Guimond
 Hubbard
 Jennings
 Karetak-Lindell
 André
 Asselin
 Bachand
 Bains
 Barnes
 Bélanger
 Bell (North Vancouver)
 Bennett
 Bevington
 Black
 Blais
 Bonsant
 Bouchard
 Brisson
 Brunelle
 Cannis
 Carrier
 Charlton
 Christopherson
 Comartin
 Cotler
 Crowder
 Cullen (Etobicoke North)
 D'Amours
 Demers
 Dewar
 Dhalla
 Dryden
 Easter
 Faille
 Freeman
 Gagnon
 Godfrey
 Goodale
 Gravel
 Guay
 Holland
 Ignatieff
 Julian
 Karygiannis

Private Members' Business

Keeper	Kotto
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
Layton	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemay
Lessard	Lussier
MacAulay	Malo
Maloney	Marston
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Mathews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau
Neville	Ouellet
Owen	Pacetti
Pallister	Paquette
Patry	Pearson
Perron	Peterson
Picard	Plamondon
Priddy	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simard
Simms	St-Cyr
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Steckle
Stoffer	Stronach
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks
Turner	Valley
Vincent	Wasylicia-Leis
Wilfert	Wilson
Wrzesnewskyj	Zed— 166

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Arthur	Baird
Batters	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Boucher	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Day
Del Mastro	Devolin
Doyle	Dykstra
Emerson	Epp
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lemieux	Lukiwski

Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Manning	Mayes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Petit
Poilievre	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Richardson
Ritz	Schellenberger
Shipley	Skelton
Smith	Solberg
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Williams
Yelich— 121	

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I declare the motion carried.

Hon. John McKay moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 149)***YEAS**

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Barbot	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Bonin	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brisson
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
DeBellefeuille	Demers
Deschamps	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Gravel
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Holland

Private Members' Business

Hubbard
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keeper
Laforest
Lalonde
Layton
Lee
Lessard
MacAulay
Maloney
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen
McCallum
McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelega)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville
Owen
Pallister
Patry
Perron
Picard
Priddy
Ratansi
Regan
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St-Hilaire
St. Denis
Stoffer
Szabo
Temelkovski
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Turner
Vincent
Wilfert
Wrzesnewskyj

Ignatieff
Julian
Karygiannis
Kotto
Laframboise
Lavallée
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lussier
Malo
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse
Matthews
McDonough
McGuire
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Nadeau
Ouellet
Pacetti
Paquette
Pearson
Peterson
Plamondon
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Scott
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Amand
Steckle
Stronach
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Valley
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wilson
Zed— 166

Komarnicki
Lake
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKay (Central Nova)
Manning
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Shiple
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Verner
Warawa
Watson
Yelich— 121

Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
Merrifield
Mills
Norlock
Obhrai
Petit
Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Schellenberger
Skelton
Solberg
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Wallace
Warkentin
Williams

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from March 23, consideration of the motion that Bill C-265, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (qualification for and entitlement to benefits), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-265 under private members' business.

● (1815)

[*English*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 150*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Arthur
Batters
Bernier
Blackburn
Boucher
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie
Casson
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Doyle
Emerson
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)

Ablonczy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Baird
Benoit
Bezan
Blaney
Breitkreuz
Brown (Barrie)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casey
Chong
Cummins
Day
Devolin
Dykstra
Epp
Finley
Flaherty
Galipeau
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan

Alghabra
Angus
Asselin
Bachand
Bains
Barnes
Bélangier
Bell (North Vancouver)
Bennett
Bevington
Black
Blais
Bonin

André
Arthur
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Barbot
Beaumier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bellavance
Bevilacqua
Bigras
Blaikie
Blaney
Bonsant

Private Members' Business

Boshcoff	Bouchard	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bourgeois	Brison	Bruinooge	Calkins
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Byrne	Cannis	Carrie	Casey
Cardin	Carrier	Casson	Chong
Chan	Charlton	Clement	Cummins
Chow	Christopherson	Davidson	Day
Coderre	Comartin	Del Mastro	Devolin
Comuzzi	Cotler	Doyle	Dykstra
Crête	Crowder	Emerson	Epp
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Fast	Finley
Cuzner	D'Amours	Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
DeBellefeuille	Demers	Fletcher	Galipeau
Deschamps	Dewar	Gallant	Goldring
Dhaliwal	Dhalla	Goodyear	Gourde
Dion	Dryden	Grewal	Guergis
Duceppe	Easter	Hanger	Harris
Eyking	Faille	Harvey	Hawn
Folco	Freeman	Hearn	Hiebert
Fry	Gagnon	Hill	Hinton
Gaudet	Godfrey	Jaffer	Jean
Godin	Goodale	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Graham	Gravel	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Guarnieri	Guay	Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Guimond	Holland	Lake	Lauzon
Hubbard	Ignatieff	Lemieux	Lukiwski
Jennings	Julian	Lunn	Lunney
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis	MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Keeper	Kotto	Manning	Mayes
Laforest	Laframboise	Menzies	Merrifield
Lalonde	Lavallée	Miller	Mills
Layton	LeBlanc	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Lee	Lemay	Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Lessard	Lussier	Nicholson	Norlock
MacAulay	Malo	O'Connor	Obhrai
Maloney	Marston	Oda	Pallister
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Petit	Poilevre
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse	Prentice	Preston
Mathysen	Matthews	Rajotte	Reid
McCallum	McDonough	Richardson	Ritz
McGuinty	McGuire	Schellenberger	Shipley
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)	Skelton	Smith
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mourani	Solberg	Sorenson
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)	Stanton	Storseth
Nadeau	Neville	Strahl	Sweet
Ouellet	Owen	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Pacetti	Paquette	Tilson	Toews
Patry	Pearson	Trost	Tweed
Perron	Peterson	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Picard	Plamondon	Vellacott	Verner
Priddy	Proulx	Wallace	Warawa
Ratansi	Redman	Warkentin	Watson
Regan	Robillard	Williams	Yelich — 120
Rodriguez	Rota		
Roy	Russell		
Savage	Savoie		
Scarpaleggia	Scott		
Sgro	Siksay		
Silva	Simard		
Simms	St-Cyr		
St-Hilaire	St. Amand		
St. Denis	Steckle		
Stoffer	Stronach		
Szabo	Telegdi		
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les		
Basques)			
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks		
Turner	Valley		
Vincent	Wasylycia-Leis		
Wilfert	Wilson		
Wrzesnewskyj	Zed — 166		

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Baird	Batters
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Boucher	Breitkreuz

Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Day
Del Mastro	Devolin
Doyle	Dykstra
Emerson	Epp
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lemieux	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Manning	Mayes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Pallister
Petit	Poilevre
Prentice	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Richardson	Ritz
Schellenberger	Shipley
Skelton	Smith
Solberg	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tilson	Toews
Trost	Tweed
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Williams	Yelich — 120

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

CANADIAN FORCES

The House resumed from March 26 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 244 under private members' business.

● (1825)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

Private Members' Business

(Division No. 151)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Alghabra
Allen	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	André
Angus	Arthur
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Baird
Barbot	Barnes
Batters	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bell (North Vancouver)	Bellavance
Bennett	Benoit
Bernier	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bezan
Bigras	Black
Blackburn	Blaikie
Blais	Blaney
Bonsant	Boshcoff
Bouchard	Boucher
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Brison	Brown (Oakville)
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinoooge	Brunelle
Byrne	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannis
Cannon (Pontiac)	Cardin
Carrie	Carrier
Casey	Casson
Chan	Charlton
Chong	Chow
Christopherson	Clement
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cummins	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davidson
Day	DeBellefeuille
Del Mastro	Demers
Deschamps	Devolin
Dewar	Dhaliwal
Dhalla	Dion
Doyle	Dryden
Duceppe	Dykstra
Easter	Emerson
Epp	Eyking
Faillie	Fast
Finley	Fitzpatrick
Flaherty	Fletcher
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Galipeau	Gallant
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Graham
Gravel	Grewal
Guarnieri	Guay
Guergis	Guimond
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Holland	Hubbard
Ignatieff	Jaffer
Jean	Jennings
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Keoper
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Komarnicki	Kotto
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Laforest
Laframboise	Lake
Lalonde	Lauzon
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee

Lemay	Lemieux
Lessard	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
Lussier	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Malo	Maloney
Manning	Marston
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Matthews
Mayes	McCallum
McDonough	McGuinty
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Mills	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Mourani
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau	Neville
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Ouellet
Owen	Pacetti
Pallister	Paquette
Patry	Pearson
Peterson	Petit
Picard	Plamondon
Poilievre	Prentice
Preston	Priddy
Proulx	Rajotte
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Reid
Richardson	Ritz
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rota	Roy
Russell	Savage
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Scott
Sgro	Shiple
Siksay	Silva
Simard	Simms
Skelton	Smith
Solberg	Sorenson
St-Cyr	St-Hilaire
St. Amand	St. Denis
Stanton	Steckle
Stoffer	Storseth
Strahl	Stronach
Sweet	Szabo
Telegdi	Temelkovski
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tilson	Toews
Tonks	Trost
Turner	Tweed
Valley	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Vincent
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Wasylycia-Leis
Watson	Wilfert
Williams	Wilson
Wrzesnewskyj	Yelich
Zed- — 285	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I declare the motion carried.

It being 6:37 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***CRIMINAL CODE**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-277, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (luring a child), as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.
(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1830)

Mr. Ed Fast moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-277, which addresses the luring of children over the Internet for sexual purposes.

This bill does two things. It doubles the maximum sentence for luring a child from 5 to 10 years in prison. It also increases the maximum sentence for a summary conviction luring offence from 6 to 18 months in prison.

I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to those members of the House who supported the bill at the justice committee. Originally at second reading my bill did not receive unanimous support and some members of the House expressed reservations about certain aspects of it. At committee, however, I believe those fears were allayed and I was pleased to see that the bill was supported unanimously and referred back to the House. Clearly, we have all recognized how important it is for us to protect the most innocent among us, namely our children, against predators who want to use and abuse modern technology to sexually exploit them.

There may still be some who ask why the bill is necessary. As I mentioned at committee, I am blessed to be the father of four beautiful daughters. They, together with my wife, are the most important people in my life. Annette and I have done everything we can to protect our daughters from those who would take away their innocence and cause them lifelong harm. Thankfully, our daughters are now all moving into adulthood as caring and responsible human beings, but there was a time when they were much more vulnerable than they are now.

As technology continues to improve and change, the challenges which parents of young children face become more and more daunting.

The Internet is quickly becoming the platform of choice for those who want to sexually abuse our children. Sexual predators no longer have to hide behind bushes in schoolyards. They now lure children from the privacy of their homes and hide their identities and ages

behind the anonymity of their computers in chat rooms, forums, instant messaging, and even websites like MySpace.com.

Canadian children, in turn, are exposed as a result of inadequate supervision at home and the use of computers at unsupervised locations. Even more critical, children often do not have the maturity to identify, avoid and protect themselves against the risks of using the Internet. They generally do not have the same ability to discern between what is safe and what is not. Sexual predators understand this and exploit this vulnerability.

As members know, the Internet is a powerful tool for both good and evil. Just as it has a vast potential to educate and improve our lives, the Internet is also a powerful force in perpetrating crime and harming people. Our laws have not kept up with this reality.

Case in point. The current maximum sentence for Internet luring in Canada is five years in prison. In that respect, our country lags far behind others, such as the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States, which have all acted to criminalize Internet luring. In those jurisdictions, the sentences are significantly higher.

In the U.K. for example, legislation calls for a maximum sentence of 14 years in prison. In Australia it is 15 years. In the United States the federal government enacted legislation that calls not only for a maximum of 30 years, but a mandatory minimum of five years in prison. Even individual states have also introduced their own laws against Internet luring with maximum sentences commonly in the 10 year range.

Clearly, if the maximum sentence is a reflection of the importance which we place on protecting our children, we need to do more.

Statistics from across North America indicate that child luring is becoming more and more prevalent. Anyone wishing to understand the scope and nature of child luring need only watch NBC's *To Catch A Predator*. The program, which stages sting operations throughout the U.S., found no shortage of material to use.

If time permitted, I could regale members with lurid details of the convictions and sentences since Internet luring was declared a crime in Canada. However, in the interests of time, I will simply state that in Canada sentences for a first time offender typically range from six months to two years in prison. Believe it or not, in some cases these sentences are served in the community and in the comfort of the offender's home.

• (1835)

It is only a matter of time before the courts will be called upon to sentence offenders who have a history of prior sexual offences. What should be of great concern to all of us is the likelihood that the relatively short maximum sentence of five years will handcuff the court's ability to sentence these reoffenders.

Private Members' Business

Let me offer a tragic yet current example. The case of Peter Whitmore, although not a case of luring, mesmerized the nation for several months last year as police hunted down the sexual predator who had abducted two young boys. Mercifully, Mr. Whitmore was caught, but only after allegedly committing numerous sexual offences against these boys. Here is the sad part: Mr. Whitmore had a long history of prior sexual offences against children and had repeatedly been sentenced to prison terms of up to five years. Even then a five year sentence did not deter this predator from seeking out young children again and he spent further time in jail for violating his parole by contacting children.

Let us assume that Mr. Whitmore is again released from prison. If he then commits the offence of luring a child to satisfy his sexual urges, the maximum sentence he could receive is, you guessed it, five years in prison, a term which has previously failed to deter him from molesting children.

What judges need is the ability to properly sentence the Peter Whitmores of this world, where Internet luring is only a culmination of a long history of sexual crimes against children and others. I would also suggest that increasing the maximum sentence for luring to 10 years more appropriately reflects the seriousness of this offence.

If we believe that violent offences against children deserve strong denunciation, that denunciation must be reflected in the sentences we impose. Yet a comparison to a number of other Criminal Code offences indicates that the current five year maximum for luring does not represent the degree of denunciation that Canadians would expect or demand.

Mr. Speaker, did you know that parental abduction of a child, distribution of child pornography and sexual touching all carry a maximum sentence of 10 years, not five? More shockingly, did you know that fraud over \$5,000 and yes, even simple theft of cattle carries a sentence which is twice the length of the five year sentence for luring a child? Clearly, when viewed in the context of these comparative offences, the luring of our children for sexual purposes cries out for at least similar, if not harsher, treatment. My heart tells me that the protection of our children is worth much, much more than the theft of cattle or simple fraud.

Perhaps even more important, increasing the maximum sentence for luring to 10 years in prison provides the courts with the tools to remove from society for longer periods of time the most serious sexual offenders, the Peter Whitmores, if you will. Common sense dictates that someone who repeatedly shows a clear intention to commit crimes against our children will not commit these crimes as long as he is behind bars.

An increased sentence for luring is justified by the unique nature of sexual offences against children. Many of those who prey on children are habitual offenders and often cannot or refuse to be treated. In other words, some of these offenders will remain a risk to their communities for the rest of their lives. A maximum sentence which delivers an enhanced opportunity for the courts to remove these habitual offenders from our communities clearly serves the interests of our children.

My private member's bill does not pretend to be a sweeping criminal justice reform. It simply addresses an apparent anomaly in the sentencing provisions of the Criminal Code. It is, however, a significant and tangible improvement in the sanctions available against those who repeatedly violate or attempt to violate the innocence of our precious children.

Let me summarize what Bill C-277 achieves. First, it condemns in the strongest terms the sexual exploitation of our children. Second, it brings the maximum sentence for luring into line with other sexual offences in the Criminal Code. Third, it elevates the seriousness of a luring offence to a level at least equal to crimes such as fraud and theft of cattle. Fourth, it improves the tools which judges have available to remove habitual offenders from society. Fifth, the bill provides the courts with a more flexible tool to sentence sexual offenders for whom luring is just a culmination of a long history of sex related crimes.

• (1840)

The message in Bill C-277 is very clear. Children are precious, vulnerable and worthy of the highest protection. They deserve nothing less. It is our job, as members of Parliament, to ensure that we do everything within our lawful power to provide our justice system with the legal tools to keep sexual predators away from our children. It is very simple.

As I have said before in the House, we have a job to do. Let us do it well.

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on bringing forward the bill. As he knows from his appearance before the justice committee, there was pretty much a consensus, if not unanimity, on the part of the members of the justice committee concerning the issues his bill addressed. There was concern about the summary conviction and the committee dealt with that.

Why was it only this one specific issue rather than a range? As we know, many other offences fall into similar categories and his bill does not address them. However, the member knows the Liberals supported the bill in committee and we will support it now.

Mr. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much her support at committee for the bill. Yes, there were some concerns about the bill originally, but those fears were allayed at the committee stage.

The reason we are addressing the luring bill specifically is because most of the other sexual offences under part V of the Criminal Code actually provide for a maximum sentence of 10 years or more. We found this luring bill seemed to be an anomaly. Somehow we were treating an offence against children as being an offence of a lesser degree. I think all of us can agree that our children are among the most important resources we have in our society and certainly are deserving of protection.

Private Members' Business

That is why we focused on dealing with this section of the Criminal Code. It will serve our children, our families and it certainly will serve Canadians very well.

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for bringing forward the bill. As a loving father of four daughters and a great parliamentarian, this is something that clearly needed to be addressed and he has boldly done that.

I also thank the members opposite who worked at committee and who have cooperated on this measure.

Does the member find it passing strange and frustrating, as I do, that while he seems to have support now for this very important initiative to protect children from sexual predators over the Internet, we on this side of the House cannot seem to get the cooperation of members of the Liberal Party, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois on Bill C-27, the dangerous offender bill?

The poster boy for that bill is Peter Whitmore. As my colleague rightfully pointed out in his speech that this individual has countless convictions of sex offences. Bill C-27 would provide for reverse onus. For individuals who are convicted three times of violence sexual offences, the onus would be on them to prove why they are not dangerous offenders as opposed to the Crown proving why they are.

Does the member share my frustration in Bill C-27; that we cannot get the same cooperation on this bill that he seems to get for his private member's bill?

• (1845)

Mr. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I think the member knows that I support Bill C-27. My luring law was able to win multi-party support. It is not that often in the House where we put aside partisan differences and we look at what is best for the country and for our children.

Rather than becoming partisan, I want to express my gratitude to all the other parties, including the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc, for coming on side and saying that they can all agree that the bill serves the interests of our children.

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the member who presented Bill C-277 for not rising to the attempts of his colleague to bring partisanship into the debate on the bill. His bill received support from all parties and members on the justice committee.

The reason why Bill C-277 received that support was because the bill was based on fact, on science and on evidence. The member was able to show all of that before the committee. The bill was not based on fearmongering. The bill did not risk bringing into disrepute or even worse, in some cases, destroying a very strong tenet of our criminal justice system. Therefore, I appreciate the response the member just gave to his colleague.

I will simply repeat that, on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, the caucus, we will support Bill C-277, as we did in committee and as we did in the House to send it to committee.

We had concerns about one aspect of it. That was corrected in committee, with the agreement of all members of the committee. I commend the member for bringing Bill C-277 before the House.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to speak to Bill C-277 at report stage. This is a bill that affects what is most precious in my life, and that is my children. In my opinion, all my colleagues from all the parties agree with me when I say that one of our roles here is to ensure the safety of all our fellow citizens and to use the utmost diligence in protecting and defending the interests of the most vulnerable in our society. Clearly, young children are included in that group.

With the growing use of the Internet, children face a rapidly changing and perhaps less friendly world. More importantly, those who exploit our children are becoming increasingly bold in their attempts to gain access to them.

As the mother of two children, including one adolescent, this reality is quite significant because I am fully aware that for an adolescent, the Internet, and chat rooms, are a big part of their lives. All parliamentarians have to ensure the protection of these children so that they can freely engage in all their favourite activities on the Internet without falling prey to malevolent people. Unfortunately, we hear too many stories in the media about children being lured on the Internet.

Bill C-277 gives rise to certain questions on the matter. What is an appropriate punishment for having lured children over the Internet? There are many opinions. Depending on the circumstances, for the victim's loved ones, a 10-year prison sentence, as set out in the bill, is perhaps not enough. However, although the bill increases the penalty, my main concern is that it does not focus enough on preventing such crime or on providing tools to prevent such terrible situations from being repeated.

Indeed, is the protection of children best served by a maximum sentence of 10 years, rather than five? Canadians need to know that the Criminal Code already contains provisions regarding the luring of children. We are not starting from a situation in which the law needs to be created. The offence already exists in the Criminal Code, in section 172.1 to be precise, and that is the provision that the member's bill aims to amend.

We are in favour of this bill and, I believe, we are going to support it. It has already been examined in committee. Although the penalty has been increased to 10 years and we do not necessarily agree that it should be 10 years, nevertheless, there is no minimum sentence, and we support the member's bill.

• (1850)

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like the other opposition parties, I rise to indicate, although a private member's bill, that I expect the NDP as a caucus to be supporting Bill C-277. It addresses an issue that is quite valid and needs attention with regard to putting some proportionality into the sentencing of the offence of luring a child by way of the Internet.

Routine Proceedings

I was reading over my notes when I originally spoke to the bill at second reading. I had said to the member who presented the bill that it was a good endeavour on his part because of the proportionality issue he was addressing.

It would be helpful if we the current government, and quite frankly the previous government as well, could have done the same thing. There are all sorts of other sections within the Criminal Code where the issue of proportionality is not addressed properly.

We have offences that any objective observer would say this is the range of penalties that we should give our judges discretion to impose. In another context of the code, we have other crimes that are of a similar nature, but the ability of the court to give a wider range of sentences is not available. That permeates a number of sections of the Criminal Code.

Although the bill addresses the issue with regard to this charge, I take this opportunity not only to express my support for the bill but to encourage the government to look at the code overall. Hopefully at some point, as I have said to the point where I am even irritating myself in having to repeat this, we will have an omnibus bill that would correct these types of anomalies in the code.

Again, I congratulate the member who has moved this and pushed it through the committee. He was persuasive at the committee in convincing us it was an issue that needed to be addressed, and it has been addressed appropriately. I look forward to seeing it passed in the House, perhaps even unanimously.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): As no other member is rising to speak, the hon. member for Abbotsford will have a five minute right of reply before we put the question.

Mr. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying I very much enjoyed the work on this bill. I have enjoyed the support I have received in this House and, particularly, at committee. Members of all the parties were able to put aside partisanship and really looked out for the interests of Canadian children, who are so vulnerable, especially in this age of the Internet and other technologies.

Again, I express my heartfelt thanks for the support the bill has received.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1855)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

The House resumed from March 2 consideration of the motion.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to speak on the concurrence motion moved by the hon. member for Malpeque as it

relates to the Canadian Wheat Board, particularly its marketing of barley and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's barley plebiscite.

Let me begin my speech by repeating the question I posed during question period today, but before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I want to advise you that I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Saint Boniface.

I asked the minister the following question:

—the result of the Canadian Wheat Board's plebiscite on barley is in and, due to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's meddling, the victim is democracy. Never before has Canada seen such a farce, fraud and betrayal of core democratic values, with traceable ballots, no available voters lists and no transparent scrutineers to monitor.

The government is mocking democracy and does not seem to be concerned. When will the government give farmers an honest vote on an honest question?

I ask, when will the government apologize to all Canadians for its blatant disregard of democracy and when will it allow an honest vote to be taken?

Being a member of the House of Commons and having to ask that type of question is not an easy thing to do. To have to question a party's commitment to democracy and freedom of choice is not something I take lightly, but given the government's actions as they relate to the Canadian Wheat Board, I was given no other choice.

People can disagree. It happens every day in the House. It happens in our homes. It happens in our communities. We argue, we discuss, we listen, we retort, and we acknowledge differences of opinion. The party I am part of believes in the Canadian Wheat Board. The party opposite does not. Let it be. People can disagree.

Unfortunately, the minority government has chosen a course of action as it relates to the Canadian Wheat Board that can only leave me questioning its commitment to democracy when it fears that the end result of a fair, legitimate vote will be contrary to what it wants to do. Let me repeat "fair and legitimate" because what the government has undertaken to do in regard to the Canadian Wheat Board has in no way been fair and has in no way been legitimate.

From the outset, the government has engaged in tactics that would have made the most corrupt dictator applaud: rigging voters lists; appointing a sham task force to write a report and issue an opinion that probably was written before it began; imposing gag orders to prevent the Canadian Wheat Board from advocating for and explaining its preferred option; firing pro-Wheat Board directors; cancelling the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food meetings that were to hear from the pro-Wheat Board president and CEO; later on firing that same president and CEO; numbering the ballots on the barley vote so they could be traced back to farmers; issuing more than one ballot to some farmers and then calling the farmers to see which ones they want counted—is that open voting?; asking farmers a muddled, unclear question when a simple yes or no would have sufficed; and finally, today when the results on the barley vote were released, interpreting the numbers in a skewed way so it could claim, and incorrectly I might add, that the majority of voters wants marketing choice.

Routine Proceedings

Let us look in a little more depth at the numbers released today by the Minister of Agriculture. The minister likes to, and I will add falsely, claim that an overwhelming majority of farmers wants to see marketing choice. For the minister's sake, I hope his fingers were crossed when he made that preposterous statement.

What the numbers really show, when looked at in a vacuum, is that there is no clear majority. What the minister chose to do in making his preposterous statement is add two of the options together to form his overwhelming majority. Unfortunately for the minister, when the two supportive Wheat Board numbers are added together, they trump what he would call an overwhelming majority. "Facts be damned," says the minority government, "we will get our desired results from somewhere, someplace".

● (1900)

By including a question that allowed farmers to believe that the Wheat Board could co-exist in a marketing system, the Minister of Agriculture is perpetrating a fraud on the farmers he purports to represent. Absolutely no study has said that the Wheat Board can exist in a dual marketing scheme. Even the minister's tainted task force said the Wheat Board cannot co-exist in an open marketing scheme.

Why then was this option included? Was it because the minister knew that had only two questions been asked, he would have lost, and badly, I might add, so he rigged the questions and thus the vote? He did not listen to the farmers. He did not hear the question that they wanted. He disregarded anything coming from the farmers who wanted to speak in a forthright way.

The minister should be ashamed. It was about actions and half-truths. In fact, the numbers show that only 13% of voters support the full dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board. What that really indicates is that the second question was a false question, because we know that the Canadian Wheat Board cannot last when there is marketing choice.

Let us look at the figures from my home province of Manitoba. The Canadian Wheat Board is based in Winnipeg, so nowhere in the country will the Conservative government's actions be felt more harshly than in downtown Winnipeg, although I remember a member opposite saying that "it doesn't matter, Cargill can do it". One might ask why the Manitoba Conservative MPs are refusing to defend the city of Winnipeg. I have asked that question many times, but that is another issue for another day.

In Manitoba, 3,703 votes were cast. Of those who voted, 50.6% voted in favour of retaining the single desk system of marketing barley. Now I might not be much of a math major, but to me this indicates that a majority of those who voted in Manitoba voted to retain the current system, not when adding two numbers, not when skewing the numbers to one's advantage, and not when abusing democracy. Rather, a clear, albeit slim, majority of Manitoba farmers voted for the status quo. Yet for some reason that I cannot imagine, the Minister of Agriculture in the minority government did not talk about that clear majority. One wonders why.

The government does not have to take my word. The minister of agriculture for Manitoba, the hon. Rosann Wowchuk, confirmed my analysis of the numbers. She also said the questions were flawed.

Since the Conservatives came to power it would not be a stretch to say that they have played loose with the truth, facts be damned. A colleague of mine referred to it as "truthiness". Today's announcement by the Minister of Agriculture is just another example of the government's embrace of the concept of truthiness: keep spinning; never stop to let people see the facts; if we get them busy enough and repeat the same falsehood over and over they are bound to believe us; keep it spinning; cajole the facts to suit us; and massage the evidence.

This is no way for a government to act. It is time for the government to cease with this charade. The masquerade is over. Canadians can see the facts no matter how hard, how fast and into what shape the government tries to change them. It must stop. The Minister of Agriculture should uncross his fingers and admit that no clear majority exists and that the entire process has indeed been flawed. I would submit that Canadians can see through this spin.

The people of Manitoba know the impact of the demise of the Canadian Wheat Board on its city, on the farmers of rural Canada and on the families of rural Canada. I was just looking at a report from the farm women's association, which talks about the importance of the Wheat Board for them. Everybody understands the importance of a single marketing, strong Canadian Wheat Board. The government is playing with the facts.

● (1905)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, rarely I have heard such a display of partisan politics in the House. I have watched what has gone on with this issue of the Wheat Board and there is something that I have noticed. One thing is that of the two spokespeople from the other side who are favouring the monopoly and who just do not want to free farmers up, in spite of a vote that has been held that has clearly indicated that 62% of farmers favour ending the monopoly, in spite of that, one of the members who is still fighting against this result and against farmers themselves is the member for Malpeque.

Is the member for Malpeque someone who is deeply involved in grain farming or with farmers as their representative in a Wheat Board area? No, he is from Prince Edward Island, which is not even covered by the Wheat Board. There is no Wheat Board monopoly in Prince Edward Island, yet he is the main spokesperson for the Liberal Party on this issue. It seems extremely odd to me that this would be the case.

As for the member who just spoke, why is she so concerned about losing the monopoly?

Mr. Rick Casson: Not farmers.

Mr. Leon Benoit: She is no farmer. In fact, she is concerned because she does not want jobs to be lost in that Wheat Board building in downtown Winnipeg. That is all she cares about. She does not care about farmers.

Those members must respect the will of farmers, those who make their livelihood from the land in growing grain, those who have been restricted so greatly in marketing by a monopoly sales situation. I would suggest that they just give up the battle. We have had the vote. Farmers have spoken on this issue. They should respect the result that farmers themselves have provided.

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that I am absolutely astounded to hear a member say that we represent only the very narrow community that we come from, that in this House we can speak only about the issues that are in our own backyard. We are elected as members of Parliament to represent and to speak for all of the issues of all of Canada.

My colleague, the member for Malpeque, has a distinguished career in the farm industry. To hear that kind of attack, that kind of slur on his good name and his longstanding commitment to the farmers of this country, is absolutely outrageous.

Let me also say this. Sure, I care about downtown Winnipeg, and I care about downtown Winnipeg a lot, but I also care about the many farmers and the many farm families with whom I have met over the course of the last number of months and who have great concerns about what is going to happen to them, to their farms, to their futures and to their children's futures if this happens.

As for the narrow, narrow approach of my colleague opposite, I challenge him to ever speak out on an issue that is outside of his own backyard, outside of his community and outside of his province.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to rise. There was what I think was some good-natured banter going on when my hon. colleague was talking about this very important issue. I represent a riding in southern Ontario, so I do not pretend to be an expert on the Wheat Board, but I have to say that I grew up going to school with farm kids and I know how important the marketing boards are in Quebec and Ontario.

Here is what I find egregious about all of this: the duplicity, the dishonesty and the insult to the intelligence of Canadians. That is what I find in this entire exercise in this plebiscite for the Wheat Board. I would ask my hon. colleague if this is not the most egregious part of this whole thing: the misrepresentation of the results of the Wheat Board plebiscite, the fact that they disenfranchised many farmers before they actually had it, and that they had numbered ballots.

I think it is a cause for concern for all Canadians.

• (1910)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre has 10 seconds to respond to that question.

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Speaker, this is a textbook case of how not to operate in a democratic system.

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre, it is a pleasure and an obligation for me to speak on behalf of the Wheat Board this evening. I have spoken on it at every opportunity and, like my colleague, I do not come from an agricultural background but I can speak intelligently to this topic. I do not think we need to come from the industry to speak on an actual topic.

The Wheat Board is a very important institution to Manitobans and all western Canadians and I think the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is finding that out in a very harsh way. It seems that his only objective, after receiving his mandate letter, was to dismantle the Wheat Board. It seems to me that if there is anything else the Minister of Agriculture has done over the last 14 or 16

months, it is very difficult to identify it. However, that is his objective and that is what he wants to do but he is having one heck of a time.

My colleague from the Conservative Party said, "Respect the decision". If there has been anything about this whole process, it has been how disrespectful the whole process has been from day one. Starting from the question period today, I think it is very typical of what has been going on here.

In question period today, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food answered a question put to him by my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre by saying that he could finally respond to a critic he could respect. I thought that was pretty telling of what farmers and producers have been putting up with over the last little while.

The critic for agriculture, the hon. member for Malpeque, has visited western Canada on quite a few occasions and I have had an opportunity to go across the rural areas with him. If anything, he is very well respected across the country. One does not need to be from Manitoba or western Canada to have people's ear. In my opinion, he is probably more knowledgeable on the file than the actual minister and he has the ear of people from all parties.

When we talk about respecting decisions, it seems to me that this whole process has been flawed from day one. The lack of respect started from day one. Basically from the time the minister got his mandate letter, things were happening. For instance, the minister held one-sided meetings in Saskatchewan only with people who agreed with him, people who did not necessarily want to keep the Wheat Board and who wanted to do away with the Wheat Board. I thought that was pretty sad. Saskatchewan and Manitoba were literally asked to sit in the corner while Alberta was sitting at the table. This is totally unacceptable.

Tampering with the voters list: 16,000 producers taken off the electoral list. If that kind of thing had happened prior to a vote in any democratic country in the world, it would have been seen as totally unusual. This is Canada, after all. This is not a fascist, third world country. This is absolutely unacceptable.

The next thing is that a gag order was used to prevent the Wheat Board from defending its position. It seems to me that if we want to put up a good fight and we want to express our opinion on something, we need to allow the Wheat Board to also express its position on certain things. I think all of us in this House have indicated that we would respect the producers' decision on the Wheat Board, but at least we should have an even playing field during the process. That certainly has not happened.

There were the firings of Ross Keith and subsequently Adrian Measner, the president and CEO of the Wheat Board. Mr. Measner's reputation world wide is absolutely impeccable. We still hear that it was one heck of a loss for Canada. The Wheat Board has lost a good person and one of the most knowledgeable people in an industry, in a corporation or in a Wheat Board that was the biggest seller of wheat in the world. It seems to me that it was a huge error that people always tried to dismantle Wheat Board from within.

Routine Proceedings

Standard & Poor's dropped the Wheat Board's credit rating from triple A to double A-plus. If we read the report, I believe it was 11 times where Standard & Poor's actually identified the reason for this drop in credit rating and it actually identified it as interference by the current government. It is very clear that once again we are trying to undermine the Wheat Board from within. Now all of a sudden one of the major institutions in Canada is paying for that with a reduced credit rating.

● (1915)

The next thing we hear is that the minister will be announcing the split between the wheat and barley plebiscites. They are two different things. When it comes to barley, a lot of it is actually sold within Canada. I think we all agree that the bulk of it is sold for feed within Canada and, therefore, the Wheat Board is not necessarily as important as it would be, for instance, on the whole wheat thing.

The plebiscite has three questions but not clear concise questions that we were supposed to have as mandated by the Canadian Wheat Board Act. Again, it is a very convoluted plebiscite. People are not sure exactly what is going on. People had three different questions to vote on and, after all that, we found out that the ballots were numbered.

It was one unusual thing after another in a democracy. The ballots were numbered, which means that the government can basically trace the vote back to the producer. Let us think about that for a second. In most countries that would be illegal. As a matter of fact, KPMG, which was the firm responsible, actually called producers back and asked them which one of their votes they wanted applied which way. Therefore, it was traceable.

We could add another thing. Some producers received more than one ballot. I know a producer in Manitoba who received four ballots. Is that not interesting?

When we look at the process, it was absolutely flawed from day one, and I am not making this up. This is factual. I am telling the House right now that the way I am saying this process happened is actual fact.

Today we received the results of the actual plebiscite on barley. It is very interesting that the Minister of Agriculture held a big press conference this morning and said that when we add up the people who wanted an option of the private sector and perhaps the Wheat Board and people who did not want it, the percentage adds up to 62%. He said that we have a majority and it is a strong majority.

If that logic holds, it seems to me that if we take just the opposite, if we take the people who wanted to retain the single desk and people who wanted an option, although we know that is absolutely fraudulent because the option was not a possibility according to every expert that we spoke to and also according to the group that was put together by the minister, but if we put those two numbers together we are looking at 86.2%. If the logic holds for one it must hold for the other.

What is left is that actually 13.8% of the people would like to no longer have a Wheat Board at all. Those are the numbers we are actually working with.

[*Translation*]

I would just like to comment in French, because it is important.

In my opinion, when barley and wheat were split up, that was also dishonest. In my opinion, that should not have been done. There are two main markets: the first is barley for malt production, the second is feed barley. In Canada, a great deal more barley is sold on the feed barley market. I feel that giving farmers the option of selling barley to the private sector or to the Canada Wheat Board was a false option. In fact, it did not exist. I am extremely disappointed with what happened throughout this entire process.

Colleagues on the other side of the House speak of respect. I insist on stating that for the entire process, at every step of the way, there was a lack of respect. In my opinion, we should set the whole process aside and ask producers a very clear, concise question and start all over again.

● (1920)

[*English*]

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while listening to the member opposite, I was very interested in some of his statements. He indicated that he did not think farmers were smart enough to figure out what they were voting on.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Not at all.

Mr. Leon Benoit: I will read the questions to the House. Farmers were asked—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. When the hon. member for Saint Boniface was speaking, I could hear clearly everything he said because he had the attention of the House. We now have a question and I want to hear the question. However, for that to happen I would like other members to wait to be called on to speak.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I will read the questions just so people will know exactly what questions were asked in this plebiscite. The questions were simple, straightforward questions.

The farmers were given three options:

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

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

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

The questions were clear and the results were decisive. Sixty-two per cent of farmers said that they wanted to operate under a system where there was no monopoly, no single desk selling.

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If those members are saying that somehow that was not an appropriate result, then they are saying one of two things: first, that KPMG, the well-respected consulting firm that carried out the vote, checked the ballots and did everything to ensure that the only people who voted should have voted, that they only cast one ballot and those types of thing, is not respected and not trustworthy; or second, they believe that somehow farmers do not know what they are doing.

I respectfully suggest that farmers knew exactly what they were doing and they did the right thing. I am delighted with the result and I am looking forward to the changes that will come in the months ahead so farmers will have a choice in marketing barley.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, we all agree that farmers are intelligent enough to make their own decisions and that has been our premise from day one.

I have itemized at least seven major flaws in the democratic process.

We all know that the second question concerning marketing choice, which the member just mentioned and which is what they have been pushing, does not exist. It is actually a fallacy. Every expert has told us that if we take away the monopoly structure of the Wheat Board, we lose the whole strength of the Wheat Board. By posing the second question, it actually misleads people.

The Wheat Board Act asks one precise and clear question: Why have these three questions and have them all convoluted? In fact, when we look at the end result, only 13.8% of farmers decided that they do not want the Wheat Board as a marketing tool and 86.2% indicated that they want it. I believe that is a very clear indication that farmers have made their decision on this, and it is not the one the hon. member is talking about.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity today to speak to a number of farmers from my riding but not the farmers who I would have expected to hear from.

I spoke with a cattle producer from Bashaw, Alberta, who raises registered Angus cattle. He said that he understood why it was important to have a choice in how barley was marketed but he also said that we should make no mistake about it, that if the Wheat Board were taken away, the price of barley would go up. The Wheat Board is holding down the price of barley.

If the member opposite is an expert on the Canadian Wheat Board, would he please tell me whether, in his viewpoint, the price of barley will now go up or down?

• (1925)

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, my perspective is that the price of barley will not move because we do not have the authority to change the Wheat Board process at this point. This was not a valid structure. In my opinion, I think the whole process should be repeated. It is too early to decide on whether the price of barley will go up or down.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, I am really encouraged today to stand in this House and address the issue of the barley plebiscite. I think that it has been a very good day for western Canadian producers.

I sat and listened to members from the other side. Do they have the right to speak? Absolutely, yes. I wish they would put up a speaker who is a farmer from western Canada. I wish that the Liberal side would put up at least one producer who would stand in this House and say that they felt this was good or bad. But they do not. They brought people from the cities to explain to farmers why they believe farmers messed up on this.

It is a great day today because farmers had the opportunity to let government know the direction that they wanted to go in regard to how their barley would be marketed. It is a momentous day for western Canadian barley growers.

As members know, barley producers were given an opportunity to express themselves in a consultation with the government on how they wanted to market their grain and they spoke. They spoke very clearly.

Of the Alberta farmers, the province I come from, 78% said that they wanted the ability to market their own barley. Liberal opposition members are standing and saying they should not have that right; they erred; they made a mistake. Those Alberta farmers, the Liberals are saying, are not aware of the best ways to market their barley or their grain.

Today, the results of the barley plebiscite are in: 62% of those across the west who participated have told us they want to remove barley from the Wheat Board monopoly. They do not want the single desk Canadian Wheat Board to be the only avenue that they have to market their barley.

On this side of the House, we have always believed that western Canadian grain farmers should have the freedom to choose how they market their grain.

At the same time, as a government, we want to ensure that we maintain a very strong, viable, but yes, voluntary Canadian Wheat Board. It is something that we promised in the last election and it is a promise that I believe now Canadians can see we are working to keep.

Our commitment to farmers, the barley and wheat producers of western Canada, has been to give them the opportunity to use their own skills to market and to find the best possible return that they can find for their product, to give them the chance to succeed, and to give them the freedom to make their own choices on how to produce and how to market their crops, whether it is through a strong Canadian Wheat Board or some other mechanism.

In this plebiscite, we asked a very clear, honest question.

In fact, if I were wording the question, I would not have worded the question in the same way. I would have made it very clear that choice number one was for a single desk monopoly where it was only through the Wheat Board. That question was toned down. It did not talk about a monopoly; it simply talked about a single desk Canadian Wheat Board.

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We asked a clear question and we got a clear answer. The question is whether farmers want to maintain the Wheat Board monopoly on barley; to have the option to sell to whoever they want, either domestically or internationally, including the Canadian Wheat Board; or to remove the Wheat Board, choice three, from any role in the marketing of barley.

We actively encouraged all eligible barley producers to vote to ensure that their voices were heard.

I want to thank the minister at this time for having the confidence of going to the producers of western Canada and saying, "We want to hear from you. This is decision time. We want to understand which choice best reflects the direction that you would like to go in the marketing of your barley".

● (1930)

Nearly 30,000 farmers from western Canada responded; 30,000 farmers took the opportunity to participate. Nearly 50% voted for the second choice, option two. About 48.2% voted for option two, the option to market their barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or any other domestic or foreign buyer.

A further 13.8% selected option three. They said that they would prefer if barley was similar to oats and canola, and was absolutely removed from the Canadian Wheat Board, and so that it would have no role in marketing their barley. In fact, those 13.8% unlikely said that the Wheat Board had done such a poor job in cases where it was selling their barley that they would rather just go out and find their own markets.

I am not certain I would agree with that. I think it is important to continue to have that choice. That is why I am pleased that the huge majority have opted for choice.

Taken together across the west, 62% of barley producers want to change the status quo. They do not want it the way that it has been for as long as they can remember. They recognize that new technologies, new abilities, and a new style of farming gives them now the opportunity to market and they look forward to it.

Western Canadian barley growers have spoken very clearly. The Minister of Agriculture has said that he intends to move decisively to act on their expressed preferences in order that producers and the entire sector have clarity in the market, and that they know that coming into this next crop year next fall that they are going to have those opportunities that they have waited so long for.

The Minister of Agriculture will be consulting with the board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board about the changes that we will be making. We will move forward with this marketing choice.

We should all remember that producers take all the risks and they make all the investments on their farm. We are coming to a time now where we are preparing for the spring and where farmers have got their grain cleaned. They have their seed ready. They have spoken for their fertilizer. They have their plan in place. They know what they are going to be planting and when they are going to start if the weather permits. The farmers take all the risks. They study the variety of barley or the variety of grain that would suit best the land on which they farm. They take the risks.

On this side of the House we believe that they should not be punished. They should not be put in jail for pursuing opportunities outside the Wheat Board that make good business sense to them.

The Minister of Agriculture will propose regulatory changes to the Canadian Wheat Board regulations with the intention of removing barley from the board's single desk authority by August 1, 2007.

Barley growers are encouraged to plant this spring with confidence, that the government is listening, and that the government is working to let them decide how they wish to sell their grain this fall.

The regulations that are being proposed will permit producers to make the economic and marketing decisions that are right for their particular operation and to allow them to maximize the returns from the sale of their barley.

We are noticing that there is a very strong demand for western Canadian barley. There is a demand in Canada and there is a demand abroad. Under the new regulations, western Canadian producers will have the choice of selling their barley to the buyer of their choice. It might be a grain company. It might be a market that they seek out and find. I know that many of our organic producers at this point in time, the ones that I know in my riding, are very good at seeking out their markets in other countries, in the United States particularly, and sometimes in other countries.

They are willing to do that. They are willing to sell to this buyer, but now there will be people competing for their commodity and for their barley.

● (1935)

The government will continue to guarantee the Canadian Wheat Board's borrowings and initial payments under the conditions set out in the Canadian Wheat Board Act. The changes will not alter the export guarantee programs of the Government of Canada.

As well, to those who like to scaremonger and frighten producers with stories about losing their advance payments, let me remind the House that cash advances are currently provided to farmers under the Agricultural Marketing Programs Act. That program is available to a wide range of producers and barley producers. They will continue to be eligible for cash advances in the marketing choice environment.

When this debate began, that was one of the questions that I had. As a young farmer I always appreciated the ability to get the advance and the ability to get those cash dollars up front, so that I could put money down on input costs and the like. Is that being taken away? The answer is no.

We have been clear from the beginning that we believe in giving producers a choice. That is what we have done with the barley plebiscite. We let producers have their say on an issue that impacts their business. We made a promise to give them the opportunity and today they have responded. They have said that they want to grab that opportunity.

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The farmers who received their ballot, sat down, read the questions, and studied and talked to their neighbours, answered very strongly today that they want the ability for choice and the ability to market their own barley. We are going to give them that choice, that ability and that opportunity.

Since taking office just over a year ago, Canada's new government has made it a priority to listen to producers and to respond to their concerns. In budget 2007 we announced new investments in renewable fuel production that will help Canada's farmers capture new opportunities in the growing bioeconomy.

This is a major commitment by the Government of Canada to not just western Canadian producers but to all producers. We now have a case where farmers have a commitment to 5% biofuel or ethanol by 2010. Farmers know that there will be a market should they decide to grow canola, barley or grain that would be used for this biofuel industry.

We had farmers come here from Camrose and from my constituency. I have been speaking to individuals from Stettler, Beiseker and Kneehill County. All of them are farmers who have talked to us about the importance of what they were hoping the government would do and consequently what we did do in budget 2007. It is important to grow canola and not just use it as a feed, for the oil or food value, but now to be able to use it for fuel value. This government was committed to agriculture when the canola producers, the industry, said that they needed parity with the United States.

They said they needed 20¢ on biodiesel and 10¢ on ethanol. The government obviously listened and responded in the 2007 budget and said that we are going to make that commitment, so that the agricultural industry, especially in the west, can benefit. Not only does it benefit but all of Canada benefits.

We have come into the green fuels. We now see that there are huge benefits for all but especially for those who are in areas where they grow canola and areas where they can contribute to this type of industry.

It is not just the producers who are going to benefit, it is the communities. It is communities like many in my riding of Crowfoot that have been looking for primary industry, that have been looking for start ups so that young people can stay, work and have a future in our rural communities. The new Conservative government is listening and it has responded.

● (1940)

Again, in all the talk about what has gone on here today, I have not heard one western Canadian farmer from the Liberal side stand up and give us any indication why the Liberal Party is not on board with the plebiscite that gives farmers the choice.

Not only are we committed to the biofuel industry and the 10¢ a litre, but we will ensure that industry knows right now, when it looks at where to place that plant. Far too often, I have heard rumours that every 11 days there is a new plant starting in the United States. Every 14 days there is a new ethanol plant. Every 11 days there is a new biodiesel plant. We never had a commitment from the former government. That is why we saw all this production and processing

go to the United States because the previous government was not committed to it.

This government recognizes the importance of not just a strong agricultural sector but strong rural communities. This is the kind of initiative that will build up our rural communities. These are the kinds of initiatives that will give new hope to the young people and to all in the industry.

This new investment not only puts in \$2 billion over seven years to support the production of renewable fuels of ethanol and biodiesel, but it also gives \$500 million in renewable fuel programs and incentives that have been put into place since this government has come into office.

These investments are important. We do not call these only expenditures on the expenditure side of the ledger. These are investments and they are an important step in helping Canada achieve that all important 5% average renewable content by 2010.

I am proud of this government. Since the election last January, I have seen a government that has been hard at work, a government that has brought forward its vision for the country. It has been repositioning Canada, not just at home but abroad. Many people have come to me and said, "I'm proud again to be a Canadian".

Now we are hearing more and more farmers calling and saying that they are proud of the direction in which the government is going. We have had very steady action on agriculture. I look forward to seeing the opportunities that lie ahead for western Canadian barley producers and Canadian agriculture as a whole.

It is an exciting time to be a Canadian. It is an exciting time to be a western Canadian farmer. As a farmer myself, I think the opportunity now of perhaps having a son who may want to stay on the farm is much greater than it has ever been before. Someone has told me that handing the farm over to one's son is not so much an inheritance as it is a sentence. That is changing and now young people are saying that there is hope in the family farm.

I am on a farm. My grandfather moved up from Minnesota in the winter of 1905-06. For over 100 years, we have been on the family farm and family ranch. It has grown somewhat. I have purchased other land that was in the family, but it feels good to say that maybe there is a future for our children coming up. It is direction like this that gives hope for all farmers, where they can see that now somebody has listened to what they have said, to what they have requested. We have listened and we have acted.

I thank the Minister of Agriculture for the positive action he has taken. I thank him for his strong commitment to agriculture. I thank our Prime Minister for his leadership.

● (1945)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe I could ask you first, do I as a Canadian from Prince Edward Island have the right to speak on this issue? By listening to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Malpeque has been recognized, so he has the right to speak.

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Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I wonder, as a Canadian listening to the member for Vegreville—Wainwright earlier, if I have the right to speak. I spent years in western Canada on this very issue and others.

My question is for the member for Crowfoot. It is interesting that for 20 whole minutes, he avoided speaking on the report before us to have a clear and honest question to put before producers. The report was passed by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food on what the question should be. The minister, showing contempt for the House, avoided those questions in his barley consultation, but which he says is really plebiscite results.

The question we should be debating tonight is that the House implement the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food by placing before wheat and barley producers of western Canada, who have a relationship with the Canadian Wheat Board, the questions contained within that sixth report.

The reason for that is the barley plebiscite results announced today by the minister are about as fraudulent and farcical as it gets. I cannot understand why those members in the governing party are not hanging their heads in shame. After gag orders on the board, firing directors, firing the CEO, practically calling the new CEO a liar, when he tabled the figures on the Algerian markets, manipulating the voters list and propagandizing the public with taxpayer money, on the real option they still could not win the vote.

The vote results of 62%, about which the member talked, is adding two of the questions together. The Wheat Board has said that the middle option is not a viable option and what it really means is the open market. On the plebiscite, what did the Conservatives get for their open market position? They only had 13.8%. That is the reality of where this thing will go.

It will be the open market at the end of the day. There will be no single desk selling through the Wheat Board when choice is implemented as the minister wants. Worse yet, the minister claims he is going ahead with 13.8% for his position and he is going to implement regulations rather than debating the issue in the House as it should be debated.

Why will the member not support an honest and clear question for western producers, as the sixth report of the committee has suggested and as the House has passed previously?

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, yes, I absolutely believe the member has every right to come to this place and debate an issue. This has been an issue that the member has been involved with for a long time, but that does not make him right. That does not make the individual correct in his assessment of this.

He is questioning the questions that were asked. He asks why they could not have been made a little clearer. In all the calls to my constituents and all the rehashed NFU letters that kept coming through to my constituency, 90% of them from Saskatchewan, very few talked about the questions that were being asked. The majority of farmers thanked me for the opportunity to decide which best would represent what they would like to see for the Wheat Board.

The member reminds me of Chicken Little, who runs around saying, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling". The member does not believe in the Canadian Wheat Board. He said that if it were opened

up, it would collapse and fall apart, that there would be no Canadian Wheat Board. I encourage him to have more confidence in its directors, to have more confidence in the ones that are in control of the board.

Competition in a free market society is good. Competition makes one better. Competition gives us the ability to improve on the way we do business.

I want to read into the record the three questions that were put on the ballot. Farmers were asked to select one of the following three options on the ballot.

The first option was:

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

If I wanted to see the demise of the Canadian Wheat Board, and I do not, I would have posed a much different question. I would have said, "Considering the fact that a large majority of farmers do not like the Canadian Wheat Board, should they retain the monopoly that it has had for far too long?" A question could be drawn up that would be remarkable, but this question asked whether it should retain the single desk. It does not talk about a monopoly for the marketing of barley into domestic human consumption. It spells out clearly where the grain is sold: through the Canadian Wheat Board.

The second option was:

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

That is choice.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Which is impossible.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: The minister shouts across the chamber and says it is impossible. If choice is given, the Wheat Board will collapse and fall. I fear what the question would have been if the member had designed the question.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Thank you for recognizing the minister.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: The member, not the minister. We had that once and we do not want to go back to that.

Option two was, "I would like the option to market my barley", and the majority chose that.

The third option was:

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

I do not know if the member for Malpeque was around when oats were taken away from the Canadian Wheat Board. I do not know if he is aware that canola is not marketed by the Canadian Wheat Board. It appears he is aware, but it did not collapse. It did not fall apart.

The offices of the members from Winnipeg are still in Winnipeg and people still have jobs, but oats is no longer on the board. I encourage the folks from Toronto, Prince Edward Island and all across the country who are so concerned that those jobs will be there tomorrow. Those jobs will be there. Canadian farmers have the ability now to say, yes, to the Wheat Board or to someone else.

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•(1950)

I would encourage the member not to be so opposed to freedom for our farmers. They should be given the ability to make those decisions themselves. Some members in the House believe in big government. They believe that government should be and do everything for everyone. The member for Malpeque thinks that government should make the decisions for farmers. I disagree.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Malpeque talked about a gag order being placed when he knows, in fact, that there was no gag order. Nobody was prevented from speaking and saying what they wanted to say. He is making something what it was not.

It was interesting to note that the member, along with other members of his party, voted against a private member's bill that would have allowed a producer to sell his product outside of the Canadian Wheat Board to a processing plant without having to pay any extra money or exchange or fees. He was opposed to that, yet the farmers in his own constituency could do the very same thing. What is the logic behind that, except philosophical blinders. He does not care about logic. He does not care about what is good or bad. He just does not want to allow that to happen.

Imagine a person who owns a piece of ground, can produce a product, but he cannot sell it unless he sells it to someone the government tells him he has to sell it to without—

•(1955)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. The rule is when the Speaker gets up, you are finished. The clock has run out.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Churchill. I look forward to listening to her speech.

Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to speak to the issue regarding the Canadian Wheat Board, as it has a great impact on my riding of Churchill. The people in my riding and, in particular, the community leaders, the mayors of towns and cities and the first nations chiefs in northern Manitoba have followed the debate very closely because of the detrimental impact it will have on the riding if the current Conservative government is successful in its attempt to dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board and dismantle the single desk marketing system. As all the reports and studies have indicated, it would actually dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board.

With respect to the plebiscite, many of the members opposite have indicated that members on this side of the House are undermining the capacity of farmers to make decisions about their own lives. Those statements are indicative of an attitude that those members may have. When I look at the plebiscite results I am startled by the spin that has been on those results. I would say that if there was something inept here, it might be people's ability to read numbers.

Members opposite continue to state that 62.2% of the respondents favour dismantling the single desk marketing, but that truly is not what was shown in the results. Some 13.8% responded very clearly that the Canadian Wheat Board should have no role in marketing barley. Also, 37.8% voted in favour of retaining single desk

marketing. That is almost three times the number who indicated there should be no role in the marketing of barley by the Canadian Wheat Board.

It was the 48.4% in the second question on which there has been debate about using that number when talking about trying to eliminate single desk marketing to show that people are in favour of that. In fact the question was vague and because of the nature of the question, it might be just as easily interpreted that 86.2% of the respondents are against the dismantling of single desk marketing in terms of barley.

When we are talking about issues that affect farmers' lives, we should not be trying to spin the numbers in favour of what very clearly is the Conservative government's agenda.

Again, I would like to have it on the record that indeed 13.8% said that there should be no role in marketing barley by the Canadian Wheat Board and 37.8% said that the Canadian Wheat Board should retain a single desk. We are talking about nearly three times the number in a clear answer on that plebiscite.

There are some things I would like to talk about in terms of this whole agenda of the Conservative government to dismantle single desk marketing. I have met with farmers. I have been very involved in this issue because it will have a detrimental impact on my riding.

•(2000)

I have been, as almost every member of Parliament has been, inundated with letters from farmers throughout the Prairies. Many of them were very vocal in their concern about the way the government has gone about destroying the single desk marketing of the Canadian Wheat Board.

One of the letters which I remember most clearly and has played most prominently in my memory was from a farmer from Saskatchewan. He said that he felt that democracy was at stake. Here was a government that was claiming to have a very strong commitment to help the people of Afghanistan, to bring democracy to Afghanistan, yet here in our own country in dealing with the people in their ridings the government has not abided by the principle of democracy.

What has happened? Since the government took control there has been a very distinct pattern in the events. It started very early in terms of the new government. The Conservative government was very vocal about the fact that it did not believe in the single desk marketing of the Canadian Wheat Board.

On July 27 the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food held a meeting. That was the first indication the government was not going to abide by a democratic process in terms of its agenda. In that meeting the government of Alberta was allowed to participate, but Saskatchewan and Manitoba were not.

Manitoba did indeed hold its own plebiscite because Manitoba farmers had been very clear in indicating their great fear around this agenda. In that plebiscite an overwhelming majority of the farmers said that they did not want to eliminate single desk marketing.

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The Canadian Wheat Board was excluded from that meeting. On September 19, 2006 a task force was appointed. The task force by way of a ministerial appointment had nobody who could defend or who was pro-single desk marketing for the Wheat Board. In fact it has often been referred to as a stacked task force in favour of the government's agenda. On September 5 the election of five directors was announced and on October 17 and the government removed 16,000 farmers from the electoral list. In October by way of an order in council the government issued a gag order to the Canadian Wheat Board which was then unable to advocate on behalf of its single desk feature.

There are numerous other things, for example the firing of a pro-Wheat Board director. In December we saw the firing of Adrian Measner, the president and CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board. In January 2007 we started to really see the implications of this. Standard & Poor's announced that it had lowered the Canadian Wheat Board's long term issuer credit rating to AA+ from AAA. It also publicly said that the government's policies may cause the rating to fall even further.

This has had a detrimental impact. We have heard from farmers. We have met with farmers. It has been clearly articulated that the process has not been the will of the farmers. Our plebiscite results clearly indicate that as well.

● (2005)

When the members opposite use language to undermine the credibility of the farmers, it is quite startling. As my colleague mentioned, it is hard to understand how it is that people would not hang their heads in shame, because this protest has not been in accordance with the act. The members have not been upfront with their constituents. In fact, we have heard from people all through the Prairies that they have been very disappointed in the government's process.

The member opposite was talking about Alberta. In fact, even in Alberta, while 15.2% of the respondents said the Canadian Wheat Board should have no role in marketing barley, 21.4% in Alberta said we should retain the single desk. What does this all mean?

I know people will ask why the member for Churchill is getting up to speak about this issue. As we have talked about many times and as has been indicated to us in many cities, the reason is that it is the single desk marketing feature of the Canadian Wheat Board that has enabled it to succeed. It has worked on behalf of farmers, but it also has worked on behalf of Canadians outside the regions where we have the farmers.

My region is one of those regions that is very dependent on the business of the Canadian Wheat Board. In the riding of Churchill, in fact, there are 1,300 kilometres of rail lines from the town of The Pas to the port of Churchill. We refer to it as the Bay line. We have numerous towns, a city and the port of Churchill through that region of the Bay line, which rely heavily on the Canadian Wheat Board. Approximately 85% of shipments along the Bay line and through the port of Churchill are from the Canadian Wheat Board.

At one point when I spoke on this issue, a member from across the floor came over to me and asked me if I had farmers in my riding and asked how it is that I think this could be at all connected. I would

like to be very clear in stating that the northern Manitoba leaders have united and have made public statements to save the railway and the port of Churchill. They believe that is wholly dependent on the success of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I would like to quote these leaders of the northern round table of northern Manitoba. We had representation from the Northern Association of Community Councils, the town of The Pas, the town of Churchill, the city of Thompson, the city of Flin Flon, Gillam, and Wabowden, and the Grand Chief of the Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin, which represents 33 first nations, many of which are along the Bay line. They have stated:

The Mayors and Chiefs are unanimous in their belief that this issue is more than a grain story. All communities from The Pas to Churchill rely, in some cases completely, on the train. There are few to no roads linking these communities and the only access they have to the rest of the province is the Hudson Bay Railway. [Hudson Bay Railway] officials have indicated that if there is no longer a [Canadian Wheat Board] then it will have no alternative but to close its operation of the railway as well as the Port of Churchill.

Essentially what I am saying is that this issue around the success of the Canadian Wheat Board, as the northern round table said, is not just a grain story. This is a Canadian story.

● (2010)

One of the members opposite talked about competition, saying that fierce competition is the way of the world, but the way of Canada is about supporting regions and supporting farmers, supporting the small family farms that rely upon a system which ensures that when times are tough they are protected. The Canadian Wheat Board supports the Bay line and the port of Churchill by utilizing its business. None of the big multinational companies utilize the Bay line or the port of Churchill. It has not been that fiercely competitive mindset that has supported these different regions of the Prairies and northern Manitoba.

I will finish by saying that this issue is a particular priority for the region right now. As I said, the mayors and the chiefs have been very strong in terms of working together and making sure their voices are heard. They have utilized their voices in support of the farmers, who actually have, in resounding numbers, supported the single desk marketing of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member. She said the result of the plebiscite is not the will of the farmers. As I read it, the question is actually quite clear. The middle question is: "I would like the option to market my barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or any other domestic or foreign buyer".

It seems rather obvious that farmers have expressed their will in the broadest form, saying they want to have the freedom to market their product. It is a product grown on their own land, a product they have produced. Why would the member have anything against a farmer being able to have options?

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We know that a private member's bill was presented in the House to allow a farmer to sell produce grown on his own land through a processing firm without having to go through the Canadian Wheat Board, and without having to pay the costs, exchanges and application fees, to sell it direct to a customer he can see. Somehow that member and other members of the Liberal Party voted against that. They voted to prevent a farmer from being able to sell his own product, which he produces by the sweat of his brow on his own land, to a customer he can see. They want to prevent that. What would be the logic of that?

Finally, the Leader of the Opposition says it does not matter what farmers might say in a plebiscite, he is going to revert to the old system whereby farmers cannot sell to anyone but one party, and a party that will deal with customers they cannot see.

What is the logic of not accepting a plebiscite whereby the Canadian Wheat Board is preserved and farmers can sell to the Wheat Board if they want to but also can sell their produce somewhere else? It is obvious that 13.8% do not want to have anything at all to do with the Wheat Board and that 48.4% say they want to have the option to sell their produce. When we add those two together, in my mind that is 62% and a bit who want to have the option to sell their own product without the interference of big brother, the government.

What does the member have against that kind of freedom? Why would she want to bind up a farmer from having that ability?

Ms. Tina Keeper: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raised a number of statements and questions. I am going to start with his statement that our leader, the leader of the official opposition, has said that it does not matter what farmers say, that he is going to reinstate the single desk marketing system no matter what.

I have to say unequivocally that I disagree with that statement. Our leader has said that he will respect the will of farmers, but he has also been very clear in terms of a fair, transparent and democratic process, which is also part and parcel of this discussion today.

I would like to go on to his next question regarding the plebiscite results. People can go to the website and check out the numbers. They are right there in black and white.

In fact, if we put those numbers together, as the member has indicated, the government's spin number, again, was 62.2%. I would have to say that if we look at the questions and look at the results, there is a preference between the single desk, which we all know means the Canadian Wheat Board, and an option to market to the Canadian Wheat Board. If we combine those two numbers, we actually come up with 86.2%. In fact, even in Alberta we come up with 84.8%.

That is what we are finding, but the member adds up his numbers his way, meaning 62.2%. As I said, that second question also says that farmers prefer the option of marketing to the Canadian Wheat Board. It was not a clear question. We do have the Canadian Wheat Board. That is clearly stated there. If we look at it from that perspective, we can clearly see that 86.2% of farmers voted in favour of the Canadian Wheat Board. I think that has answered the member's question.

● (2015)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Before I recognize the hon. member for Malpeque, I would like to say that there are five minutes left and in those five minutes I would like to recognize two members, so it will be two questions and two answers. I ask members to watch the Speaker, because you are likely to be interrupted at one point.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would not want to be interrupted.

From the member's response to the question from the member for Souris—Moose Mountain, it is obvious that the member for Churchill thinks the plebiscite question was a farce, and obviously I would agree.

The member is from Churchill. There has been quite an effort by the Government of Canada to spin the concerns of the people in Churchill as if the business that is going to Churchill from the Canadian Wheat Board is done in such a way as to almost subsidize transportation in Churchill. I would like the member's response to this, because that allegation is absolutely not true.

The fact of the matter is that the Canadian Wheat Board is selling through Churchill, which is not owned by any of the grain companies, and it is selling through Churchill because it can get premium prices and less transportation by selling that way. The fact of the matter is that if the grain is sold by a grain company, that company is going to market its grain only through its own elevator system, so it can take profits at that level as well.

Therefore, I would ask the member for Churchill a question. Would she would agree with me that what the Conservative Party of Canada is trying to allow here, by getting rid of single desk under the Wheat Board and giving the grain companies and multinationals more advantage, will really do damage to Churchill in terms of her people and will also at the same time take money out of the pockets of western farmers?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Churchill should know that the hon. member for Malpeque took two minutes to ask his question. She has one minute to reply.

Ms. Tina Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I would like to restate that the multinational companies this agenda seems to be in favour of supporting are not utilizing the port of Churchill and have not utilized the Bay line. In fact, Hudson Bay railroad officials have just indicated in an announcement if there is no longer a Canadian Wheat Board they will have no alternative but to close the Bay line operation as well as the port of Churchill. This will have a dire impact and will be detrimental to the region.

● (2020)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this member and all the other Liberal members who have spoken today have led us to believe that farmers who voted in the plebiscite were too stupid to understand question number two.

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They have said clearly that question number two, which was, “I would like the option to market my barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or any other domestic or foreign buyer” was simply not possible. Yet, 48% of all farmers who voted chose that option. The Liberals have said that they believe those farmers simply did not understand that that option was possible, to operate under a system that included the Canadian Wheat Board or marketing of some other option.

I would like to ask the member opposite, does she honestly believe that farmers who voted in this plebiscite were simply too stupid to understand the second option?

Ms. Tina Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I am shocked and appalled by the member's language and attitude. I find it offensive that he would refer to farmers in that way.

In fact, I think it was that member who mentioned the word scaremongering. That is mongering of some sort. I am not sure what kind of mongering it is, but it is very unfair.

I made no such allusion and I do not think anybody on this side did because we have great respect for the voice of farmers. In fact, it has been respect of the system and the process of the act that should be of primary importance here. When we look again at these results in black and white—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to be here before a full House tonight and hope I get a resounding applause after my speech, especially from this side. I can think of nothing better to do this evening than to come here and talk about the Canadian Wheat Board.

This past weekend I spent some time in Saskatchewan and while there I had a chance to speak with some people in the farming community. One major concern they have is what would happen to grain transportation if the Wheat Board loses its single desk. Currently, the Wheat Board books about half of the CN and CP Rail cars and gets the best price for farmers. It takes care of all producer car shippers on behalf of farmers.

When the farmers deliver board authorized grain to the elevator, they receive the initial CWB announced prices immediately. Without the Wheat Board the major grain companies would be in control, not the farmers. A restructured Canadian Wheat Board would have to own its own elevator and port facilities to be able to compete with the Cargills and the other multinationals.

If we look at food security, if we look at the future of a small farm, we see that it is the future of agriculture in Canada that is at stake here with this debate. The Wheat Board for example would not have the capital to buy elevators or build new facilities according to the report by Murray Fulton. Clearly, a Wheat Board without single desk powers would mean that farmers would be left at the mercy of the large multinational grain companies and the railways. This is the theme that threads itself through this debate.

In addition to this policy, if the Wheat Board is not able to market and coordinate movement of grain, this places another burden on farmers. As independent inland terminals fall by the wayside,

farmers will wind up spending more time on the road hauling grain over longer distances. As we move into the future, it is important for the government to realize that it needs to play a role in ensuring efficient, affordable rail transportation in our country. This means preserving secondary railway lines and helping small independent grain terminals and cooperatives to survive. This helps to strengthen our rural communities.

Another concern expressed to me this past weekend by a young farmer is that of the problems of an open market. If we look at pulse crops, currently roughly 15% of producers are able to hit that top one-third of the market; 60% of farmers get under 50% of the market. There is constant negotiation and this takes up valuable time as the market goes up and down. According to this farmer, he would have liked to have pulse crops included in the Wheat Board's single desk where prices are pooled and premiums are extracted.

Another farmer mentioned that his son spends a great deal of time on the phone trying to negotiate prices for non-board crops. According to him, most farmers prefer to deal with the Wheat Board which negotiates premium prices on their behalf and currently Canadian farmers grow quality wheat. With the loss of single desk, one farmer mentioned to me that there would be a shift to lower quality wheat with high yields. This would however put our farmers in direct competition with American soft wheat resulting in what? In lower prices.

Another interesting point I learned is that the majority of cattle ranchers are in favour of the Wheat Board due to favourable prices for feed barley. So we see that it is not just a question that concerns someone producing barley or wheat. It concerns agriculture and by concerning agriculture, it concerns the future of our country and our food security.

As we begin to analyze the benefits of a Canadian Wheat Board single desk, we begin to see why a vast majority of farmers want to retain the Wheat Board as it currently is. I would like to re-emphasize again and again that there either is an open market or there is not an open market. A restructured Wheat Board without single desk and without assets will not survive. Let us not forget that in Manitoba, where there was a clear cut question, 61.8% of farmers voted to retain the single desk for barley while 69.5% of farmers said yes to single desk for wheat.

● (2025)

That brings us now to the plebiscite. Today we had the results of the barley plebiscite and once again we have this debate about whether the questions were legitimate or not. I would like to submit that the questions were misleading. It was another step in what I call a step by step destruction of the Canadian Wheat Board as we know it today.

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The three questions were repeated on a number of occasions as if to somehow give legitimacy to the questions on the plebiscite. I would like to submit that question number two really was not valid. If we look at the way the questions were worded, we would see that the first and third questions were in the third person, whereas the second one began with "I would like", which was obviously researched. Questions are not asked in this manner without having done some research into how people might answer.

Question number two gives hope. It gives hope to farmers that somehow they can survive, sell to an open market, and still retain the Wheat Board. This is a false hope because that is not the case according to the research. It is not the case according to the sham task force that said either it is an open market or it is not an open market. That is the key.

Opponents of the Wheat Board are constantly talking about freedom of choice and the idea that each farmer should be able to decide how he or she wishes to market grain. On the surface, this appears logical. However, if placed in the context of grain production in western Canada, this idea starts to lose its validity.

In other words, the debate is this. Should a small minority have the right to destroy the future of the majority? For example, should a farmer who lives close to the border with all the latest technology and may in the short term obtain good prices in the U.S. market be allowed to destroy a system that works well for most farmers, like the folks I talked to last weekend in Saskatchewan and especially those who do not live close to the American border?

In fact, one of the main things that separates us from our U.S. friends is the notion of the collective good in Canada. In our history we have made decisions that are based on what is the right of the majority, whether it be medicare, publicly funded universities or in this case the Canadian Wheat Board.

Having said that, it is important to note that our Canadian way of life is indeed under attack from market forces with the support of the so-called new government. I believe that if we were to step back and observe how the universe is unfolding, we would see a very disturbing pattern.

• (2030)

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Wheat Board is just one player in a vast international market. There is enormous pressure from U.S.-based multinational corporations and the WTO for Canada to keep dismantling its social welfare system. Multinational corporations would love to open private hospitals in Canada and have access to billion-dollar profits. And it is no secret that the United States has tried several times to get the WTO to pressure Canada to dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board's single desk. They have not yet succeeded. Now our new government is doing it for them. We would like to know who is giving our Prime Minister his orders. Certainly not the Canadian people.

Is dismantling the Canadian Wheat Board a sacrifice? Is the government doing it to show the WTO that we are complying with their demands even though, for now, we are not changing anything about supply management? Let us be clear: supply management will be the next to go after our Canadian Wheat Board.

[*English*]

On March 22 the WTO issued a statement that Canada should dismantle significant trade barriers it uses to protect wheat, dairy and other agricultural producers. The WTO is not happy with government support for Canadian agriculture. We, therefore, as a nation must resist this pressure.

In this debate we often overlook the ramification of decisions made in our communities and in the long term. Our federal government should be doing everything that is humanly possible to ensure the survival of our rural communities and family farms. Handing over grain marketing to large multinationals does not do this.

What about the port of Churchill? As one Manitoba farmer wrote to my colleague from Winnipeg North: "In the much discussed future of the Canadian Wheat Board, there has been very little mention of the implications for the future of the port of Churchill. The bulk of freight shipped on the Hudson Bay Railway to Churchill is grain by the CWB. I trust that as a Manitoba MP, you are considering how the loss of that traffic would affect the province's economy. It is virtually impossible to think that the major grain companies, with terminals at Thunder Bay and the west coast, would ship grain through Churchill. A quick look at the map shows the relative distances from points in Manitoba to ocean ports. Churchill is much closer than Vancouver, Prince Rupert or Baie Comeau".

Those are the words of a farmer from Manitoba.

There is probably no need to repeat all the steps the current Minister of Agriculture has taken as he continues to drive nails into the coffin of the Canadian Wheat Board. These issues have been raised by farmers, by groups that represent them, by parliamentarians here in the House and by the press. Unfortunately, a lot of the government backbenchers have not raised the issue, except for one courageous member of Parliament from Manitoba.

Suffice it to say that over the past few months there has been a systematic attempt undertaken by the Prime Minister and his Minister of Agriculture to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board.

The questions could have been handled differently, in a truly democratic fashion.

Instead of striking a sham task force, the minister could have worked with the Canadian Wheat Board's board of directors and all farm organizations of all persuasions to look at the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. There really has not been an in depth socio-economic study undertaken by the government to deal with the long term losses of the single desk. In spite of the fact that there are over 200 policy analysts in the Department of Agriculture itself, we have no idea what the long term ramifications will be. We play off one study against another study and we look at short term gain. But, then, is that not what politics is all about? We look at short term gain for the election. I think it is wrong. It is not morally right.

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This should have been a priority. Instead, we are changing the future of agriculture in Canada because of an ideology that states that the market must dictate all decisions and that has convinced some farmers the short term gains are worth it. I guess, ultimately, history will be the judge of policies that are made today and I fear that it will not be favourable for Canada, the Canada as we have come to know it.

The governing party's spokesman, the current parliamentary secretary for agriculture, has made a lot of statements against the Canadian Wheat Board not only this year but in years past.

For example, on May 2, 2003 he blamed the Wheat Board for American trade actions. In fact, the Wheat Board has consistently been found to be a fair trader and it has won every legal case mounted against it by the Americans, who want to destroy the power of the single desk.

On June 14, 2002 he claimed that the Wheat Board is a bad deal economically for farmers, but several independent and peer reviewed studies prove that the Wheat Board marketing actually earns a premium for farmers, unlike the non-peer reviewed, non-independent and sometimes discredited studies the government likes to quote from.

The disturbing fact is that if there is even a small grain of truth in their statements, that should trigger a study, it should trigger an economic analysis so that we look at things in the long range and not at what is going to happen today or tomorrow.

● (2035)

During the debate on March 2 we heard irresponsible allegations that farmers do not trust the Wheat Board and that for years they have asked for information but the Wheat Board has not been required to provide it. In fact, farmers do have access to information through the directors they democratically elect and in whom they have placed their trust to use the marketing information, to act on behalf of their best interests and in such a way as to not give away sensitive information to their competitors. Again, the parliamentary secretary was making wild accusations without foundation.

The government is running its campaign against the Wheat Board because it feels it has only one choice to whom it must sell. The truth is that the Wheat Board is the agent through which western grain is sold on behalf of farmers to over 70 countries worldwide. Some small choice.

If the Wheat Board is competing against Cargill and ADM, it will no longer be in the Wheat Board's best interest to do market development as it does now. These competitors will be the ones to capture the values that, with farmers' money, the Wheat Board has created.

Returning to the plebiscite, if barley goes on an open market and there is a choice, we know when there is an open market if prices are high, farmers will choose to deal directly and if prices are low they will go to the Wheat Board, but just having been given that option means that the clout the Wheat Board has to gain the markets internationally will be lost as we continue to go along that path.

In the real world of economics, competition among sellers does not drive prices up. Competition among sellers drives prices down.

When a number of sellers have the exact same product to sell, it is only common sense that the lowest bidder will make the sale.

Multinationals have a mandate to produce profits for their shareholders. The Wheat Board has a legitimate mandate to act in farmers' best interests and return all the profit minus expenses to them. That is the difference.

If the Wheat Board fails to do right by farmers, the farmers have the democratic means at their disposal to dismantle the Wheat Board. Farmers know that and many of them chose question two because they were told by the government that the Wheat Board could stay and continue in its present form. In fact studies have shown that it will not. There either will be a Wheat Board or there will not be a Wheat Board.

If the minister and the government were doing the right thing, they would not have taken the approach they have taken. They would not have to hijack the Wheat Board's communications and printed material to reflect the Conservative Party's election promise. They would not have to put a gag order on the Wheat Board and then proceed to promote their own agenda using government sources. They would not have to remove appointed directors and a respected CEO and replace them with cronies whose main qualifications are that they support the government but not what is in the best interests of farmers. They would not have to make last minute changes to the Canadian Wheat Board election voters list to try to get an edge and then make the outrageous claim that the Wheat Board supports this change, even though consultation never occurred.

I was sitting at a farmer's breakfast table last weekend. He asked, "What will we do? My neighbour has four different ballots and now they are phoning to see whose ballot he would like to have counted". It is confusion. Something is not right. Something did not quite work.

If what the government was doing were right, it would not have used the slippery statistics such as it has in overstating the changes in Canadian oat acreage after it was removed from CWB jurisdiction in 1989. Oat prices dropped from Wheat Board prices of \$140.90 a tonne in June of that year to \$67.02 on the new private market by September. By February 1991 oats had dropped to \$51.34 a tonne. This disaster played out right across the Prairies. It was seven years after a radical decline in oat acreage and other international factors before prices recovered to something like what the Wheat Board has got for farmers.

Today the value of oats is only \$185.12, not much different from the 1989 CWB prices, but freight rates are up by 432% since that time and largely, the export dollars are going to private trade and not to farmers. That is not much to crow about for the government when it comes to oats.

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• (2040)

With the CWB pushing barley sales, our European and Australian competitors will take many of our export customers, just as they did with oats. Europeans are still subsidized and the Aussies do not have to deliver their grain over the Rocky Mountains so their delivery costs are lower.

Why does the government ignore, for example, the lessons of the BSE crisis? It taught us the hard way that when two or three big companies are controlling the market and farmers have no choice but to deal with them on their own, it is farmers who get hurt.

If the Wheat Board is allowed to continue on its current path, for sure no farmers will get hurt. However, if the government ultimately succeeds in its efforts to strip the single desk from farmers, many will surely be destroyed as the law of the jungle takes hold.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are so many questions and so little time. The issue that was brought up by all of the speakers from the opposition parties is that the second option presented in the plebiscite should not count. That option reads like this:

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

All the opposition members today have somehow judged that the option just would not work. Almost 50% of farmers who voted selected that option. What those members are saying is that the 50% of farmers who voted just do not know what the heck they are talking about. That is what they are saying, that the farmers chose an option that is not realistic.

I disagree. Fifty per cent of farmers who voted, or more, clearly disagree. Sixty-two per cent of farmers supported choice in marketing, the option to either market through the Wheat Board, which will remain, or to some other market as they choose. That is what they chose clearly in this plebiscite.

I do not know why all the opposition members are saying that the second option somehow is not realistic. I would like the member to explain that.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, the implication is that farmers do not understand question two. I think what is happening here is that the way the question is worded and the spin that has been given to this whole plebiscite is that the Canadian Wheat Board will continue to be strong and viable if we have an open market.

That is the message that has been given to farmers, that what is wrong with having question two, if they can have a strong Wheat Board and sell on the open market and if the market is bad they can go to the Wheat Board, that they would have that choice. The fact remains, and studies point to the fact that once we let it go, and even the Wheat Board directors stated recently that barley marketing through the Wheat Board will cease to be a viable option if we open it up to the open market.

• (2045)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly the member for Vegreville—Wainwright tries to make an issue by trying to blame us for how the government misled producers and propagandized them in terms of trying to have them believe that option two is really an option at all. No other Canadian would accept

a three choice question on a serious issue. We either have it or we do not. It is as simple as that.

The member for British Columbia Southern Interior is a hard-working member of the standing committee and he heard the debate at the committee. He supported the sixth report.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has shown not only contempt for the committee, but contempt for the House in terms of not asking appropriate questions with clarity. I would ask the member for British Columbia Southern Interior if he feels the same way as I do, that really it is an affront to democracy. A standing committee had hearings. We heard witnesses. We passed a report. We presented it in this House. That report carried in this House and the minister disregarded that report and the direction of the House.

Does the member believe as I do that the Prime Minister and all of the Conservative government have shown contempt for the House and contempt for western farmers in the way they have proposed this misleading question?

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, we work very closely on committee with all members. On this issue, it seems that we have a united front with the three opposition parties, and we are trying to bring this question forward. I agree with his statement.

With this whole debate, the answer is there before the question is asked. In other words, the point of the current Minister of Agriculture is that there should be this open market and let us find the best way to do this. Consequently, all these actions have taken place and we have contempt for what the standing committee has voted.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member would seem to indicate that it is an either/or option. We either have a Wheat Board or we do not have a Wheat Board. The fact is we are talking about a small component, the barley aspect of it. We can have a Wheat Board and we can give farmers a choice.

I am back to my point that the question itself, which says:

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

It is not hard to understand and it gives the farmer an opportunity to have an opinion on whether he can sell outside the board or not.

It seems to me that if the board cannot survive under that option, something would be wrong. When I was in business, I would have to give the best price to my customer. I knew who my customer was and I made sure he was satisfied so he would use me.

Why does the member think that we cannot have a Wheat Board that allows the farmer to sell his barley in or outside of the Wheat Board to get the best price? Should he not be able to compete with the rest of the market and give the farmer the best price?

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Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, if we were dealing with a number of small businesses in a competitive environment, then I would say, yes, the question is logical and it makes sense. However, we are dealing on the world stage and the world stage is basically playing out this way. There are a number of strong grain multinationals supported by other governments that want to have control over our grain industry.

If we allow the farmer the choice of selling either on the open market or to the Wheat Board, which is what the member has stated, then the power of the Wheat Board itself is eroded on the international level. This means that, as in the case of oats, the prices could very well drop, maybe not today but tomorrow. We do not have anybody speaking on behalf of or trying to get those lucrative markets. It is as simple as that.

• (2050)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had to take advantage of the opportunity to speak to this issue. I have heard several speakers today during the debate. In fact, I have followed and been a part of this discussion for 40 years. So little has changed in that time and that is a problem. It simply is not acceptable.

Finally our government made a commitment to give farmers a say on the issue, particularly on barley marketing. We asked the farmers three questions. We gave three options to farmers in the plebiscite. The first option, and I will read it again:

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

For that option, 37.8% of farmers chose it.

The second option:

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

For that, 48.4% of farmers chose it.

The third option:

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

For that option, 14% of farmers chose it.

The results are that 62% chose to operate other than through the monopoly provided by the Canadian Wheat Board. The choice was clear.

Our government now will move ahead, changing the regulations as necessary. We hope in time for the new crop year, August 1, we will be able to put in place this freedom of choice in marketing barley for Canadian farmers within the Wheat Board area. Farmers outside of the three prairie provinces and the Wheat Board portion of B.C., which is a small portion, have had a choice for the past several years. It is only people in that restricted Wheat Board area who have been fettered by a monopoly, unfairly so, and we are now changing that.

I want to talk about that monopoly. How was it put in place? It was put in place originally in 1918. For what reason? To get cheap grain for the war effort. After the war, what happened? It is interesting to read the words of the MPs who were in the House at that time. They made a decision, and it was clear to them, that it was

not appropriate to restrict the marketing of farmers with a monopoly other than for the war effort. They removed the monopoly.

Therefore, the Wheat Board operated between 1918 and 1942 as a voluntary board, which is exactly option two that we offered in the plebiscite. Farmers had a choice. They could market through the board or any other way they chose. That was the choice from 1918 to 1942.

Then what happened? The monopoly was put in place in 1941 or 1942, again, for what reason? So the government could get cheap grain from farmers below market value for the war effort. Farmers did not like that. They lost a lot of money. The government promised it would pay them back later and get rid of the monopoly after the war. It did not do that. After the second world war, the monopoly was not removed, and that is the only reason we have had the monopoly of the Wheat Board since then.

The monopoly was put in place, not to give farmers a better price for their grain, but to buy at below market value for the war effort. That is the way the monopoly has worked. That is the reality of what has happened.

I am here to say that our government has finally removed that monopoly, at least for barley as we promised to do, and farmers have quite enthusiastically supported us. In Alberta, almost 80% of farmers supported removing that monopoly.

I am delighted by that. It is progress. Wheat is an issue for another day. Our government has always said and made it clear, that we wanted to give farmers the option to either market through the Wheat Board, keep that in place, or to market any other way they saw fit.

• (2055)

I am a farmer. I have about 2,000 acres of grain land. I do not farm any more, but I rent it out on a crop share so I still sell grain. I am delighted that I, as a farmer, finally have this choice.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House are deemed put and the recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, April 18, 2007, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these proceedings arise from a question I asked the minister responsible for the Status of Women last December, when the Conservatives announced that they were slashing the budget of Status of Women Canada by \$5 million and forcing the closure of 12 of the 16 regional offices across Canada, as well as the layoff of nearly half of the department's staff.

The primary purpose of Status of Women Canada is to help women acquire the necessary skills to participate fully in the social, economic, cultural and political life of Canada and ensure that politicians and policy-makers are informed of key issues affecting women.

In a society where women continue to be marginalized within key political, social and legal institutions, and I point out that less than one in five members of Parliament are women, it is essential to promote the realization of women's human rights such as equality before the law, the right to an adequate standard of living, life and security and the same access to economic opportunities as men, in other words, equality. By equality, I mean real equality, not some abstract concept of law.

Since the announcement of the budget cuts, however, the Conservative government has flip-flopped on a number of issues. It is now adopting a familiar pattern of slashing and burning programs brought in by the former Liberal government and then suddenly reconstituting them and restoring funding when public opinion polls tell the Prime Minister that he has made another gaffe. This shows a visionless Prime Minister trying to slither with slimy gimmicks against women who constitute 52% of the population.

I know the response from the government will glorify the \$5 million that was suddenly found in last week's budget, after the minister responsible for the Status of Women suffered the embarrassment of having her offices occupied by protesters on International Women's Day.

Let us take a closer look at what the Conservatives are actually doing. According to chapter 3 of the federal budget:

This funding will enhance the activities of a refocused Women's Program, and create a new Women's Partnerships Fund to foster joint undertakings in areas of common interest with other federal departments and other levels of government.

If that sounds like gobbledygook to members, I think most Canadians would agree. Yet what is not mentioned in the budget is that the Conservatives have changed the terms and conditions of the women's program under the Status of Women, which essentially wipes out research funding and disallows advocacy activities. How can Status of Women Canada promote equality when it is prevented from researching issues or advocating policy changes to politicians and policy-makers?

Let us talk about equality. The Conservatives have deliberately changed the mandate of the department and explicitly removed the word "equality" as a goal of the department simply because the minister responsible does not think equality matters any more. I would like to know, and, indeed, all Canadians would like to know,

if the Conservative government no longer believes that equality is something that we as a country should strive toward.

I ask the question because it lies at the heart of the Conservative agenda. Does the government or the parliamentary secretary agree with the minister that the goal of gender equality is no longer relevant in Canadian society?

• (2100)

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to respond to the member for Don Valley East. I am, in fact, a little surprised that she would want to talk about the Status of Women in light of her government's failure to adequately address funding issues at the agency.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women delivered what no previous minister in the same portfolio could, more money for women. Last year, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women asked the minister for a response to a report on funding for women's organizations. That report, "Increasing Funding to Equality-Seeking Organizations", called on the government to increase funding by 25%.

The previous government had over a decade to affect change in the Status of Women agency and it did nothing. Canada's new government is taking a new approach. We will not be satisfied with the status quo approach taken by the Liberals. We recognize that not all women experience equality. We see how the lives of women, children and families can be improved.

It was this government that took action. It was Canada's new government that listened to women and listened to Canadian families.

Earlier this month, to mark International Women's Day, the minister announced an increase of \$5 million to the women's program at Status of Women. That announcement increased the budget of the program by 42%. In fact, Canada's new government added an additional \$5 million to Status of Women in this year's budget for a total of \$10 million. That is \$10 million of new money that will directly benefit women in their communities.

This government's overall record on helping women, children and families has been second to none. In a little over a year we have introduced the universal child care benefit to help women and their families in their homes. We implemented hospital wait time guarantees for prenatal aboriginal women. We expanded eligibility for compassionate caregivers, most of whom are women. This government introduced pension splitting for senior citizens, targeted tax cuts like the GST, the textbook credit, and a credit for families with children involved in physical activities.

We introduced real change, real ideas, and real policies that are making a difference in the lives of Canadian women.

Adjournment Proceedings

The member for Don Valley East stood in the House and said that the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India depends on federal funding to do its important work. She asked if the minister would guarantee that this organization's funding would not be cut. The minister's office has checked into this, and according to officials at Status of Women Canada there has been no application from this organization this year.

The member also mentioned the National Association of Women and the Law. I am sure that if the hon. member would like more information on these two organizations, the minister's office would be more than happy to investigate.

In the meantime, I would implore the member to actually look at the facts, read the budget, and recognize that this government is working to improve the lives of women, children and their families. We are not just talking about it.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary did not answer a simple question which was: Does the government believe in equality? That shows it does not.

The budget is a bunch of gimmicks.

The Status of Women was established by the Liberal government, not by the neo-cons. The neo-cons can take as much credit as they want, but 52% of voters know that they are being conned.

According to chapter three of the Conservative budget, funding will be steered toward real action in key areas such as the economic status of women and combating violence against women and girls.

It is a fact that long guns are the most common type of firearm used in spousal homicides. Over 71% of spousal homicides involved rifles and shotguns. In spite of this shocking statistic, the Conservatives introduced legislation that would remove seven million long guns from the firearm registry. This is how they protect women.

Does the parliamentary secretary sincerely believe that removing rifles and shotguns from the gun registry will somehow protect women and girls from the threat—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

• (2105)

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's party has been mismanaging public funds for years. While the Liberals chose to spend taxpayers' dollars on administration and bureaucracy, we are delivering even more programming dollars to women in their communities.

An independent evaluation showed that it cost 31¢ to deliver \$1 under the women's program. That is unacceptable. By streamlining the agency and putting application forms online, we were able to redirect \$5 million to the women's program. The reality is that we all do not live in major urban centres and this government recognizes that. By putting the application form on the website, we reach women in rural and northern communities.

On this side of the House, unlike the Liberals, we do not separate the women off and we do not hold all boys policy weekends. All

ministers and all Conservative caucus members will continue to work together to help Canadian women and their families.

We have taken women's issues very seriously. Protecting women in violent—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Laval—Les Îles.

[*Translation*]

MINISTER OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during question period on February 20, I asked the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration the following question:

Mr. Speaker, it costs \$45 a day for a government member to rent a car. However, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration preferred to spend \$6,200 for a limousine with a uniformed driver.

When will the minister stop her excessive spending of taxpayers' money? And above all, when will she restore the \$20 million she slashed from our immigration system?

In his answer, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform completely ignored my question.

[*English*]

The government's mantra has always been to slash and burn to the detriment of Canadians on fixed incomes and to the detriment of seniors.

[*Translation*]

Often, it is to the detriment of new arrivals whose credentials are not recognized in Canada. As a result, they cannot begin their lives in our country because this government reneged on its promise to allocate \$18 million in the 2007 budget to look after foreign credential recognition.

Although this government would like us to think that it is helping seniors, that is not the case. Let us not forget that it was the Conservatives who tried to de-index old age pensions.

[*English*]

The government refuses to listen to information from Canada's own census data which shows that about 115,000 people living in Canada who thought they were Canadians, it turns out that they may not be after all. For example, we are talking about the children of military personnel born abroad.

When demographer, Barry Edmondston, a sociologist at the University of Victoria, appeared before the standing committee he said that the problem touches more than a few dozen Canadians, although the minister would have us believe it is only a mere 450 people. According to Edmondston, there may even be about 85,000 people in other countries who may not know they have lost their Canadian citizenship.

Instead of taking a holistic and proactive approach to resolving these issues and preventing any future problems or occurrences, the minister has said that she prefers to deal with cases on an individual basis. Unfortunately, a reactionary approach will not resolve this issue.

Instead of putting the money back in the budget to review the legislation and overhaul the act, the minister insists that her department must apply the law as it is written and will not envisage a revision of the legislation.

During her recent testimony at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, the minister said:

Overhauling the Act is a major, major effort and quite frankly, it's more than we could take on to help these people at this point in time.

[*Translation*]

This is just not acceptable. Today, I am asking the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration—who I see is absent—to start by implementing a communications strategy with ads and public service announcements in print and electronic media to inform Canadians that they could lose their citizenship. The strategy should include a major campaign about the toll-free information line so that more people can get the information. This telephone communications strategy must be made available to people both in Canada and abroad.

Once again, I am asking the minister, who is not here tonight, to put the \$20 million back into her budget to update the Citizenship Act and take proactive measures to find—

• (2110)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. The member for Laval—Les Îles has a lot of experience in this House and knows that she is not allowed to mention the absence or presence of members in the House.

[*English*]

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member annoys me when she speaks about Conservatives not being accountable because Canadians are satisfied with our new government and they understand that Conservatives are accountable and are getting the job done, something that the member and her party did not do in the last 13 years.

As troubling as Canadians found the Liberal scandal and culture of entitlement while in government, they are finding the Liberals' current desperation and aimlessness as opposition downright disturbing. It is bad enough that Liberals could not get governing down after 13 years of trying. Now we are seeing that they cannot get opposition down either.

Canadians can see that the Liberals are the only ones who did not see anything wrong with ad scam. Canadians see that the Liberals are trying to hold us to a higher standard of rules and yet they could not pass those same rules and policies that they are expecting us to do. They had that file as well.

Canadians are not impressed with the Liberals' oppose everything at all cost approach. They see that the Liberals have lost touch with the public that they wish to serve. The Liberals want so badly to get back to power as quickly as possible that they will do just about anything.

Adjournment Proceedings

The member asked about the \$20 million cut from the immigration system. Canadians know there was no cut. They know that their government added funding for immigration where their old government did not. They know that we cut in half the right of permanent residence fee that the Liberals created. They know that after the old government froze money for immigrants for a decade, their new government added \$307 million in funding for immigrant language training and literacy, programs that help newcomers settle in communities across the country, find doctors, register their kids for school and adapt to their new home.

That is right, there were no cuts to immigration and Canadians know that. They know that their new government is appreciative and it is funding immigration, not like the old government. For 13 years the Liberals did nothing for immigrants other than many empty promises.

Now in opposition, the Liberals are still opposed to new money for immigrants. They voted against every new measure that we made. Immigrants and all Canadians are noticing and they are noticing that the Liberal opposition is opposing a lot of measures that make a difference in their lives. They see that the Liberals are opposed to \$2.4 billion in benefits going directly to families who can put money toward their choice in child care. The Liberals voted against it and their leader says that he will take it away from families if he gets power.

Canadians see that the member and her Liberal opposition voted against students. Canadians value education. They welcome our 40% increase in post-secondary education transfer, new graduate scholarships and \$500 million for labour market training. Only the Liberals are opposed to that.

Canadians see that the member for Laval and the Liberals are opposed to helping low income Canadians. We created a working income tax benefit that will help 1.2 million Canadians. The member voted against it. The member and her Liberals are trying to take that away. I am not sure if it is in the provinces or the social programs they deliver that the member and the Liberals are against, but she has opposed \$39 billion in social transfers over the next seven years. Old habits die hard, I suppose.

Her Liberals cut social transfers for health care, education, child care, seniors and other social spending by \$25 billion—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please.

The hon. member for Laval—Les Îles.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Mr. Speaker, I am really surprised by the answer from the parliamentary secretary because I was not aware that she was parliamentary secretary for citizenship and immigration.

However, the insults I heard were totally irrelevant. They were just partisan attacks.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would like to say that the government has now been governing for 18 months. It seems to me that 18 months is plenty of time for a government to show its colour and to tell Canadians what it intends to do for them.

The Conservatives have shown what they are doing. The member's speech was full of platitudes. I will reply by saying that the former Liberal government announced a \$500 million plan to reduce the processing backlog, as well as the creation of the new, in Canada economic stream to allow applicants with experience in Canada's labour market or educational institutions to remain in Canada. I know all about it—

• (2115)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Mr. Speaker, in the next election, the Liberals will have a lot to answer for as opposition. They are so desperate to get back into power they completely lost sight of what is important to Canadians. They are really out of touch.

They voted against \$45 million to improve physical access to people with disabilities and a record high \$5.6 billion for child care

and early learning. They voted against \$307 million to improve the lives of immigrants and to help them adapt to life in Canada. They voted against \$500 million in labour market training for unemployed Canadians not eligible for EI.

They voted against the \$30 billion over seven years in social transfers to Quebec and other provinces. They voted against the \$10 million to combat elder abuse. They voted against tax cuts to help low income Canadians. They voted against the almost \$2 billion in funding for affordable housing and homelessness. They voted against improved access to student loans and graduate scholarships. They voted against money for seniors and the disabled. They voted—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It is with regret that I interrupt the member but the time is up. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 9:17 p.m.)

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