



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Friday, May 11, 2007**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 11, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)  
[English]

### CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed from May 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-54, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (accountability with respect to loans), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to complete my remarks this morning on Bill C-54.

I should also say at the outset that I will be sharing my time with the member for Churchill.

Members of Parliament are honest people. Unfortunately, we have been tarred, I think unjustly at times, by the public. Most people in the chamber would agree that everything should be transparent with respect to where we raise our money or what loans we have backing us. I for one believe that anything I do can be posted on a website, I will be accountable for it, and people can hold me accountable for it because they can elect me or not.

It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister has not been forthcoming. In his 2002 leadership campaign he failed to disclose the sources of the people who donated to his leadership bid. I would like to know that and I think many Canadians would like to know who supported the Prime Minister in his leadership bid in 2002. Was it the coalition for guns? Was it Canadian big business? Who was it? Right now we can only speculate and I think the Prime Minister would do himself a service if he came clean.

I should contrast that to the Liberal Party's last leadership campaign and conference in which the leadership candidates went above and beyond everything that was required by Elections Canada.

We need rules and regulations, but I believe that full transparency is a much more powerful tool.

I recall one incident that had to do with the Ethics Commissioner. I was invited to go to the Grey Cup in Ottawa a few years ago by some big company that I knew about. Everyone knew the name. I do

not recall having any dealings with it. I told my staff to phone the Ethics Commissioner's office to find out if this was appropriate and get its blessing.

A member of my staff spoke to someone at the Ethics Commissioner's office and the person said that because the Grey Cup was such a big event I would be sitting with corporate people from that company and there would be no time to talk business. The individual thought it was inappropriate. To me it seemed totally counterintuitive. I would have thought the opposite would have been the case. I did not go to the Grey Cup.

That is the problem when one tries to regulate and micromanage things at that level. Let us be accountable and transparent. We have a very good transparent and accountable system in the Parliament of Canada. People vote frequently, sometimes far too frequently as they see it and certainly as many of us see it, but they have a vote. They can kick us out if they see that we took a donation from a company or individual who they feel is inappropriate.

I recall being the treasurer of the riding association of the former member for Etobicoke North who received a large donation, I would say in the thousands of dollars. That conjures up thoughts of \$40,000 or \$50,000, but it was not even \$10,000. I talked to the member at the time. I was the treasurer, a part time volunteer. We discussed it and decided that it was inappropriate to accept a donation of what I will say was \$5,000 at the time because there was clearly an agenda, at least in our judgment, by the company making the donation. We sent back a letter, thanked it profusely, and said we felt it was inappropriate.

I have had donations of \$200, \$250 from corporations and those are basically the size of any corporate donations. I have had some slightly larger over the years. Is a \$250 donation going to buy my position in the House of Commons where I am representing the people of Canada? Of course it would not. If that were the case, I would send the cheque back. No amount is going to change my mind about a position I am going to take. I am going to take a position that is, in my judgment, in the best interests of all Canadians. That can be a judgment call and people would agree to disagree.

• (1010)

However, I think we get so hung up with these rules and regulations. I for one voted against our government's bill, Bill C-24, election financing, and tried to work a compromise out with the then Prime Minister to limit corporate donations but not to the extent that they were then or are today.

*Government Orders*

I do not think the bill accomplishes that much. It sort of reinforces what is already on the books. We cannot use loans to circumvent the donation limits. That is already there and we have to disclose these loans.

Certainly, I support transparency, accountability, and I am going to ask our critic for his best advice once the bill goes to committee, but at this point I am not sure it adds any value.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, some members of Parliament, especially Liberal members, and some former members had trust funds. No one knew who donated to these trust funds and many of those trust funds got transferred to the riding associations.

I heard the Liberal member talk about transparency and accountability. On behalf of his party, will he pledge to bring forward all the names of people who have donated to past trust funds that are now transferred to riding associations, so that even today we can get some clarity as to who are some of these past donors?

**Hon. Roy Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I am quite aware of the trust fund situation of my former colleague from Trinity—Spadina. In fact, I think those trust funds have all been wound down.

There are different motivations for setting up a trust fund. I have a trust fund. I have a trust fund because when I receive donations, I want to put it on deposit and I want to have it there. It is all receipted through the party, so the party gets its commission or whatever. I put it in a trust fund so that I can put it on deposit, it can earn money, and it is earmarked for an election campaign.

We need to understand that when we raise money, it is to run elections. There is a tendency certainly in many associations if we have the money there in an association's bank account to suddenly, if there is a great idea to support people who go to this convention or that convention, have a big picnic, to do this and that which are all good things, but we have to have the money there to fight an election campaign.

Therefore, I have a trust fund. It is all fully disclosed. There are no donations going directing to my trust fund. It all comes from the association. It is all receipted. It is all publicly available. Once it goes through that process, I put it into a trust fund. It is a legal trust fund sanctioned by the party and sanctioned by Elections Canada.

One of the things that some people were annoyed about is when they collected money, it had to go through the party and the party collected a commission. That was fair enough. It has to run the party apparatus as well, but some people were quite upset about that. I do not think it is driven by the need to hide donations, but right now the trust funds are all wrapped up, the way that one was and I am sure that it is appropriate.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure it did not escape your notice that the hon. member did not answer the question he had been asked about what the source was for monies in all these trust funds.

It is interesting that on the one hand that is a question not worth answering in his mind, whereas it is desperately important that the Prime Minister explain where he got funds from for a leadership race that occurred not under the current law, not under the proposed law, but under the current law which was enacted a year ago, and not

under the law that Jean Chrétien enacted in 2004, but under a previous law. Therefore, we are going back now to 2002.

The argument I guess he is presenting is that somehow, and I will not say I guess because he essentially made an assertion, extremists and so on must have been at the root of any money that was received at that time. That is just indecorous and inappropriate.

However, I think we can probably guess that the same people who supported the Prime Minister when he ran for the leadership of the Canadian Alliance in 2002 would also have supported him in 2004 when he ran for the leadership of the new Conservative Party in a much better financed campaign.

We all remember that in 2002 the Canadian Alliance was in disarray and the leadership was not quite the prize that the leadership of the Conservative Party in 2004 was. He was not running against a billionaire either who had an infinite amount of money to spend financing her own campaign.

Therefore, if we were to take a look at the 2004 numbers which are public, we would get an idea of the kind of structure we can expect. What we see is very few large donations and we would also see the number one donor in that campaign. Number one was me. I gave the largest donation. I think we have a pretty good idea that we are not talking about vast amounts of money from corporations.

By contrast to that, if we were to look at the numbers for the Liberal leadership campaign, we would see—

• (1015)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I do have to give the hon. member some time to respond. The hon. member for Etobicoke North.

**Hon. Roy Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I think the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington has it wrong because we cannot look at the donations that were made today to the Prime Minister's campaign and then conclude that they must have been the same people back in 2002. That is just not good enough. The member opposite knows that.

There could have been a whole group of different people in 2002, different corporations. It was then the Alliance Party. If I were to stand in the House and say I did not disclose my donations in the election campaign in 1997, but in the election campaign in 2000 we could see the list of people who donated to my campaign and we could infer that it was the same group. It is not good enough. The member opposite should know that.

**Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-54, which focuses on creating further restrictions on the use of loans for political entities.

I understand the bill, if passed, will amend the pre-existing rules of the Canada Elections Act. This is legislation that touches on the national discussion of democratic reform, a discussion that has always been of great interest for all members of this House and, indeed, for many constituents across my riding of Churchill.

*Government Orders*

As some members in the House may know, the Churchill riding is a very northern riding in Manitoba and it covers more than half of the province of Manitoba. It reflects rural Canada and aboriginal Canadians, including first nations and the Métis nation.

Canadians expect their members of Parliament to be continuously working to find ways to enhance our nation's democracy. As parliamentarians, we must work together to foster a nation that values both civic responsibility and empowerment. These virtues are the centre of any debate on democratic reform.

Bill C-54 purports to establish a uniform and transparent reporting regime for all loans to political entities, including mandatory disclosure of terms and the identity of all lenders and loan guarantors.

Strangely enough, the government's proposed provisions already exist in the current law.

The legislation is also designed to tighten rules of treatment of unpaid loans to ensure candidates cannot walk away from unpaid loans. This does not represent a substantive change to the law as, once again, there are already provisions in place to ensure that loans cannot be written off without consequence. Political riding associations would ultimately be held responsible for unpaid loans taken out by their candidates.

This would allow only financial institutions and other political entities to make loans beyond the annual contribution limit for individuals, and only at commercial rates of interest, although the current law already requires all loans to be made at commercial rates of interest. Under the proposed legislation, unions and corporations would now be unable to make loans and financial institutions could not lend money at rates of interest other than the market norm.

While it seems that the government intended to increase transparency with this bill, the shortcomings of the bill, as it is currently laid out, are such that it would do nothing to increase accountability. Instead, Bill C-54 would build new roadblocks that would restrict the access Canadians have to the democratic process.

If passed as is, the legislation would give financial institutions the full say on who gets to run for political office in Canada rather than Canadians.

In line with the Conservatives' trends of discriminatory policies, the bill would negatively impact many Canadians, especially people in my riding, including first nations, minority candidates and, I believe, women for nomination. Canada is at the point in our history where the government should be continuing the Liberal legacies of encouraging greater participation in the democratic process. The government must celebrate our diversity through political empowerment rather than design laws that would hinder one's ability to run for public office.

The proposed changes would make it very difficult for Canadians, especially those of limited means and those with limited contact to potential wealthy contributors to even seek nomination in Canada because of the challenge of securing loans from banking institutions. I am curious as to whether the members opposite were intentionally doing this or perhaps it is an aspect of the bill that they merely

overlooked. Either case, I think it is a question worthy of further exploration.

I also want to add that under Liberal leadership in this country, the government passed legislation that limited the roles of corporations and unions in electoral financing and introduced the most dramatic lowering of contribution limits in Canadian history.

The key difference between limiting the role of corporate and union contributions in political campaigns and limiting loans in the manner that the government has introduced is a matter of equity. I feel that their proposed approach would be regressive. Given this opportunity to advance this debate, we should seize the opportunity to democratize our institutions where available.

● (1020)

For some, the window of opportunity to influence policy may only come once every four years. Since the passing of Bill C-16, the next scheduled time Canadians will have the ability to voice their opinion for policy change will be in October 2009. This is not to say that the federal election will occur on that date but rather that it is theoretically conceivable.

Our democracy is an institution of the people and in order for such an institution to be truly meaningful it must be truly accessible, regardless of gender, race and social status. With this in mind, we need legislation that will address these demands for all Canadians.

I look forward to hearing other members' perspectives on this debate and observing how it unfolds in the near future.

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's comments about election financing reform. Of course, her party is opposed to any kind of reform in that area and it is no secret why that is.

If we go back to the Liberal leadership race we can see what the various candidates borrowed from private individuals. For example, for the opposition leader it was almost half a million dollars. For the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore it was \$470,000. For Bob Rae it was \$845,000 in loans. It goes on and on, \$200,000, \$300,000 for a total of \$3 million that was borrowed from private individuals to run those campaigns.

The problem is that nobody knows the terms of the repayment. Nobody in the public knows what the interest rates were. Are those loans being forgiven? Is this a back door to actually do donations? Nobody knows.

Why does the member not support the demand of taxpayers, voters and Canadians in general that there be accountability in election financing?

**Ms. Tina Keeper:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin with what Canadians do not know. He is right. They do not know who the funders were for Prime Minister Harper's race in 2002.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I do not know how many times I have to tell members that they are not to refer to the Prime Minister or anybody else by their first or last names.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Tina Keeper:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize. As a new member I am sometimes shaky on the rules of the House.

I would like to add that it was the Liberal Party that brought in Bill C-24, the most sweeping changes on electoral reform. In fact, when we talk about this particular bill, Bill C-54, the core of the issue for many Canadians is access and participation in the democratic process.

Many members seem to use Bill C-54 to focus on the Liberal leadership race. I think there is a desperate attempt to make an issue of something that was not an issue. It is about access to the democratic process and we as parliamentarians have a duty to ensure that all Canadians can access this process.

I represent a large riding with a population that is not as large as many small urban ridings but 65% of my riding are aboriginal people. However, because of systemic policies and some of the laws in this country, the aboriginal people have been marginalized. For instance, in one centre in my riding where mining is booming and the price of minerals is going through the roof, the first nations have not had access to resource benefit sharing. There is inequity and it is through the history and the policies of this country that have created inequity. As parliamentarians it is our job to ensure that we have a process in place where we have equal access.

I represent many people in my riding who do not have the ability to access this type of loan from a bank because they do not have the capital. However, that is not due to not wanting it or not working hard enough. People did work hard but we come from a whole different cultural background where our industry was the land. We did not have financial institutions in the same tradition as western Canadians, or western civilization as we might want to call it. We had our own civilization. Our industry and our economy was based on the land. We did not have these types of institutions so we do not have a history of participating in these types of institutions. We did not have a framework where we built up capital and equity.

Therefore, this whole framework, which is at the core of this bill, is actually alien to people, but not out of choice. Many new Canadians who have come here are working hard and paying their bills but they are living cheque to cheque. We all know people who reflect that reality for many Canadians and in fact we know that probably the majority of Canadians live in a lifestyle where they may not have access—

• (1025)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am sorry but the time for questions and comments has expired. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Drummond.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of the Bloc Québécois about Bill C-54, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (accountability with respect to loans). Basically, this bill seeks to prevent individuals from bypassing campaign financing rules. Naturally, the Bloc Québécois will support it.

The bill would also correct another problem with the government accountability act, also known as Bill C-2. Why another problem? Because unfortunately, during the study of Bill C-2, it became clear

that the Conservative government was more interested in passing the bill quickly than in really fixing ethical problems, even though it presented the bill as its key piece of legislation to clean up campaign financing and governance. Sadly, the hasty treatment made for a very incomplete key piece of legislation.

At the time, the opposition parties, the media and Democracy Watch pointed the problem out, but the government refused to act. As a result, there were huge gaps in terms of ethics, and now we have to fill those gaps. For example, it provides little protection for whistleblowers and does nothing to improve the Access to Information Act. I will come back to that later on.

Bill C-54 will fix the problem of loans that allowed individuals to bypass political contribution restrictions. When the Conservatives introduced the bill, they pointed out that during the most recent Liberal leadership race, several candidates had taken out big loans to bypass financing restrictions. It may be that several Liberal candidates did this, but let us not forget that the Prime Minister himself has not disclosed all of the contributions he received during the 2002 leadership race.

By way of explanation, I would like to remind the members that Bill C-2, which addresses government accountability, introduced new restrictions on campaign contributions, limiting any individual's annual contribution to a registered party or candidate to \$1,100. Furthermore, Bill C-2 reduced the amount a union or business could contribute annually to a registered party or candidate to \$0. Basically, contributions from unions and businesses are no longer allowed.

Unfortunately, it was still possible to circumvent these restrictions by taking out personal loans. As I have already mentioned, we saw this when several candidates in the recent Liberal Party of Canada leadership race took out sizeable loans from individuals and financial institutions. *La Presse* even reported the amounts of the loans, which totalled hundreds of thousands of dollars, obtained by the current leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, the current deputy leader of the party, and by Bob Rae and Gerard Kennedy. I would like to remind the House of those amounts. Bob Rae, who was defeated by the current leader of the official opposition, owes \$580,000 to John Rae, the vice-president of Power Corporation. The current leader of the opposition borrowed \$430,000. The current deputy leader of the Liberal Party borrowed \$170,000, and Gerard Kennedy borrowed \$201,000.

The subterfuge of using loans gave candidates access to enormous sums of money. This bill would correct such issues. As I was saying earlier, however, the accountability act fails to address a number of ethical problems. For example, the whistleblower protection issue has not been resolved. Several Conservative election promises concerning whistleblower protection did not make their way into the Accountability Act. As we all know, during the January 2006 election, the Conservatives made a number of election promises regarding this issue.

*Government Orders*

•(1030)

First of all, they wanted to ensure that whistleblowers would have access to adequate legal counsel. However, former Bill C-2, the Federal Accountability Act, imposes a \$1,500 limit on legal costs, which is incredibly low. Thus, under the Conservative government, whistleblowers must be able to pay for their own legal counsel if they want to disclose wrongdoing.

Second, they wanted to give the public sector integrity commissioner the power to enforce the whistleblower legislation. This was not in the bill.

They wanted to guarantee protection to anyone who reports wrongdoing within the government, not just to public servants. This is not in the Federal Accountability Act.

They wanted to take away the government's ability to exempt crown corporations and other entities from the application of the whistleblower legislation. This is not in the accountability act either.

Another problem that the Federal Accountability Act has not solved is the reform of the Access to Information Act.

On April 5, 2005, the Liberal government released a discussion paper on reforming access to information. This document met with general criticism, even from the Conservatives. In addition to doubling the minimum administrative fees charged to the public, the proposal by the former Liberal Prime Minister, the member for LaSalle—Énard, maintained all the exceptions provided for in the legislation.

In fact, in 13 years, the Liberal Party never managed to introduce a valid reform of the Access to Information Act. For its part, the Conservative Party promised during the election campaign to reform the Access to Information Act. To quote the Conservatives' election platform, "A Conservative government will implement the Information Commissioner's recommendations for reform of the Access to Information Act".

We are still waiting for this reform. When will the government decide to carry out this reform, as promised?

The truth is that now that they are in power, the Conservatives, like the Liberals before them, are in less of a hurry to reform this legislation. Moreover, the Information Commissioner recently noted that this is a general trend. He said, "The reason that action, not more study, is required is that governments continue to distrust and resist the Access to Information Act and the oversight of the Information Commissioner".

Despite the shortcomings of former Bill C-2 on accountability, Bill C-54, which is before us today, proposes four types of changes.

First, the bill establishes a system of uniform, transparent reports on all loans to political entities and provides for mandatory disclosure of the terms of those loans and the identity of the lenders and guarantors.

Second, the bill would prohibit unions and corporations not only from making contributions, in accordance with the Federal Accountability Act, but also from lending money.

Moreover, loans, loan guarantees and contributions from individuals could not exceed the limit set out in the Federal Accountability Act, which is \$1,100 for 2007.

Lastly, only financial institutions, at market interest rates, or other political entities would be able to lend money exceeding that amount. The rules for unpaid loans would be tightened so that candidates could not default on their obligations. Riding associations would be held responsible for their candidate's unpaid loan.

Despite this bill, which we are in favour of, in a few short months the Conservative party has built up a track record that shows a lack of political will to obey the rules and put an end to the culture of entitlement.

•(1035)

Denouncing the sponsorship scandal that took place when the Liberal Party was in power, Mr. Justice Gomery said that it was time to do away with the mentality behind the culture of entitlement and the attitude people in government have that they can do anything they want and are accountable to no one. This is not how things should be. This is certainly not what Quebeckers and Canadians want. To avoid this attitude, there must be open and transparent management of public funds and taxpayers' money. The Conservatives have unfortunately not set a good example.

In December 2006, the Conservative Party admitted that it had failed to disclose the receipt of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Chief Electoral Officer. The money was registration fees collected from Conservative delegates attending the Conservative Party's May 2005 convention. The report said that in being forced to treat convention registration fees as donations, the Conservative Party discovered that three delegates, including the Prime Minister, had exceeded their annual contribution limits of \$5,400. The Conservative Party was forced to reimburse \$456 to the Prime Minister and to two other delegates.

Here is another example: a closer look makes it clear that this government is being influenced. The Prime Minister, when in opposition, reprimanded the Liberals for the comings and goings between political offices and lobbying firms. Yet, since taking power he has appointed a former lobbyist as the head of National Defence. This party denounced the lobbyist culture associated with the running of the Liberal Party. At that time we agreed with our Conservative colleagues. You could say that power changes political parties and makes anything possible.

We can see what the appointment of a lobbyist has done to National Defence. We can see that the Prime Minister now has a serious credibility problem with regard to his lobbyist minister. It is true that this appointment has paid off for companies that sell military equipment. We believe that the Minister of National Defence should have considered the taxpayers, who clearly want more humanitarian action than war.

*Government Orders*

The Prime Minister did not stop there with his partisan appointments. He also appointed Sandra Buckler as his director of communications. We should remember that the Conservative government decided to maintain the contract with Royal LePage relocation services, in spite of a devastating report by the Auditor General. In 2005, this company hired Ms. Buckler to meet with the members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which had serious doubts about the spending of public money by Royal LePage and which was examining the possibility of referring this matter to the Auditor General. It is likely that Ms. Buckler was not paid by Royal LePage to convince the members to refer the matter to the Auditor General. In this case, whose interests came first, Ms. Buckler's or the taxpayers'? To compensate her, the Prime Minister appointed her director of communications of his cabinet.

In April 2006, the Prime Minister tried to appoint Gwyn Morgan, a Conservative Party fundraiser, to the position of chairman of the new public appointments commission. This appointment was blocked by a parliamentary committee dominated by opposition members.

I have another example of how this government is maintaining the culture of entitlement. It awards contracts to Conservative friends. This government awarded a communications contract to Marie-Josée Lapointe, a former member of the Prime Minister's transition team. This contract goes against the spirit of the accountability act, former Bill C-2, since political staff are not allowed to receive contracts from the government in place for 12 months after they have left. The contract was cancelled half way through.

This government also uses public funds for partisan purposes.

• (1040)

In March 2006, the Conservative government awarded an \$85,000 contract to gauge public support for the Conservative Party's five electoral priorities. In July 2006, the Conservative Party awarded a contract to Strategic Counsel in order to poll public opinion on various political issues. The very partisan report identified the environment as a very important issue for the government's re-election. It should be noted that Strategic Counsel is run by Allan Gregg, who was the Conservative Party's official pollster under Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell.

What is more, the Prime Minister has made dozens of partisan appointments within the machinery of government. When the Conservatives were in opposition they denounced such practices. Now that they are in power, why are they doing the exact same thing? Do they believe it is their turn to do whatever they want? The Conservative Party should be accountable to the public for its actions.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-54, but it finds it regrettable that the other problems I have just mentioned have not been resolved by the Conservative government.

Taxpayers deserve to have a government that is above reproach. Neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives have lived up to these expectations. That is why most people in Quebec vote for the Bloc Québécois. Our party is the only one that is not negatively influenced by power. Our only goal is to defend the interests of

Quebeckers and they realize that. They can be assured of our full commitment to that goal.

When all the parties represented in this House understand the importance of integrity and transparency, our democracy will only get better. Quebec and Canadian taxpayers deserve that; let us govern accordingly.

• (1045)

[English]

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while I thank the hon. member for her comments, she unfortunately spent 90% of her time talking about unrelated issues and only 10% on Bill C-54.

However, in the time she did spend on Bill C-54, election financing reform, I was glad that she referred to the Liberal leadership convention and the fact that horrific amounts of money were borrowed from private individuals. In fact, among the 11 candidates for the Liberal leadership, a whopping total of \$3 million was borrowed from private individuals. None of us know what the interest rates were, what the repayment plan was, or whether there was any repayment plan.

Canadians then have a right to ask this question: what are these wealthy lenders getting in return? Is it love and affection? I think not. Canadians are not that naive. What else are they getting in return? In Bob Rae's case, he was a Liberal leadership contender and borrowed \$500,000 from his brother. What does he get in return? Influence? We do not know.

I would ask the member to comment on whether she knows if all of these loans given to the Liberal leadership contenders are going to be repaid? Does she know?

[Translation]

**Ms. Pauline Picard:** Mr. Speaker, I talked about Bill C-54. I said that the Bloc was in favour of this bill, which is designed to correct the problem of loans.

As for the Conservative member's question—it is always the same question, written in advance—I cannot answer. But I can give a few examples of partisan appointments. In accusing the Liberals of not being transparent, the Conservatives seem to be taking a “My dad is stronger than your dad” stance.



In my opinion, the Conservatives have not proven that they are as pure as the driven snow, as they claim to be. On April 12, 2006, it was announced that a friend of the government, former Conservative member Jim Gouk, had been named to the board of NAV CANADA. The government controls three seats on that board. On April 21, 2006, Gwyn Morgan, a Conservative backer, was appointed chair of the new Public Appointments Commission. The appointment was blocked by a parliamentary committee dominated by the opposition. On June 27, 2006, Kevin Gaudet, a Conservative organizer who had worked on the Prime Minister's leadership bid in 2004, was appointed to a part-time job at the Canada Pension Plan Review Tribunal that would have paid him \$250 per sitting day. The Conservative government eventually backed down on this. On June 27, 2006, Brian Richard Bell, a Conservative organizer from New Brunswick, was appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench of New Brunswick. On September 18, 2006, Jacques Léger, interim president of the Progressive Conservative Party, was given a judgeship in the Superior Court of Quebec for the district of Montreal. On October 31, 2006, Raminder Gill, a former Conservative candidate who was defeated in Mississauga, was appointed as a citizenship judge. He was a former Progressive Conservative Party member in Ontario. His appointment made room for the floor crosser, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville. On November 1, 2006, Howard Bruce, the Conservative candidate in Portneuf in 2004 and—

• (1050)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

[English]

I am sorry, but we need time for other questions and comments.

The hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East.

[Translation]

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member who just spoke.

I heard the hon. member for Abbotsford make a few statements on certain candidates who ran in our party's leadership race.

[English]

Perhaps I could ask the hon. member if she would want to ask, in regard to the 2005 convention which the Conservative Party refused to declare, or in regard to the leadership supporters of the Prime Minister, whether or not she believes this bill should be expanded and indeed made retroactive. We would then catch what happened with the Conservative Party when it in fact used \$2 million that should have been declared and should have been considered an election expense.

Does the hon. member believe that? In terms of making this a situation that the member for Abbotsford would like as a trap for the Liberal Party, maybe she would want to ask for full disclosure from the governing party for who in fact contributed to them and, more importantly, whether or not the 2005 convention should in fact be part of that retroactive net that we want to put in place.

[Translation]

**Ms. Pauline Picard:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the question by the hon. member from the Liberal Party, I would say I agree that this

### Government Orders

should be made retroactive. I have denounced the fact that the governments, whether Liberal or Conservative, try to be squeaky clean during the election campaign, but once in power the same thing always happens.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-54 because it will put an end to certain practices, which will allow greater transparency. What I have denounced are the flaws in the accountability act, Bill C-2. There are major shortcomings that need to be corrected.

[English]

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to give a few opinions on and discuss further some of the implications with respect to the legislation.

I will preface my comments. Coming from York South—Weston, I come from a riding that is very working class. It is an immigrants' turnstile type of riding. According to usual indicators, it is one of the less wealthy ridings in Ontario. In fact, it is second last in terms of those indicators. Most of the housing stock was built before 1950. Most of the people, about 60%, live in multiple occupancy high-rise buildings. There are a lot of issues that come along with this in terms of people coming here with hopes of being part of the mainstream of life in Canada.

One of those hopes is to be a fully empowered member of Canadian society, with the right to vote equally and equitably. I think this House stands for those values and works toward that objective so that we do not let down past, present and future generations with respect to their ability to become part of the mainstream of Canadian life, which is what they come to this country for.

Against that background, when I am looking at equity I think that we should not place one class of citizens aside and stereotype them with respect to having less rights. It always bothers me when I see a preamble to legislation couched in these kinds of terms: we will create "an airtight system of political financing that will eliminate, once and for all, the influence of rich, wealthy individuals from the political process".

I never knew that one of the standard values of this country was that we should stereotype wealthy people and make them scapegoats for other inequities that may exist in society. In fact, our Income Tax Act makes it very clear that in order to be equitable we will take that wealth from those wealthy people and redistribute it to those who are less fortunate. We hope there will be many wealthy people and we will take that wealth and redistribute it. That is the objective of our Income Tax Act.

Nobody has ever said that this is a very tenuous and unclear objective or mechanism. It is like what we say about equalization in this country, which is that we disagree in terms of how we go about it and we disagree from time to time about those who are being advantaged or not, but we stand for equity. We stand for redistribution wealth on a federal level also.

When we come to an Elections Act, I hope that we are driven by that same objective, which is to be fair and even-handed with respect to making the Elections Act accountable. Accountability is the key. If this legislation does that, then there will not be and should not be one person in the House who would oppose it.

*Statements by Members*

I know there is not an elected member in this House who would deny how very exhaustive the processes under the Elections Act are, to the extent that it is very difficult to even find lay people in our ridings who are up to the tremendous pressure and up to participating to the extent to which they want, to be agents and to be involved in our campaigns at the financial level. The checks and balances on accountability are now so weighted that it is getting to the point where one has to be a professional, such as an auditor or an accountant or whatever, to be able to carry on that role.

• (1055)

In my riding, if I did not have someone like my friend, Gunter Kujat, who has been loyal to being partisan, I do not know what I would do. I trust him. I have faith in him. I am sure there are similar examples in ridings throughout our country .

When legislation is layered on top of existing legislation and it has some inherent inequities in terms of treatment, it behooves us to understand whether what we are doing is counterproductive to the objective of bringing more people into the elections process. I am going to speak about three parts of this legislation that do that. The first that I believe is overly heavy-handed beyond the terms of the Canada Elections Act—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I am sorry, but the hon. member will have to make those three points later on because we have come to the time for statements by members. The member will have 13 minutes and 45 seconds left in his time.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### SPOKEMAN TOUR

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a young man from my riding by the name of Tim Harriman.

Tim is a 19-year-old cancer survivor. His goal is to cycle across Canada to raise awareness for childhood cancer and to increase donations toward finding a cure that will put an end to this disease. Tim will work to raise this money by cycling through all 10 provinces visiting many of the 17 children's hospitals and cancer treatment centres along the way.

Tim's cycle will begin on June 4 in Victoria, B.C. and will end in mid-August in St. John's, Newfoundland. The trip will take approximately 81 days, will cover 7,738 kilometres and will take an estimated 412 hours of riding.

In order to watch Tim on his journey or make a donation, please visit his website at [www.spokemantour.com](http://www.spokemantour.com). Tim vowed that as soon as he finished his cancer treatments, his next challenge would be to cross this country spreading the word on behalf of kids who are fighting cancer. I know with his determination he will fulfill his dream and beat his goal of raising \$100,000.

Best wishes to Tim Harriman.

• (1100)

### CANADA WINTER GAMES

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for the first time in Canada Winter Games history Nunavut won a medal. Our very own Nunavutian, Eugene Dederick, age 15 became the first athlete to win a medal as a judo competitor and therefore made history.

It was very fitting and very northern as the Canada Winter Games were held in the north for the first time when Whitehorse, Yukon hosted the games and did a fabulous job.

I congratulate Eugene and his coach for their hard work and dedication along with the rest of their team and Sport Nunavut . I also acknowledge Eugene's family who have supported him along the way.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the other participants, the artists, the athletes and the volunteers who made these games so special.

Not only did Eugene win a bronze medal, he is the very first to participate in judo at the Canada Winter Games from my territory. He has made all of Nunavut very proud.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### LE MONDE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on April 18, the Quebec community newspaper association presented three awards to *Le Monde*, a community newspaper in the riding of Papineau, which I represent.

The first award presented by the nine-member panel was in the best report category for an article by Guillaume Dandurand in February 2006, on the problem of pawnbrokers.

The second award was for best feature story for Luigi Spadari's article on the integration of visible minorities in Quebec society, which appeared in the March 2006 issue.

The third award, in the best opinion piece category, went to Pierre Brassard for an editorial in April 2006, on the impact of globalization on the clothing industry.

Allow me to offer my sincere congratulations to *Le Monde* and its journalists, who are so good at portraying life in our riding.

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[English]

### B.C. FLOOD MITIGATION

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, B.C. residents who live near the Fraser River are facing a potential crisis. Our snow pack is 50% higher than normal and just a few days of heavy melting could cause massive flooding throughout the Fraser basin, overflowing dykes and creating a disaster.

Since 1995 the federal government has not funded maintenance of flood controls on the Fraser. This has been left to local municipalities which have been unable to cope with the huge capital costs.

The federal government has been more than willing to ensure significant assistance to other parts of the country to help with flood controls but not for B.C.

The Conservative government recently offset only half of what the B.C. government had already allocated. This is too little, too late for a disaster that could be only weeks away.

The Fraser River Basin Council has said that direct flood costs could add up to \$6 billion. This does not take into account the human suffering. A massive flood on the Fraser this spring could destroy farmers' fields, submerge the Trans-Canada Highway and—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Westlock—St. Paul.

\* \* \*

### SPINAL CORD INJURIES

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about one of the inspirations in my life, and in fact in the lives of all those she touches.

Trina Preusglias was 16 years old when she and her family were involved in a devastating car accident that forever altered the direction of their lives.

Trina suffered from what the doctors described as an injury to her spinal cord at the cervical levels of the fourth, fifth and six vertebrae. Trina never accepted the doctor's analysis that she would not walk again. From that day on she worked tirelessly day in and day out for 10 years toward her goal of walking.

Trina's dedication is an inspiration. Recently she has discovered Project Walk, an organization dedicated to help Trina push as hard as possible to recover as much as possible, however long it takes.

Last weekend I was privileged to attend a community function where I was amazed to see the courage this young lady demonstrated as she stood up and took steps with very little assistance.

I have no doubt that Trina will walk again.

Trina is an inspiration and a source of strength to her family, her friends and her community, and I thank her.

\* \* \*

### MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the loss of manufacturing jobs in Canada is becoming more acute by the day.

It was announced two days ago that Canadian Blue Bird's manufacturing facility, a mainstay in my riding of Brant for almost 50 years, will be closing very soon. In my riding alone, 1,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the auto sector since 2005.

At Blue Bird, 130 people will lose their jobs when the plant is relocated to the United States. The 130 employees are dedicated and the facility has won several workplace health and safety awards in their field.

To ignore the current manufacturing crisis is to ignore the livelihoods of thousands of Canadians. Instead of idly watching the

flow of jobs leaving Canada, the government must step up to the plate and protect workers in the manufacturing sector.

\* \* \*

●(1105)

[Translation]

### SOCCER

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for a number of years now, the Notre-Dame-de-Foy campus in Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures has been hosting activities that have contributed to soccer's rising popularity in Quebec City, Quebec and Canada.

Friendly evening soccer games and tournaments have been regular activities all week long for years now. The average age of the members of the group I want to talk about today is 45. Most of them are imports, immigrants who have taught us about soccer and shown us how to appreciate it. Today, in the Quebec City region, in my city, over 25,000 people play the sport.

It is my pleasure and honour to tell you about Edgardo Sanchez, who is now over 65 years old and still playing. He is the first to arrive—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Compton—Stanstead.

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### APÉRI-FRUIITS COMPTON

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, I love homegrown Quebec products, and I am always eager to talk about the quality and variety of products from my riding.

To back up my claim, one of our local companies distinguished itself during the Quebec City gastronomy festival, held from April 20 to 22, by living up to the reputation built by products from the Eastern Townships. There are two categories in the “cup of nations” competition: the international category for wines sold by the SAQ, and the local category for wine and cider by Quebec artisan producers. Of the 282 products that were sampled and judged, Apéri-Fruits Compton's black currant aperitif was awarded the silver medal in the flavoured liqueurs category.

I would like to congratulate Yves Cousineau and Marc Boily on their achievement. We knew you produced an excellent aperitif, and now everyone else knows it too.

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### OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week, Justin Trudeau spoke out against bilingualism and the institutions that support it.

Why do the federal Liberals want to close francophone schools in New Brunswick or Manitoba, and close anglophone schools in Quebec?

*Statements by Members*

The Liberals' arrogance shows that they have no consideration for cultural communities. Mr. Trudeau's desire to get rid of minority language schools compromises what we have worked hard to accomplish together as Canadians.

The essence of bilingualism is to defend the rights of language groups, rather than reduce them to a personal choice. Mr. Trudeau's comments show not only a flagrant lack of respect for the official bilingualism policy and Canada's language communities, but they are also evidence of the Liberals' unilateral approach to programs.

This is proof that the Liberal leader is completely lacking in leadership, and that chaos reigns within the Liberal Party of Canada.

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[English]

**STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recent cutbacks to the federal student summer employment program have left organizations in the Kenora riding high and dry. Not for profit organizations that have added to the quality of life in the Kenora riding not to mention provided job opportunities for our youth are being shut out by the Conservative government.

Take the Lake of the Woods Railroad Museum, for example. Ron and Ann Baker of Kenora have been operating this museum for the last 15 years. This museum not only provides the people of Kenora with a glimpse of their history, but it also attracts tourists to the area and helps the local economy. For the last 12 years, the Liberal government recognized the importance of such an initiative and each year the Bakers could hire a summer student. This year, however, they will not receive anything. This operation is at risk of closing and students in Kenora will lose one more opportunity for a job.

I find it shameful that the Conservatives cannot understand the benefit that this funding has provided to small towns and organizations. I urge the government to reconsider its actions.

\* \* \*

**MS AWARENESS MONTH**

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, May is MS Awareness Month. It was great for me to be able to meet with victims of MS on May 9 and to accept a red carnation to wear as a symbol of our support to find a cure for this crippling disease.

Most of us know someone with MS. Personally, my sister Mary Lou suffers from MS and friends, Dianne Hepburn and Tammy Graver, have also been diagnosed with MS.

On April 14, it was my pleasure to participate in the MS Walk for Life in Owen Sound and to be a proud member of Mandy Maisonneuve's "Dream Team". Mandy, a neighbour and a 30-year-old mother of two young boys, has been diagnosed with MS.

For these four young women, all from my hometown of Wiarton, and for all the sufferers of multiple sclerosis, we must keep up the fight to find a cure for this serious and debilitating disease. I ask all my colleagues in the House to join me in this great cause.

●(1110)

**VISUAL ARTS AWARDS**

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on May 30, as part of the "Art for Everyone" celebration, the Ottawa School of Art will present the second annual Visual Arts Awards, recognizing artists and art supporters throughout the national capital region.

The Visual Arts Awards are intended to recognize artists and individuals who have made a sustained commitment and a significant difference in the visual arts community in Ottawa through their dedication, creativity and initiative.

Their outstanding successes include mentorship and guidance to members of the visual arts community, breaking new ground and overcoming old barriers and, of course, contributing to the development of a vibrant visual arts community in Ottawa.

It is with great pride that I stand here today representing a riding with a thriving arts community. The achievements of the many dedicated workers and heroes in the visual arts help make our community and nation's capital so culturally expressive.

I commend the Ottawa School of Art for recognizing these achievements and I invite all members of the House to join me on May 30 at Fifth Avenue Court in the Glebe, for an evening of celebration of the visual arts.

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**ATHABASCA BASIN**

**Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last September, the Athabasca Economic Development Training Corporation met with the Saskatchewan Conservative caucus, spelling out their case for an all season road in the Athabasca region.

The province had agreed to fund half of the construction costs and a previous Liberal government had announced it would fund one-third of the costs.

The Saskatchewan Conservative caucus suggested its strong support for this project, but with the arrival of the construction season in the north, we see no movement from the federal government on this important initiative.

This is a quality of life issue. Northerners are paying outrageous prices for basic food necessities, \$12 for four litres of milk, \$4 for a loaf of bread and so on. This road would inject significant business and economic development opportunities for Saskatchewan and improve the quality of life of all northern people in the Athabasca basin.

Some of us have tried to bring attention to this important issue, and it appears as though the Saskatchewan Conservative MPs are not among this group. I ask the Minister of Indian Affairs to commit to this project and help the people of the Athabasca basin.

[Translation]

**ÉTIENNE LAFORTUNE**

**Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, every year, 20 students receive a TD Canada Trust Scholarship for Community Leadership. The scholarships serve to reward students who have shown their consistent concerns for the improvement of their communities. This is the most prestigious post-secondary scholarship program in Canada.

I am pleased to inform the House that a young person from my riding, Étienne Lafortune, a student at the Cégep régional de Lanaudière in L'Assomption, was selected as a recipient of this award for 2007.

Étienne helped establish an environmental committee that led to his school obtaining level one certification in the Cégep vert du Québec program. His idea to develop a sponsorship link with the developing world also led to a project called L'Anse d'Hainault, which, last year, paid the tuition fees for 27 students from a village in Haiti.

Congratulations, Étienne. You are an example to us all. Above all, keep up the good work.

\* \* \*

[English]

**NELSON MANDELA**

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 13 years ago this week, a man who was incarcerated by a violent segregationist state became the first black president in its history. Nelson Mandela's transition from revolutionary to philosopher, from prisoner to politician, set the tone for the changes South Africa would go through under his leadership and afterwards.

Under a Liberal government, Parliament bestowed honorary citizenship on Nelson Mandela, an act that enriched all Canadians, an act that was a statement of our values to the world. The motion itself almost gained unanimous consent. The Conservative member for Calgary West voted against the motion and against Canada's salute to Mr. Mandela.

By this and other actions we are reminded that the fight against bigotry and intolerance knows no boundaries and must be confronted everywhere, in the House, throughout Canada and around the globe.

On today and every day we salute our fellow Canadian Nelson Mandela.

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**DWIGHT WILSON**

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week Canada and my constituency of Oshawa lost an incredible man who was a bridge to our past. Dwight Wilson, Canada's second last remaining World War I veteran, passed away at the age of 106.

Up to June 2006, Mr. Wilson resided at Cedarcroft Place nursing home in Oshawa. Mr. Wilson contributed a lot to my riding and was a wonderful supporter of our local servicemen and women, veterans and our legion.

*Oral Questions*

He was one of more than 600,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders who joined the military to fight in the first world war, the war to end all wars. It was a war that cost our country approximately 66,000 brave countrymen and women.

Mr. Wilson will be missed by many in Oshawa. I encourage all parliamentarians and people of Oshawa not to forget him and the others of his generation who gave so much for their country. The sacrifices made and remarkable bravery displayed by Mr. Wilson and his comrades is a lesson for all of us. It has been a great honour for me to have known him.

Thanks, Mr. Wilson. We will miss him.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

● (1115)

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA**

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we have seen in the last two days is a government ruling by fear and intimidation. The Minister of the Environment admitted yesterday that the bogus arrest of Jeffrey Monaghan would send the right message to public servants.

However, what about the leaks by his own staff and the leaks by Jeffrey Kroeker, now the director of communications for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? Where were the handcuffs for him?

Why does the government want to send a chill through the public service?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on the specific investigation into the criminal matter to which the member for Kitchener Centre refers. However, I will quote her leader on the general subject of that investigation and he said:

—I will never encourage this kind of behaviour..For the principle, I think civil servants must respect the secrecy of their role.

I would like to know why the member is asking that question when her own leader looks at that kind of behaviour and condemns it as inappropriate. Why can the Liberal Party and the Liberal leader not hold the same position on any issue for more than 24 hours?

\* \* \*

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as if muzzling and intimidating public servants was not shameful enough, the government is deliberately trying to hide information from Canadians.

Yesterday, Conservative committee members tried to block a probe into why Foreign Affairs officials heavily censored documents about possible torture of Afghan detainees. These were the same reports that the government said did not exist, that the minister never bothered to read and that the Prime Minister said were left to government lawyers to black out.

*Oral Questions*

Why did the government have the member for Burlington filibuster the committee? What is it trying to hide?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the accusation is preposterous. The member knows very well how the Access to Information Act works and who determines what is released and what is not released. She is suggesting that somebody making a speech and then a motion being actually dealt with in the same meeting is a filibuster. They voted in the same meeting.

Let me tell members about filibuster, obstruction and delay. There is a bill called Bill S-4, the Senate term limits bill, introduced almost a year ago and the Liberal Senate has been delaying and obstructing it through every procedural tactic for a year now because they do not want democratic reform. They do not want democracy in—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is not simply hiding the truth; it is afraid of it. In another committee yesterday, the Conservative chair went so far as to halt the testimony by University of Alberta Professor Gordon Laxer. When other members overruled this draconian decision, he abruptly adjourned the meeting. This is unacceptable.

Why did the government have the member for Vegreville—Wainwright halt the testimony of Professor Laxer? Why is it so intent on silencing any voice of dissent?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just cannot believe it. Here we have a situation again where what happens is a person speaking at a committee, not even discussing the subject matter at hand, is asked to return to the subject. That is called obstruction because the person is not testifying on what he came to testify on.

Let me tell members what secrecy and cover up is. That is when the Liberal senators go into secret to hold a little kangaroo court to accuse someone and condemn someone because the person had the temerity to expose wasteful Liberal spending in the Senate, \$30,000 junkets to nowhere, to visits that did not mean anything. That is what they spend their time doing, covering up the—

• (1120)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Honoré-Mercier.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government continues to play hide-and-seek. It continues to make a mockery of democracy.

This week, the conservatives cancelled the meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. They did not wish to discuss the cancellation of the court challenges program. Why?

Because they do not want Canadians to know the truth and they prefer to hide the facts. What is even worse is that they resort to intimidation to get what they want, and that is shameful.

Will the government finally unseat the dictator of the Standing Committee on Official Languages? Will it finally get rid of him?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that the committee is to meet again on Tuesday and that the parliamentarians will be able to examine the issue with a calm and serene attitude—in contrast to the bluster of my hon. colleague.

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**MINISTERIAL EXPENSES**

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities is typical of this government. They try to hide the facts, but they get caught every time. The Minister of Labour was caught in the act, as was the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. This is becoming embarrassing.

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons would like us to believe that they were proactive in disclosing the information. However, their web site tells a very different story.

They hid the facts and got caught. Let them do their homework.

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again the Liberals seem to have a casual disregard for the truth and the facts. All these matters are disclosed, either on the departmental website or through the minister's proactive disclosure. In fact, the kind of expenditures we are talking about were three times as high under the Liberals.

Even under the Liberal leader, when we talk about hiding things, what did he have for wining and dining expenditures when he was environment minister? For our environment minister in his first year it was \$3,000. For the former environment minister, now the Liberal leader, \$17,000, six times as much. I guess he was too busy wining and dining to ever get the job done.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**GASOLINE PRICES**

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the Minister of Industry is running out of arguments to defend his inaction on the spike in profits at the refineries. Yesterday, to avoid answering the question, he went so far as to say that implementing the Kyoto protocol would further increase the price of gas.

Is there anyone in this government who could ask the Minister of Industry to do his job, to take action to prevent this abuse by the oil companies and to stop using ridiculous fearmongering as a diversionary tactic?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House knows that the opposition parties would allow the price of gas to increase by 60% under Bill C-288. Canadians would have to pay almost \$2 a litre if it were up to the Bloc Québécois.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, after the House passed the motion calling on the government to take action, and after this morning's criticism by Quebec's natural resources minister, Claude Béchar, of the minister's refusal to intervene, does the minister not think it is time to act on the recommendations of the former competition commissioner, who, like the Bloc Québécois, wants to give the Competition Bureau more power in order to investigate the fluctuations in the price of gas?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Bloc Québécois supports an environment policy that calls for roughly a 60% increase in the price of gas. It is odd that the Bloc Québécois members are condemning the increase in the price of gas when they are the ones calling for such an increase.

**Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in addition to his fear campaign, the minister also began a campaign of misinformation. Yesterday, he tried to create confusion by saying that, if we want to give the Competition Bureau greater investigative power, we just had to vote for Bill C-41. However, the investigative powers covered by Bill C-41 relate to the telecommunications sector, not the oil and gas sector.

Rather than trying to fool everyone, does the minister plan to address the problem of the appalling increase in the price of gas by giving the Competition Bureau the investigative power it needs to do its job in the oil and gas sector?

• (1125)

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, according to leading Canadian economists, the Liberal plan, which is supported by the Bloc Québécois, would trigger a 50% increase in hydro costs, as well. As for the costs of heating homes with natural gas, they would basically double from what they are right now. This is irresponsible.

**Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when he was with the Montreal Economic Institute, the minister blamed environmentalists for the increase in the cost of gas. He is now a minister within the government and therefore must side with consumers.

Does he thus intend to give greater powers to the Competition Bureau?

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in our last budget, we introduced various initiatives, such as the eco-auto rebate program, which helps Canadians purchase high efficiency vehicles through rebates of up to \$2,000. As the government, we are taking action.

[English]

## AFGHANISTAN

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Conservatives continued their shameful attempt to cover up their role in the Afghan detainee scandal. A Conservative member filibustered for five hours to stop the ethics committee from investigating the illegal suppression of foreign affairs documents. These documents warned about torture and killing in Afghan prisons.

Which minister ordered the filibuster? Was it the same minister who ordered the cover-up?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the facts related by the member from British Columbia are not accurate in any way, shape or form. The NDP's concept of a delay and filibuster is a meeting where there is a vote taken and decisions are made. I do not understand that at all. It is certainly, as I said, different from the way the opposition conducts itself in delaying legislation.

In fact, when we talk about that, I could ask the member from the NDP why it is that it supports the notion of not dealing with Bill C-44 that is going to give human rights to first nations people and give them the protection of the Canadian Human Rights Act. Why does her party support the concept of that not being dealt with at committee and delaying that over the summer?

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the very flippant way that the government has handled this whole detainee scandal has been appalling. It has actually shocked Canadians right down to their very fibre. We have been at the forefront on human rights issues internationally and now we carry this shame.

The Afghan government wants a change in strategy because of mounting civilian deaths. I ask again, who ordered the filibuster and just what did the government think it would achieve by hijacking the ethics committee?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, certainly, nobody in this government has any shame about Afghanistan. There may be shame in the NDP and I can understand why it would be embarrassed with the positions it has taken demanding an immediate withdrawal. However, Canada is doing important things in Afghanistan.

I will quote Seema Patel, the lead project consultant for post-conflict reconstruction for the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, who said, "Canada is leading by example, spending its reconstruction and development funds on projects that build loyalty and trust, that are led by local people, with outsiders playing a supportive and catalytic role".

We are proud of Canada's role in Afghanistan.

*Oral Questions***SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of International Trade was a senior executive in the forest products industry, he attacked the U.S. position on softwood lumber as flawed and unjust, but the first thing he did as international trade minister for the Conservatives was to cave in to the United States.

He knew full well that this agreement was a bad one, especially the anti-circumvention clause which gives the U.S. the right to attack sovereign forest policies in Canada. That is exactly what the U.S. is doing right now.

Given this tragic mistake, which has left our forest industry in peril, will this spineless and inept minister step aside?

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the quick answer to that one would be no, absolutely not.

It was the current minister who established the softwood lumber agreement that the Liberals could not establish in all of their 13 years. We had 20 years of litigation and 20 years during which the Liberals could have gotten this done. It was the current minister who has put this in place and has provided an environment to discuss this.

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is pure drivel and the parliamentary secretary knows it. At least the minister understood drivel when he was a Liberal.

The minister brags about the softwood lumber agreement. Is he still satisfied knowing that Canadian softwood lumber producers today are paying more in export taxes than they were paying in tariffs under the Liberal government? Is the trade minister still gloating over that?

Is he happy now that Canada is facing litigation from the Americans, the very thing this agreement was supposed to end?

• (1130)

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of drivel, I think we have heard quite a bit of it. That is probably why the hon. Minister of International Trade left that party and came over here, because he knew that we would speak the truth and that we would stand up for the forestry workers, and that is what we did.

We put an agreement in place that actually provides security for this industry. We have some rough road ahead, but we are in the negotiation process. We think we are right, and we are going to stand up and defend the industry.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government told us that it had bought peace for seven years.

Yesterday, seven months later, the president and general manager of the Quebec Forest Industry Council, Guy Chevette, estimated that nearly 100 sawmills in Quebec would soon close their doors.

Sawmills in Parent and Launay have already closed, and other closures are expected in Raguenu and Forestville.

Does this government have the nerve to tell the hundreds of workers who are now unemployed that its surrender to the Americans was the right answer?

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, even though forest management is more the responsibility of the Government of Quebec, I will say that the department I head, the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, does not get involved in primary processing.

However, secondary and tertiary processing is something that does concern us and that we do support for the regions of Quebec. In light of this forestry crisis, I want to stress the importance of diversifying economic activity throughout the regions of Quebec. That is why we recently introduced six new tools to help the regions of Quebec turn a corner.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we predicted that this would happen. It would seem that the American industry is using our producers' money to weaken them further.

On March 30, U.S. trade representative Susan Schwab said that our neighbours to the south now consider road construction in forest regions and even regional economic development programs as illegal subsidies.

Will this government defend the thousands of Quebeckers who depend on forestry or will it again capitulate to its Republican masters in Washington?

**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 question of roads is more a provincial responsibility. Quebec, like the other provinces, knows that we cannot intervene at the primary processing stage in forestry, any more than in the fisheries.

I want to remind this House about all the support the Economic Development Agency of Canada provides for economic diversification in the regions of Quebec, including the CEDI-Vitality program, which allows business owners to receive both repayable contributions—loans—and non-repayable contributions in order to expand or to create new businesses.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Secretary of State for Agriculture made a speech to members of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, while, paradoxically, the federal government is considering raising the acceptable chemical residue limit on hundreds of fruits and vegetables sold in Canada, in response to pressure from the Americans.



*Oral Questions*

Can the Minister of International Trade promise that from now on the standards for both countries will be the highest possible standards?

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think that this issue has been addressed over the last few days by the Minister of Health. He made it very clear that the standards we have in this country will be the highest possible standards. They will protect our citizens and consumers. Canadians will not have to worry about the safety of their food.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Richard Aucoin, Chief Registrar of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the organization responsible for this reform, thinks that this is a normal harmonization process being carried out under NAFTA.

Does the minister really think that lowering Canada's requirements is part of a normal and desirable harmonization process?

• (1135)

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I have said and what the Minister of Health has said. Canadian citizens are being protected with the highest standards. They do not have to worry about the safety of their food because this country has one of the best food safety programs and agencies in the world.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### MINISTERIAL EXPENSES

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this week we were served up some pretty good demonstrations of Conservative-style transparency. The Minister of Labour and the Minister of Transport covered up their travel expenses, and we heard about purchases of tanks on the sly, the systematic obstruction of a committee, and the failure to disclose partisan government polls. In short, the lack of transparency was at its height.

Will this government, which ran its last election campaign under the banner of accountability, admit that there is a significant gap between its talk about transparency and the reality?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not true. The truth of the matter is that all expenses of Conservative government ministers have been posted on the ministers' and departments' web sites. Everything is there.

[English]

The gap that exists is the gap between the spending by previous Liberal ministers and the spending by Conservative ministers which is usually a very large gap, and guess what? It was the Liberals who spent more.

[Translation]

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are demonstrating that transparency and account-

ability are but passing values and last only as long as an election campaign.

Will the government acknowledge that its transparency agenda has fallen by the wayside, that it is a total failure and that its approach is no different than that of the Liberals?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are truly proud of the accountability act. It is the most rigorous legislation of this type passed by any government in the history of Canada.

[English]

Never before has there been a government willing to take an initiative and bring forward a law so dramatic on accountability, and it is working. It is working because the public can see what happens and we have an unprecedented level of accountability. It also works because when Conservatives are in charge, taxpayers' dollars are taken care of much more carefully.

\* \* \*

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the 2004 election campaign, the then leader of the opposition said that a Conservative government would offer Canadians relief from the high prices of gasoline by removing the so-called tax on tax and by not charging the GST on gasoline over 85¢ per litre.

He also said that revenues generated on high prices of gasoline were “revenues that no one foresaw even a few months ago”, and that a Conservative government would only be “depriving Ottawa of a massive windfall it did not count on and that it did not need”.

Will the Prime Minister finally honour his promise on gasoline now that it has been well over a year and gasoline is well over \$1 a litre, or will he admit that this is just another promise that looks a whole lot like old-fashioned Conservative electioneering?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the member was when we had the budget because the budget cut the GST on gasoline far more than that earlier promise that the Conservatives made. We went above and beyond and cut taxes even more.

It is different from what the Liberals would do. For example, the Liberal leader, when he was the environment minister, was quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as saying, “High gas prices are actually good for Canada in the medium and long term”. In August 2005, in the *Montreal Gazette*, the Liberal leader pointed out, “High gas prices are not necessarily a bad thing”.

We see their secret plan at work now with their plan to raise gas prices 60%. That is—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will give the hon. member a bit of math. What he is talking about is a savings that was lost in these increases of 1¢ a litre. What he forgot to tell Canadians is that the Conservatives are ripping them off by 3.2¢ a litre based on a promise that they made.

[Translation]

Will the Prime Minister finally keep his promise? Will he finally level with Canadians and tell them that his government will do nothing to limit the huge amounts of money that the government and oil companies are taking out of the pockets of Canadians, as requested today by the Quebec minister of natural resources?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am always amused when the Liberals ask people to keep promises on the GST. They were the ones, that member himself, who campaigned on a commitment to eliminate the GST and, guess what? It is still there.

However, somebody did keep the promise on the GST. It was the Prime Minister and this Conservative government who committed to cut the GST by 1%, including on gasoline, a deeper cut than our previous commitments on tax cutting.

It is very different from the Liberals' plan. Their deputy leader, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, admitted that his plan would mean some Canadians might need to pay more at the pumps. That was reported in the *National Post* in August.

In unveiling his policy, he said, "Federal taxes on transportation fuels should be restructured to be heavier on—"

● (1140)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member Ajax—Pickering.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative home retrofit program is being revealed as ecofraud. Wednesday in committee the deputy minister of Natural Resources admitted the truth.

After the minister attempted to lump figures together and skew numbers, his deputy revealed that the government had cut \$152 million per year from what the Liberal EnerGuide program had provided, leaving only \$37 million for housing retrofits.

The government's attempt to mislead, confuse and outright deceive Canadians goes too far. When will the minister put back the \$152 million he axed and stop misleading Canadians?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, mislead, confused, deceived sounds like the Liberal Party playbook to me and it is the playbook of that member who just spoke.

We are sitting here today talking about wanting lower gas prices and yet the member for Ajax—Pickering, back in September 2005, when gas prices were going up, said, "We need to see the silver

lining in this rather painful situation. We need to wean ourselves off petroleum".

The Liberals think high gas prices are a good thing, which is why they proposed a 60% increase in gas prices.

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while he ignores the question and makes jokes, let us look at the reality.

Something that is even worse is that the minister has cut programs at the expense of helping poor Canadians. Low income families simply do not have the means or the upfront cash to retrofit their homes, but instead of providing support to the EnerGuide program for low income households, the minister got rid of the program altogether and \$100 million annually was taken away from low income Canadians.

When will the government stop spending money on misleading advertising for its ecofraud? When will it reinstate the EnerGuide program for low income families and do something more than just cut and spin?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the program the Liberals had was a program where most of the money actually did not go to consumers.

We have replaced that program with a program where the money goes to consumers. We are helping low income consumers by putting more money in their pockets, in the same way as the GST cut, the workers' income tax benefit and the fact that we have lifted so many Canadians off the income tax rolls.

Today I received indication from Statistics Canada that Canada today has the lowest unemployment rate in 33 years. This is a new announcement, thanks to the strong economic growth under the government, helping all Canadians, including low income Canadians.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the recent incident at a resort in Mexico involving a Canadian citizen, the member for Vancouver South has made repeated claims that the United States has a special arrangement with Mexico. He claims that Americans can send in police investigators any time a U.S. citizen is involved.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs clarify if this is true and explain what Canada's arrangement is with Mexico?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada and the U.S.A. have a mutual legal assistance treaty with Mexico which provides for the assistance of one country to another in obtaining evidence for the investigation of crimes when requested.

*Oral Questions*

However, assistance must be requested. Canada, like the U.S., can respond to a request for assistance from Mexico in a criminal investigation under that treaty but both the U.S. and Canada require a request.

We are prepared to work with the Mexicans on this and on any other file involving Canadians and we have told them so.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the national inventory on greenhouse gas emissions, Canada ranks with Belarus for living up to its obligations for reporting to the United Nations.

In an e-mail I just received this morning, the UN confirms, "We have not received the submission of Canada's 2007 inventory due on April 15".

Australia and the U.S., the Prime Minister's role models, have sent in their reports.

How many more international embarrassments will we need to suffer under the Prime Minister? Why has the government not lived up to its obligations to the UN and sent in this report?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is correct to the extent that Canada is a little bit embarrassed on the world scene because of the record of 13 years of inaction on the environment and the fact that we had to see greenhouse gases rise to 35% or more above our Kyoto targets under the Liberals, notwithstanding the fact that they entered into a treaty saying that we would reduce them by 5%.

Our government is changing that. We have brought forward a plan that, for the first time in Canadian history, will result in mandatory standards and actual reductions in greenhouse gases. The Liberals were big on reports and international agreements. We are big on actually delivering results to improve the health and environment of Canadians.

• (1145)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, is this not interesting? The international agreement that I am talking about is the one a Conservative government signed in 1992. On accountability on international agreements, its own government signed it.

Where is the report? I have information that the report is ready but that it is being sat on by the government, not by the public servants who prepared it. Why is the government hiding this report? Why is it not coming clean with Canadians on where we are with greenhouse gas emissions? Why will the minister not tell us the truth and come clean? Where is this—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. government House leader.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the House where we are going with greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions are doing down, and that is our policy and our plan. It is the first time a government has ever brought forward a plan but obviously that will not be reflected in the disclosure because it is a new plan. Unfortunately, the disclosure will

still reflect the unfortunate track record of a previous Liberal government that did absolutely nothing on the environment.

When they see disclosure in the future, they will see things moving in the right direction and they will see greenhouse gases going down.

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**PASSPORT CANADA**

**Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, record numbers of calls are coming into my Vancouver office from constituents having to cancel, sometimes at great expense, business trips and family reunions abroad after waiting months in vain for their passports.

Another story in the *Vancouver Sun* today points out that repeated attempts to contact the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Safety and the CEO of Passport Canada to explain this mess have led to no comment.

Who is in charge over there? Who is responsible for this bungling? Will someone please fix it?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, through several measures, Passport Canada is now able to output 20,000 passports per day, an increase of 40% over last fall's capacity. However, Canadians continue to apply for passports at an unprecedented rate, at about 18,000 applications per day.

Passport Canada is now able to cope with the demand and address its backlog. The situation is improving and, if the current demand continues, most of the service channels will be normal by the end of the summer.

**Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 13 months and the Conservatives are still not getting the job done.

On February 13, the foreign affairs minister told this House that 500 new passport employees had been hired. Two months later, he admitted that they still had not actually been put on the job. Here we are three months later and they are not getting the job done.

Worse than the minister's incompetence is the fact that he does not think he needs to be accountable for this mess. When will the minister—

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

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the hon. member that those 500 officers are now fully working. That is why we have been able to increase our capacity by 40% by addressing 20,000 passports per day. As I stated, we expect this backlog to be over by the end of the summer.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minority Conservative government is dragging its feet on filling vacancies on the Immigration and Refugee Board as more refugee cases become statistics in the swelling backlog.

The minister has personally claimed that she is filling positions but the fact is that there simply are not enough judges to handle the overload of casework.

When will the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration fill the 60 vacancies on the IRB and get to work on reducing the backlog?

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister commissioned an independent report that has come through with a number of recommendations that the minister has accepted. Part of that is requiring a new process that is more efficient and transparent and that will get positions filled quicker.

One of the aspects of the report indicates that those who go to the position will need to write an exam and pass the exam to qualify. We will ensure that appropriate people are appointed in due course and expeditiously.

• (1150)

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government there were only five vacancies on the board. Under the Conservatives the number has grown to 60.

When he resigned last month, the former IRB chairman said that he had left the minister with 80 qualified candidates to choose from. He also said that the backlog was “growing at a rate of 1,000 a month on the refugee side”.

In her attempts to stack the IRB with hand-picked right-wing appointees, the minister has made a mess of Canada's refugee system.

When will she take immediate steps to resolve the crisis?

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the past, the previous Liberal government appointed friends, family members and those who were not able to pass the test. What we will do is ensure that those who are actually appointed are qualified. Everyone will be required to write an exam and actually pass the exam before they are appointed.

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[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a demonstration will be held today on Parliament Hill to urge the government to meet an international assistance objective of 0.7% of our GDP.

How is it that the government feels free to invest millions of dollars in military equipment, but when it comes to international assistance, the increases fall well short of the objective of 0.7% of the GDP?

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would believe that everyone in this House would recognize that in budget 2007 we reaffirmed this government's commitment to double overseas official development assistance. We added \$900 million in that budget for the next two years. I do not think that is diminishing. That is increasing.

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[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian embassy's kiosk and that of a private school in Montreal were closed during an education fair in Saudi Arabia. The Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice closed the kiosks because the representatives working there were women.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs personally lodge a formal complaint with Saudi authorities to inform them of our utter disapproval of how these three women were treated by the religious police?

[English]

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the embassy in Saudi Arabia has contacted the Saudi Arabian authorities to address that issue. I would like to remind her that it was not the Government of Saudi Arabia that was responsible for it, but the organizers there. We have filed a protest and we are talking to the Saudi Arabian government about it.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that the government has reneged on the Kelowna accord and the residential school apology. It has failed to show respect toward our first nations and aboriginal peoples.

Concerning the matrimonial real property issue, would the minister seriously consider adopting a plan of the Union of Ontario Indians now being reviewed by its member communities? That plan better reflects the inherent legal capacity of first nations and the need to recognize historic aboriginal and cultural values.

We can learn much from our first nations people. Will the government adopt the union's plan?

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member from the Liberal Party is interested in matrimonial property. Of course we as a government want to pursue that matter very vigorously. That is why we brought forward Bill C-44.

*Oral Questions*

Some people in Canada might not realize this, but in fact the Canadian Human Rights Act does not apply to first nations people on reserve. It is a shameful situation that has been left with us by the Liberal government.

The Liberals, with all the other opposition parties, have just chosen to put off extending human rights to first nations people until after the summer. They want to go back to their cottages and their country clubs first and maybe think about it a little further.

We are ready to act. We are ready to bring human rights to first nations people.

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**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for too long Canadian farmers were neglected under the previous Liberal regime. In January 2006 new hope arrived for farmers in the form of a Conservative government.

The Minister of Agriculture continues to lay out some very impressive programs to help farmers from coast to coast. Could the parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture tell the House what the government is doing to help improve the outlook for Canadian farmers?

• (1155)

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that is very easy. With the help of great members like the member for Chatham-Kent—Essex, we have done a lot.

The government is providing a total of \$4.5 billion in new funding to the agriculture sector over the next five years, with \$1 billion to fix CAIS, \$400 million for cost of production support, and \$600 million to kickstart farmer savings accounts. Producers heading out to spring seeding can now access up to \$100,000 in interest-free cash advances.

We are working with the provinces and territories. We are providing market choice for barley growers in western Canada. Exports are up in wheats and canola. Cattle shipments are bouncing back.

It is good to be a farmer under this Conservative government.

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it was November 2004 when Parliament voted to ban trans fats. Since then, a blue ribbon task force of experts agreed to ban trans fats. Restaurants, food manufacturers, doctors, scientists and even municipal governments agree that we have to get this toxic goop out of our food supply.

What on earth is the holdup? What possible excuse does the minister have for not listening to Canadians and banning trans fats now?

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):** Mr.

Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to assisting Canadians and improving their health outcomes. That is why we brought forward the new Canada Food Guide. After a number of years, we have upgraded this document, which of course lets Canadians know that they should in fact limit their intake of trans fats.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the government is telling us the whole story. I think the government will not ban trans fats because the Americans would not like it. Just like the increase in pesticide thresholds, I think American trade concerns are trumping our Canadian sovereignty over our own standards on health and well-being.

I want to know if the government has discussed the banning of trans fats with the Americans. Did the Americans raise this as a trade issue? Will the minister table any documents and correspondence from the American government on our interest in banning trans fats in this country? Will the government table those documents today?

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again I have to make it very clear that our government is very committed to the health of Canadians, even those who fly in black helicopters.

We have indicated clearly in an upgraded and renewed document, the Canada Food Guide, that trans fats are not good for one's health. We are going to continue to make this known to all Canadians.

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**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, women in Canada earn 71¢ for every \$1 a man earns. Our current pay equity legislation is complaint based and has led to litigation lasting over 20 years.

The previous Liberal government committed to introducing proactive pay equity legislation in late 2006 or early 2007. The Conservative government would rather spend hundreds of millions of dollars on lawyers.

When will the government stand up for women and follow the recommendation in the 2004 pay equity task force report and the proactive pay equity motion passed by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women yesterday?

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk about this government's commitment to women.

We are putting in over \$6 million to combat the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. Our government is helping protect women against cervical cancer by investing \$300 million for immunization. As well, we are increasing funding to Status of Women Canada, with an additional \$10 million, bringing its budget to the highest ever.

*Oral Questions*

This is concrete action and we are delivering it for Canadian women.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, free trade agreements can encourage economic prosperity and raise the standard of living for citizens in the countries involved.

Whereas the Liberals paid no attention to emerging trade opportunities for Canada, this new government has already demonstrated great forward thinking through initiatives such as the Asia-Pacific gateway.

Last week, the Minister of International Trade was in Washington, D.C., at the Council of the Americas. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary would share with us what this new government is doing to improve our economic relations with our partners in the region.

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of International Trade presented a clear vision of Canada's trade agenda for the Americas. His message was unambiguous. The Americas are a key priority. To that end, we have already started work with the U.S. and Mexico to further strengthen our NAFTA partnership.

Last year Canada signed a foreign investment protection and promotion agreement with Peru. This is the first such agreement that Canada has signed in eight long years. Negotiation of bilateral trade agreements with Caribbean and Latin American countries is another key part of our plan.

We aim to build—

• (1200)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Etobicoke Centre.

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**ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the public accounts committee's investigation of the RCMP pension fund heard new allegations of obstruction of justice and destruction of evidence.

Testimony indicated that Deputy Commissioner Gauvin interfered with access to information requests. Files have gone missing. Just two weeks ago, his executive assistant got into the secure area of RCMP archives before it closed on a Friday in an attempt to access files the committee had requested.

While Mr. Zaccardelli is gone, his deputy commissioner is still in a position to obstruct and destroy evidence. Why?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government is working to get to the bottom of this scandal, which of course occurred under the previous Liberal government.

Just last week we heard about a former Liberal MP who in fact was engaged in highly questionable contracting schemes to enrich himself at the expense of RCMP members. We learned also that he

had brought that information to the attention of Liberal ministers who did absolutely nothing to stop the scam.

Now we are pushing forward with a continued public investigation at the public accounts committee. We have also appointed an investigator who will report back to the minister and publicly.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a recent study shows that the federal support program that gives families \$1,200 per year is not effective because it hurts public child care, discourages women from working and benefits the wealthy.

Given that these conclusions echo the Bloc Québécois' warnings, does the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development agree that it is time to turn the \$1,200 benefit into a refundable tax credit?

[*English*]

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we believe in choice in child care. We also are investing \$5.6 billion per year in child care.

However, why is that party supporting Bill C-303, a private member's bill that is against funding to the provinces? That is the question.

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**PET FOOD**

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, half of all Canadians have a pet. They are wondering why their government does no testing on pet food, with no regulation, no inspection and no protection.

There are tales of kidney failure in cats, serious sickness in dogs, and massive recalls of pet food. No wonder ordinary Canadians do not trust the Conservative government.

How many more pets need to fall ill or, worse, even die before there is any real action from this government?

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the CFIA has had the responsibility for regulating food for human consumption. It is reviewing the regulations regarding pet food coming into this country and in due time will report back.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That brings question period to an end.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

\* \* \*

● (1205)

**CONSTITUTION ACT, 2007 (DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION)**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-56, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (Democratic representation).

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

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, presented on Thursday, June 22, 2006, be concurred in.

The deportation of undocumented workers in Canada continues to tear families apart, hurting entire communities and causing economic problems in industries like the booming construction industry in my riding in downtown Toronto.

In the last years we have seen children being used as bait in schools and families risking their health and well-being by going underground to escape deportation. Shamefully, this is being done in a country that needs immigrants and skilled workers.

The Conservative government is continuing the old Liberal tradition of failing to set the immigration target at 1% of the population, which is the figure that we need to replenish the workforce. The NDP has been pushing for the regularization of undocumented workers. We have been calling for an effective program, particularly for workers in high demand sectors, such as construction.

We believe that the government should allow people without status who have already been working in Canada for many years and who are calling Canada home, some of whom are paying taxes, to be given the opportunity to apply for legal status.

Canada needs an immigration target of at least 1% of the country's total population to enhance Canada's population. That would be about 330,000 new immigrants a year. Yet this year our immigrant target is 240,000 to 265,000. The target is much lower than the 1% that we need. We need to build up our base to benefit our economy.

It is estimated that there are as many as 200,000 undocumented workers in Canada employed in trades and low paying sectors such as the hospitality and construction industries. There may be as many as 15,000 undocumented Portuguese and Brazilian workers in the construction trades in Toronto alone. These workers, who have been contributing to the economy, are exploited because of their lack of status. The government is doing nothing to help.

These workers, while helping us alleviate the chronic shortage of skilled labour, do not necessarily contribute to the income tax base. According to the Ontario Construction Secretariat, the underground economy has cost \$1.3 billion in lost government revenues.

The effect that deportation has had on the community, especially in downtown Toronto, has been devastating. I can give some figures. Between 1996 to 2000, 292 Portuguese citizens were deported. Between 2001 and 2004, 443 Portuguese citizens were deported. From 2005 to mid-year in 2007, already 727 Portuguese citizens were deported. Imagine how devastating that is to that community.

The Alliance of Portuguese Clubs and Associations of Ontario has asked the minister to implement a moratorium on deportations to allow the opportunity to discuss various options to regularize these undocumented workers. Unfortunately the minister has not listened. The Portuguese-Canadian Congress and the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals stated in a letter:

We believe that the consequences of pursuing the current strategy of strict enforcement of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act will be seriously detrimental to Canada's economy and would be contrary to our strong humanitarian principles.

We fear that this strategy...if pursued will deter other undocumented workers from coming forward and will drive them further underground which will ultimately be more costly to our society. These individuals are the most vulnerable living among us and they will continue to be further victimized.

As I have said in the House on many occasions, undocumented workers and their families live in fear today because the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has failed to act. The economic consequence of the minister's continued refusal to act in the best interests of these workers can be seen across Canada.

● (1210)

In July 2006, the Canadian Construction Association stated:

As the largest industry sector in Canada, the construction industry is facing unprecedented demand for labour. According to the Construction Sector Council, between 2005 and 2014, approximately 150,000 people will be needed to meet impending retirements. Furthermore, between 2005 and 2010, an additional 41,000 workers will be needed to meet expected demand.

Those are staggering numbers, almost 200,000 workers short of our need. This surely begs the question, what are the Minister of Human Resources and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration doing? Are they asleep at the wheel alongside the absentee Minister of National Defence?

*Routine Proceedings*

It is outrageous that we would leave the vital construction industry shortchanged over the next decade. The government clearly has no plan to address this major issue. It seems that shortchanging the construction industry is only the beginning. The government has also failed to act to reverse the devastating trend begun by the former Liberal government with regard to the immigration point system.

In the early 1990s, the Liberal government prioritized educated professionals and business people over skilled workers and family class immigrants. Today that is still the case. In 2005, 55% of new immigrants were professionals, compared with only 17% in 1990. The two lowest skills levels for new immigrants went in the opposite direction. Skilled labourers only accounted for 10% of new immigrants in 2005, compared to 37% in 1990. No wonder there is a shortage of workers.

We want professional workers to come to Canada. Unfortunately, the government has treated these most educated, most skilled immigrants like eternal second-class citizens. The Conference Board of Canada has reported that our economy loses about \$5 billion each year because of underemployment of new immigrants whose foreign training, expertise and experience are not recognized in Canada.

People come to Canada thinking that their degrees qualify and yet when they arrive in Canada, they discover their degrees are not being recognized. That is really difficult for them. It gives a false picture of Canada. It is not fair to immigrants who move here in the hopes of bettering their lives.

When immigrants come to Canada they have to go through lots and lots of hoops in the current process. They do not necessarily know where to apply. They do not quite understand the assessment process. It is complicated. Different levels of government are involved. There are professional bodies. Yet there are no national procedures in place.

Furthermore, when people apply at CIC centres and visa offices overseas, they are not being told that this will happen to them. It would not be very difficult for us to assess their credentials before they came to Canada, and yet Canada refuses to act.

Each year Canada receives between 220,000 and 245,000 immigrants. In 2005 over 130,000 skilled workers were admitted into Canada with numbers only expected to increase. Immigrants in the past decade have accounted for 70% of Canada's net labour force growth. This trend is going to continue. Far too many of these highly skilled new immigrants are driving taxis and delivering pizzas. We are drawing these skilled labourers out of their home country where they are needed and yet their talents are being wasted in Canada.

According to a University of Toronto study by Dr. Ritz, the underutilization of skilled new immigrants represented a \$15 billion earning deficit in 1996. Imagine what that number would be today.

What is happening? There has been nothing from the government but empty promises from the ministers and the Prime Minister saying that a plan will be coming, perhaps later, maybe in the late spring, sometime. We have not seen any action.

• (1215)

The NDP and I have presented a plan to improve the lives of tens of thousands of new immigrants in Canada who are underutilized,

underpaid and undervalued. It is about time that we deal with the issue of foreign credentials.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has issued a dissenting opinion to the report that is in front of us today. It states—

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order concerning statements made by the member for Louis-Hébert during the period for statements by members.

In his statement, he referred to immigrants as imports. Soon, on May 18 of this year, in Montreal, former Haitian slaves will inaugurate Place de l'Unité in celebration of the harmonious relationships that have prevailed from the end of slavery to the present day. I find it unacceptable that in this House, a member should express the idea that immigrants are imports. I formally request that he retract his statement and apologize without delay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** I would like to thank the hon. member for Papineau for her statement. The Chair will rule on this matter shortly.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration issued a dissenting opinion to this report. It states:

At the present time there is a growing concern with respect to the plight of undocumented workers all across Canada. This is a matter with no easy solutions and a number of competing concerns, all of which warrant careful consideration and study. There is no question this government and the Conservative Party of Canada recognize that a thoughtful and measured response is required before policy can be implemented to fully address this situation.

I have a question for the government. Should we be deporting hard-working families, families who have lived here in Canada for many years, families who have raised their children here, who have good jobs, who have established themselves in communities, and who have contributed to Canadian society?

Obviously, the answer is no. We should not be deporting these hard-working families. We need to see a new policy to address the plight of these workers and their families. That is why a moratorium is required and it is required now.



*Routine Proceedings*

Beyond that, we have seen the government only dragging its feet on the immigration system and immigration reform. Where is the overhaul of the point system? When will we see a fair and just system for the sponsorship of families? How will our economy grow with our desperately growing need for skilled labour? How long do families have to wait before they can bring their loved ones, like parents, to Canada?

It seems that the minister has three choices. He could follow the Liberal lead and just turn a blind eye to the exploitation of these workers. He could order a witch hunt, a mass deportation of 200,000 hard-working, tax-paying people, or he could just do his job and find a solution.

The Conservative government has had the opportunity to address and improve Canada's immigration system, which is currently failing and broken, but it seems to be continuing the Liberal's record of failures in this area, a record of doing nothing at all for our new immigrants.

Therefore, I call on the government to do the following: first, stop deportations while new immigration policy is being put in place; second, establish an in Canada program which would offer work permits to law-abiding workers and their families, leading to the opportunity for these workers and families to apply for landed status; and third, create a long term solution for a fair program that permits skilled workers to immigrate into jobs in the construction and service sectors.

• (1220)

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the hon. member.

Obviously, the report that came before the House was a report that went forward from the committee by the opposition without hearing a shred of evidence. I wonder if the member was aware of that. Indeed, there was an attempt made by the government to have a study conducted on this issue and to hear from all of the stakeholders involved in order that this problem and issue could be addressed. In fact, other agenda items were taken by the opposition, so that we will not be going into this comprehensive review until our next opportunity, which will be when we get back in the fall.

The second thing is the booming construction industry, of course, is taking place throughout the country. We have worked with the temporary foreign worker program and the provincial nominee program that provide a basis for skilled workers to attempt to fill the jobs that are available. As much as we are sympathetic with those who are here without going through those processes, what would the member say about the fact that we have a backlog of about 800,000 who are attempting to get in through a legitimate process?

What do we tell these people who are trying to go through the programs and avenues that already exist? Is there not some necessity to deal with the backlog, to provide a legitimate process through which people can come in, as we are doing now?

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals had 13 years to study and the Conservatives have had more than a year to look at the various options. There have been many options. Pilot projects have been suggested by the construction trade, immigrant working groups

and different cities. I know the city of Toronto certainly had different suggestions. There have been options, reviews and studies on this issue.

If we have hearings, are we going to ask the undocumented workers to come to Ottawa to speak to the standing committee? That would not work. It is not as if we do not know what the problems are.

Construction workers appeared before us who said that we have serious shortages. Different immigrant working groups, whether from Brazilian, Portuguese or Filipino communities, said that more deportations are a complete waste of taxpayers' money. Why? Because we deport these workers after spending a lot of money in court and then about a year later, because the employer still needs these workers, after they return to their home country they bring the workers back to Canada.

It is wasting the employer's time, it is causing hardship, tearing families apart, removing kids who are already in school, some of them even born in Canada, and interrupting their daily lives. What for? They are not criminals. If they are good enough to work here, they are good enough to stay in Canada.

In the mid-1980s there were regularization programs that worked and Canada benefited from these workers becoming landed immigrants as they are now contributing as citizens.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the member for Trinity—Spadina's speech concerning the motion.

She explained the problem the Portuguese in Toronto are having. I would like to know if she is also aware of the problem facing Mexicans who come here for seasonal work, such as harvesting produce in Quebec, and who have to pay deductions out of their paycheques even though they receive no benefits. Has she considered that?

[*English*]

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. There are Mexican seasonal workers and workers from Pakistan. They are from all over the world coming to Canada and helping our farmers, our construction trade, working as nursing aides, nannies and domestic workers. Some work in restaurants and hotels. They are in all different sectors and they do contribute by paying taxes.

However, if they are injured in the workplace they do not get workers' benefits. When they are sick, they cannot get help from our medical health care system because they do not have medical coverage. Some of their kids are fearful to go to school. There are many tragic stories where kids are so worried about going to school that they are not in school. Every child should be in school.

In some cities, such as Toronto, they are beginning not to ask questions and have a "don't ask, don't tell" policy. They say that schools should not ask about the immigration status of these kids because every child should be able to be in our school system.

*Routine Proceedings*

These serious problems have been with us for years and are getting worse. We have to act on humanitarian and economic grounds. We must do something now for all these workers that are being exploited.

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we have a provision in our system that deals with humanitarian and compassionate grounds, and that is always open and available. We need to be compassionate that is for sure. As the member indicates, we need to find a legitimate way to ensure that we can have skilled trades and labourers addressing our booming economy.

Let us assume that indeed we develop a system where people can legitimately come through the system to meet the economic needs and the skills shortages that we have throughout various parts of the country, in the eastern part of the country and the western part as well.

What would the member propose we do for those who then decide not to go through the temporary foreign worker program, the skilled worker program or the provincial nominee program or any other program and jump the queue that is designed for workers?

At some point would the member not say that we must expect that the process be followed. Although we use good judgment and compassionate grounds where obviously we do not go into schools and do those kinds of things, but at some point what do we do with those who decide they want to go past the queue in any event?

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is really no queue to jump. There is the temporary workers program. If these workers are good enough to work, why can they not be landed immigrants?

In the present immigration system, the points system is stacked against them. Some of them may not be fluent in English or French. They may not have degrees. We do not need people who have a large number of degrees to work in the construction trade. As long as they are qualified electricians or bricklayers, they do not need a degree in computer science. The points system is completely broken.

There is really no way for them to apply to become landed immigrants to Canada. We need to fix the points system. There has been nothing done in the past. In fact, during the 1990s the system got worse. We have more people coming in with degrees and fewer labourers, and yet it is the labourers that we need.

We can look at the situation with nurses. We used to have a program with the Philippines where we recognized the credentials and the degrees of nurses that came from the Philippines. In the mid-1990s we changed the program. They are now coming in and working as nurse's aides and not as nurses. They are paid lower wages and occasionally they are deported because their work permits run out. If they are good enough to work here, they should be allowed to become landed immigrants.

• (1230)

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am please to have the opportunity to participate in the debate and to speak with respect to a moratorium on removals for undocumented workers, as proposed by the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina.

To frame the debate, I believe it is important to underline two principles the government has continually expressed in explaining its position from the outset, and that is fairness and respect for the rule of law. Fairness and the rule of law are two things Canadians expect to see in our immigration system. So fundamental are these two principles, that they have been enshrined in the Immigration Refugee Protection Act, sometimes referred to as IRPA.

The motion passed the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration without the opposition calling a single witness. Indeed, the process was flawed and was contrary to the rules of the House and committee rules. No evidence was given to explain why the government should overlook the limits of the IRPA, the act which governs immigration, which is not contained in provisions allowing for a moratorium. In fact, we will be studying this issue in a comprehensive, broad basis where there will be ample opportunity for all stakeholders, all those interested in this issue, construction workers, those who feel that there should be a new system, those who want to talk about the point system, to come forward.

What the member and the opposition party have done by proceeding with this motion, without the calling of a shred of evidence, is simply to try to make political gains, political hay out of a situation that requires our compassion and our direction. It is something that we should take into account in a sober and thoughtful way.

The committee did not hear from anyone, so it did not consider the evidence of how moratoriums have failed Canada in the past. It did not call anyone, so it has not listen to those who are concerned about the consequences a moratorium would have on applicants who have legitimately applied to come to our country following due process. It did not hear that legitimate applicants would have to wait longer to free up the resources needed to allow those who come here illegally to move to the front of the line.

The committee passed this motion, without thinking about its consequences and whether it was fair, simply and purely to try to take advantage of a situation to its advantage.

Earlier I referred to a principle that I believe Canadians and Canada's new government share. It is upholding and respecting the rule of law. For the record, there is no provision in the law that allows for a moratorium. To implement a moratorium without anything to enable it would be arbitrary. This is no way to apply the law or act as a government.

There is no question that the matter of undocumented foreign workers in Canada is a serious one to which we need to direct our minds and attention. As I mentioned, we will be doing so in a broader and more extensive way.

*Routine Proceedings*

I can assure the House that our new government is well aware of the serious skills and labour shortages affecting the productivity and growth in a number of regions and sectors of our economy. One only needs to spend some time talking to employers across the country to hear first-hand the difficulties they are experiencing in finding people with the skills and experience they need to maintain their competitive edge. In fact, they go a long way out of their normal offerings to ensure they can attract people to positions. They provide training and so on to ensure they can stay open and do what is required of them.

That is why our government is working with all interested parties, provincial and territorial agencies, labour and industry organizations and community groups, to find ways to address our labour and skills shortage through legal means, through a process that is fair and open to everyone. True, we may need new electricians, but if we have a process for electricians to come forward, then we do not need to have somebody come in some other way to try to fill that position.

Part of the solution is to put Canadians in these jobs. One way of helping to create these jobs is through training and education. In budgets 2006 and 2007 and through our "Advantage Canada" plan, our government committed to increasing participation in the workforce.

To accomplish this, our government has made several commitments. These include reviewing systematically and eliminating barriers to labour force participation for underrepresented groups and improving labour market programming so it helps Canadians to develop the skills they need and the skills employers want.

That should be our first target, to try to get people trained in skills that already exist and encourage them to enter into the trades and skills which are much required in the building of our country.

We have committed to making improvements to the temporary foreign worker program to respond to employer needs and examining ways to make it easier for Canadian educated foreign students and temporary foreign workers to stay in Canada and become Canadian citizens. We have committed to supporting the removal of barriers to labour mobility across the country, ensuring people can cross interprovincial territories so they can go to work where the work is. We have committed to enhancing labour market information available to Canadians so they can make optimum choices for themselves, reducing taxes and creating a business environment conducive to business investing in training. We have done that in our budget. We encourage employers to have people trained to fill those positions that are much required.

•(1235)

Our economy and our country are growing. There is no question we will need more people to fill the positions that will be available as a consequence of this. We work with the provinces and the territories and the private sector to make training and skills development more widely available to Canadian workers and better aligned with the needs of the economy. While government plays an important role, business also have a role to play in helping and training workers for the current and future needs.

We recognize that immigration has a role to play as well. We are working with our partners in the provinces and territories and the

private sector to enhance the capacity of our immigration program to respond to those needs.

We are taking other actions. While the Liberals froze settlement funding for over a decade and voted against providing \$307 million in new settlement funding for immigrants, our government has committed over \$300 million in new settlement funding over two years to ensure newcomers to Canada are equipped to enter the Canadian workforce as soon as possible.

While the Liberals stood idly by for 13 long years, we are taking real action to address the needs of immigrants. Budget 2007 announced the creation of a foreign credentials referral office. Its creation will fill a need clearly identified with the provinces, the territories, the stakeholders, while respecting provincial jurisdiction.

In this regard, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development have consulted with provinces and territories, as well as the full range of stakeholders involved in integrating immigrants into the labour market force and society. Stakeholders include regulatory bodies, provincial assessment agencies, post-secondary institutions, sector councils, employer associations and immigrants.

We will take a leadership role in helping perspective immigrants and internationally trained and educated individuals already in Canada find the information and access to services they need to put their skills to work. We want to ensure the people we work hard to attract to this country can put their skills to work for Canada as soon as possible after their arrival.

We are processing a record number of temporary foreign worker applications. Just last year, we took in over 100,000 temporary foreign workers. We have recently announced changes to the temporary foreign worker program to make it easier and faster for Canadian employers to meet their labour force needs. We have cut the red tape. We have ensured that the process goes quicker and smoother. We have ensured that we have the resources in place to help employers accept these workers and process them through so they can be a part of the workforce.

These changes will reduce the time that employers have to wait to get workers they need and to extend the time that workers can stay in Canada from one year to two years and, in fact, make application for permanent resident status. This will help bring more security and stability to workers and to employers.

We have also opened new temporary foreign worker units in Calgary and Vancouver to better serve these high demand areas. We have created regional lists of jobs where there are clearly identified worker shortages. We have made it faster and simpler for employers to hire a foreign worker for an occupation that is on one of these lists.

*Routine Proceedings*

We are also making it easier for international students to stay in Canada and work off campus. In this regard, we have granted over 11,000 off campus work permits to international students. These students are young and motivated and they have a good feel for our country. Why not give them some Canadian work experience and do our best to have them stay, after their student visas have expired, to use their new skills knowledge in our country?

We will continue to explore other options in the future so as to ensure our immigration policies and our programs continue to make a contribution to Canada's prosperity.

To be perfectly clear, there is no doubt many undocumented workers are hard-working people. We recognize there are no easy answers. This is a serious issue, one involving families and children, but it is not fair to allow some to jump the queue while others who follow the rules have to wait in line. Those who are here illegally have violated the values of fairness and respect for the rule of law, which are not only the foundation of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, but the values that are the very foundation of Canada.

● (1240)

To offer a moratorium would be patently unfair to the thousands of people who seek to come to Canada every year and are prepared to follow the rules. We have these rules for a reason and far from the least of these is the need to assure the safety and security of Canadians and our allies.

That is why everyone who applies to come to this country must pass through a security and criminality check. They should recognize that a moratorium on deportations would almost certainly encourage foreign nationals to come to Canada illegally, safe in the knowledge that if caught working in Canada without authorization, they would be entitled to remain in the country.

To be sure, we are compassionate when it comes to specific situations. We know there is a great diversity in the circumstances of undocumented workers, including the reasons that left them without legal status here in the first place.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act includes provisions to address the issue of foreign nationals without status. For instance, in exceptional circumstances, a foreign national living in Canada without legal status may apply for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

That is what we do in Canada. We respect and apply the rule of law so there is fairness, certainty and transparency in decisions allowing people to come, to live and to work in Canada. We do not pick and choose when the law should apply and when we should look the other way. That is not the way to run a country or an immigration system.

The proposal to suspend the removal of undocumented workers and their families who pass security and criminality checks is not the solution to the plight of undocumented workers in Canada. The answer will be found in the context of Canada's broad immigration policies, which are widely regarded to be responsible, logical, humane and democratic, not in quick fixes and knee-jerk reactions. We need to analyze the problem, look at the situation, address what is happening in our country and then approach it in a logical fashion.

However, it must be fair, it must be compassionate and it must allow those who respect the process and choose to enter this country through that means not to be hard done by.

We must therefore do what we now have commenced to do. We are hearing from a broad perspective of individuals, stakeholders and those who are interested, including those who have specific representations on the ground. We want to see how this issue can be addressed, how we can resolve what has happened to this date. We want to have a system in place on a go-forward basis that is fair and appropriate for all those who want to take part in this great country of ours, all those who want to help us grow our economy in Canada. We want to ensure the boom experienced in construction and other areas continues to the prosperity of all Canadians and those who come here on temporary or other basis.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Mr. Speaker, in the mid-1980s the government at that time introduced a regularization program. The program worked this way. People who had been in Canada for five years or more and who were working and did not have a criminal record could apply to become landed immigrants, which would qualify them and allow them to stay in Canada.

During the period when the program was in place, thousands and thousands of undocumented workers came forward. As a result, they were able to stay in Canada legally. They are now law-abiding citizens who pay taxes and contribute to Canada.

There is absolutely no reason why Canada should not reintroduce a program of this nature. What barrier would the member see that would cause the government not to have this kind of program, which we have had several times in the past 20 years?

● (1245)

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, there is no question about it. A process needs to be made available to those who choose to fill, in a legitimate way, positions that need to be filled. The problem comes in if we design a system to react to the demands the country has, and then on the other hand say to those who wish not to go through the process, but want to come in some other way, that they can do that, and we will simply regularize them in the course of time. It would certainly have a great pull for people who would say that they do not necessarily need to come in through the process but will come here in some other way.

I think it is important to say this. We must have a process that is fair and equitable, a process that has an equal application for all those who wish to fill a particular position. They all should be allowed to go through that process as a group and then be selected from that process. We should not have systems designed that go outside or around that, or else why have a process in the first place?

I can appreciate what the member has said in that there are some compassionate reasons and grounds to consider for those who may be in that position, but this is an opportunity for the member and others who would like to propose solutions or put their options forward to the committee. The committee will be studying this issue comprehensively to see if there is a manageable way to deal not only with this situation but with what might happen on a going forward basis.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member's comments with respect to following a process and following protocol so that people coming to Canada are actually following the existing process and regulations and applying from their home countries. Everything stays nice and neat. I understand that.

However, we also have the reality in this country that thousands of people are in Canada who are undocumented, who are working and providing for our economy, and who are filling jobs in areas that are in crisis, such as the construction industry. We need to address those issues.

Would the hon. member have a proposal as to how to fast track, open up and change this system that actually prevented these people from coming in before? Would he have a proposal to make it more open and to allow in the skills the country needs, especially in the construction industry, in a more effective and faster way? They would certainly be needed.

In the meantime, we cannot ignore the human suffering and the human reality, and the economic reality as well, of these undocumented workers, most of whom have been here for decades. Most of them, if not all, have children here and raise their children here. Most of them, if not all, have businesses here and many of them, but not all, pay taxes. Sending them back home at this point would be undue hardship not only for them and their children, but also for industry, especially the construction industry, which is in crisis in its need of skilled workers.

It seems to me that we do not have deal with this in a one-sided way. We can deal with the reality that we have in the country, ensure that we have some humanity, and show that we are going to address both the social and economic needs at the same time, and then possibly begin to revamp the process, as the hon. member mentioned. Can the member not at least consider that?

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, we do have a compassionate system in place. We have a process for considering humanitarian, compassionate applications in those unique circumstances.

However, we have designed programs and are continuing to have programs to address the very issue the member raises, with programs such as the temporary foreign workers program, the provincial nominee program and a program known as CREWS, for example, the construction recruitment external workers services. CREWS was created with stakeholders in the construction industry to manage, control and allow for the efficient processing by HRSDC and CIC of applications for the entry of temporary foreign construction workers. Certainly those are processes are in place to meet the needs of the booming construction industry.

However, we also have a backlog that was created when the member's party was in government. It has grown to 700,000 or 800,000 people who are applying legitimately through the system. If she is saying we should now process someone in addition to or ahead of them, what is she going to do with those who are in the queue?

Certainly one can design programs, have an intake of applications and have someone coming in the other way, but there needs to be some integrity in the system. In that integrity of the system, we have to design something that works for the stakeholders and for those

who are involved in the industry, and they must work through that process.

Manitoba has used the provincial nominee program to a significant degree, more than any others have, and it has done a good job with that. The province of Saskatchewan has taken that initiative and has opened up offices in Saskatoon and I believe in Regina to deal with that. Similarly, the province of Ontario is being encouraged to do that. The province of Alberta has undertaken those types of processes that will allow it to meet those needs.

I would encourage us to use those legitimate types of vehicles for addressing the situation and proceed with humanitarian and compassionate grounds when we are looking at issues relating to deportation or those who are here. However, at the same time, we must do it in a measured way and with respect to the fact that we must allow due process to take place.

• (1250)

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech and I was disappointed as I was thumbing through the dissenting opinion to the fourth report that we are moving concurrence in today, which was put forward by my colleague. I believe my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, raised a number of objections that would fly in the face of public opinion when it comes to the treatment of the deportation of temporary or undocumented workers in this country.

I am surprised at a lot of these arguments. I do not think his party would be proud of some of the positions he has taken, which to me border on intolerance. When we scratch the surface just a little bit, there is very little business case we can make for some of the objections raised. We all know about the difficulty of deporting anybody from this country. Under the current rules, frankly, only people who want to leave can actually be kicked out. It is an enormously costly process.

However, in the situation of this incredible need and demand for the work that is being offered by these undocumented workers, what is the business case for deportation? If there is no business case, what is the rationale?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. parliamentary secretary will want to know that he has 50 seconds to respond.

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, one can hardly respond adequately in 50 seconds except to say that there are no massive deportations taking place, but there are processes under way to legitimately address areas of employment needs that can be met in a legitimate way and where wages, working conditions and so on can be monitored appropriately.

The member needs to understand that when a process is developed, that process needs to be followed. It is a matter of the rule of law. To have a report such as this one by the opposition, of which he is a member, filed in this House without hearing a shred of evidence is unconscionable. It is to make a decision without taking any consequences into account.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I obviously support the motion and the report. I have a great deal of experience with this issue, having spent a couple of years actually working on the solution. There is no doubt that there are several thousand undocumented workers in Canada and actually the number is much larger than that. We all know that.

I am going to give members a bit of a chronology to give citizens an understanding of the issue.

I am splitting my time with my colleague from Brampton West.

In 2003 I met with the labour and construction industry, with both business and labour representatives, who informed me that they were desperate to keep qualified workers in this country. Most of these workers come from Portugal or Eastern Europe and most are undocumented.

At that meeting, I learned a great deal about who these undocumented workers really are, what kind of lives they lead in this country, and where they come from. They are skilled labourers who in many cases came as visitors, with a visa, and overstayed. They are refugee claimants who failed the refugee status requirements and stayed.

Most, if not all, of these people are paying taxes in this country. Many of them own their own businesses by now and are creating jobs in addition to their own jobs. Most of them are actually owners of homes and are contributing to our Canadian society. Most of their children, if not all, are either born or raised here.

If were to look at these people, normally we would say that they are stable, settled Canadians. Again, most of the children have never been in their parents' country. Those who were raised and born here have never seen Portugal or Eastern Europe or wherever. Some of them do not even speak those languages. The only country they have ever known is Canada, their country of birth in many cases and certainly their country of adoption.

That is a very quick profile of undocumented workers. Most of them are working in the construction industry, although not all of them, but I am focusing on that industry because it is the one that I was working with for a while.

This does not mean that there are no bad apples in this group. I am not suggesting that all of the people working here as undocumented workers have no difficulties, but I would say that in the main they are hard-working and law-abiding people who are raising families, contributing to Canada's economy, and working very well, as I already have said. Many of them own houses and have created their own businesses, and their children are being educated here.

The labour representatives and the construction companies I met with told me that their industry desperately needed skilled labour. This is not something new. This has been going on for some time. In fact, I was a volunteer helping with the immigrant settlement program for about 20 years. I know that in the 1980s we were talking about the fact that the average age of a construction worker at that time was 50 years and the area was becoming de-skilled.

In fact, the industry has been trying for some time to try to get the government to fast track some of the applicants, which was

mentioned by the government representative earlier. The industry is trying to do that because in addition to its undocumented workers here, it needs more skilled workers. One does not cancel out the other.

In fact, some contractors told me that they were no longer bidding on jobs and contracts because they were not able to find enough labour to fulfill the commitment they would be taking on. That is pretty serious in an industry that is very fundamental to our country's economy.

The average age of a construction worker today is about 60, probably more by now, and even if the undocumented workers were allowed to stay in Canada, the industry still would be facing a shortage of skilled labour, so this is not one or the other. It is an issue that is very major to that industry. The industry has been trying desperately to resolve this with the CREWS program, which was mentioned earlier, to try to fast track skilled workers to this country.

● (1255)

Both labour and industry went on to describe who undocumented workers are and what they do. They said that they work very long hours and that most of them pay taxes to this country. They said that they are raising Canadian-born children or children who came here as young children and are now Canadians. They also said that they keep the construction industry from collapsing because that is where they are needed.

Unless undocumented workers are regularized, they have no rights of any kind in this country. They cannot access any benefits and are not paying into pensions, therefore, as they grow older they will not be able to look after themselves. They will be living in poverty because they are not contributing to CPP and so forth. If they should become injured they cannot access workers compensation or anything else because they have no rights. If they become ill they have no access to health care. These are all major issues.

In a sense, they are making major contributions to our country but they are marginalized in many ways in terms of the benefits they can access from this country.

In essence, Canada is benefiting from the labour of these people without having to give them any rights or payments in the form of services, which is unfortunate. Some people have said that the way to resolve that is to deport everybody. I will talk a little about that because that is the wrong way to go and it does not resolve the issue in any case.

When I met with both the labour and the construction industries they asked that we try to find ways to regularize the situation for these people in a legal manner, respecting the immigration regulations, laws and security provisions.

*Routine Proceedings*

In my work with them, we looked at a number of options for possible solutions. One option was to ask the undocumented workers to come forward and ID themselves and then ask them to go back to their native country with the understanding that they could apply for landed status in Canada. We would try to facilitate that provided they had no criminal record or problems.

This was a difficult situation to work with because we did not think the undocumented workers would accept it because it was a bit of a risk. The best solution we came up with was to have the undocumented workers come forward and, after the normal checks for security and whatever, give them a three year work permit and then, like all other workers who come to Canada from abroad, they would be able to apply for landed status after three years. We felt this process would help the construction industry with its chronic manpower skills shortages. It would also help children, either born or raised here, to have stability, to know who they are and to help their parents live their lives without fear of detection. They would pay into pensions, receive health care and other services and become proud and productive Canadians. This also would help the industry tremendously and keep it from collapsing into the crisis that it is in today.

This was a solution that was being worked on by the previous minister just before the election. In fact, the solution had been arrived at and it was a matter of tabling and bringing it forward when we lost the election.

I would suggest to the current government that instead of trying to deport people, we should look at the compassionate reality and the fact that this country desperately needs their skills which they have been providing for all these years. The industry is desperately looking for this kind of solution. This would be the only humane and compassionate way, instead of turving out families and forcing them to sell their businesses, which creates unemployment, and selling their homes and yanking their children, many of whom were here or who have been here for 14, 15 or 16 years, from school and moving them to, basically, a foreign country.

I think this is a very reasonable solution that the government should look at because it is the only one that makes sense and it is compassionate.

• (1300)

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that many of those who find themselves in this category are in an awkward and difficult position. Obviously, we need to find some means of dealing with that not only for the present but on a go-forward basis.

However, her government for 13 long years did not address the situation nor did it come up with any solutions. Maybe the member could indicate to me how it is that all of a sudden she feels that the solution should happen right now.

I agree with her that a solution is necessary. In fact, we have commissioned a committee study where this issue will be look at broadly with solutions in mind. The member and her party opposed the hearing of witnesses when the first report was filed and without hearing any witnesses had the report filed. However, during the 13

years of her government, deportations were happening, I would suggest if I were to look, at a higher rate than they are now.

The Liberals did nothing for 13 years and all of a sudden today are saying that we have a problem. There is a problem and we will find a solution to the problem but the member hardly has the place to say that it should be happening immediately.

• (1305)

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Mr. Speaker, my understanding of what the hon. member just said with respect to the committee not allowing witnesses, is not accurate. It is not true.

The hon. member says that the Liberal government did nothing for 13 years. First, we had a huge deficit that we actually got rid of. Second—

**Mr. Gary Goodyear:** Tell the truth.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** That was Trudeau's deficit.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Oh, give me a break.

Second, I just presented some information and I said that we had been working on it. There had been consultation with the industry. The information and the studies were there. The Conservatives are saying that they will do more studies. At what point do we stop studying and start taking action?

The actual proposal, which the bureaucracy I am sure must have had at the time that the new government came in, was already there. The solution was there. The consultations and discussions with industry took place so I do not see why we need to delay this further.

The reason the study was done was because the proposals, the recommendations and the way forward were already there. Had the Liberals not lost the election at the time we did, the minister would have tabled those changes.

Two wrongs do not make a right and the fact that they happened under our watch does not mean that this is not the right thing to do. The hon. member is not even listening, which is quite nice. However, he should remember that two wrongs do not make a right and, therefore, I think it is time that the Conservatives get on with doing their job and take responsibility for some of these things.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am only rising to thank my colleague for an excellent speech. I concur with many of the fine remarks she made and I recognize and pay tribute to the work she has done in this field for many years.

I would like to point out that other groups within her area also agree. I have a statement from the executive board of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council's general meeting from April 6, 2006. It states:

Canada has been built by immigrants seeking a better life, but today the immigration system is broken.

A number of organizations in Toronto concur with that statement.

Would my colleague agree with the Toronto and York Region Labour Council that Toronto is not being well served by the current immigration system?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that the need for skilled workers in Toronto in the construction industry is not being met. Because employers are not able to bring in the skilled labour as fast as they need them, the industry has asked for a fast track to bring skilled labourers to this country.

We did meet with the industry many times and we came up with a solution to address the needs of that industry with undocumented skilled workers who are in this country already. We should at least keep those workers in the country and then change the structure of immigration because, quite frankly, the points system, as the hon. member knows, does not allow for the easy entry of skilled labour. The points system actually, in my view, needs to be changed in order to ensure that skilled labourers can come in much more quickly. I think there needs to be some changes made—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Brampton West.

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration's motion recommending the government to place an immediate moratorium on the deportation of all undocumented workers and their families who pass security and criminality checks while a new immigration policy is put in place.

I want to begin by clarifying who, and not what, the motion addresses. The motion calls for an immediate moratorium on the deportations of all undocumented workers and their families who pass security and criminality checks.

First, let us remind ourselves that this motion concerns living, breathing humans. We are not talking about some kind of infestation of insects or stolen property. We are debating a matter that concerns living, breathing human beings with feelings, dreams and aspirations.

Second, let us also remind ourselves that the motion also concerns workers, so we are debating a matter that concerns living, breathing humans who are also productive contributors to Canada's economy and, precisely, they offer skills and services that are in demand.

Third, let us remind ourselves that the motion concerns not only living, breathing workers, but their families as well, so we are now debating a matter that concerns not only those persons who choose to be here, but those who were born and raised here as well.

Fourth, let us also remind ourselves that the motion concerns not only those workers and their families who pass security and criminality checks. We are debating a matter that concerns those living, breathing, productive members of our society and their families who have also honoured and respected the law in all other respects.

Fifth, because they are working underground, these people are being exploited and they are unable to reap the social benefits of the society to which they contribute.

Finally, in the interest of honesty, I must also be forthright and admit that yes, indeed we are talking about illegal workers, that is, persons who elected to take jobs in Canada without securing the appropriate visas.

In some instances, of course, some of these workers may have entered the country illegally but, in many cases, they may have simply overstayed a legal visa. None of this can or should be denied. However, I believe, like a great many others, that the fact that there are so many illegal workers in Canada is not itself the problem. Rather, it is instead a symptom of a severe problem in our immigration system.

After all, I find it difficult to regard any instance of a skilled worker productively contributing to the economy as a problem in itself. The problem is instead that there is something so wrong with our immigration system that it is unable to meet the very real demands of our economy.

These people are here because we need their skills and services and, in many instances, desperately so. If our immigration system were working as it should, there would be no demand for undocumented workers because the system would have provided all the legal labour necessary for our economy.

The problem is not the workers themselves but the fact that our immigration system is so inefficient at the task assigned to it. Therefore, the objection that normalizing these workers is somehow unfair to those who are working their way through the legal immigration process gets things backwards. Rather, it is unfair that we have an immigration system that is meant to identify the most needed and the most skilled immigrants and yet seems unable to do that in any fashion that meets the genuine demands of our economy.

Such an immigration system is not only unfair to immigrant workers, legal or otherwise, it is unfair to all Canadians. We need an immigration system that works to meet the demands of our economy and anything less is unacceptable.

Nevertheless, it is not for this reason alone that I support this motion. I also support it because it is in our country's own best interest to provide a moratorium and work to integrate these workers into the legal system.

● (1310)

There are presently at least 200,000 illegal workers in Canada and perhaps as many as 500,000. We are talking about skilled tradesmen in construction. We are talking about cooks, cleaners and truck drivers. We are talking about a huge number of people who are filling demands in the workforce. They are here and employed precisely because we need them.

What do we think will happen if we round these people up and deport them? The net result can only be economic chaos. The construction industry will collapse.

Consider also the costs. Identifying, rounding up, and deporting 200,000 to 500,000 workers will require an incredible expenditure of energy and resources. We must consider this matter practically and consider it from a perspective of how to best employ our resources to good effect for all Canadians. Rather than wasting resources deporting persons who have lived and contributed to our country, and are otherwise law-abiding citizens, it makes much more sense to use our resources to integrate these people into our economy.



*Routine Proceedings*

By deporting them, we are only worse off than we were before. By calling a moratorium and integrating these persons, we will be better off. The answer should be obvious to all. In the same way that we provide amnesty to tax evaders because it is in the best interests of the country to reclaim the lost tax revenue and avoid the expense of pressing criminal charges, I am arguing that all Canadians will be better off if we expend our resources integrating these much needed workers.

In closing, I want to say that I support this motion and the reasons are straightforward. We are talking about living, breathing, productive, law-abiding persons who warrant our respect and contribute to our society, even if our immigration system has failed to identify and integrate them legally.

I believe it is in our own best interests to integrate these workers and their families into our society precisely as we work hard to prepare our immigration system, so it works to the advantage of all Canadians as it was intended to do.

The parliamentary secretary is badly misinformed. I was on the immigration committee and before the NDP pulled the plug on day care and other needed social programs, the Liberal government had in its estimates money to begin regularizing these workers. Members of the present government sat on this immigration committee and it was unanimous in support. We do not need more study. It has been studied to death. Please, let us pass it.

•(1315)

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to partly agree with the member opposite. I have a large population of Portuguese people in my riding who are absolutely some of the most vibrant, hard-working, intelligent and proud people in this country.

However, I have to tell this hon. member that these are not only living, breathing, proud, wonderful and vibrant people; they have suffered from a decade of delay under the Liberals. Hundreds of thousands of people were thrown out under the Liberal regime. The immigration department is a mess because of the decade of delay and the decade of disgrace.

Here is my question. I would like to ask the member if she can point to one incident, one time that she spoke on this issue when she was in government? Not once.

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier:** Mr. Speaker, I contributed quite heartily in committee as—

**Mr. Gary Goodyear:** Never once in the House.

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier:** Not in the House. But anyway, that does not matter, Mr. Speaker.

I think that the issue right here is here and now. I participated in the debate in committee and it is on the record. But that is not the issue. The hon. member agrees with me that the immigration system is in a mess. Now he has the opportunity to put his money where his mouth is.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have in front of me a news release that came out on December 20, 2004. At that time the government was holding cross Canada hearings with the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. It gave an opportunity for a person's voice to be heard.

That committee travelled in March and April of 2005 to St. John's, Halifax, Charlottetown, Fredericton, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria. Hearings were held at each location on various topics of immigration.

I also have a submission from March 24, 2005, by the Portuguese Congress of Canada. It recommended precisely what is before the House today. It said that we need to deal with the undocumented workers. We need to have regularization. Action needs to be taken, then and now.

That was March 24, 2005. Yet, no action was taken by the former Liberal government and no action has been taken by the Conservative government. We are about to hold even more hearings. What good is it? Why do we waste taxpayers' time travelling to all these places and give people hope, asking agencies to come and tell us what they want, and then completely ignore them and take absolutely no action?

•(1320)

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree with the member, except for one thing. At those hearings we heard from the Polish groups, the construction industry, and from everyone who had a stake in this. Once the report was tabled, the minister put in place, in the supplementals, the money to begin the regularization of the program, and the NDP pulled the plug.

**Mr. Gary Goodyear:** Mr. Speaker, I will be very sincere on this because I have received emails from my Portuguese community. The emails are actually from members of the community who are asking me to please not support this because they waited in line. They did everything the right way. Despite the fact that after a decade of Liberals, we have something like 700,000 immigrants trying to get into this country the proper way. I would really like to know, what shall I tell the folks in my riding who have asked me—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Brampton West.

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can tell the members of his riding the same thing that my great grandmother probably told people when they said to her, "We did not get an old age security pension, why should you have one?" She replied, "Would it not have been nice if we had been in the position to be able to do that for you?" We would—

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

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to enter into the concurrence debate on the fourth report of the citizenship and immigration committee. I am proud that the NDP moved this concurrence motion and proud of my colleague from Trinity—Spadina who has a long track record and history for speaking out on behalf of rights for undocumented workers.

*Routine Proceedings*

I will begin my remarks by saying this issue has been the elephant in the room for decades that no one is willing to speak about. We have to start with the fundamental base information that economic migration has been a fact of life for thousands of years. People gravitate to where the opportunity is and in this case the economic activity was in Canada and people no matter what their reason for coming here, seek a better life.

That is how we built this great nation. Industrious and skilled people are able to travel and come to our country. It is a reflection of the inadequacies in our immigration system that we have hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers toiling away in certain key industries in our country where there are skill shortages.

I come from the building trades, a carpenter by trade, and certainly the construction industry is one of those sectors where there are tens of thousands of undocumented workers providing a necessary function and a necessary service.

This is not the first time that we have had this debate in the House of Commons. Somebody just accused one of the Liberal MPs of never having raised it in the House of Commons. I can say, we have. My colleague from Trinity—Spadina has most recently, but for the decade that I have been here, we have raised it over and over again.

We were critical that the government was allowing an increased number of foreign workers on special work permits and not taking advantage of the great pool of skilled labour that was resident in this country, notwithstanding the fact they jumped the queue. Let us put that to the side. This is not a punitive debate of punishing people for not following the rules to get here.

The government was meeting a demand. It is an inexorable migration. People gravitate toward opportunity and it is something that we want to encourage, not discourage. So, we find ourselves with this pool of undocumented workers, great skill shortages and a great need and demand.

I defy anyone here to show me the business case for spending millions of dollars to have a mass deportation and throw 200,000 people out of the country. It would be ludicrous. It would tie up the enforcement division of Immigration Canada for decades and that is not even if every one of them exercised their right to appeal because our system is fair and equitable. We can only really deport people who want to be kicked out because if one digs in his or her heels they are in for a five or seven year appeal. It is impossible.

Why do we not just face the facts, acknowledge that we have a human resource in this body of undocumented workers, recognize that the skill shortages demand these workers, and give them some status. Give them their right to apply their craft and their trade with dignity, safety and security and a safety net that our system offers, and let them help us grow this great land without having to sneak around.

It is only common sense. It happened in California. When they realized they had hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers in the California building industry, unions started going out and organizing. My own union signed up 15,000 dry wallers and tapers who were Mexican, who were undocumented, and they started representing them because they were providing a necessary service, paying taxes in that country, and they deserved representation and

recognition. Maybe that would be the first step toward solving this problem as well.

With what short time I have I think it would be useful to look at this motion by the City of Toronto, moved by Councillor Giambrone, a former president of the New Democratic Party I might add, and seconded by Mayor David Miller. It states:

WHEREAS Toronto City Council recognizes there are thousands of hard-working, tax paying immigrants in the City of Toronto who have no government documentation; and

WHEREAS there is a shortage of labour in the construction sector;—

I will not read all of the other whereas items. It concludes:

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Toronto City Council direct the City Clerk to write to the Federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration expressing its desire to see the cases of undocumented workers be addressed in a timely, fair and equitable manner.

● (1325)

It argues in the whereases that there should be a moratorium on deportations until such time as we can find a fair and equitable way to deal with this issue.

It points out as well that two of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act key mandates are to support the settlement, adaptation and integration of newcomers to Canadians society and to manage access to Canada with a fair and effective enforcement strategy. If we can take the very mandate of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act's own language, we could find a much more compassionate way of dealing with the backlog of undocumented workers in this country.

I also recognize the work of my friend and colleague, John Cartwright, a fellow union carpenter and leader with the Carpenters' union. He is now the head of the Toronto and District Labour Council. It too is getting involved in trying to represent undocumented workers.

We have a choice in our hands. We either acknowledge we have a pool of skilled labour and a great labour shortage and we put those two together, or we order a witch hunt and mass deportation of 200,000 hard-working tax paying people.

I think it is an easy choice to make. There is no business case for carrying on with the status quo. There is a compelling business case for putting to use this human resources pool that we have and to help build the economy and fill skilled labour shortages.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** It is with regret, but it is nonetheless my duty to interrupt the proceedings on the motion at this time.

[Translation]

Accordingly, debate on the motion will be rescheduled for another sitting.

[English]

When we return to this matter, there will be 13 minutes left for the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

*Private Members' Business*

•(1330)

[Translation]

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

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-362, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (residency requirement), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, with me it is either feast or famine and today is a feast.

Today, I rise to speak in support of Bill C-362, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (residency requirement). Introduced in the House on October 25, 2006, the intent of Bill C-362 is straightforward. It amends the Old Age Security Act to reduce from 10 years to 3 years the residency requirement for entitlement to old age security.

Nevertheless how straightforward the bill may be, it addresses and remedies a great injustice in Canada's social security system, an injustice which is presently causing great harm to seniors across Canada and to the families and communities to which they belong.

The bill deserves the support of each and every member of the House. It is my sincere hope we will set aside all partisan concerns and work together to improve the well-being of a great many seniors, their families and communities across all of Canada.

I want to begin today by identifying and clarifying the great injustice Bill C-362 is meant to address. Following that I will identify and discuss why I believe the bill warrants the support of every member of the House.

Presently the Old Age Security Act requires a person to reside in Canada for 10 years before she or he is entitled to receive old age security. Although the old age security program is intended to be universal and to act as the cornerstone of Canada's retirement income system for all Canadians, this residency requirement effectively excludes many seniors from its benefits.

Indeed, because of the 10 year residency requirement, it is not at all uncommon for a Canadian senior citizen to go entirely without the benefits of old age security for many years. Practically speaking, the residency requirement creates two different classes of senior citizens, those who qualify for old age security at 65 and those who do not simply because they have not yet lived in Canada for 10 years.

As a result, the residency requirement also creates two different classes of families and communities within Canada. There are those families and communities whose seniors receive the benefits and peace of mind of old age security at age 65 and those families and communities that do not because of the residency requirement.

In other words, the residency requirement also creates a distinct class of families and communities, those who are required to take on a burden of responsibility that other families in Canada are not expected to bear. The net result is the 10 year residency requirement for old age security treats a whole group of Canadians as second class citizens. This, I am sure we can all agree, is unacceptable.

It should also be noted that the 10 year residency requirement also adds insult to injury by targeting, inadvertently I think, some of the most economically vulnerable seniors in Canada.

As some member of the House well know, in some cases seniors can circumvent the 10 year residency requirement and qualify for old age security if they emigrated from countries that have signed reciprocal social security agreements with the Government of Canada. These agreements allow for the coordination of the two countries' social security programs, make the benefits portable between the two countries and normally exist because both countries provide social security plans with similar benefits.

As a result, in many cases, the very reason no reciprocal agreement exists between Canada and a particular country is simply because the other country is unwilling or unable to provide comparable social security for its citizens, including its seniors. This means those persons who may need old age security the most, because they emigrated from countries with little or no social security, must go without here in Canada even after they have become Canadian citizens. This I am also sure we can all agree is unacceptable.

To summarize, the injustice that Bill C-362 is intended to address is the brute fact that the 10 year residency requirement for old age security not only treats a great many Canadians as second class citizens, but it also denies benefits to some of those seniors most in need of assistance.

If we also recall that poverty is epidemic among our seniors, especially among women and new Canadians, there is only one sensible and decent conclusion to be drawn. The 10 year residency requirement is unjust, unacceptable and must be changed. That is exactly what Bill C-362 aims to do.

•(1335)

While I am friendly to the view that the residency requirement could be eliminated entirely, it is my feeling that a three year residency requirement is appropriate, meaningful and not at all arbitrary. Although none of us in the House can ever be sure of the original intentions of those legislators who proposed and accepted a 10 year residency requirement, it is easy to speculate that this requirement was intended to ensure old age security would only benefit those immigrants who were truly committed to remaining in Canada.

While I certainly agree that the decision to leave one's country of birth in itself is a good sign of one's desire and commitment to reside in Canada permanently, the three year residency requirement provides a sufficient safeguard against any potential abuse.

*Private Members' Business*

Moreover, to demand a residency requirement any longer than three years is unreasonable. After three years of residence, an immigrant is entitled to become a full citizen of Canada. If three years' residency is sufficient for citizenship, it is certainly sufficient to entitle that person to old age security.

Having identified the injustice that Bill C-362 is intended to address, and having justified why I think a three year residency requirement is appropriate, I want to conclude my remarks today by explaining why I think the bill deserves the support of each and every member of the House.

Ultimately, I believe Bill C-362 deserves the support of every member of the House as a simple matter of decency. However people may choose to make sense of the notion of decency, whether they prefer to talk of a principle of fairness, or equality of opportunity, or the equal dignity of all persons, the underlying sentiment remains the same. A person should not be made worse off than others arbitrarily and without just cause.

Unquestionably, the 10 year residency requirement arbitrarily prevents a great many seniors from receiving old age security benefits and this creates undue and unjust hardship for a great many seniors, their families and their communities. As far as I can tell, there is no good reason which justifies the imposition of this harm on so many Canadians.

The only truly decent thing to do is to reduce this residency requirement to three years, as my bill proposes.

Bill C-362 also deserves the support of every member of the House because, in supporting it, we can each acknowledge an honour the immeasurable contribution made each and every day by seniors across Canada, to our families, our communities and our country.

Seniors, thanks to their lifetime of experience, are able to provide support and guidance to all of us. Not only do seniors help us to remember and to understand our history, our values and our identity, they very often help alleviate the real pressures of raising a family in today's fast paced society.

There is, for example, no better child care than that provided by a loving grandparent. However, seniors will not be in any position to offer us guidance, wisdom and support if they are themselves trapped in abject poverty. By securing the economic security of all seniors, ultimately we do a service to all Canadians.

Bill C-362 also deserves the support of every member of the House because, in supporting it, we formally recognize that all Canadian seniors deserve to live their entire lives with a sense of dignity and self-respect. No person and certainly no member of the House would ever want to face a choice between abject poverty and a life of absolute dependence on family and friends.

By guaranteeing a certain basic level of support for all Canadian seniors, we guarantee a lifetime of dignity and self-respect for all Canadians. After all, all of us will one day ourselves be seniors, some sooner than others.

● (1340)

Finally, Bill C-362 deserves the support of every member of this House because I believe that Canadians all across the country want us to address the very real injustice faced by so many seniors, their families and their communities.

On the whole, Canadians are decent people without exception. Whenever possible we strive to do the right thing and to right wrongs whenever we encounter them. I think to even the most casual observer the injustice of an arbitrary 10-year residency requirement is a wrong that needs to be corrected. Indeed, since tabling this bill I have received a great many letters of support from persons and organizations all across Canada.

In closing, I want to remind the members of this House that Canada has been, remains and always will be a country of immigrants. Even today, Canada has one of the highest per capita rates of immigration in the world, with roughly 17% of our population foreign born and another 30% descended from earlier generations of non-British or non-French immigrants.

It also should not be forgotten that the British and the French at one time were themselves immigrants. Moreover, research indicates that within the next 20 years, immigration will account for all our net population and labour force growth in Canada. In my view and the view of a great many Canadians, every single one of our recent immigrants and future citizens deserves a social security net which is truly universal and which encompasses a person's entire life.

While it is certainly tempting to say that we need to provide this kind of social security as a necessary exercise in marketing, that is, we need to do it if Canada wants to attract and retain the best and the brightest immigrants, I think there is a deeper and much more meaningful motivation. We owe it to all Canadians as a matter of decency, the kind of heart-felt decency which motivates and unites every person in this great and caring country of ours.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by the member who introduced Bill C-362. I think it is a good bill, but it seems to me that there is something contradictory about what the member said.

She said that she does not want to see two classes of Canadian citizens: first-class Canadians and second-class Canadians. However, because I have not been a member for long, I remember being there when the social affairs committee considered Bill C-36, which was also about seniors. At the time, the Bloc Québécois proposed an amendment because the clauses excluded new Canadians who were being sponsored.

The Bloc Québécois asked the committee to amend the bill so as not to restrict new citizens' access to old age security because of the sponsor's obligations under the Immigration Act.

I know that the Liberals voted against that amendment. Now that the member is introducing a bill that looks a lot like what the Bloc Québécois proposed for Bill C-36, can she tell me why they voted against the amendment?

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier:** Mr. Speaker, I am not really sure of the particulars of which the member speaks. If the Liberals did vote against that, they now have the opportunity to do the right thing and vote for my private member's bill.

• (1345)

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member and I am actually amazed. I will not be supporting this private members' bill and this is why.

We spoke a little while ago about some of the problems with immigration and illegal workers. The problems are a direct result of failed Liberal attempts to correct a system that had good intentions, but we know where good intentions often lead and what is often paved with good intentions.

My parents came from another country. They understood what the rules were. They also understood that should they take their parents along, they had an obligation.

In light of what we saw with the last proposal, that we change our immigration policies and in light of those as a direct result of failed Liberal attempts, what does the member expect would be the outcome when people are not expected to make a contribution? What could we expect next? What policy would they bring forward to try and correct that kind of a mess that we would be headed into?

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to respond to that question.

I grew up in Chatham, Ontario. It is where I got my values. I remember when I was a young girl of about 17 years that the Czechoslovakians were coming to Canada and people in my family and others were scraping together furniture and clothing for them. We do not have to do that any more. Our economic situation is not the same as it was. My great-grandmother did not have any pension. Should everyone today be denied a pension because the people before us did not have one?

This is progression. That argument is similar to people who say that their kids do not need a new school, that they went to a school of a certain condition and if it was good enough for them, it should be good enough for their kids. It is not that kind of attitude that makes this country grow.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it appears to me there are many reasons for providing assistance through our old age system. They need more money and I hope that day will come, but it is a way to honour those who have thrived and survived through thick and thin to bring this great country to the point it is at today.

If someone has lived here three years or less, I do not think it is a sign of that. I really object to that kind of proposal. I have not even heard what kind of an impact this would have economically on the entire system.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member should know that the clock has run out, but I will allow her equal time.

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier:** Mr. Speaker, you are kind. I know the member for Wild Rose has a heart as big as his personality. I would

be more than happy to discuss this bill with him when we are out back.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-362, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (residency requirement). I want to thank my hon. colleagues for their contributions on this important issue.

The bill proposes to lower the residency requirement from the current 10 years to three years. For several reasons this proposal is unacceptable for the government and I will outline the reasons.

I want to start my discussion of old age security by stating that Canada's public pension system is widely recognized as one of the best systems in the world and is often duplicated by countries wishing to set up public pension programs of their own.

The old age security, OAS, portion of our pension plan is an integral component of the system. It is of the utmost importance that we show prudence and forethought when proposing sweeping changes the likes of which this bill proposes.

The Government of Canada has a fully functioning public pension system. One part of it pays benefits to Canadians who have paid into the program like the Canada pension plan. Other parts, like the OAS, are not contributory and therefore they are offered to all seniors in this country, as long as they have a minimum 10 years of residency in the country. This does not seem unreasonable.

In fact it is the responsibility of the government and of all Canadians to ensure that the people who built this country are taken care of in their old age. It is for this reason that the length of residence in Canada has been the program's central eligibility criterion since its inception in 1952.

The OAS is not income based or contributory, or based on one's nationality or country of birth; it is simply residency based. This requirement is intended to establish a person's attachment and his or her contribution to Canadian society, the economy and his or her community over his or her lifetime. It is reasonable to expect that a person live in Canada for a minimum period of time before being granted the right to a lifelong public benefit.

Many other countries have functioning public pension systems as well, and the Government of Canada has endeavoured to sign agreements with these other countries. We have done this so that new Canadians from other countries with similar public pension systems have the ability to use time spent in their country of origin and the contributions they have made in their communities to help meet the minimum residency requirement for Canada's old age security program.

The proposals put forward in this bill would require years of renegotiation with some 50 countries, the same as they took years to sign in the first place. Did the member for Brampton West consider this in the drafting of her bill, or was this just an afterthought? Unfortunately the opposition members have continued their trend of proposing changes to programs without fully understanding what the ramifications of these changes would be.

*Private Members' Business*

What is most shocking is that this bill has been proposed by a Liberal, a former parliamentary secretary. She should know that not only would the bill cost billions of dollars and put the long term viability of the old age security program in peril, but that it would take years of negotiation with more than 50 foreign governments with whom we have signed agreements.

There are only two options here: the member did not know this, which means she did not do her research and the bill does not deserve to pass on that alone; or she knew and did not care, which means she has put forward this bill for political purposes to score cheap political points.

I note with interest the comments made by the hon. member for Brampton—Springdale when she suggested in the House that the proposals contained in Bill C-362 were required to offer support to new Canadians.

●(1350)

I just want to reiterate the comments made earlier by the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington whom I believe made a very valuable point. It is Canada's new government that put forward the largest increase in settlement funding for new Canadians in the past decade. It was not the Liberals. It was the Prime Minister and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who created the foreign credentials referral office. The Liberals did not do it. In all of their 13 years of majority rule, the Liberals did not do it despite their talk.

I also notice that this particular bill was not proposed when the Liberals were in power. Canadians, and especially new Canadians, know who is getting the job done for immigrant communities, and it is the Prime Minister, not the previous Liberal government.

Canada's new government has looked to support seniors with several initiatives aimed at helping older Canadians, specifically older Canadians who are surviving on small incomes. These were implemented in a responsible manner after careful study of all relevant facts.

These changes include the commitment of \$19.5 million for the new horizons for seniors program. We are providing tax relief by allowing pension income splitting for pensioners, providing tax relief by increasing the age credit by \$1,000, and increasing the guaranteed income supplement maximum benefit. This initiative alone benefits more than 50,000 seniors. Budget 2007 raised the age for maturing RRSPs and pension plans to 71 from 69.

Bill C-36 is an act which makes several reforms to improve access to old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. It expands the compassionate care benefit, making more Canadians eligible to take care of loved ones in their hour of need.

The record of the Conservative government speaks for itself. We have acted to protect the pension program for seniors. We have a lengthy list of accomplishments on this file and we will not abandon our prudence for political gain. Furthermore, we have a record that is unparalleled when it comes to support for new Canadians.

The Liberal record tells another story. The Liberals have proposed a bill here today that would not only put the long term viability of the

old age security program into peril but would also require years of renegotiation with more than 50 foreign governments.

The opposition has not done its homework and that is simply unacceptable. The government must and will act responsibly when it comes to protecting the seniors pension programs and the responsible thing to do is oppose the bill.

●(1355)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying earlier when I was asking the hon. Liberal member a question, I was surprised by this bill presented by the Liberals, but, at the same time, I am pleased it was presented and I do not understand why the Conservative Party is refusing to support this bill. This is a matter of justice for seniors. When it comes to matters involving seniors I think we ought to be particularly attentive because they often experience injustice in our society.

Nonetheless, the bill does not change matters much. The bill simply reduces from ten years to three years the residency requirement for entitlement to a partial monthly old age security pension. That is not much.

The current ten-year residency requirement places undue hardship on recent immigrants who are seniors in that they are unable to adequately access old age security benefits. The bill on old age security would simply change a few sections of the act. The proposed changes would amend the sections that refer to ten years and replace ten years with three years. That is not asking much, so I wonder how anyone could be against it.

The definition of “specially qualified individual”, which indicates the number of years of residency required to be entitled to benefits, would be changed and ten years replaced with three years.

It seems obvious to the Bloc Québécois that Bill C-362 would facilitate access to the old age security program for new immigrants who are seniors. The quality of life for seniors often depends on the care they can receive. This quality of life also depends on their income. New arrivals are also entitled to dignity. The Conservative Party does not seem to realize that.

As well, it is clear that Bill C-362 introduces certain measures to amend the Old Age Security Act that do not affect Quebec's jurisdiction. That is why the Bloc Québécois supports this bill in principle.

Allow me to put this into context. In the past few years, the Bloc Québécois has noticed that seniors are among those in our society most affected by the federal government's cuts to transfer payments. The quality of life of seniors often depends on the care they can receive and this quality of life also depends on their income.

That is why the Bloc Québécois has always harshly criticized the irregularities in the guaranteed income supplement program, which guarantees low-income seniors additional income.

*Private Members' Business*

Bill C-36, which received royal assent on May 7, 2007, hopefully resolved some of the accessibility problems in the system, but it did not resolve the issue of giving beneficiaries the full retroactive amount. This what the Bloc Québécois was calling for, but it was not included in the bill.

Bill C-362 would extend the accessibility of the old age security program to recent immigrants who are seniors, by decreasing the Canadian residency requirement from 10 years to three years.

I would also like to briefly remind the House how Bill C-36 amended the Old Age Security Act. Bill C-36 received royal assent on May 7, 2007. It amended the Canada pension plan and the Old Age Security Act. The amendments include ongoing renewal and clarity of legislation, simplifying the reporting of income for couples and seniors, and consistent benefit entitlements.

There was also a proposal for common amendments to both the Canada pension plan and old age security. These provisions had to do with electronic services, the collection of interest charges and the sharing of information. However, a contentious issue concerning accessibility remained for Canadians and the Bloc Québécois opposed increasing the restrictions on new citizens who have immigrated to Canada.

The Bloc Québécois believes there cannot be different classes of Canadian citizens—which the hon. Liberal member recognized earlier—no matter what their background. The Bloc Québécois believes that being a Canadian citizen should be enough to access the guaranteed income supplement. Some clauses of the legislation posed a problem by creating different classes of Canadian citizens, for instance, a person in respect of whom an undertaking by a sponsor is in effect as provided under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act—the sponsor system. Those clauses excluded new Canadian citizens who were still being sponsored.

• (1400)

The Bloc Québécois asked the committee to amend the bill so as not to restrict new citizens' access to old age security benefits because of the sponsor's obligations under the Immigration Act. The Bloc Québécois believes that once a person becomes a Canadian citizen, the sponsor's obligation should automatically end.

The sponsor's obligations generally begin as soon as the sponsored person obtains permanent resident status, and they end at the end of the sponsorship period. In some cases, that can be a long time—as long as 10 years. That has to change. According to the act, the obligation cannot end prematurely, even if the sponsored individual becomes a Canadian citizen. Moreover, neither separation, nor divorce, nor moving to another province ends the obligation. The obligation stands even if the sponsor's financial situation becomes difficult.

As I mentioned earlier, it is important to note that the Liberal Party voted against the Bloc Québécois' proposal last February. Now we are discussing an issue very similar to the ones debated in the context of Bill C-36, which just received royal assent. Bill C-362 does not address sponsorship of newcomers, but it does address other categories of newcomers who are not sponsored.

The changes Bill C-362 proposes are minimal. The main change is to reduce the residency requirement for entitlement to a monthly

partial old age security pension from 10 to three years. The number 10 is simply replaced by the number 3. The bill amends other sections of the act simply to bring them in line with the definition of a “specially qualified individual” so that the act can apply.

Who is affected by this bill? There are various categories of newcomers and potential immigrants to Canada. Unfortunately, as I just mentioned, sponsored immigrants, permanent residents and new citizens who are still being sponsored are not affected by the amendments made by this bill. They would have access to old age security after three years for spouses or 10 years for other individuals, as is currently the case after sponsorship.

Newcomers who are affected by the bill include skilled workers, businesspeople—the three categories are investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed workers—asylum seekers and refugees. I believe that Canada accepts 25,000 refugees each year.

Because of globalization and the fact that we live in a global environment, the Bloc Québécois thinks that Canada must be flexible about citizenship and the services offered to newcomers. Given the increase in exchanges between countries, there should be mechanisms in place to allow for greater human mobility, as well as measures already in place to help the disadvantaged.

The position of the Bloc Québécois is the following. We are aware that Bill C-362 will facilitate access to the old age security program for recent immigrants who are seniors. Since the quality of life of seniors often depends on the care they can receive—as I said earlier—this quality of life is dictated by their income. Newcomers also have a right to dignity. Moreover, we believe that Bill C-362 introduces certain measures amending the Old Age Security Act that do not infringe on Quebec's areas of jurisdiction.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of the principle of this bill. However, I would like to point out that a great deal of work remains to be done. It is deplorable that, for all these years, the Liberal and Conservative governments neglected, muzzled and ignored seniors, the most vulnerable individuals of our society. First, the Liberals ignored this group of disadvantaged individuals and preferred to allow the flight of capital to tax havens, the reduction of debt and cuts to Quebec and the provinces. Next, the Conservatives favoured tax reductions rather than providing immediate support to the workers who helped build today's society.

Fortunately, the Bloc Québécois was there to ensure that our most vulnerable seniors would have a voice in government. Thanks to many interventions in the House, committees and the media, the Bloc Québécois was able to keep in the forefront a group of individuals who were not a government priority. Seniors are entitled to the guaranteed income supplement, but without full retroactivity because of various notable government mistakes. We will continue to fight against the federal government in order to—

*Private Members' Business*

• (1405)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina.

[English]

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a citizen is a citizen. A citizen who is a senior has been living in Canada, pays income taxes, GST and property taxes. Therefore, why do some seniors qualify for old age security and the guaranteed income supplement and others do not?

Six months before their 65th birthdays, seniors living in Canada have something to which they can forward. They can apply for old age security and on their birthdays they receive a cheque. No matter what their income levels, they receive a monthly pension cheque.

Some seniors come from countries that have social security agreements with Canada. They could be in Canada for a year, or three years or five years, and they may or may not be citizens. Even after just being in Canada for one year, they receive the old age security. That is fine. We totally agree with this. If that senior is in need of extra support, that senior can combine the Canada pension plan and receive the guaranteed income supplement if the level of income is below a certain poverty line.

Seniors who come to Canada from countries that have no social security agreements with Canada, even though they could be working, contributing to the society and paying their taxes, do not qualify for old age security even though they have been in Canada for five or eight years and are Canadian citizens. That is not fair.

Ordinary Canadians expect the Canadian pension system to be fair. They expect some social justice and equity. They feel that all citizens should receive old age security, no matter what country they come from or how long they have been in Canada.

The bill in front of us would change the residency requirement from 10 years to 3 years, and the NDP supports that proposal. We understand there is a historical problem that dates back to 1977. The NDP has spoken out about this injustice for many years. After all, the founder of the whole concept of old age security and pension was Tommy Douglas, the former leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada. We have always envisioned that old age security and pension would cover all seniors living in Canada. We know that quite a few seniors live in poverty.

We understand that approximately 17% of seniors live in poverty. This is almost one in five seniors. Of these folks, 71% are women and 29% are men. Twice as many women lived with low incomes, and these women are seniors. Many of them have contributed, but are unable to receive old age security.

We have noticed there has been massive support from the community. We want to thank the member of Parliament for Surrey North. She has moved a motion in Parliament to remove this unjustified 10 year residency requirement. The motion is also in front of Parliament right now.

There are also other groups such as the Alternative Planning Group and Immigrant Seniors Advocacy Network forum, which represents African Canadian Social Development Council, Chinese Canadian National Council, Hispanic Development Council and the

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians. They are pushing the Canadian government to be more flexible and accommodating in treating immigrant seniors as equal members of the Canadian family by eliminating the 10 year residency requirement.

• (1410)

We also received a Vancouver city council resolution, approved on March 15, 2005. It says:

THAT Vancouver City Council request the Federal Government to ensure pension equality for all Canadian senior citizens, regardless of their country of origin and whether or not that country has a social services contract with Canada...

We also received from the Women Elders in Action group whose pension conference recommended that every individual, who was a permanent resident of Canada, at age 65 be entitled to old age security and the guaranteed income supplement and that these pensions needed to at least meet the low income threshold cut-off levels to reduce the potential abuse of elders.

A seniors summit at the Vancouver Declaration also stated that we needed to change the rule so immigrants would be eligible for pensions. We have seen petitions with 10,000 signatures in support of eliminating the 10 year residency requirement.

We know there is massive support out in the community. We know it does not require a large amount of money to level the field so there is equity. That is why I do not quite understand why the Liberal members of Parliament a few months ago did not support the amendment at the committee on human resources when we were debating Bill C-36 on pensions.

I recall the Bloc had a motion which was supported by the NDP. Given this is a minority government in a minority Parliament, with the support of the Liberals that amendment would have been passed at committee. Because Bill C-36 is a government bill, it would have come back to the House of Commons. We would have had this old problem fixed. Never mind the 13 years of the former Liberal government never dealing with this problem.

Right now what we have in front of us is a private members' bill. We are supporting it. However, we thought the opportunity with Bill C-36 was a missed opportunity.

Let us collectively vote in favour of this private member's bill and change the residency with regard to old age security so seniors do not have to live in poverty. They would qualify for old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. Let us get the private member's bill to the human resources committee and have it come back to the House for support so we can right this historical wrong.



*Private Members' Business*

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-362, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (residency requirement), introduced by my colleague from Brampton West. The intent of the bill is to amend the act to reduce from 10 years to 3 years the residency requirement for entitlement to a monthly pension.

As my riding of Beaches—East York is extremely diverse, with a large immigrant population and a high number of seniors, the bill would have a very positive impact on my community.

The current system intends to be universal but it actually discriminates against many older immigrants who have come to our country to seek a better life. The discrimination currently in the Old Age Security Act leaves many senior immigrants living in an impoverished situation from which they cannot get out.

We on the Liberal side of the House believe in helping those living in our country who are disadvantaged, which is why it was the Liberal governments that established: the OAS Act which created the old age security pension in 1952; the Canada pension plan and the QPP in 1966; the guaranteed income supplement for low income seniors in 1967; a publicly funded national health care program in 1968; and, restructured the Canada pension plan to ensure its sustainability in 1998.

In 2005, the guaranteed income supplement for low income seniors was increased by \$2.7 billion over two years. This was the first non-cost of living increase since 1984. Bill C-362 would be the next Liberal achievement in supporting seniors.

The current system excludes many seniors from the benefit of OAS, especially new Canadians. Because of the 10 year residency requirement, it is not at all uncommon for Canadian seniors to go without the benefits of OAS for many years. This bill would achieve equality among seniors. Ten years is too harsh and can cause undue hardship to the most vulnerable seniors. Reducing this requirement to three years to keep in line with the citizenship requirements is a necessary change.

Seniors can meet the citizenship requirement, thereby becoming Canadian citizens, but because they have not lived in Canada for 10 years they do not qualify for the OAS. Therefore, this creates two categories of Canadian citizens: ones that get old age security and ones that do not. I believe this to be unacceptable.

Several groups have come out in support of Bill C-362. They include: Seniors Network BC; the Seniors Summit, which in its Vancouver declaration stated, "Change the rule that immigrants are not eligible for pensions for 10 years"; the Women Elders in Action is a group of women who have been active on this; Vancouver's city council has made its position very clear; the Alternative Planning Group/Immigrant Seniors Advocacy Network forum in Toronto on May 6, 2006 representing the African Canadian Social Development Council, the Chinese Canadian National Council, the Hispanic Development Council and the Council of Agencies serving South Asians called on the government to be more flexible and accommodating and treat senior immigrants equally by eliminating the 10 year residency requirement through an amendment to the Old Age Security Act; and, finally, the Immigrant Seniors Advocacy Network has also made representation.

All of those organizations work very closely with immigrant populations and they see, on a day to day basis, the hardships that this particular rule imposes on people. These organizations are credible and they have people who work at the grassroots on a regular basis. They have done many studies and are at the forefront of our social services programs.

Those organizations are telling us that what they see happening is not only unfair but undemocratic. This is one of the many reasons that I support this bill. Having worked as a volunteer in immigrant settlement programs myself for many years, I know of the difficulties that some of these seniors face and the need to rectify it.

● (1415)

According to Statistics Canada, there are 4.3 million people over the age of 65 living in Canada. The total number of seniors receiving old age security and the guaranteed income supplement is stated at 4.078 million people, according to Social Development Canada. This means that there are over 206,000 seniors living in Canada who are not receiving old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. This is no small number.

With little or no support other than their families, many of these seniors are living in poverty. It is time for us to do something about it. Many of these seniors do not meet the 10 year residency requirement even though such benefits are given to seniors through social agreements with countries within one year of their residency in Canada. We have a lot of reciprocal agreements with many countries around the world in terms of pensions that go to those countries from Canada and pensions that come from those countries to Canada. However, there are many countries with which we do not have those agreements, some of them because they do have not much of a pension structure for their own citizens.

I believe that when these seniors get here and become Canadian citizens they should not be penalized. They should not be unable to receive a pension of any kind and thereby be condemned to live in poverty for many years. Many of these seniors are deprived of the basic necessities of life due to the residency requirement, as we have said before.

The former Liberal government expressed its unequivocal support and commitment to resolve this very important issue. It is important that we address the issue of poverty among Canada's seniors and immigrant seniors. After one becomes a Canadian citizen, there should be no residency requirements to stop one from receiving the old age security.

*Private Members' Business*

The current policy discriminates between two citizens, with one getting the whole array of old age security benefits and the other not getting them. When an immigrant comes to Canada and has to wait three years to get his or her Canadian citizenship, he or she should not have to wait another six or seven years to meet the requirements for old age security benefits. It is discriminatory. That is why I thank my colleague from Brampton West for introducing Bill C-362, which I of course support.

In my own riding, I have had many meetings with constituents who are facing this kind of problem. Almost all of them will express that while they and their families want to and will continue to look after each other and support one another, and the children obviously will continue to support their loved ones, there is the reality of the situation, in that sometimes families lose jobs.

As well, many immigrants are working two or three jobs just to make ends meet. When their elderly parents are not able to receive assistance after they become citizens, it makes the burden on the family that much greater. Their requests to me have been for us to assist in this area. I am very pleased that my colleague has presented this bill, because I think it would in fact resolve a great many of those problems. These people would be very happy to hear that we are working on trying to address some of these issues.

I understand that there are some people who say that this is too short a period and that the seniors who possibly would receive these pensions would not have made any major contribution to Canada's economy. We must remember, however, the children who are here with them. Many of these citizens actually work part time, because that is the only way for them to make a living, and they will continue to do so. Also, their children, grandchildren and others are making major contributions to our society.

This is really an investment in a healthy family, because parents and grandparents stabilize immigrant families. They assist in many ways, in keeping peace in the family, in helping the parents in terms of looking after the children, and in providing a generational continuity within that community.

It is very important that these seniors continue to come to Canada, join their families and become part of their families so that these families do have that generational stability and the grandchildren have the ability to spend time with their grandparents. Family reunification is fundamentally important. I believe in it very much. I support this bill because it does the right thing.

• (1420)

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to have this opportunity to make some remarks on Bill C-362 and the reasons why this government is in favour of maintaining the old age security program in its current form.

For more than half a century, the old age security program, OAS, has been a significant part of Canada's public pension system. OAS has provided benefits to Canadians aged 65 and older based solely on their years of residence in Canada.

The rules of eligibility are very simple. In order to qualify for OAS benefits, a person has to be 65 years old and have resided in Canada for at least 10 years after the age of 18. A full pension is

payable after 40 years of residence in Canada. Once an individual is eligible for OAS, the door is open for them to receive other income-tested benefits such as the guaranteed income supplement or GIS.

The Old Age Security Act came into force in 1952. Since that time, the act has been reviewed and updated on many occasions. One particularly important change occurred in 1977, when partial OAS pensions were first introduced. Before that time, a person got either the entire pension or nothing at all.

The 1977 changes meant that eligible persons could receive a partial pension. That was based on their actual number of years living in Canada.

These changes also allow Canada to conclude reciprocal social security agreements with other countries. This means a person can qualify for the OAS with less than 10 years of residence in Canada as long as that person lived or worked for a certain number of years in their country of origin and as long as Canada has an agreement with that country.

Unlike the public pensions in some other countries around the world, Canada's OAS program has no qualifying conditions relating to citizenship. As long as a person resides in Canada for a minimum period of time, that person is eligible for a lifelong benefit based solely on residence and not on citizenship. This is no small benefit, considering the fact that the program is funded entirely out of general tax revenues.

Unlike the situation in many other countries, in Canada a person does not need to have worked to qualify for the OAS benefit. A person who has no previous labour force attachment—for example, a woman who has looked after children her entire life or a person who has a permanent disability and therefore could not enter the workforce—is still able to receive a pension with no penalty.

**An hon. member:** And rightly so.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** My colleague has said, "and rightly so", and of course he is right. That is the appropriate thing for a pension of this nature.

Instead, we have a policy in Canada of 10 years' residency in order to be eligible. Why is this done? It is done because the Canadian public and their governments believe it is important to encourage ties to Canada, and to have beneficiaries contribute to our communities, to be eligible.

This is not a new thing. It should come as no surprise to either the sponsor of this bill or her colleagues in the Liberal Party. They either supported the status quo for 13 years while they were in government or they never thought it was a big enough priority to depart from their policies at the time.

It seems to me that it is a reasonable policy goal to ensure that the OAS program remains financially sustainable for many years to come. We should be very attentive to any attempts, such as the current one, to substantially change a well-established policy in a way that could impose significant new burdens on Canadian taxpayers.

The minimum residency requirement of the program is designed to recognize the contribution seniors have made through their participation in Canadian society and Canada's economy during their lifetime, whether or not they were members of the workforce, but contributions they had to be present in Canada in order to make. It is an acknowledgement of the current arrangement that Canadian society as a whole has a responsibility to share the quality of life that we enjoy today with those who have built this country into what it is today.

By asking the government to reduce the residence qualification period for the OAS program, my colleague opposite is asking us to change a policy that is not only fair but has stood the test of time through changing immigration patterns and successive governments.

It is worth noting that the current policy has also withstood the test of two charter challenges. Twice, the Superior and Federal Courts have ruled that the qualification requirements for length and time of residence in Canada for old age security do not discriminate against applicants on the grounds of national or ethnic origin. I repeat: the courts have ruled twice that this policy is not an attack on immigrant communities, notwithstanding the charge made by the member for Brampton West in introducing this bill.

*Private Members' Business*

●(1425)

I want to point out as well that the proposed changes to the bill would cost as much as \$700 million annually. This figure would surely increase with inflation and would make it very difficult to pay for the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

When Bill C-362 returns for study by the House, there will be five minutes left for the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

●(1430)

[*Translation*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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**APPENDIX**

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

**CHAIR OCCUPANTS**

**The Speaker**

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

**The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole**

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

**The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole**

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

**The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole**

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

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**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

MR. JAMES MOORE

MR. JOE PRESTON

HON. KAREN REDMAN

HON. LUCIENNE ROBILLARD

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

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

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



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

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

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

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

#### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

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

#### QUÉBEC (73)

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

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

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

## LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of May 11, 2007 — 1st Session, 39th Parliament)

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

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

Jim Abbott	Barry Devolin	Jason Kenney	James Rajotte
Diane Ablonczy	Norman Doyle	Ed Komarnicki	Scott Reid
Mike Allen	Rick Dykstra	Daryl Kramp	Lee Richardson
Dean Allison	Ken Epp	Mike Lake	Gerry Ritz
Rob Anders	Ed Fast	Guy Lauzon	Gary Schellenberger
David Anderson	Brian Fitzpatrick	Pierre Lemieux	Bev Shipley
Charlie Angus	Steven Fletcher	Tom Lukiwski	Joy Smith
Gérard Asselin	Cheryl Gallant	James Lunney	Kevin Sorenson
Vivian Barbot	Yvon Godin	Dave MacKenzie	Lloyd St. Amand
Dave Batters	Peter Goldring	Fabian Manning	Brent St. Denis
Leon Benoit	Gary Goodyear	Pat Martin	Bruce Stanton
Dennis Bevington	Jacques Gourde	Tony Martin	David Sweet
James Bezan	Nina Grewal	Irene Mathysen	Myron Thompson
Sylvie Boucher	Helena Guergis	Ted Menzies	David Tilson
Garry Breitkreuz	Art Hanger	Rob Merrifield	Bradley Trost
Gord Brown	Richard Harris	Larry Miller	Garth Turner
Patrick Brown	Luc Harvey	Bob Mills	Merv Tweed
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Patricia Davidson	Gerald Keddy	Pierre Poilievre	John Williams
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Rahim JafferLuc Malo  
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Gord Brown  
Rod Bruinooge  
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Michael ChongMike Lake  
Tony MartinGary Merasty  
Michael SavageMario Silva  
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Hon. Greg Thompson	Minister of Veterans Affairs
Hon. Marjory LeBreton	Leader of the Government in the Senate and Secretary of State (Seniors)
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Hon. Chuck Strahl	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Hon. Gary Lunn	Minister of Natural Resources
Hon. Peter MacKay	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Hon. Loyola Hearn	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
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Hon. Carol Skelton	Minister of National Revenue
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Hon. Rona Ambrose	President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification
Hon. Diane Finley	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Hon. Gordon O'Connor	Minister of National Defence
Hon. Bev Oda	Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women
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Mr. Steven Fletcher	to the Minister of Health
Ms. Diane Ablonczy	to the Minister of Finance
Mr. James Moore	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics
Mr. Tom Lukiwski	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform



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## APPENDIX

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