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(HANSARD)

Friday, October 19, 2007

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 19, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from October 18 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you know, Tuesday's Speech from the Throne addressed a number of issues, including the need for Canada to strengthen its presence on the world stage.

The speech emphasized the fact that “in our own neighbourhood... Canada is back playing an active role.” I would like to discuss this for a few minutes.

In July, while he was travelling around the regions, Prime Minister Harper provided an overview of our priorities. Our goals are to increase prosperity, enhance safety, and promote our fundamental values—Canadian values that are also universal values: freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

We must sustain the momentum achieved by the Prime Minister's trip. We have to develop and implement a results-oriented strategy that promotes Canadian interests. That means doing three things.

First, Canada is committed to building relationships with the rest of the Americas that will serve our common interests. We will strive to enhance security on this continent and to solidify safer, more secure relationships with our neighbours. We will also work to make our economies stronger and more sustainable by promoting free trade agreements.

Second, we will ensure that Canada plays a leadership role in North America. We will work with our partners to strengthen and promote the basic Canadian values I just mentioned.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Durham.

[*Translation*]

I will continue, and thank you for allowing me to share my time.

Third, what does a strategy for the Americas mean? It means that our government is determined to carry on with its long-term commitment in Haiti. As you know, Canada has had a long-standing commitment to Haitians. We have contributed unprecedented human, financial and political resources to help ensure the success of the efforts of the international community in Haiti. Lastly, we have ensured that the UN mandate will be renewed for another year, and that the UN intervention force will continue its development work in Haiti.

[*English*]

Let me focus on our trade agenda in the Americas for a moment. As members know, Canadians themselves are engaged in the region. Canada is now the third largest investor in the region. Last year Canadians took more than 2.5 million trips to the Americas and the Caribbean. Now when Canadians visit the regions, they can be confident that Canada is back and playing an active role.

Trade and investment translates into jobs, jobs both in the hemisphere and here at home. Our government wants to ensure that Canadian businesses have continued access to this growing market. This summer we launched free trade negotiations with Peru, Colombia and the Dominican Republic, as well as with CARICOM, made up of 15 Caribbean countries.

We also hope to complete ongoing negotiations with the Central American four, comprising El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua. I hope these negotiations will be a success in the near future.

The NAFTA agreement helped Canada strengthen our already close ties with Mexico. This economic arrangement was an important catalyst and I am confident this success can be repeated. Yes, we can repeat the NAFTA success and that is why it is important to have good relationships with the countries in the Americas in order to have other free trade agreements.

Our goal is to promote enhanced market access and a level playing field for Canadian businesses in the Americas and increase opportunities for Canadian entrepreneurs.

The Address

Crime and drugs from the region find their way onto our streets. Security in neighbourhoods equals safety at home. We, therefore, need to help strengthen security and the rule of law in the hemisphere.

We are committed to working with our hemispheric partners to address pandemics and emergency preparedness. It is very important for our population and also for our neighbours in the hemisphere.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

As the Prime Minister pointed out, Canada is a model of constitutional democracy and economic openness, which is combined with social safety nets, equitable wealth creation and sharing across regions.

Canada plays a dynamic role in strengthening and promoting our fundamental values. All Canadians win when our neighbours subscribe to our country's fundamental values: freedom, democracy, respect for the law, justice and the rule of law.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I am determined to make this priority a success. I would also like to speak to the House about what I have done to date to ensure that our foreign policy in the hemispheres is effective and noble. I recently had intense discussions at the UN with the leaders of countries in the Americas.

One of my first acts as Minister of Foreign Affairs was to meet with the Mexican foreign minister. I also met with the leaders of the Central American Four countries, which I listed earlier, as well as the foreign ministers from the Rio Group countries. I also had the opportunity to meet with the President of Haiti, Mr. Aristide. During all those meetings, I promoted the values cherished by Canadians and I insisted that those countries must be able to have a democratic society like ours. I can assure this House that the discussions with my colleagues were very fruitful.

Achieving Canada's objectives in the region will require a government-wide commitment. I would like to give a few examples of how our cabinet is investing heavily in this approach. Our government and its various departments are taking a comprehensive approach.

The hon. Bev Oda, the Minister of International Cooperation, has just returned from a visit to Haiti and Jamaica. She told me recently that her visit to Haiti served to demonstrate our ongoing support for reconstruction efforts in that country. In Jamaica, Minister Oda met with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Her travels served to reinforce Canada's determination to play a role in the region. Together, we are promoting prosperity, good democratic governance and regional security.

My colleague, the hon. Tony Clement, Minister of Health, just signed an important declaration with the pan-American security organization to promote the adoption of a joint action plan to address health issues in the Americas.

These are all important initiatives led by our government. I am very pleased with the initiatives undertaken by my colleagues and I remain fully available to speak with my colleagues in this House about—

• (1015)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the Minister of Foreign Affairs but time has expired. I did not interrupt him at the time but the minister did refer to members of the House by their names, rather than their ridings, so perhaps some chastisement of the speech writers might be in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the minister's comments. I am not sure if I missed it through translation but he might want to look at who the President of Haiti is at this point. I think he might have made an error.

However, I will get into the substance of his comments. It is interesting that we have a government now that is looking at free trade with the Americas. At the very same time that we are entering into free trade with the Americas we have human rights abuses going on in Colombia. To the extent that, and I am not sure whether the minister is aware of this, the American Congress has suspended free trade talks with the government of Colombia. Why? Because of the human rights abuses going on.

I would like the minister to explain to the House and to Canadians why it is that human rights are going to be trumped by profit-gaining from corporations both here in Canada and by corporations around the world. Why is it that the government claims to be supporting human rights abroad, yet we see trade deals that will be going on which undermine human rights?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier: I fully appreciate my hon. colleague's question, Mr. Speaker. We know that international trade allows our entrepreneurs in Canada to sell their goods and services to other countries in the Americas and vice versa. That is the beginning of economic prosperity.

We know that Canada was built on economic freedom. Some 100 years ago, markets started to open. We believe that market openness is beneficial to nations in allowing various nations to increase their wealth. In turn, this wealth gives them access to better education and social services.

We therefore believe that it is important to enter into such free trade agreements, as this will bring prosperity to these countries while fostering prosperity for our Canadian businesses. At the same time, we are promoting fundamental freedoms, universal freedoms, Canadian freedoms and Canadian values entrenched in the UN Charter, with which everyone is familiar, and in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As a country, we are part of the United Nations. As I said earlier, we have values to share: freedom, democracy and the rule of law. These are values that we share. In our discussions with other countries, we make sure to promote these values, and I am honoured to do so on behalf of my country.

The Address

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the writer and philosopher Voltaire often said, “When you lie long enough, the lie becomes the truth.” At times we have the impression that this is the government’s communications strategy with respect to federal spending power, a power that this government is presenting as a brand new item, a historic step forward.

However, if we carefully examine the details of what is said in the throne speech, it is not the same as what was in the social union agreement that the Government of Quebec rejected and that the National Assembly unanimously rejected in 1998.

The social union agreement provided for the right to withdraw with financial compensation from all programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. The Speech from the Throne refers only to shared-cost programs. It just so happens that in recent years, for all practical purposes, there have been no new shared-cost programs.

Therefore, as political analyst Michel David said, it is a scam. We have been offered a prize that really does not exist, and we are a far cry from what was discussed in the Meech Lake accord and in the social union agreement.

Therefore, it is not a historic step forward that is being offered by this government since it is far less than what we had in the past and all opposed.

The question I would like to ask the minister, if he really is serious, is the following: What are these programs—

• (1020)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Foreign Affairs, please.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Mr. Speaker, today we are discussing Canada’s position in the Americas and its international role. I understand that my Bloc Québécois colleague may have a specific question about a specific issue, and we will discuss this a bit later in the House.

With regard to the commitments we made in the throne speech—both our international commitment and the government’s commitment to place formal limits on spending power—I can tell him that this is a position we had decided to take. The Prime Minister said so when he spoke a few months ago in Quebec City.

In my opinion, this reflects our federalism of openness. The Bloc Québécois will never be able to do anything to ensure that we have the sort of federalism that complies with the Canadian constitution. Our country is a federation that we respect, and on the international scene we—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. The hon. Minister of International Cooperation has the floor.

[*English*]

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs for sharing his time with me.

I am proud to speak to the Speech from the Throne, not only as the member for Durham but as the Minister for International Cooperation.

My constituents in Durham know that our government is delivering a better Canada for them and their families. They want the government to continue to govern. They want broad based tax relief for their families and businesses, a real plan for further carbon emission reductions and they want a justice system that will fight crime and make our communities safer.

I know they recognize that they enjoy many qualities of life that others around the world do not. They want a government that will do its part as a member of the global community and bring peace, freedom and the values we cherish to all peoples.

I am privileged to be part of a government that will fulfill its duties, not only here in Canada but around the world. We have a duty to our international reputation, to our partners on the global front to fight poverty, hunger and human injustices. That is why we are supporting the international effort in Afghanistan.

Canada chose to be in Afghanistan because it was the right thing to do, not just the easiest thing to do. We are in Afghanistan because we have an obligation to the international community working in Afghanistan, the development workers and the members of the military who have sacrificed so much to this noble cause.

Having just returned from my first visit to Afghanistan, I can say that I saw a determined, noble and resilient people, a people who can see a difference in their lives after decades of conflict and chaos. I saw how they were rebuilding their infrastructure, preserving their culture and pursuing their livelihoods, whether it was a small vegetable stall, producing hand-made goods for sale or working a small plot of land to grow vegetables or raise livestock.

I want to particularly point out that there were deeply embedded inequities facing Afghan women under the Taliban. They had no human rights, no protection under the law, no access to education and no rights to participate in a democratic process. Today, girls are being educated and women are generating incomes for their families, they voted in the democratic election and are active in their parliament.

With CIDA supported microfinancing programs, over 380,000 people have started their own businesses and more than two-thirds of them are women.

Today, over 80% of Afghans are receiving basic health care. The infant mortality rate has been reduced by 22% and children are now receiving polio vaccinations.

The Address

I saw real progress being made and that is why all Canadians should be proud of what is being accomplished in Afghanistan. I met with aid workers, the president and members of the Afghan government and in every case they expressed their gratitude to Canada. We are one of the top donors to the Afghan mission. In fact, Canada has committed to support the Afghan people with \$1.2 billion by the year 2011.

The Afghan people are now taking hold of their own lives. We cannot let terrorism again take root in Afghanistan. Our goal, in fact the goal of the democratically elected government in Afghanistan, is to strengthen the country, its institutions, its economy and its own confidence in its future.

I ask all members of Parliament to support the Speech from the Throne and ensure that the progress made in Afghanistan can continue.

• (1025)

Canada is doing its part in other regions of the world and our development efforts are growing. In Budget 2007, our government committed to doubling its international assistance by 2011 from our 2002 level. In that commitment, at the recent G-8 summit our Prime Minister committed to doubling its aid in Africa.

During his trip to South America and the Caribbean, he also made a commitment to increase our focus on the Americas.

[*Translation*]

In addition, the Prime Minister increased Canada's commitment in Haiti to \$555 million over five years.

Earlier this fall, I had an opportunity to see just how important Canadian aid is to the Haitian government and to the agencies working to improve roads, schools and clinics there.

[*English*]

In Jamaica, I saw how Canada's response to the needs of Jamaicans after hurricane Dean was so gratefully appreciated. I saw Canadians at work, bringing education, training and infrastructure improvement to that country as well.

Canada is committed to playing a bigger role in the Americas and to do so for the long term. The Prime Minister, on his trip to Latin America, made this clear. I am pleased that we will be advancing peace, security and development through a wide variety of instruments in this hemisphere. I can assure Canadians that the government will do so with greater focus and effectiveness. We will sustain our efforts so that they will have impact and make a difference in the lives of people in need.

With a government and a leader with a strong commitment, a clear moral purpose and compassion, Canada will fulfill its role in international aid and development.

As the throne speech and our actions show, the government is committed to restoring Canada's place in the world as one of the more generous and committed nations and to improving the global quality of life. As the Prime Minister said on Wednesday, we are all ordinary human beings who just want to live in peace, give their families hope and build a future in their communities. The vision outlined in the

throne speech offers a new and confident vision of Canada's place among nations.

It is not only my responsibility as the member for the fine riding of Durham, but also my responsibility as the Minister of International Cooperation. I am very proud to be part of a government that has made its commitment to the international world, to those in need around the world and to do it in a way that will deliver value for the dollars that Canadians work hard to contribute to this global effort.

• (1030)

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister and I thought she spoke quite well about a number of issues in which Canada is involved.

Canada is a wealthy nation. We are more wealthy now, conceivably, than we ever have been with the surpluses that we have racked up. I want to ask her about a specific private member's bill that has passed the House and has gone to the Senate, Bill C-293, the ODA act, the purpose of which is to make poverty the focus of overseas development assistance.

Many other nations in the world have gone this route. It seems like a no-brainer to many Canadians. It has the support of all kinds of NGOs and organizations that think Canada could do a lot more and that we actually should be hitting some of our millennium development goals. There are people who believe, as I do, that we should hit the 0.7% of GNI for overseas development assistance.

I want to ask the minister specifically whether she thinks that Bill C-293, the purpose of which is to make poverty the focus of overseas development assistance, is a bill that she could encourage her government to support. Is there something wrong with that bill? Does she believe that Canada should hit our 0.7% target out of the millennium development goals?

Hon. Bev Oda: Mr. Speaker, we are monitoring the progress of Bill C-293 closely. We understand its intent and its principles. Those principles and the intent reflect the intentions and the commitment of the government.

As I articulated in my presentation, the government has committed to doubling its foreign aid over the course of the next couple of years. We have committed to doubling our aid to Africa. We have enhanced our commitment to the Caribbean and to the western hemisphere.

Just as important, we want to make sure that the commitment of Canadian support in tax dollars is going to be done effectively and efficiently. We want to make sure those dollars are not just announcements of large figures; we want to make sure those dollars are going to help the people they are intended to help.

We have a three-pronged program, which we articulated in budget 2007: to ensure that we enhance our international aid and development support with focus, to ensure that it be more effective and efficient, and to ensure that it is done accountably so that we can report to Canadians the good work the government is doing on the international front.

The Address

The Deputy Speaker: There are many people rising. I cannot recognize everybody, but just to prove that I do have peripheral vision on my left, I recognize the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it does not surprise me that you have peripheral vision to your left, but I hope you will also have it to your right.

I listened with interest as my colleague articulated some of the advancements that we have been able to see in Afghanistan. This summer I had the privilege of hosting a town hall meeting in my riding, where Lieutenant-Commander Albert Wong presented some of the advancements that have been made in Afghanistan. Indeed, I have heard some personal stories of what has happened there.

The best part of this for me this fall was to participate in a Thanksgiving Day parade on King Street in Kitchener as we were supporting the efforts of our troops in Afghanistan. Sometimes our colleagues on that side of the House would make us believe that Canadians want us to get out. I want to tell our minister that the kind of support I experienced as we supported our troops that day was incredible. As we approached, people inevitably would stand and applaud. I wonder if the minister has experienced that same kind of response in her riding of Durham.

•(1035)

Hon. Bev Oda: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his support for the mission in Afghanistan and the work that Canadians and our government are doing. I certainly have experienced that same kind of support. I am privileged to have met a number of distinguished members of the military who have returned from their missions in Afghanistan and they speak so highly of the work they do.

I have to relay to the House my experience during my trip to Afghanistan in talking with those who every day are facing a very challenging situation. They have told me they want to be there. They see a clear purpose in being there. I met Canadians who were civilians doing work in Afghanistan. I met a woman who voluntarily took a sabbatical from her company in order to return to Afghanistan for another six months. These are the stories that Canadians should hear about.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in this House and comment on the throne speech.

[*English*]

After listening to the Speech from the Throne and reading it in detail subsequently, I was encouraged by a lot of what was stated in it. Like many Canadians, I was disappointed that I did not see all that I would have liked to have seen. In a minority government it is my responsibility as a member of the opposition to work to make Parliament work and to try to encourage the government to bring forward some of the things that were missing from the Speech from the Throne.

It is also my responsibility as a member of the opposition to see that the application of the principles outlined in the Speech from the Throne meet the full interests of Canadians and do not cater to some partisan right wing ideology. That is my fear with regard to the

Speech from the Throne, because it can be taken both ways. A lot of these things can be taken in many ways. I will try to outline a few of those matters and point out some of the things that could be improved.

One thing that was very much missing was the whole question of health care in Canada. This continues to be the major preoccupation of Canadians and one of our great weaknesses, both perceived and realistic, as seen by Canadians. We see that wait times are not coming down. The Fraser Institute has stated that in many areas wait times have been increasing over the last year.

That is disappointing, because the federal government made a commitment in its electoral campaign to have specific programs to reduce wait times. I do not necessarily agree with these programs, but I would be willing to work with the government and look at what had been put forward by the Liberal government previously and what is being asked for by the provinces. We could also look at what is being brought forward by the medical community and the patient community to improve the situation in Canada.

We could look at how to get more physicians, more nursing staff and more health professionals into the system and how to find innovative approaches to health care delivery in order to make it more efficient. I have not seen any of that. I would be willing to work with the government, through Parliament, to try to improve these things.

There is also the whole area of infectious diseases. When we look at our health care system we can see that infectious diseases continue to be a health threat. A lot of these diseases are coming out of the hospitals and are either difficult to treat or untreatable using current technologies. They are resistant to drugs. This is very costly to our system and a great risk for our population.

There is also the question of pharmacare. The cost of some drugs can put people into poverty. We had committed to working with the provinces with respect to resolving this issue. I do not see any advances being made with respect to this and I think it is very necessary. We all know people who are suffering from chronic diseases. The cost of medication for those people, both prescription and non-prescription medication, can take them into poverty. We have the wealth in this country and I think that if we work together federally and provincially we can resolve these situations.

I neglected to say that I will be splitting my time with the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

The other question, of course, that is of great concern to me is the question of the Atlantic accord. The government misled Atlantic Canadians, Nova Scotians and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in particular. The government said it would honour the accord but it has not. A Conservative member was kicked out of his caucus for defending Nova Scotians. We have seen a side deal being struck by the premier of Nova Scotia that in no way meets the full intent of the accord.

The Address

The accord was to be revenue for Nova Scotia based on its petroleum production, above and beyond any other programs of the day. What we have seen is that the Prime Minister bullied a weak premier into taking a deal that is an either/or situation. It may improve the situation as it exists now five or 10 years down the line, but in no way does it meet the commitment of the accord, which was to be an economic development benefit for Nova Scotia, above and beyond.

It is the deal the Prime Minister presented which the premier refused when he spoke to the Senate. It is the deal that the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley was kicked out of caucus for refusing to accept this spring. I think that is a shame. We have to make sure that we continue to fight to restore the full intent of the deal for Nova Scotians. The member for Cape Breton—Canso has been leading the charge on behalf of Nova Scotians. He has been doing a lot of work out of the limelight. I thank him for that.

•(1040)

In my riding, there is the question of transportation. I was very pleased to see in the Speech from the Throne a commitment to the Pacific and Atlantic gateways. Part of the gateway is traffic going to the northeastern United States and the United States as a whole from my area of Nova Scotia through the Digby ferry, whether it be tourism or the \$200 million-plus worth of fishery products annually that go across on that ferry, which is at risk. The ferry is on a short term reprieve from the federal and provincial governments, but we need a long term commitment. I encourage the Minister of Transport to be very supportive and to come forward as quickly as possible with the long term fix. The business community has to make a long term commitment. It has to market its products. It has to market the area. It cannot be done every six months or every two years. It has to be done in the long term.

It is the same for the Port of Digby. The federal government has had the arbitrator's report for two years, a report which indicates that it is Transport Canada's contract that was weak in the privatization of that port. I encourage the minister to take action. I have discussed it with him many times and he is very supportive, but I encourage him to take quick action and resolve this issue. He has had the report in his hands for nearly two years now. I believe that is too long.

Air transport out of western Nova Scotia continues to be a great problem. I encourage the Department of Transport to work with the provincial government and local municipalities for the long term maintenance of the Yarmouth International Airport and its marketing to private carriers.

I was disappointed to see that although the fishery is mentioned there was no commitment as to what the government will do to assist the long term survival and development of the fishery. There was no commitment to small craft harbours, as had been committed to in the Conservative election campaign. The Minister of Fisheries committed to this when he was chairing the fisheries committee of the House of Commons. I have been working with him in a dialogue to try to improve the position he has taken on the preservation of the independence of the inshore fleet.

I think he has the right principle and is trying to do the right thing. Some modifications have to be made because a lot of people are

getting hurt and are caught in the trap and should not be. I will continue to work with the minister on that.

On the question of agriculture, in Nova Scotia the pork and beef industries are in dire straits. The pork industry is disappearing as quickly as we can watch. The beef industry is in grave turmoil. We need some innovative and imaginative support from the federal government, working with the province and the agricultural community, to maintain its survival. It is a question of food security for Nova Scotia. A different solution is needed in Nova Scotia compared to western Canada, where there are huge amounts of production mostly for export. In Atlantic Canada, the production is for the local domestic market and it requires a different solution.

The question of Afghanistan is always a subject of debate in my riding. It will be remembered that when there was a debate and a vote in the House on the extension of our mission in Afghanistan, I spoke in favour and supported an extension. But what I opposed then and what I oppose now is using Parliament as a rubber stamp for a government initiative. I can accept that the government makes a decision on military deployment. I can accept that the government makes the decision and takes the responsibility for it, because the government cannot share with Parliament in an open forum some of the information used to make that decision. The government cannot put our military people and our allies at risk. Some of that information must remain secret.

However, if the government wants the support of the House and a debate in the House, it has to be with full disclosure. It cannot be limited to a three hour debate with no information presented. We can strike a special committee of this House. We can swear in members as privy councillors; many members already are. We can swear in new privy councillors in order to evaluate information that may otherwise not be made public. We can see if we have the confidence, yes or no, that we can in a combat mission achieve the goals that we are seeking and if we can do it in the short term. In all cases I think we have to have long term support for the people of Afghanistan. We have to work toward diplomacy and also toward development and security.

•(1045)

[*Translation*]

On a more positive note, I want to thank the government for promising to implement phase 2 of the Dion plan. This is very important to official language minority communities.

I am glad the Conservatives recognized the value of the Liberal platform, and I will work with them on this. I encourage the government to continue taking action in this area by providing long-term funding and support for official language minority communities across the country.

*The Address**[English]*

One of the areas that is now of great concern in my riding, in all of Nova Scotia and probably all of Canada is the question of labour market training. It always comes to a crunch, when right before the quotas are to start the funding is not there. There is a scramble to find funding for a few students. Again, there is no long term planning. There should be a program whereby we permit people receiving EI to follow these labour market forces and make themselves more available for work.

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always I listen very carefully when a member of the opposition stands to speak and on something as important as the throne speech, I am even more diligent. I found a few comments rather offensive, but that oftentimes happens in the House of Commons.

The suggestion was made that somehow our government misled people regarding the Atlantic accord. I remind the hon. member that if it were not for this government, when it was on the opposition benches, pushing as hard as we did on the former government, there would be no Atlantic accord.

We have a situation where there is some misinterpretation and we are correcting that very quickly. A couple of premiers are onside already and one more to go.

The member opposite was the minister of fisheries. When he talks about things such as the problems he outlined in agriculture, aquaculture, transportation, labour market, I remind him that the economy is better now than it has ever been.

What did he do as a former minister, when his party was the government, to solve all of these problems, the problems that were there for years and years and went unheeded?

[Translation]

Hon. Robert Thibault: Mr. Speaker, the reason why Canada's economy is doing better now than it has in generations, if not ever, is that we have seized the opportunities that presented themselves. We have invested in research and development as well as in our universities. We have dealt with the annual deficits created by the Conservative government. We have put the country back on the right track.

We must now look at the country's current situation. It is different from what it was in 1993, 1995 or 2005. Canada's economy is doing well right now, but that is not necessarily uniformly true across the country; as a result, some regions, and perhaps all regions of Canada, are at risk.

The Canadian dollar is now at par with the U.S. dollar. While some regions are experiencing strong economic growth, other regions, or sectors such as the manufacturing sector, are experiencing a decline and are struggling. Solutions are needed today for today's problems. We have dealt with the problems facing us; now, we are asking that this government do the same.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague's speech, however,

I have to confess that it did remind me of watching a man desperately trying to tread water.

When he says he was encouraged and yet disappointed that there were things that could be taken both ways, I do not know if he read the same throne speech I read. The throne speech I read said that the government would kill the Wheat Board. That cannot be taken both ways.

The throne speech said that our international obligations to Kyoto were dead. That cannot be read both ways. Conservatives will put off any action until 2040 when we are all pushing up daisies. I think that is fairly clear.

It says that we will not be in Kandahar until 2009; we will be there until 2011. That cannot be taken both ways.

When we have such clear issues, such wrong-headed issues, and such a divisive path for our country, how can he sit there, and he probably will sit when the vote comes, and say that he is encouraged and yet disappointed?

● (1050)

Hon. Robert Thibault: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could give the member one example. I see in the throne speech that the federal government is willing to look at the question of EI and EI reform, and that is very positive. There is the elimination of wait periods and also the extension of EI to people who are suffering from chronic diseases, who are out of the workforce for cancer treatment or things of that nature, for a year or so, as brought forward in a private member's bill by our members for Cape Breton—Canso, for Sydney—Victoria.

I can also see improving processing times. Currently unemployed people wait for their first benefits for five or six weeks. I can see improvements for people who are receiving EI but not in full time work. They will be able to take labour job training programs and continue receiving their EI in the off period, which is not possible now.

There are a lot of good things that can be done. Then it can be a complete right-wing agenda to cut back on the benefits being received by people in temporary and seasonal employment and that would be negative. Therefore, in that sense it can be taken both ways.

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take the back end of the ship with my colleague from West Nova. His speech reminded me of a time when Nova Scotia had a regional minister who actually stood up for our interests and put Nova Scotia's interests ahead of Canadians' interests.

I want to talk about the Speech from the Throne. Some of the things that my colleague spoke about I may touch on, but for me it was a disappointing document, a leaflet really, more for what is not in it than for what is in it.

The Address

We just had a question from a western Canadian about the Atlantic accord saying that there was a lot of miscommunication. I remember when I was in the House back in the spring when it was apparent to most people in Canada, and certainly to all people in Nova Scotia, that the Atlantic accord was torched. A member from Ontario asked a question saying that it had not been torched and it was still there. That was obviously not the case. I pointed out to the member at the time that he would not know the difference between the Atlantic accord and a Honda Accord, and that is still the case. There is a lot of confusion.

The Atlantic accord is gone. If it were not gone, we would not have seen the scrambling to try to fix it. The fix is not a fix that Nova Scotians would stand up and give any resounding approval to. It is not a fix at all. If it were, the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley would be back on that side of the House from where he was kicked out not too long ago.

It is one issue that all Nova Scotians, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will stand up to be heard on.

Last week I had a public meeting in my community. I invited people to tell me as their member of Parliament what they wanted to see in the throne speech. The government had prorogued Parliament and would bring in a throne speech. Whether I agreed or disagreed, we discussed a number of things. We discussed poverty, Afghanistan, the Atlantic accord, as we might expect, students, seniors and veterans.

One issue that came forward, as one would expect, was the issue of crime. In my community of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour we have had more than our share of violent crime, which is a big concern.

At that meeting, two people whom I had not known before spoke at that meeting in a very personal way about their experiences with two sons from two different families. They had been beaten up and bullied and they did not feel safe in their community. They came with an open mind about what could be done, but they wanted to see changes in the Youth Criminal Justice Act to address their specific case.

When members of Parliament hear these stories, they want to do the right thing. In Nova Scotia last December Justice Merlin Nunn came forward with a report on youth crime in response to a specific incident in Nova Scotia, which was quite appalling. The report was long, detailed, well thought out, well argued and well presented.

When the Minister of Justice came to Halifax, he referenced the Nunn Commission report. All members should go to www.nunncommission.ca and have a look at this report. In the report it refers to problems with the Youth Criminal Justice Act. It indicates particularly that repeat offenders are not dealt with effectively enough and makes recommendations. It also suggests that the Youth Criminal Justice Act is sound legislation and that we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

When the Minister of Justice refers to the Nunn Commission report, I hope he does not just take a little piece of it, on which I agree with him, but looks at the who report in context and adds into that the need for mental health services for kids in our community, boys and girls clubs, breakfast programs and stay in school programs as well, which will also do more to reduce crime.

Yesterday the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development spoke on the throne speech. He was one of the first government speakers. It was an amazing spectacle. He gave a 20 minute speech without talking about human resources. He talked about one specific issue, and that was the crime issue, which the government is pounding away trying to get people to believe that its members are the only people who want to act on it.

The Minister of Human Resources and Social Development stood in the House of Common, and he is a good guy, but he did not talk about human resources. Why? Because there is nothing in the throne speech on human resources of which to speak. We heard about employment insurance. It states:

Our Government will also take measures to improve the governance and management of the Employment Insurance Account.

There are people across Atlantic Canada whose knees are shaking when they read that piece. Does that mean the government will make it better, as my colleague from West Nova optimistically points out?

● (1055)

If the government wants to make it better, it could look at some private members' bills that have come from all parties in this Parliament: Bill C-269, Bill C-265 or Bill C-278 that my colleague from West Nova referenced, which would extend sick benefits under EI from 15 weeks to 50 weeks. Who could oppose that?

It is a reaction to a very significant issue in Canada, which is that people who used to die of heart attacks, strokes and cancer in a lot of cases now are surviving. That is good news. The bad news is they cannot go right back to work and the EI system is the perfect way to address that need.

I want to applaud the member for Sydney—Victoria, who brought forward Bill C-278, costed it and did a lot of work on it. He got the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Cancer Society to say that it was the kind of legislation we needed, and the government refused a royal recommendation.

This document has one very brief mention about education, saying families worry about the rising costs of higher education. That is not a stunning revelation. They do. We all hear that as well. We need to help them. One does not tax cut one's way to a better education. One invests, particularly for low income Canadians, persons with disabilities and aboriginal Canadians. We should be investing.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

● (1100)

[English]

In the late 1990s, when the government wrestled the deficit under control, we invested in things like the Millennium Scholarship Foundation, which is now at a precipice in terms of whether it can continue if it does not soon get a nod from the government that it will put money back into it, Canada access grants, learning bonds and a number of other things.

If we are to address productivity, there are a number of ways we should do it. We should be reducing taxes, not throwing \$6 billion out the window on a GST cut, particularly for Canadians who need it the most. As a start, we should go back to the Liberal cut of the economic update of 2005, which the government reversed the following year. That is a start, raising the personal exemption.

I am fully in support of lowering corporate taxes. The countries in the OECD that have done that are doing very well. The lowest economic groups in those countries are doing very well also.

There are things that we can do, such as replenishing the Millennium Scholarship Foundation. The Canada summer jobs fiasco, which we dealt with last year, was pretty clear. It was a mistake by the government. It tried to rectify it. Some organizations, due to pressure from this side of the House, got their funding but many did not. There are things we can do now to ensure that fiasco does not happen again next year.

I want to talk about manufacturers and exporters. There is a crisis in manufacturing in Canada. We need to have mechanisms in the employment insurance system through Human Resources Canada to deal with that.

In my riding the Hershey Moirs plant announced in the spring that it would close in December. Six hundred people will be out of work. There is a program designed to help those people through Service Canada. I have been at transition team meetings with the union, which is working very hard. It is not happy about it at all, but realizes it has to now ask what it will do with the people. It is working with the plant and with Service Canada on a program that provides assistance to people who will lose their jobs.

Guess what? There is a limit of \$100,000 per project. I asked Service Canada if it had implemented this project somewhere else and it said, yes, that it was great. I asked how many employees were affected and it said one. One person gets laid off and it can spend \$100,000, 500 or 600 people get laid off and it can spend \$100,000. Surely the funding should be by person, not by project.

I want to mention that I spoke directly to the minister about that. I appreciate the fact that he took the time to talk to me about this case. I am very hopeful he will intervene to make sure that what needs to be done gets done. However, there was no mention—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. We have reached 11 o'clock and it is time for statements by members. The member has a minute and 30 seconds remaining in his 10 minute allocation.

COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to extend congratulations on behalf of the Parliament of Canada to the City of Langley, which recently received the International Communities in Bloom Award. To win against international competitors from England, Scotland, France and Japan in the elite of all categories is akin to receiving a gold medal at the Olympics.

Not only did the City of Langley win the international category, it received special mention for its responsible environmental protection initiatives, mainly its attempt to become carbon neutral in the next 30 years. The City of Langley is planting about 30,000 trees over the next several years to reduce its carbon footprint.

I would like to congratulate the hard work of the Communities in Bloom committee under co-chairs Teresa Galbraith and Guy Martin, and the Nicomekl Enhancement Society, and the Langley Field Naturalists.

Each of us needs to follow the example of the City of Langley and re-green and beautify our communities. It makes our communities healthier and safer.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this month Canadians learned about the proposal by the Bush administration that would see their personal details transferred to the United States government when they travel.

The proposal, known as secure flight, would force Canadian air carriers that fly over American air space to provide the personal details of their passengers to American authorities.

[Translation]

That is a serious violation of Canadian travellers' right to privacy. Our government has a duty to protect Canadians from foreign governments making such excessive demands.

In light of the abuse suffered by Maher Arar, Canadians are worried, and rightly so, when information pertaining to them is provided to Washington.

[English]

The Minister of Foreign Affairs must act immediately to ensure that Canadians, and in fact all passengers, travelling on Canadian air carriers are protected from this overzealous and unnecessary intrusion.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

REPENTIGNY SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 13, at an event recognizing volunteer agencies in Repentigny, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and its Ozanam house were named best volunteer agency of 2007.

This agency has been in Repentigny since 1982 and is known to be the most productive, most structured and most active of its kind in Quebec.

The Saint Vincent de Paul Society meets the daily needs of the less fortunate and provides critical assistance to victimized families. It is an enormous job that 132 volunteers do together for a common mission. Volunteer hours totalled 55,988 in 2006 and 2007. Furthermore, 427 people in need found support at the house and 64,722 clients walked through its doors.

The Ozanam store takes gently used items, cleans and repairs them and sells them at a modest price.

I am pleased to congratulate in this House the president of Ozanam, Margot Murphy, and the entire team of volunteers and workers who provide help and support to people who are often denied what they need.

* * *

[English]

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two men went on a hunger fast in Thunder Bay to protest INAC's foot dragging over kids' education. Since the 1980s there has been no per capita increase for on-reserve K to 12 education.

INAC's spending authority to pay for education expires on March 31. The new job opportunities that the Prime Minister promised will not happen if education is not fully funded.

This week First Nations Technical Institute will have its budget cut by 65% forcing the school to shut down most of its programs. There have been over 2,000 graduates from FNTI. The federal government pays 48% of the costs for Ontario universities but it is telling FNTI to find more private sector funding because paying 27% of the costs for first nations students is too high.

The government is going in the wrong direction on lifelong learning for aboriginal people. Tell band councils now if the discrimination against first nations children will continue or will the government fully fund indigenous education? Tell band councils now.

* * *

VOTER TURNOUT

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Remembrance Day is fast approaching and I would like to honour all members of our armed forces who fought the battles of yesterday and to those currently deployed around the world for protecting the rights and freedoms we enjoy.

One of the most important freedoms is the right to vote. When we say that soldiers have died to give us this right, it is more than just words, it is a fact. This is why I am very disappointed that in recent municipal elections in Alberta voter turnout was approximately 28%. Similar voter turnouts are seen throughout the country. Just last week in the Ontario provincial election only 52% of the people who were eligible voted, thereby setting a record for the lowest voter turnout in Ontario's history.

Many have said that lower voter turnout is the result of growing cynicism of our political process. I say that it is an absolute insult to those who have died and to those who continue to fight to ensure that this freedom is preserved.

If we truly want to honour our veterans of the past and our soldiers of today, we should take the five minutes to mark a ballot on every election day.

* * *

● (1105)

YOUTH JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had an open meeting in my riding last Tuesday evening. I invited constituents to come in and tell me what their priorities were for this Parliament. We talked about a lot of things.

At that meeting, two parents whose sons had been severely beaten spoke about their situation. They did so in a very even-handed and personal way. They want changes made to the Youth Criminal Justice Act and they have a right to expect those changes. My community has had more than its share of violent incidents involving youth and I support that changes should be made.

Justice Merlin Nunn last year released a comprehensive report on youth justice. In that report he called for changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act as it refers to repeat offenders. The government should listen and act accordingly. It should also take into account that Justice Nunn believes that the Youth Criminal Justice Act is, on the whole, a very sound piece of legislation.

We need to invest in community support for child care, mental health services and other pieces of our social infrastructure, and we should not abandon rehabilitation, but I do believe that citizens have a right to feel secure in their homes, on their streets and in their schools.

Youth justice can work. We need to recognize its flaws and get them fixed.

*Statements by Members***AFGHANISTAN**

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is in Afghanistan along with 60 other nations and international organizations as part of a UN sanctioned mission to help build a stable, democratic and self-sustaining society.

Canada has shown leadership by committing development assistance and deploying diplomats, development workers, troops and civilian police to help the Afghan government secure a better future for its people.

Canadians understand that without security there can be no humanitarian aid, no reconstruction and no democratic development.

The Canadian approach focuses on enabling Afghan leadership. Through training, including training of the Afghan national police and army, we are passing on skills that will allow Afghanistan to progressively assume responsibility for defending its sovereignty. This will not be completed by February 2009, but we believe this objective should be achievable by 2011. That is why the government has appointed an independent panel to advise Canadians on how best to proceed, given these considerations.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PIERRE VERCHEVAL

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on September 14, Pierre Vercheval became the first francophone Quebecer to be inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. After retiring from professional sports, he started a prolific career as a commentator, and since 2002, has been a special adviser to Laval University's Rouge et Or sports team.

A well-known fan favourite, Pierre Vercheval is used to setting records. Nearly 20 years ago, he participated in a training camp for an NFL team, a first for a Quebec athlete. At the end of his career, Vercheval had 212 CFL games under his belt, another first for a Quebecer, had won two Grey Cups and had been named all-star offensive lineman.

Pierre Vercheval paved the way for a generation of Quebec football players. Today, there are about 30 of them in the CFL. For them, and for the many football fans in Quebec, he is a true role model. On behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I would like to congratulate him.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ARCTIC

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Arctic is a fundamental part of Canada's history. It is central to our national identity. That is why the Government of Canada is developing an integrated northern strategy that, among other things, strengthens Canada's sovereignty.

To deliver on the international dimensions of the strategy, we will ensure that Canada remains a world leader in the regulation of both shipping and the environment in the Arctic.

This government will also complete a comprehensive mapping of Canada's Arctic seabed extending beyond the 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone. The submission is due in 2013 and is intended to confirm, based on the scientific and technical criteria of UNCLOS, the extent of the area over which Canada has sovereign rights to its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

By focusing on Canada's Arctic and standing up for our sovereignty, we have sent an important message to the world: Canada is back as a credible player on the international stage.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate a constituent who has earned the prestigious Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case.

Dr. Wendy Robbins of the University of New Brunswick has been recognized for her contributions toward equality for women. She co-founded the women's studies interdisciplinary program at UNB and was research director of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. She also co-founded the Coalition for Pay Equity in New Brunswick.

Dr. Robbins helped cause the Government of Canada to open up the Canada research chairs program for more women, aboriginals, minorities and persons with disabilities.

After receiving the award, Dr. Robbins commented that the women's rights movement is going backwards as a result of the wrong-headed policies of the government.

Dr. Robbins is a dynamic individual who speaks with great credibility. She has demonstrated a great sense of social justice. Canada is blessed to have committed, energetic people like Dr. Wendy Robbins making a difference in Canada.

* * *

● (1110)

[*Translation*]

ANDRÉE BOUCHER

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Mayor Boucher passed away in August, the Quebec City region lost a great woman. Today, I would like to pay tribute to her.

She was a wife, mother, grandmother, mother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, cousin, friend, schoolteacher, city councillor and mayor. She left an indelible mark on the Quebec City region. She went beyond politics to become a model for women who, like her, want to change things. She chose a path that, until recently, has been trodden mostly by men.

Statements by Members

Today, we should pay tribute to this woman who was a pioneer in municipal politics. By turns funny and severe, she navigated challenging waters with great dignity. I will remember this captivating woman for her respect for the citizens of Quebec City and for being who she was with integrity and without apology. Farewell, Andrée Boucher.

* * *

[English]

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to convey the growing chorus of voices in Victoria expressing concern about homelessness during this Homelessness Awareness Week. Obviously Ottawa needs some awareness.

Twelve hundred people in my region are homeless or on the verge of being homeless. Nine hundred and fifty-three families are on wait lists for social housing.

The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce is leading a national charge for a federal housing first approach. Our downtown business association has vocally argued that part of the federal surplus should be invested in a national housing strategy.

The government this week said that its primary duty was the protection of its citizens. Well, it is time for the government to finally act on those words and show real political will to put an end to homelessness in Canada. The government must take action, not just words, but action.

* * *

AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in granting honorary citizenship to Nobel Peace Laureate and imprisoned Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi, this House has recognized one of the great personifications of liberty, courage and moral authority in our time, indeed in any time. She is someone whom the Nobel Committee characterized as an outstanding example of the power of the powerless; who endured the assassination of Burmese independence leader General Aung San, her father; who herself survived an assassination attempt in which 100 of her supporters were murdered; who, as the democratically elected leader of Burma, has now spent 4,000 days under house arrest; who symbolizes the long march to freedom of our other honorary citizens; who is a metaphor and message of the heroism of the Burmese people and brutality of the Burmese dictatorship.

For what kind of government arrests a Nobel Peace Laureate and murders and tortures peaceful monks and students?

I trust that one day we will be able to honour Aung San Suu Kyi by welcoming our honorary citizen to Canada as the leader of a democratic and free Burma.

[Translation]

QUEBEC WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, October 14 to 21 is Quebec Waste Reduction Week in all areas of Quebec.

Action RE-buts, the official organizer of the week, is strongly urging the people of Quebec to participate in this major event and to think seriously, both collectively and individually, about how we produce waste and, more importantly, how we can reduce waste.

Basically, this week serves as a good opportunity to assess how we are managing in terms of reducing, reusing, recycling and composting, in an attempt to make small changes to our everyday actions. This could mean taking the time to re-evaluate our consumption needs, our use of packaging, how we dispose of electrical appliances and all products, and encouraging creative recycling.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all Quebecers to get involved in Quebec Waste Reduction Week.

* * *

[English]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is only one party in this House that is currently under three separate investigations for ethical lapses.

Only one party in this House is being investigated by Elections Canada for allegedly spending \$1 million over the limit in the last election.

Only one party in this House is being investigated by the Privacy Commissioner for using government resources to build lists of Canadians based on ethnic affiliations.

Only one party is being investigated by the Ontario Provincial Police for having its top level party insiders offer plum patronage appointments to entice someone to drop out of an election.

There is only one party that seems to be ready to say or do anything necessary to get elected no matter how many laws it has to break in the process. It is the Conservative Party and Canadian voters know it just cannot be trusted.

* * *

● (1115)

SENIORS

Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are so preoccupied with getting back into power they just do not know, or perhaps they just do not care, what is happening in the real world.

The member for Mississauga South introduced a motion on Wednesday calling for the creation of a secretary of state for seniors. Well the Prime Minister already did that last January.

In addition, the Conservative government delivered over \$1 billion in tax relief to seniors, doubled their pension income credits, invested \$10 million in the new horizons for seniors program, improved old age security, created a national seniors council, improved compassionate care benefit, and we will introduce identity theft legislation to protect Canadians, especially seniors, from scam artists.

In the throne speech, the Prime Minister made very clear our intentions to tackle elder abuse. Perhaps members of the Liberal Party should stop worrying about themselves just long enough to appreciate all the good this Conservative government has done and will continue to do for seniors.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

ELECTIONS CANADA

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Elections Canada has found that the Conservatives cheated during the last election to the tune of \$1.2 million. We know that this scandal germinated at Conservative Party headquarters since it was Conservative candidates who said so.

The Conservatives falsely brag about having paid for their publicity campaign with “clean money”, but it was candidates in Quebec who denounced this illegal trick that they had to play along with.

Why does the Prime Minister not have the courage to stand up in this House and explain his role in this scandal?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is beyond me what this has to do with the administration of government or government business. I do not know why, Mr. Speaker, you are allowing the question to be in order.

We have answered this a number of times. Everything that we have done in terms of our party financing activities has been legal and in accordance with the law.

I would appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, that you should apply the rules of this House as to what is actually government business and the administration of government.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know this scheme goes to the very heart of the Conservative Party and of the government. Court documents prove the party's executive director knew about it. The party's chief financial agent knew about it. Tom Flanagan even brags about it.

Are we supposed to believe that Mr. control freak, the Prime Minister himself, was not in the loop? What is he afraid of? Why will he not stand in this House and explain his role and that of his staff in this scandal?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will restate my concern about whether this is in order.

Oral Questions

I have heard a lot of questions from the other party on this. It appears that professor panic and his gang of divided desperadoes have been so busy trying to find hiding places this week that they have not been able to come up with any new questions. That means I do not have to come up with any new answers.

It is the same answer as we have always had, which is that we have followed the law in this regard and we will continue to do so.

The Deputy Speaker: Just before I recognize the hon. member for Beauséjour, I would say that he is under some obligation to link this to the administration of government in the formulation of his question.

[Translation]

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, court documents clearly show that Mike Donison, the Director General of the Conservative Party, had a hand in this scandal every step of the way.

Instead of being punished, Mr. Donison was rewarded by being named senior advisor to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Will the minister clean house in his own cabinet and ask Mr. Donison to apologize, while we wait for the Chief Electoral Officer to decide how he should be punished?

• (1120)

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe I stated yesterday that when one makes accusations about an individual that have potential consequences, one should be wary of that.

If the member is prepared to make those same allegations outside the House where he invites the consequences that come with making such an accusation, I would invite him to do so.

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know the former executive director and the chief financial officer of the Conservative Party knew of this illicit ad buy scam. We know that 129 candidates and official agents knew because they signed the bogus rebates. They are the ones who tipped off Elections Canada.

The Minister for Democratic Reform should tell us what he knew about this money scam. If he thought it was legal, how come he did not participate in it?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will restate the same thing. Everything that we have done in our campaign finance activities has been entirely legal. We followed the law and we will continue to do that.

[Translation]

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec, this in and out trick was used with hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I want answers from the Quebec campaign manager, but that was Michael Fortier; he was not elected and he sits in the other place.

Oral Questions

The Ontario campaign manager is here. Can the Minister of the Environment confirm that he was aware of this scam? If he thought it was legal, why did he not take part in it?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all our campaign financing activities are entirely legal. They follow the law and they will continue to do that. It is very different than the other party.

In fact, I observed that there has been a big difference in Canada since our new government was elected. Under the Liberal government Canada fell in Transparency International's clean government index down to 14th spot.

Since this new government was elected we have started climbing back up to ninth spot on the world stage. We are seen as a less corrupt and better government.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, nearly two years after the Prime Minister made a promise in Quebec City during the election campaign, the fiscal imbalance still has not been corrected. Yet the Séguin Commission had identified the solutions to this problem: first, additional funding for the provinces; second, a new sharing of tax room; third, the elimination of federal spending power.

Will the Prime Minister finally stop playing with words, as he has done in the throne speech, and keep the promise he made on December 19, 2005 in response to the Séguin report, which received unanimous support in Quebec's National Assembly?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the 2006 and 2007 budget speeches, the government took into account not only the recommendations made in the Séguin report, but also a broad consensus among the provincial premiers. It acted to correct the fiscal imbalance by balancing the distribution of federal government revenues.

The federal government and the other provinces have been wrangling over the issue of federal spending power for more than 40 years, and we are going to tackle that.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there has never been a tax transfer under this government. All we have seen are inadequate money transfers.

The Prime Minister promised to eliminate the fiscal imbalance and therefore also eliminate federal spending power in Quebec's exclusive areas of jurisdiction. The throne speech does nothing to accomplish this.

Is the Prime Minister aware that if he digs in his heels, he will irrevocably break the promise he made to Quebeckers in December 2005, which will prove that it was nothing but a Conservative election ploy.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it must be said that if this was a ploy—which it most certainly was not—the fact remains that the Bloc Québécois supported it. The Bloc Québécois quite clearly stands behind the report by the former finance minister of the Government of Quebec, Yves Séguin, whom I knew personally. But I have to say that there were other comments as well. Canada is a federation, and the other provinces had their say too. I have to say that the results in Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean have proved our party right. In fact—

• (1125)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): The results in Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot also prove something, Mr. Speaker.

If the elimination of federal spending power is not accompanied by the unconditional right to opt out, with full financial compensation for Quebec, then they are trying to fool us because the government intends to restrict its spending power only in cost-shared programs, which are almost nonexistent.

Will the government admit that, with the promise in the throne speech, there is nothing to stop it from continuing to meddle at will in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is very aware of the areas of jurisdiction and it practices a form of open federalism. We have proven this with such gestures as recognition of Quebec's role in UNESCO, among others. We did so when we were able to resolve the fiscal imbalance to the satisfaction of Quebec. We did so, everyone in this House did, when we recognized that Quebeckers form a nation within a united Canada. I believe that what they did not like was the part about a united Canada.

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, had the Bloc Québécois never spoken of a nation, it would never have come to pass here in the House of Commons. Thanks to our hard work Quebec has been recognized as a nation.

All federalist parties were in league yesterday to defeat the sub-amendment by the Bloc Québécois, the voice of the unanimous will of the Quebec National Assembly, which is calling for the unconditional right to opt out with full compensation.

Does the government acknowledge that with this vote it has demonstrated, once again, that it does not have any intention of eliminating federal spending power?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to immediately make one thing very clear to the Bloc Québécois. We will not eliminate the federal spending power; we will limit it, as we said in the consideration of the throne speech. That is in French, therefore we can understand it: we will limit the federal spending power.

Oral Questions

[English]

BILL C-62

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week's throne speech confirms that the government is continuing to take Canada in the wrong direction on many key issues. By completely ignoring the prosperity gap, we know exactly where working families stand with the government's agenda, and that is just the beginning.

Twice this Parliament has passed legislation to protect workers from bankruptcy by protecting their wages. Yesterday, the NDP agreed to bring back the crime bills. Will the government now reinstate Bill C-62 for the protection of workers' wages from bankruptcy? It is long overdue. Why is it not doing that?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the NDP about the issue of poverty and of people's prosperity in Canada. In fact, we are very pleased with what we see under our government because today more Canadians have jobs in Canada than ever in Canadian history.

That does not change the fact that some people will be looking for protection in cases where they do lose their jobs and this is the bill that the hon. member references. As she well knows, we are in discussions about whether they are willing to deal with reinstatement of those bills. I am happy to continue those discussions with her.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader is not answering the question. I want to know why the government has such contempt for legislation that has been passed by this Parliament twice to protect workers from bankruptcy by protecting their wages. It is an absolute injustice that workers still do not have this protection. Millions of dollars have been lost in their wages because this bill has not been implemented.

Why will the government not give a clear commitment today that the bill, which everyone agrees to, will be reinstated so that workers can get the protection they need? It is long overdue.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the position of this government has been quite clear and the hon. member for Vancouver East knows it quite well. We want to get permission to reinstate all the bills that we had in the last session. We have asked her permission for that and if she is willing to give that, we would be very delighted.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an Ontario police officer, in a sworn statement, says that there is evidence that high level Conservative Party operatives were involved in discussions to bribe Ottawa mayoral candidate Terry Kilrea with a Parole Board appointment.

This week the government House leader himself admitted that somebody approached one of their ministers. Will the House leader tell us who that minister was?

● (1130)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of public record and I am quite happy to tell him. After the municipal election was over, Terry Kilrea phoned the Minister of the Environment and asked how his appointment was going. The Minister of the Environment told him that he had no idea what he was talking about. The reason he said that was because no offer ever came from this government and, as the member knows, since then no appointment has ever been made.

Only the Liberal Party considers the failure to make a patronage appointment a scandal. I see the Liberals have not given up that view since yesterday.

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if it were not for the court documents that made it really clear, those guys would not tell us which minister was approached.

The reality is that the minister knows it is against the law and if he knows that and knows that he should not even be seen to have a discussion on this issue, why would he not cover his back and call the police right away and tell them that someone approached him with an inappropriate offer? What was he waiting for? It is a simple question and I need a simple answer.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know members of the Liberal Party are used to ducking, covering and running when people complain that patronage appointments are not made because that is their base, upset that they are not doing what they think they are there for.

In our party it works very differently. The Minister of the Environment was quite open. He made no offer. No appointment was made by the government. No patronage appointment took place. I do not know what the member is complaining about.

[Translation]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is no laughing matter. In May 2007, the Minister of the Environment told the police that Mr. Kilrea mentioned a job offer on the National Parole Board during a meeting on July 19, 2006. The minister also told the police that he would have had to personally approve any such appointment to a federal public position of that nature.

Does the minister have the courage to confirm these facts?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very puzzled because, as I have said repeatedly, there was no appointment made. We were not in the business of doing that and no offer was ever made.

I know it might have been different had there been a Liberal government because the fellow who had an interest in it, Larry O'Brien, was actually appointed by former Prime Minister Chrétien to an advisory council and was a major fundraiser for the Liberals. In fact, he was even president of the Laurier Club for big donors.

Oral Questions

If the Liberal Party were still in government I suspect perhaps that appointment might have been made because he would have been in a position to deliver.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kilrea's affidavit is at odds with what the environment minister told police. The minister said that Kilrea asked but Kilrea said that he did not raise the appointment directly with the minister because O'Brien told him not to. Mr. Kilrea swore this in his affidavit and took a polygraph test which he passed with flying colours.

My question is simple. Did the Minister of the Environment mislead the police and, if so, why?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he certainly did not mislead the police. In fact, he was quite clear that no appointment was made, no offer was made and no appointment would be made. There is nothing coming from the government. All the folks who are involved have nothing to do with the government and, as I have seen, if we put any affiliation on them, they are Liberals.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, more victims have succumbed to the forestry crisis. Following the definitive loss of more than 200 jobs yesterday in Saint-Michel-des-Saints, we learn today that another 200 jobs are being lost in Haute-Mauricie. Yet, no concrete measures were announced in the throne speech to support the workers, communities and families affected by this crisis. Instead of helping, the government is only adding to the crisis through its laissez-faire ideology.

Why does the government still refuse to introduce concrete measures?

[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I come from a part of rural Canada so I understand how devastating this can be to communities. We are concerned about this, which is why we put in place the targeted initiative for older workers which is working in nine different places in Quebec.

We think these workers still have a tremendous amount to offer. We want to see them get the training they need to move on into other sectors and other jobs and continue to provide for their families.

• (1135)

[Translation]

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government must stop reflecting and start acting. I would remind the government that, since April 2005, 21,000 people whose livelihood depended on forestry are now unemployed in Québec.

Will this government continue to show indifference, as is the case with the manufacturing industry? Or will this government decide to finally take action to help and support the forest industry?

[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is hardly indifference to start a program like the targeted initiative and then to add on top a \$3 billion program designed to assist the provinces in providing training over the next five years.

We are doing a tremendous amount to help workers across this country who are devastated by layoffs in some of these hard hit sectors. I am proud of that record. We are concerned for these workers and we are doing the best we can to assist them.

* * *

[Translation]

METALLURGY INDUSTRY

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when Rio Tinto took over Alcan, the company agreed to Quebec's demands, but the federal minister was negligent and declined to use the powers available to him under the Investment Canada Act to ensure that the transaction would benefit Canada.

Would the minister acknowledge that if he really cared about the well-being of workers, he would have demanded that Rio Tinto guarantee the job level and commit to doing a certain amount of its aluminum processing right here?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, France, Australia and Quebec all agreed to this transaction. The Minister of Industry also approved Rio Tinto's acquisition of Alcan because it will benefit Canada. Rio Tinto committed to investing \$3.9 billion in Canada, \$2 billion of that in Quebec. Furthermore, the company's headquarters will be in Montreal, and most of the senior executives will be in Canada.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Minister of Industry is not the only one guilty of negligence. The Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec is also guilty of abandoning millions of workers to their fate in my region and even in his very own region.

Does the minister acknowledge that his decisions show just how powerless he is in his cabinet?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why the member does not support a \$2 billion investment in Quebec. A large part of that money will go to the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region to implement Rio Tinto Alcan's new AP50 technology.

Rio Tinto has also promised to contribute \$200 million to charities. Furthermore, the company's headquarters will remain in Montreal.

Members of the government, including the Minister of Industry, made this decision because it really is in Canada's best interest.

[English]

PRIVACY

Hon. Garth Turner (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians may have had their privacy breached and their trust misused by members of this House. This is due to CIMS, a database run by the Conservative Party, which each party MP has installed in his or her office.

Unknown to millions of constituents, personal information is routinely fed into this database, which experts are calling a “chilling” breach of ethics. Will the Prime Minister do the ethical thing and release the names of Canadians in this database, giving voters the opportunity, if they wish, to opt out?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Again, Mr. Speaker, I appeal to you in that I fail to see what a political party database has to do with government business.

What I can assure the member of is that no department of this government makes use of that database. It is a party database. I do not understand his concern.

Hon. Garth Turner (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will answer that. When the Canadian Press asked the Conservatives if citizens could see their file in the party's secret database, the party asked what the specific reason for that would be.

I will answer that. This is their information. It belongs to them. This is their privacy that the government party has no reason to breach. These are their own members of Parliament elected to serve—

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 say it again: it is a political party database. How political parties run their campaigns in terms of databases has nothing to do with the administration of government and no department uses it. No minister's office uses it that I know of.

• (1140)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has not denied that it obtains and exploits personal information for political purposes. The Conservatives have created a national database that records personal information which was confidentially provided to the Government of Canada.

What Canadians want to hear from the government is that the person elected to represent them is not using the confidential personal information to fundraise for political purposes. Will the Prime Minister cease this unethical practice and stop violating the privacy of Canadians?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, is this not special? The Liberals, who have made an art out of communicating with different communities based on publicly available lists, are now shocked that someone else should do the same thing.

I can see why the member for Thornhill is not asking these questions any more. She very kindly sent out Rosh Hashanah greetings to her constituents: “*SHANA TOVA* My best wishes for a

Oral Questions

year filled with peace, good health and happiness”. That was from the MP from Thornhill.

I also got a notice yesterday that members of the Chinese community in her constituency were receiving Chinese New Year's greetings.

Would those members just please stop the hypocrisy?

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, invasion of privacy and ethnic or religious profiling is simply unacceptable. If someone contacts an MP with a CPP or passport problem, they do not expect to land up on a political mailing list. For example, we saw this last year when the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke was caught collecting information from passport applications to send out birthday cards.

This type of unethical behaviour is inexcusable and alarms Canadians, who expect their members to represent them, not exploit them. Will the Prime Minister do the honourable thing and stop this unethical practice now?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, only a Liberal could think it is unethical to wish somebody a happy New Year.

Here I have a letter from the co-presidents of the Canadian Jewish Congress, who say:

We commend the Prime Minister for this thoughtful gesture. We are heartened that our elected officials make the effort to extend good wishes to members of other faith communities, communities that make a vibrant contribution to the diverse multicultural fabric of Canada.

That is what the communities are saying, but perhaps that member would like to ask his colleague from Thornhill why she was sending Chinese New Year's greetings to members of the Chinese community in her riding and where she came up with those lists. Probably from the same place we did.

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AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is an important member of the international coalition working to rebuild Afghanistan and create stability there. One question on the minds of Canadians right now is this. Are we and our allies winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people?

I would like the Minister of Foreign Affairs to tell the House now how an average Afghan sees the international mission and does he have any information he can share with the House about Afghan public opinion?

[Translation]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the results of a poll conducted by various Canadian media are in. This is a poll on the situation in Afghanistan as experienced by the Afghans.

Oral Questions

We note from this poll that 73% of Afghans believe that the women are better off now than they were five years ago. In addition, 84% of Afghans have confidence in the Afghan national army and 76% have confidence in the Afghan national police. Finally, 60% of respondents say that foreign presence is a good thing for their country. Moreover, in Kandahar, where the Canadian troops are centred, six Afghans out of ten feel that some...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina.

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[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are over 4,000 words in the throne speech and nothing on immigration, nothing on matters that are important for ordinary immigrant communities and families. We have alleged fraud in overseas visa offices in Chandigarh, refugees turned away at the border, thousands of families being split apart and the system is in a complete mess.

Why is the minister ignoring the problem or is the government too busy sending out greeting cards?

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we certainly take any allegations of fraud or impropriety seriously. Obviously some of the situations arose under the previous government if we were to look at it very closely. However, this government has done more than any previous government in terms of what we do for immigration.

In the last budget, we had \$1.3 billion over five years to enhance settlement and immigration programs for newcomers, \$13 million over two years creating the foreign credential referral office, \$34 million over two years in selecting immigrants with skills and experience into Canada and \$51 million over two years to improve the temporary foreign workers program. We are getting something done in the immigration portfolio.

• (1145)

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): However, Mr. Speaker, none of that is working because we have thousands of families being cruelly split apart. Let me give an example.

A Vancouver woman cannot bring her husband to Canada because she was born Christian and he is a Muslim. I will quote from a media story. She said, “I never thought my government would try to break my marriage up because of culture and religion”.

Do we have a Minister of Citizenship and Immigration that unites families or do we have a marriage counsellor here?

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously we will not get into the specifics of any particular case but I will say that we treat all cases dispassionately, with merit and on a merit basis. All of the personnel working in immigration treat every case with utmost respect and with appropriate dedication.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1988, Conservative MP, Lawrence O'Neil, said in the House, about a woman's right to choose:

It appears that there is widespread acceptance of the notion that a mother should have the right to control her body. There is no such right.

Now that same Lawrence O'Neil has been appointed by the government as a justice on the Nova Scotia Supreme Court.

Canadian women fought hard for the right to choose. Will the minister explain how Canadians can believe that he is not packing the courts with Conservative ideologues?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the individual in question is an outstanding individual who has made great contributions to his community. Similar to the other 117 appointments we have made to the court, all on the basis of merit and legal excellence, any analysis will confirm that this is an outstanding group of individuals who are prepared to serve their sovereign and their country.

Hon. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how the only people who seem to be qualified to be judges these days are ideological Conservatives. The former president of the party in Quebec is now a judge, the chair of the Prime Minister's leadership campaign in New Brunswick is now a judge, the party's former chief fundraiser in Alberta is now a federal judge and now a former Conservative MP from Nova Scotia who opposes a woman's right to choose.

How can the minister stand there with a straight face and tell the House that he is not about ideologically based patronage?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the members of the Liberal Party can in this place, but I would disagree with them doing it, slag and slur the members or the individuals who are prepared to serve on the benches of this country. I invite any independent analysis of the 118 individuals we have appointed to the courts. These are all outstanding Canadians of whom we all can be proud.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, chiefs from the first nation communities of Muskrat Dam, North Spirit, Poplar Hill, Keewaywin and Slate Falls, five communities in my riding, are travelling to Ottawa looking for help from the government. As we speak, the people of these isolated, remote communities are without emergency health care for as many as three out of seven days a week.

This is unacceptable. Access to health care is a basic right that all Canadians deserve. Will the minister meet with the chiefs to solve this blatant double standard in health care for first nations right across Canada?

Oral Questions

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary for Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government actually has taken great measures to improve the health care of first nations communities in improving their water quality, making major investments in housing and trying to work with first nations to ensure they get the health care they need in a timely manner.

Quite frankly, first nations people were left in great destitution over the last 13 years and our government is going to clean up the mess left by the previous government.

Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was the Conservative government that scrapped the Kelowna accord. The \$1.3 billion in funding for health care was laid out in the Kelowna accord. It was money that was desperately needed in these remote, isolated communities. Is the minister going to be honest enough to tell that to the chiefs? After all, it was the Conservative government that slashed and gutted the Kelowna accord.

How will he explain this broken commitment? What is he going to do to help these communities and to help these chiefs provide health care for their communities?

• (1150)

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary for Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have increased transfers by over \$200 million to aboriginals in this country. We are providing testing and advice to the chief and council in Port Alberni. This past summer, Health Canada officials worked jointly with communities to inspect the homes infected by mould, for example.

Throughout Canada, in fact, through the hard work of our cabinet and colleagues, first nations peoples are optimistic about their future, a lot more so than they were under the Liberals.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how many more times will we have to repeat that the only way employees can be efficiently protected from the vagaries of the economy is by ensuring autonomy and independence in the management of the employment insurance account? We all know that, at present, only a fraction of those who contribute are actually eligible for benefits. In the throne speech, the government said it would improve the governance of the employment insurance account.

Will the minister give us the assurance that he will support the establishment of an independent fund so as to put an end to this looting?

[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that we will improve the management and governance of the EI account. We have committed to that in the throne speech.

We have also, in our short time in government, reduced the premiums, improved the benefits and, I want to point out, are now contributing more to training for workers than any government in the history of this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when they were in the opposition, the Conservatives supported the principles of autonomy and independence for the EI account. Now that they are forming a minority government, they know that this could be achieved by passing Bill C-357 put forward by the Bloc Québécois, but are using the royal recommendation as a procedural tactic to informally oppose such a policy.

Could the minister tell this House whether he will support the principles of autonomy and independence for the EI account by seeing the passing of Bill C-357 through to completion?

[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Québécois have brought forward a number of private members' bills which, if they were all implemented, would make the employment insurance account not viable. It could not be sustained. We are talking about tens of billions of dollars in new benefits that they want to introduce.

The point is to have a fund that is sustainable and to balance it with benefits that will allow people to have a fallback in the case of layoff and also with training options, which we are providing through new labour market agreements with the provinces, with \$3 billion over the next six years.

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EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government refuses to provide us with any details on the side deal with Nova Scotia with regard to the Atlantic accord. So far all we have seen is happy for the camera handshakes, with absolutely zero documentation.

We will have to forgive Atlantic Canadians if they are leery about taking the word of the government and in particular the word of the Minister of National Defence. Bruce MacKinnon, the editorial cartoonist in today's *Chronicle-Herald*, exposes the naked truth. The cartoon may imply that the minister has nothing to hide, but Nova Scotians want to know: where is he hiding the document?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand the premise of the question. I think there is some suggestion that there is no deal with Nova Scotia, that there is no Atlantic accord. The hon. member would be aware that this is a falsehood that he is attempting to spread.

The federal government is very satisfied with the agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia and the Premier of Nova Scotia is extremely satisfied with the agreement with Nova Scotia, so I do not understand why the member of Parliament opposite continues to spread doubt and falsehoods about the Atlantic accord.

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many Canadian businesses are under enormous strain in trying to comply with the mountain of paperwork and red tape imposed on them by government. In budget 2007 our government committed to address the red tape and paper burden on Canadian businesses and individuals by performing a government-wide count of all legislative and regulatory compliance measures by September 2007.

Could the new Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism inform this House on the status of this important commitment to Canadians?

• (1155)

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, this matter is important to the 98% of businesses in this country that are small businesses and in fact to all businesses. Red tape gums up the works of the engine of the economy.

Our government, for the first time in a long time, because the former government completely ignored this situation, is getting to work to deal with this. Our commitment is to reduce the paper burden by 20% by 2008. We are well on track to do that and have the full support of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

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CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative spin machine has its grubby fingerprints over every aspect of the public service. Government websites that are meant to provide public information are now being used to sell the divisive and wrong-headed throne speech of the government. When people go to the Environment Canada weather website to find out if it is going to rain today, they should not have to worry about being deluged with blarney from the PMO.

My question is simple. Why is the government using taxpayers' dollars to sell a partisan and wrong-headed agenda to Canadians?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is something new when the government is doing something wrong when it is trying to communicate with Canadians about what it is doing.

I have to say that when people go to the Environment Canada website I suspect it is because they care about the environment. They want to know what the government is doing about the environment: what we are doing to clean up our air by introducing mandatory targets for emissions, what we are doing to clean up Canada's water, and what we are doing to protect Canada's endangered species. They are looking at that and they are saying, "Finally, a government that is taking action for the environment".

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that was a dismal drizzle.

Where is the accountability in this House? Whether it was the failed media spin bunker in the shoe store or the use of promotional tag lines on government websites, the government seems to believe

that taxpayer money and public programs are there to be used as a private partisan war chest.

This is an abuse of public trust. Where is the accountability?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the accountability is that we are telling Canadians what the government is going to do. That is what accountability is about, because this is a government that tells Canadians what we are going to do and then we deliver and do it.

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EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only did the government sign a phantom side deal with Nova Scotia that did not even honour its promise, but after years of preaching about the evils of side deals, the government announced the deal one day after Danny Williams won a massive mandate to fight the Prime Minister.

Coincidence? I think not.

It is becoming quite clear that this side deal is not worth the paper that it is not even written on. Why did the government announce it so blatantly as to smack Newfoundland and Labrador right square in the chops? Why? And what happened to the evils of these side deals?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question from the hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, the hon. member would know that Newfoundland and Labrador has a great deal under the accord. In 2005, for the first time, it received 100% of its offshore. He would also know that as the deal is written it will lose that when it loses equalization.

Therefore, the issue is that under the new equalization agreement Newfoundland will be the chief beneficiary of 50% of its offshore revenues. The new deal is a good deal for Newfoundland and Labrador. The old deal was a good deal for Newfoundland—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

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HEALTH

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is widely known that Canadians are experiencing a problem with obesity and that the programs that were formerly in place to combat this problem were allowed to lapse by the previous government.

Could the Secretary of State (Sport) inform the House on what our government is doing to help Canadians get and maintain their activity?

Routine Proceedings

● (1200)

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is true that the previous Liberal government cancelled ParticipACTION. The Minister of Health and I this week relaunched ParticipACTION.

We are encouraging Canadians to become more aware of leading active, healthy lifestyles. This is a contribution of \$5 million over two years. We are committed to supporting sport and promoting physical activity.

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[Translation]

SECURITIES

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again the federalist parties are ganging up on Quebec. The Minister of Finance, encouraged by the NDP, is determined to create a Canada-wide securities commission. What is more, we learn that in the other place, a Liberal has tabled a bill to set up a single securities regulation system, which would replace the regulatory systems in Quebec and the provinces.

The unanimous position of the National Assembly is final. Quebec's finance minister has said yet again that this is a jurisdiction exclusive to Quebec and the federal government has no business interfering in it.

Will the Minister of Finance stop this harassment?

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that Canada is the only industrialized country in the world that does not have a common securities regulator.

It is all about competition, providing competitive advantages for people who are involved in our economy. We realize that the provinces need to be consulted on this, which is why the finance minister will establish a panel to look it over.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every day Canadians are being squeezed when it comes to family time, and Statistics Canada confirms this. Canadian workers spend 45 fewer minutes with their families each work day than they did 20 years ago.

Ontario recently announced a family holiday in February, but the Conservative government has decided to exclude federal employees from this much deserved holiday. Clearly, this is unfair.

Will the government reverse its decision so federal employees can honour the same kinds of commitments that they want to with their families and be able to spend family time together? Will that family guy over there allow federal employees the same rights as the other families in Ontario?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by

correcting the hon. member. In fact, the government has done no such thing.

Collective agreements, over which we do not have unilateral control, indicate which employees are covered by which holidays.

We in fact provide 11 holidays to our federal employees, whereas the province of Ontario only provides 10, so there is an additional day. I hope the member is not suggesting that we take one of those holidays away from our public servants, many of whom live in his own riding.

However, no, we will not unilaterally overwhelm, change and strip away the collective bargaining agreements that are in place, and I hope the member would not suggest we do so.

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[Translation]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's forestry industry continues to sink deeper into one of the worst crises in its history and the government is doing nothing about it. Worse yet, the government, with support from the Bloc, adopted a sellout agreement on the softwood lumber dispute. This agreement now allows the United States to attack federal and provincial programs that are designed to help Quebec's industry.

Why did the government, with help from the Bloc, choose to defend the interests of the U.S. at the expense of Quebec's forestry workers?

[English]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech did recognize the pressures facing the forestry industry.

We have recognized the importance of the forest industry to the Canadian economy. In the last year and a half we have moved on several fronts. We have resolved the softwood lumber dispute, which the previous government was unable to resolve. We have launched the forest industry long term competitiveness initiative. We have implemented the mountain pine beetle program where that has been a problem in the forest industry. We are supporting new energy initiatives as well.

We have clearly supported the forest industry and we will continue to do that.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1205)

[English]

CANADA ACCOUNT ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, on behalf of the Minister of International Trade, the Canada Account Annual Report for 2005-06, prepared by Export Development Canada.

*Routine Proceedings***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to some unfounded comments that were made yesterday by the member for Mississauga South in this chamber, I wish to table, in both official languages, copies of a letter from the office of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to all parliamentarians concerning requests for intervention in urgent immigration cases.

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PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU DAY ACT

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-463, An Act to establish Pierre Elliott Trudeau Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and privileged to introduce my private member's bill that would designate October 18 each year Pierre Elliott Trudeau day. October 18 was the late prime minister's birthday.

Pierre Trudeau's innovation, dedication to Canada and truly progressive approach to public policy inspired me and countless other Canadians to become involved in the political process. This is my humble way of giving something back to him.

Generations to come will recall his name long after most of us here are forgotten, for he transformed our country, challenged us to think differently and encouraged us as people to take our place in the world.

I invite all members to join me in supporting the bill to declare October 18 Pierre Elliott Trudeau day.

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

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PETITIONS**INCOME TRUSTS**

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on the income trust broken promise. The Prime Minister boasted about his commitment to accountability when he said that the greatest fraud was a promise not kept.

The petitioners remind the Prime Minister that he had promised never to tax income trusts, but he broke that promise by imposing a 31.5% punitive tax, which permanently wiped out over \$25 billion of hard-earned retirement savings of over two million Canadians, particularly seniors.

The petitioners therefore call upon the Conservative minority government to: first, admit that the decision to tax income trusts was based on flawed methodology and incorrect assumptions; second, to apologize to those who have been unfairly harmed by this broken promise; and finally, to repeal the punitive 31.5% tax on income trusts.

JUSTICE

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table a petition today signed by many citizens throughout southern Alberta and Lethbridge.

The petitioners call upon the government to protect our children by, among other things, ensuring that repeat offenders be designated as dangerous offenders, that compulsory public notification of movements of convicted pedophiles be offered and that it proceed with changes to the justice system and legislation which would result in harsher penalties for convicted pedophiles.

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition with literally thousands of names, Canadians right from Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador to Burnaby, British Columbia.

The petitioners remind the government that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known, yet Canada continues to be one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world.

They call upon Canada to ban asbestos in all its forms, to institute a just transition program for asbestos workers in the communities in which they live, to end all government subsidies of asbestos in both Canada and abroad and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam convention.

● (1210)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to present petitions to the government from petitioners in Burlington, Oakville and Trois-Rivières on the subject of human trafficking.

The petitioners are asking the government to continue its good work to combat the trafficking of persons. This is a growing crime here in Canada. There are many signatures on these petitions.

ASBESTOS

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition today that is particularly appropriate at this time when we hear the Minister of the Environment speaking about Canada's leadership around environmental matters.

This petition is signed by thousands of people who are asking the government to ban asbestos in all its forms and institute a just transition program. Canada continues to be one of the largest producers and exporters as my colleague said earlier.

We must end all government subsidies that continue to this day for asbestos and stop blocking the international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos such as the Rotterdam convention.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*The Address***POINTS OF ORDER**

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a small procedural matter out of question period.

Today the record will again show that during the course of question period the Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) read from an explicit piece of paper that purported to be a greeting card of some kind. He did not identify who that document was sent to or aimed toward. It is important for the House to know exactly what piece of paper he was quoting from. I would ask the Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) to table that greeting card for all members of Parliament to see.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair will take that point of order under advisement at the moment. We look forward to an opportunity for the Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) to respond.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: At the time when we last departed from orders of the day the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour had one minute and 30 seconds left in his speech, which I invite him to complete at this time.

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about what was not in the Speech from the Throne.

My point, very simply, is that Canada is a wealthy country, possibly now more wealthy than ever. This is not the time to abandon the social infrastructure of which Canadians are proud. We should be enhancing that social infrastructure.

Yesterday, the YWCA, hardly a political hotbed of radicalism, said that the Speech from the Throne virtually ignores the legitimate concerns of Canadian women and their families. It said that women were all but shut out of the government's plans and that there were no concrete provisions in it to deal with women and children living in poverty.

We should be addressing poverty. In 1997, a much less affluent time in the history of this nation, we brought in the child tax benefit, which was a major innovation. That was a huge step forward for children, but we need to do more.

This Speech from the Throne is disappointing and it is disappointing for a number of reasons. It might even be frightening. It is short on specifics, not enough to prompt an election that Canadians do not want, but another signal that we are on the wrong track in this country and we are particularly on the wrong track for those who need help the most.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest the comments made by the former

speaker regarding the Youth Criminal Justice Act. I also noted his comment in the S.O. 31 that he gave today.

I can assure my colleague that in my riding well over 11,000 people have signed a petition asking for changes to this act. Parents who contact me, even parents whose own children have been in trouble with the law, are asking for changes.

I would like the member to clarify whether or not he agrees that as the throne speech outlines, our government is intent upon bringing some changes to this act that would denounce criminal behaviour on the part of young people and deter future young people from getting into those kinds of difficult circumstances.

• (1215)

Mr. Michael Savage: Mr. Speaker, I think I was pretty clear. Let me be as clear as I can be.

I will support changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act because I think they are necessary. I support the changes outlined by Justice Merlin Nunn in his document which came out last December. I reference it again for everybody: www.nunncommission.ca.

I will support changes because people in my community are concerned and afraid. I have talked to principals in high schools. I have talked to police on the streets. I have talked to lots of people who want changes. I have also talked to people promoting child care, people who are talking about the lack of mental health services and the infrastructure that helps to prevent crime.

Let us not just do a little bit of the job. Let us do the whole job. Let us fix the problem as it exists now. Let us fix the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which otherwise is a good piece of legislation, but not when it comes to repeat offenders. Let us not think that we have solved all the problems once we have done that.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague from Dartmouth that many aspects of the Speech from the Throne as we see it are frightening. I think is the term he used. However, my colleague probably knows that there is no business case, for instance, for abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board.

He might not be aware that my riding of Winnipeg Centre is the corporate headquarters of the Canadian Wheat Board. Those of us in Manitoba find this prospect in the Speech from the Throne that the Conservatives are going to abolish the Canadian Wheat Board absolutely frightening.

My colleague may or may not be aware of the 460 direct jobs, but 3,700 jobs support indirectly the administrative business operations of the Canadian Wheat Board. This is going to create an enormous black hole in the heart of my riding.

Not only does the Canadian Wheat Board get the best rate of return for Prairie farmers and minimize risk and provide a great service, this great Prairie institution if it goes down is going to create a vortex that is going to affect the entire agricultural sector in the province.

The Address

Is my colleague aware of this devastating impact and why then would his party vote for a Speech from the Throne and give tacit approval to abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board?

Mr. Michael Savage: Mr. Speaker, I do not come from Winnipeg and I cannot feel that need quite as strongly as my colleague, but one could not be in the Liberal caucus with the member for Malpeque who has stood up for the Canadian Wheat Board from one end of this country to the other and has convinced us all of the need of that institution.

We believe in the Canadian Wheat Board. We support the Canadian Wheat Board. We think there is a role for the Canadian Wheat Board and it is wrong to try to abolish the Canadian Wheat Board by the tactics the government has used.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the member's speech I remembered coming here in 1993 and the first thing that I heard in the throne speech that I strongly recall and found it rather surprising was that there were one million children living in poverty and the government was going to deal with it.

In 2004, Jean Chrétien was gone and the new member for LaSalle—Émard was the prime minister and the throne speech said the government was going to deal with child poverty which was 1.5 million. The number had gone up by half a million. In other words, from the throne speech in 1993 dealing with child poverty the Liberal government did not get it done.

When I look through the throne speeches over the past 10 years, every time the Liberals did not get it done. Dealing with child poverty, why did the member's government for 10 years, from 1993 to 2004, not get it done?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour has 40 seconds.

Mr. Michael Savage: Mr. Speaker, I have shared with many people in my own riding concerns about child poverty, but we have to be realistic. When we took over in 1993, there was a huge deficit and spiralling debt. We had to make some changes. When we had the opportunity, we brought in the child tax benefit.

More recently, under the former minister of social development, the member for York Centre, we brought in child care, so that people who did not have the opportunity for child care would have it. We had taken positive steps with the Kelowna accord. We are going backward now. We are going in the wrong direction now and it is a concern particularly for those who need help.

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POINTS OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is unrelated to the debate, but the opposition House leader was asking me to table a document which is the copy of the Rosh Hashanah greeting card from the member for Thornhill. I am quite pleased to table this document to satisfy the request of the opposition House leader.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

• (1220)

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg South.

As was clearly stated in the Speech from the Throne, nowhere is Canada making a difference more clearly than in Afghanistan. We know Canadians want their country to play a world leadership role and that is why Canada joined the United Nations sanctioned mission in Afghanistan.

We are there because we believe Canada should live up to its international responsibilities. We are there because it is the right thing to do. The goals jointly spelled out by the Afghan government and the international community could not be clearer. I am quite sure that none of us here want to jeopardize the progress that has been made by Afghans and their international partners since 2001.

Now is not the time to lose our resolve. Much has been accomplished in the past six years. Afghans have suffered through decade after decade of war, leaving most of their country's infrastructure destroyed. They are looking to the international community to help Afghanistan get back on its feet.

Canada, along with 60 nations and international organizations, is helping Afghanistan to become a stable, democratic and self-sustaining state. Canadians understand that development and security go hand in hand. Without security there can be no humanitarian aid, no reconstruction and no democratic development.

There is no better measure of this progress than the four million Afghan boys and two million girls who can dream of a better future because they now go to school. These children will be the stewards of Afghanistan's long term recovery.

Let us talk about what we all agree on. All members in the House are proud of the progress that Canadians have contributed to in Afghanistan. We are proud of 17,500 community development councils that have been created through the national solidarity program, to which Canada has contributed over \$20 million in the past year.

There are over 500 community councils in Kandahar province alone. These make possible development projects that are locally chosen, implemented and owned. Already in Kandahar bridges have been built, roads paved, wells dug and power lines strung. These are essential ingredients in the long term stability and prosperity for the country as a whole.

The Address

Then there is the microfinance program. Consider that there are 380,000 participants, of whom about 75% are women. Ten thousand more Afghans gain access to small loans every month to start a small business, to buy livestock or to invest in agriculture. The repayment rate is over 90%. Canada, I am proud to say, is the largest donor to this program, with \$56 million in support, and now it is on the verge of self-sufficiency.

The Afghanistan Compact, the joint plan developed by the Afghan national government and over 60 members of the international community in January 2006, guides our engagement. Building on the political and institutional accomplishments of recent years, it lays out detailed benchmarks over 40 areas: in security, in governance, rule of law, human rights and in economic and social development. The whole international community, including Canada, is behind these goals. The Government of Canada is behind these goals and I am sure that every member of the House is, too.

Afghanistan is on a path to peace and prosperity. The international community is determined that nothing will derail the country from this track. That is why there is a 37 nation International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, to which Canada is an important contributor. This international force is there so that the goals of the Afghanistan Compact can be met and so that the Afghan National Army and National Police can be developed to the point where they will be capable of taking over in the future.

Here we come to the crux of the matter. Every member of the House is in favour of peace, but we must recognize that the path to peace will take commitment, determination and patience.

We owe it to diplomatic and development workers and to those who are there as advisors and mentors to inculcate good governance through Afghan institutions and to provide the safe environment they need in which to do their work. It is not just Canadian efforts that are at stake. This is a cooperative endeavour.

Just as Canadians rely on other nations for security in other parts of the country, we are responsible in Kandahar for enabling the work of the United Nations and other agencies. It is a big responsibility and one that we cannot take lightly or contemplate abandoning without carefully weighing the consequences. That is why the Prime Minister has appointed an independent panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, which will advise Parliament on options for the mission after the current mandate ends in February 2009.

We firmly believe that the Afghan people deserve a chance to escape the tragic poverty and under-development that has plagued their country for decades. In fact, improving Afghanistan's future is the purpose of our mission. Like Afghans themselves, we believe a more secure, more stable and more prosperous Afghanistan is essential.

Despite strong economic growth in the past few years, it is still one of the poorest countries in the world. Without better education and better health care, it will be very difficult for the Afghan people to get ahead.

• (1225)

Canada and Canadians have much to give and we have a moral obligation to help. Afghanistan is currently the number one recipient

of Canadian bilateral aid. Some \$1.2 billion worth will be delivered by 2011. That puts us among the top donor nations to Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan compact talks about security, governance and development as the three pillars, and the metaphor is apt. Each pillar is equally essential and the three mutually support each other. The Government of Canada's approach reflects entirely this interdependence. In fact we have actively sought out issues where we can best leverage our resources, where our security efforts will help build capacity in governance, for example, and where our development projects will help ensure a more secure environment.

Let me start by mentioning just one example. We are finishing one of the most important roads in the country, the road from Kandahar to Spin Boldak on the Pakistan border, the shortest route out of Afghanistan to a seaport.

Economic development is key to peace and stability in this border region, as G-8 leaders recently agreed. A new road means better access to markets, to government services, to education and health care, and a better route home for refugees. It means that the Afghan national army and national police will be better able to bring security to this critical region. When we rebuild a road, we also create a path to a brighter future.

As I mentioned before, our strategy is to strengthen Afghanistan and put it on the path to self-sufficiency. Above all, this approach means assistance in the form of planning, training and mentoring.

For the Afghan national army, which is well on track to reaching its goals, Canada has had great results with our operational mentoring and liaison teams. These Canadian military units work directly with the Afghan army, teaching them how to be a professional and effective force to the extent that they are increasingly capable of mounting independent operations, which is, of course, the ultimate goal. This approach is shared by all nations as the best way to make the Afghan national army work. It is worth noting that many nations, including France, Croatia and Poland, have recently announced that they are sending additional training teams to Afghanistan to help speed up the process.

Canadians should be proud of the progress we have already made in Afghanistan. However, because of Afghanistan's unique history of war, instability and underdevelopment, none of our goals can be fulfilled without a security presence. Anything else would be fundamentally inconsistent.

The Canadian Forces mission has been approved by Parliament until February 2009, and our government has made clear to Canadians and our allies that any future military deployments must also be supported by a majority of parliamentarians. As for our development presence in Afghanistan, it will continue until at least 2011.

The Address

In the coming session, members will be asked to vote on the future of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan. As the Prime Minister has stated, this decision should honour the dedication and sacrifice of Canada's development workers, diplomats and men and women in uniform. It should ensure that progress in Afghanistan is not lost and that our international commitments and reputation are upheld.

As was made clear in the Speech from the Throne, our government does not believe that Canada should simply abandon the people of Afghanistan after February 2009. Canada should build on its accomplishments and shift to accelerate the training of the Afghan army and police so that the Afghan government can defend its own sovereignty. This will not be completed by February 2009, but our government believes this objective should be achievable by 2011, the end of the period covered by the Afghanistan compact. Our government has appointed an independent panel to advise Canadians on how best to proceed, given these considerations.

There will always be those who seek to score short term political points whenever the challenges involved in rebuilding Afghanistan become more evident, whenever we transition from an easier phase to a harder one. For such people it is convenient to cling to the excuse, to which I would say first, the current international effort is completely unlike anything that has ever been attempted before. It is conceived entirely for the good of the country at the behest of a democratic government and fully supported politically, financially and militarily by the international community. The second thing I would say concerns the hundreds of thousands of Afghan women who have received small business loans, and the two million Afghan girls who can now go to school. Could we really look them in the eyes and say, "We are sorry, but having encountered some resistance, we have now decided that your country is hopeless. We have decided instead to return to our comfortable, insulated shells"?

Canadians know that such an attitude would not only be irresponsible, but it would go against the values we hold dear as a nation. Every day we see the difference we are making as Canadian soldiers and civilians work with Afghans to help them build a better society. We should not delude ourselves into thinking that they do not want the same things that we want for our own children: security, education, greater economic opportunity and a better future. These are the goals Canada is helping Afghanistan to attain. That is why we believe our continuing engagement in Afghanistan is both necessary and worthwhile.

• (1230)

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the hon. member's words on the work that Canada is doing for human rights in Afghanistan. He forgot to mention that by all objective reports, violent incidents in Afghanistan have more than quadrupled this year alone.

I would like to ask him a question about other rights and whether the government is prepared to defend those rights.

Canadian airlines at the moment are being asked to turn over passenger lists to homeland security. Will the member's government stand up for Canadians and refuse to turn over those lists?

On the security and prosperity partnership on which the member's government is forging away enthusiastically and signing away our sovereignty by integrating and harmonizing our regulations in over

300 areas with those of the Americans to better mesh with and fit the needs of American companies, I am wondering if this is in the best interests of Canadians.

Would the government support having an open discussion in Parliament?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, the NDP has never seen a conspiracy theory it did not love.

What this government does enthusiastically is support the rights of Canadian women and children, all Canadian citizens, and by the way, the rights of other women and children and citizens around the world who need our help. That is what Canada has done for the last 140 years since we became a nation and that is what we will continue to do enthusiastically.

If the NDP, or its predecessor the CCF, had had its way, Dutch women and children would have wound up starving at the end of World War II. South Korea would probably be a communist state today instead of one of the most prosperous nations in the world.

That is what we stand up enthusiastically for. The people we stand enthusiastically side by side with are our traditional strong allies, the nations of the world who share our sense of human values, our sense of rights, our sense of responsibility. That list includes a lot of western liberal democracies such as the United States, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, France, Italy, Spain, and so on.

Yes, I am very enthusiastic about what our government is doing in standing up for the rights of Canadians and for other people around the world who need our help.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the parliamentary secretary on how well he articulated Canada's international role, especially as it applies to Afghanistan. It has been stated that the security of Canada is intrinsically tied to the security of Afghanistan.

Yesterday we commemorated the fact that at one time women in Canada were not even considered to be persons. It is very fitting that the parliamentary secretary spoke today about the raising of rights for the women and children in Afghanistan.

The opposition claims to speak on behalf of soldiers deployed to Afghanistan and wanting to end the Afghan mission. The parliamentary secretary has many soldiers in his riding and I am sure that he has occasion to speak to these soldiers. Would the parliamentary secretary please share with us what the soldiers tell him in terms of their experiences in dealing with the Afghans?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question and for her years and years of strong support for the Canadian men and women in uniform as well.

The Address

Yes, I speak to Canadian men and women in uniform every single day. I was proud of my 30 years in the Canadian Forces but I have never ever been prouder of the men and women who wear uniforms than I have been in the last few years. I have witnessed firsthand on the ground in Kandahar, outside the wire in Kandahar the kinds of things they are accomplishing and the kind of people they are. They are the most spectacular citizens we have in this country in the job they do and the very difficult conditions under which they do it. They and their families that support them deserve our tremendous support.

I can tell the House what the soldiers, sailors and airmen tell me and actually sum it up quickly with what happened this summer. I spent time with the Minister of National Defence in the garrison at Edmonton. We spoke to about a dozen wounded soldiers, some of them seriously wounded. Their message to the Prime Minister through the Minister of National Defence was "Please, please, please let us finish our job". They are committed to getting it right. I wish more people in the House were as well.

• (1235)

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 would like to commend my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence for his eloquent presentation in the House today. Clearly, he has a lot of knowledge in this area and I am glad that he is a part of our team.

Today I will talk about Arctic sovereignty, an issue that is very important to me as a northerner. I come from northern Canada and am very appreciative of the new approach that the Prime Minister has taken ever since he became Prime Minister to bring sovereignty back to our Arctic.

Canada's Arctic is an essential part of our history and a pillar of this Conservative government's strategy to build a stronger Canada and a better Canada from coast to coast to coast.

Our Arctic is on the verge of major environmental, economic, social and political change. Climate change, the search for resources and a renewed focus on the peoples of the north are driving this change. Sea ice has steadily decreased in the Arctic and this trend is likely to continue. The Northwest Passage is opening up for longer periods in the summer and its use is gaining international attention. At the same time, we recognize the north as a vast well of energy and mineral resources. In short, the opportunities and the challenges for Canada are enormous.

This government is ready and is acting to protect what is ours and improve the lives of all northerners. For too long, people of the three territories were made promise after promise in Liberal government press releases. That era is thankfully over. Our government is committed to helping the Arctic finally realize its true potential as a healthy and prosperous region within a strong and sovereign Canada.

New opportunities are emerging across the Arctic and there are new challenges from other shores. Our government is bringing forward an integrated northern strategy focused on strengthening Canada's sovereignty, protecting our environmental heritage, promoting economic and social development and improving and

devolving governance, so that northerners have greater control over their destinies.

In this International Polar Year we have the ability to shape an Arctic of tomorrow that reflects Canada's national interests and values. We come to the international table with some important issues and assets. Canada owns one-third of the world's land mass above the Arctic Circle. There is great natural resource potential within our vast northern lands and seas, and we can count upon the ingenuity, adaptability and expertise of our northern peoples to turn that potential into reality.

But the Arctic is only a piece of a much larger region occupied by eight states with lands that lie above the Arctic Circle, five of which surround the Arctic Ocean. Each Arctic nation has opportunities and faces similar challenges. Canada is seizing the opportunity to reinvigorate our north, stating loud and clear that it is rightfully ours. We are taking the lead internationally to meet the global challenges head on. This is why Arctic sovereignty has been and will continue to be a strong priority of the Prime Minister's government.

Canada's Arctic sovereignty is long-standing, well established and based on historic title. While other nations prepare to stake a claim to Arctic regions more than 200 miles off our coastlines, we are asserting our sovereignty through comprehensive mapping of Canada's Arctic seabed.

Canadian scientists right now are conducting extensive mapping surveys on Canada's largest icebreaker in the Beaufort Sea to establish with certainty where our continental shelf begins and ends. Recently, our Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development visited that dedicated research team aboard the *Louis S. St-Laurent* and witnessed first hand the valuable and vitally important work that they are undertaking.

Never before has this crucial part of Canada's ocean floor been fully mapped. This research will help Canada gain international recognition of our sovereign rights over seabed resources in the areas beyond the 200 nautical mile limit.

The purpose of Canada's mapping will be to make a submission, due in 2013, which will prove, based on the scientific and technical criteria of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the extent of the area over which Canada has sovereign rights to its continental shelf beyond this 200 nautical mile limit.

With an investment of almost \$70 million over 10 years, this Canadian program is a collaboration among Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Natural Resources Canada. The scientific work will help Canada present the best submission possible. These results will provide the maximum extent of the continental shelf outside our border. The work being done will have a lasting impact on Canada's future role in the Arctic.

The Address

●(1240)

Canada is but one of a number of Arctic nations that have embarked on this process to delineate the outer limits of their respective continental shelves. Should there be overlaps between Canada's claim and that of another nation, there are legal provisions in UNCLOS for resolving them.

This important exercise is neither an adversarial process nor a race. Rather, it is part of an orderly operation within the terms of the agreement. Under UNCLOS, each country has the right to the mineral and living resources of the soil and subsoil attached to its continental shelf but no country has sovereignty over the ice, sea or sky above it.

It is worth noting that in this regard the North Pole is on the high seas and therefore beyond any state's control. Under international law, no country can validly subject any part of the high seas, which includes the North Pole, to its sovereignty. To date, no science has proven that any seabed or continental shelf extends beyond the North Pole. As it stands, Canadians interests are not challenged in this regard.

As we all know, the sole land dispute in the Canadian Arctic is over Hans Island, which Denmark is claiming. Although Hans Island is only 1.3 square kilometres, a fraction of the size of Toronto Island or Stanley Park, and has limited resources, Canada has always acted to protect its sovereignty over this island and will continue to do so in the same manner as it protects all Canadian territory. To ensure that our position is protected, Canada and Denmark have agreed to engage in discussions on managing and eventually resolving this dispute.

The issue with the United States over the internal waters of the Canadian Arctic, including the waterways of the famed Northwest Passage, relates only to navigation rights in these waters and not to whom the waters belong. No one disputes that the waters are Canadian. The United States contends that these are Canadian territorial waters and that an international strait runs through these waters, which would limit Canada's rights to regulate navigation. Canada does not agree with this and has made it quite clear that these are internal waters of Canada by virtue of historic title. Our legal position is well-founded in fact and in law and is consistent with our rights and duties as parties to these international covenants.

For added certainty, the last Conservative government drew straight baselines around the Canadian Arctic in 1986. The drawing of these baselines was done in accordance with international agreements and the Oceans Act of Canada. As a consequence, all waters landward of the baselines are internal waters and form part of Canada's sovereign territory.

As a matter of public policy, Canada is, nevertheless, willing to permit international navigation in and through the Northwest Passage so long as the conditions established by Canada to protect security, environmental and Inuit interests are met.

Our government is moving forward with new Arctic patrol ships and expanded aerial surveillance to guard Canada's far north and Northwest Passage. Our government recognizes that an increased Canadian forces presence in the Arctic is essential to achieving our

goals in this region and that it is critical to our national interest and sense of identity.

The acquisition of new Arctic offshore patrol ships will deliver on the government's commitment to maintaining sovereignty over Canada's northern waters, ensuring that Canada's military has the equipment to conduct patrols over all these oceans. With six to eight Arctic offshore patrol ships, the Canadian navy will be able to operate in all three oceans, providing surveillance, search and rescue, and support to the RCMP, the Canadian Coast Guard and other government departments and agencies. The acquisition of these patrol ships is part of Canada's overall commitment to increase its presence in the Arctic and also includes the development of a deep-sea port and the establishment of a new Arctic training centre.

The Canadian Forces conduct aerial surveillance several times annually in the form of northern patrols and will expand this operation. These patrols improve our ability to quickly identify any crises that may happen at home or abroad. They will be a custom designed program and built in Canada and will be amongst the heaviest, most versatile armed naval vessels capable of sustained operations in ice. They will be capable of operating in ice up to one metre thick and each vessel will also be equipped with a helicopter landing pad.

Recognizing Canada's strong legal position with respect to our Arctic islands, waters and continental shelf, the Government of Canada is committed to asserting Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic and to giving itself the means to do so effectively. It is committed to growth and development, to territorial integrity and to building for a stronger future. We have already committed to a number of important initiatives and will continue to make the Canadian Arctic a pillar of our political platform.

●(1245)

To take advantage of the north's vast opportunities, northerners must be able to meet their basic needs. A strong and sovereign Arctic must be a healthy and prosperous Arctic.

Our government will work to continue to improve the lives in the north for first nations and Inuit through better housing. We will continue to introduce these measures on an hour by hour basis as the north continues to grow to its true potential.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was fascinating to hear about 10 straight minutes on flag waving and Arctic sovereignty and less than 10 seconds about actually dealing with the lives of people in the Arctic.

It reminds me of the throne speech the other night when the Prime Minister quoted the song about Franklin. We must remember that Franklin was some white guy who lost his way in the Arctic and starved to death trying to engineer the age of the pith helmet and the flag waving. It appears we are back to that.

The Address

Let me say from our experience what we are seeing in the far north. The community of Fort Albany, which suffered an extreme mould crisis this past summer, was identified by the James Bay Health Authority as a grave threat to human health. Indian affairs refused to participate in a meeting with Emergency Measures Ontario, Health Canada officials and regional chiefs to deal with this. We tried again and again and what we ended up getting were INAC spin doctors.

I spoke with the minister about this situation in September. He said that the community was offering no plan. He wanted to know where the action plan was. Well, that plan was sitting on INAC desks since early August and in mid-September the minister told me that he had never seen the plan.

We are seeing people on the James Bay coast who are in abysmal, disgraceful poverty. He stands in the House to say that we are back to the age of colonialism, that we will walk all over the Arctic waving our flag with our big ships and helicopters but meanwhile these people are living in dreg conditions. I find it appalling and I would like to know why he read only one sentence about how his government will improve lives. It has done nothing.

I would like to know what the government will specifically do about the situation in Fort Albany. As it stands right now, people are still getting sick and they are still waiting for the government to take action.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Mr. Speaker, I must say that I do not appreciate being referred to as a colonialist in light of the fact that I am an aboriginal Canadian but I will respond to his question in relation to Fort Albany.

In fact, this community built a number of homes according to a plan that they devised themselves. Indian affairs was not involved with the plan but is more than prepared to help the community address its situation with mould.

Unfortunately, the member did want to create some type of media stunt at a most recent meeting and department officials wanted no part of that. I hope that in the future he will want to proceed in a very professional and parliamentary way and, should he choose to do that, we will continue to work with him on this very important issue.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order because I was invited to go to a meeting by the chief and the grand chief of the Mushkegowuk Council. To be told in the House that I was involved in a publicity stunt is an insult and it undermines my professional integrity. I am asking the member to now withdraw the comment.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Mr. Speaker, I guess in turn I would have to say that being referred to as a colonialist is something that I find offensive as well, so I suppose I would ask for him to withdraw that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It appears that we are getting into points of debate and not points of order. I would like to move on to the next question.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry has the floor.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party seems to give priority to the militarization of the Arctic to protect Canada's sovereignty.

My question is for the hon. member. Would it not be more logical to resort to diplomacy, with the support of good icebreakers, in order to protect Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic? It seems to me that this should be the way to go, and other countries are doing that.

• (1250)

[*English*]

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Mr. Speaker, of course diplomacy is an important part of maintaining sovereignty in the north. I did indicate that we are working with Denmark in relation to the specific case of a debate on sovereignty. However, I would say that over the last number of years we have seen a massive depletion of our military and I think, based on my appreciation of international diplomacy, that it does make a difference when one is actually capable of defending one's sovereignty in terms of being able to administer diplomacy.

I know that the member and all the individuals who I know who live throughout the north, both Inuit and non-Inuit, would appreciate living within the Canadian context instead of some foreign power that does not hold democratic values as we do in Canada.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that members of the NDP continually try to drag debate in this House down to a lower level.

The parliamentary secretary indicated some of the things that our government is doing. It is important that we have a presence in the north, whether it is through our navy, our air force or our rangers. However, the issue of a research station in the north will answer a lot of the questions that we have about the situation that is changing there as far as climate, pollution and issues like that are concerned.

I would just like him to comment a bit further on the proposed research station in the Arctic.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Mr. Speaker, we have made a large commitment, not only to research but also to building a northern port in Nunavut. This will definitely assist the Government of Canada, not only in being able to do further research but also promoting our sovereignty in the area.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will split my time with the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

I am pleased to take part in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. Obviously, this speech, delivered on Tuesday, does not meet the five conditions set by the Bloc Québécois which—and I am glad to point this out—reflect the values and interests of Quebecers. This is why we will not support this throne speech.

I am of course looking at the throne speech from my perspective as our party's critic on natural resources. It goes without saying that I was disappointed to see that it did not include any new initiative. I did not see anything related to natural resources, renewable energy, or even to the debate that we are asking for on nuclear energy and radioactive waste management.

The Address

In fact, if we take a close look at the throne speech, we realize that it is old news. In the last budget, tabled in March 2007, the government had already announced the creation of a major natural resource projects management office. On October 1, the Department of Natural Resources announced on its Internet site the opening of the office. Then, on October 16, the Speech from the Throne announced the establishment of a natural resource management office. The government sure likes to repeat itself.

I would like to explain what this office is all about. I was particularly interested because of my role as critic. Every year, \$20 million of taxpayers' money will be spent on running and implementing this major projects management office for natural resources. Those watching at home will be interested to know a bit about what this office will be doing. I will quote a text from the Natural Resources Canada website:

The overall objective of this investment [by the government] is to improve the competitiveness of Canada's resource industries while providing the capacity needed to uphold Canada's world-class environmental standards.

No one is against virtue. Obviously, the Bloc Québécois wants to take steps to eliminate red tape and make things easier. That being said, we must remain vigilant. We would not want this office to end up muzzling citizen groups, making it easier to bypass environmental standards and requirements or watering down environmental criteria.

Some people may think that I am overly concerned or doubtful about this office. It is because I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and still am. On December 7, 2006, a representative from the nuclear power sector came to explain that his sector was experiencing development difficulties because it has to comply with many regulations and deadlines to obtain licences. I would like to quote Mr. Wayne Henuset, from the Energy Alberta Corporation, who spoke to the members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on Thursday, December 7, 2006. He said:

The nuclear power commission has made the licensing for this very complicated, so we would like to get the licensing a little more streamlined. Then it wouldn't take three or four years to get a licence to build a nuclear plant.

We need more clarity on the regulations. That would be the number one issue.

We can see the link between this request by the Energy Alberta Corporation and the request it submitted to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to conduct a study on setting up a nuclear generating station in the oil fields of Alberta. The government was nonetheless quick to respond to the demands of a major industry that uses natural resources. It may have been a little quicker than it would be in responding to requests from workers, women or minorities in Quebec and Canada.

Allow me to be concerned. We are not against having a more effective and more efficient machinery of government. It is a question of being vigilant and ensuring that this office, whose annual budget is indeed \$20 million and ensures the coordination of five departments, can do the work fairly by respecting the rules and requirements of the provinces and Canada.

• (1255)

The Speech from the Throne mentions supply management. In the speech the government reiterates its support for supply management.

That is good because it is giving it a chance. Nonetheless, this is not the first time the Government of Canada has given its support to supply management and that did not prevent the former minister of agriculture from making statements that somewhat contradicted the government's positions. Allow me to quote Canada's former minister of agriculture on supply management. It is not an old excerpt from the archives of Parliament; he said this on May 27, 2007.

He said, "We have the best negotiator in the world in Steve Verheul, (other countries) are talking about changes, and (producers under supply management) don't even want us to be in the room talking about changes. It is the stupidest tactic I can think of. So instead of Steve being in there and going to bat for them, he sits outside the room because all he can say is that we refuse to have any changes because our supply managed sectors can't live with any changes". I could also quote the Minister of International Trade on the stubborn sectors that held up the Doha round of negotiations.

I am concerned and vigilant, and one can see why. So, I want to tell the new Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food that, as a member representing a riding that is 80% agricultural, I will pay very close attention to what he says, in order to adequately protect producers in my constituency, because they are adamant that the supply management system must be maintained.

There are other aspects of the throne speech that I find disappointing. For example, I did not find anything on the program for older worker adjustment. I want to talk about it again today, because the government really does not seem to understand the need for such a program.

Since 2004, in my riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry, 2,500 jobs have disappeared, primarily in the textile manufacturing sector, including at the Huntingdon Mills and at the Cleyn & Tinker mill. Recently, 1,000 jobs were eliminated at the Goodyear plant, and another 150 at the Gildan plant. Finally, just recently, the Abattoirs Billette had to shut down their operations. This means a loss of over 200 jobs in the riding.

What is the Bloc asking for? It may be worth repeating, because the government does not seem to get it.

The Bloc does not want a program promoting the fact that older workers are now useless and cannot make other employers benefit from their qualifications and work experience. The Bloc wants a program that is simply designed for workers who have tried everything.

The Address

I suspect that the minister has not talked to older workers in a long time. Older workers in my riding have clearly said that, despite all their training and reclassification efforts, it is very difficult to retrain at age 58 or 59, particularly in a small town such as Huntingdon, where public transit is non-existent. It is indeed difficult for people who do not have a car to travel long distances and to relocate. What is \$75 million for people who devoted their lives to the economy of Quebec and Canada? The Bloc sincerely believes that, this time, the Conservative government had the means to give older workers, in the throne speech, what they need to retire with dignity.

In conclusion, the Conservative government must now face a confidence vote. It must now be accountable to the people of Canada.

• (1300)

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I found my colleague's speech very interesting, especially the part where she spoke of an assistance program for older workers.

We are also in favour of providing assistance to individuals who wish to retrain or find another job. However, we must realize that this is not always a possibility. I will cite the example of a massive layoff in a one-industry town where even skilled young people do not have jobs. An older worker who has always worked in the same sector may not necessarily be able to find another job.

After exhausting their employment insurance benefits, workers find that they have to sell everything, their homes and their assets, for which they worked so hard. They have to sell what took them a lifetime to acquire and spend the rest of their working life on social assistance until they retire. That is a very sad lot for those who have fought their whole life to build Quebec and Canada.

In its first throne speech, the government had promised to put in place an assistance program for older workers, like the one that existed previously, but it did not do so.

Could my colleague talk about her reaction to the fact that the government makes promises but does not deliver the goods?

Is she even more concerned that now, not only has it not delivered the goods but it is no longer even promising them?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. This gives me the opportunity to explain that, before the Conservative government implemented a program for older workers, the municipality of Huntingdon introduced a pilot project, thanks to the leadership of the mayor, Stéphane Gendron, and the cooperation of all the community partners. This was before the Conservative government took hold of the idea.

Despite the weeks of training and all the efforts made to help people retrain, while some were able to do so, not everyone was successful. The program is targeted at those individuals.

In assessing the amount needed to be able to support these individuals and these older workers, we do not think it is unreasonable, especially since, for many years, the employment insurance fund has been turning a profit, which could be reinvested in this program.

I met with many older workers and some of them broke down in my arms. In Montmagny, some ten older workers from Whirlpool

committed suicide. After speaking with the grieving families and with the co-workers of those who had committed suicide, we think it is reasonable and only right for the Conservative government to stop turning a deaf ear, to listen to the public and the demands of the Bloc Québécois, and offer these people, these workers aged 55 and over, the possibility of retiring with dignity.

• (1305)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles should know that he has 90 seconds for the question and answer.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this will only take me a couple of seconds. I want to thank my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry. I am very fond of the city of Valleyfield.

Can she explain whether funding for the POWA is shared with the provincial governments?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, my answer will be short. Quebec proposed that the federal government fund 30% of an older worker assistance program.

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take the floor today. As this House is aware, the Bloc Québécois will vote against the throne speech. We have said so from the start. We had five official requests, which were not out of the ordinary. They are five essential, reasonable priorities. As usual, the government did not want to listen to us. As usual, it had its own agenda. The government places a great deal of emphasis on militarization, and it is going to invest a lot of money in that.

I will start by talking a bit about Afghanistan. Why is it that we are sending soldiers to Afghanistan and yet we have no information here? We never have any reports about what is happening there. We know nothing. We do not know how many soldiers have been wounded, what is happening or whether our troops are in good condition. We have no information. Even the Standing Committee on National Defence gets information in dribs and drabs. This House has not sat for five months. As parliamentarians, we should at least be able to know what is happening to our soldiers in Afghanistan.

I read in a newspaper that 15% of Canadian and Quebec soldiers returning from Afghanistan suffer from mental illnesses. That is a very high number, and it might be even higher than that. So why is it that we in the House have heard nothing about this? Why is it that we have to read about this in the papers? Why has neither the Minister of National Defence nor the Prime Minister told us anything about this? This is very troubling.

The Address

We talked about withdrawing the troops by 2009, and we were going about it responsibly. We said that we had to meet with the UN to discuss readying troops from other countries to go to Afghanistan. We did our part and we have to bring our soldiers home. But in the Speech from the Throne, the government said that it wanted to prolong the mission until 2011. It even wants to put together a committee that would pay someone \$1,400 per day to study this issue even though we know that the decision has already been made. That is outrageous.

For those of you who do not know, tonight is homelessness awareness night in Quebec. People in 22 municipalities will be sleeping outside tonight. Members of a number of organizations and homeless people will spend the night out in the cold, trying to keep warm as best they can. What does the throne speech have to offer these people? Absolutely nothing. The employment insurance fund has a \$54 billion surplus, yet the throne speech promised nothing for these people and nothing for the POWA that people have been demanding for so long.

I know that my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry has some problems in her riding. Some of her constituents have even committed suicide. It is unbelievable to think that people can be driven to suicide after having depleted all of their resources. This is unacceptable at a time when the government itself is running a surplus and the employment insurance fund is overflowing to the tune of \$54 billion.

We have always asked the Conservative government and all of its predecessors for an independent employment insurance fund. Such a fund could be used to help the homeless. It could be used to increase employment insurance benefits or even to increase the number of weeks people can receive benefits. It could also help businesses by reducing their employment insurance premiums. Fifty-four billion dollars is more than a hill of beans. That is a lot of money.

What is the government doing with that money? It is helping itself to it. Where does it use it for? We have just learned from the throne speech that this money will be spent on military equipment for the Arctic. I have nothing against the Arctic, but these are billions of dollars not being spent where the need is the deepest.

Because of all that, we remain committed to fighting to protect the environment. In my riding, the Centre for Electric Vehicle Experimentation in Quebec, or CEVEQ, is conducting studies on electric automobiles and buses. It is doing a fantastic job. It is barely self-sustaining.

• (1310)

Help could be provided to the centre to enable it to expand its research and make faster progress, but no. The government would rather kiss Kyoto goodbye and follow China's lead. It is shameful to think that Canada could be comparable to China where the environment is concerned. How far back is this taking us? It makes no sense.

Immediate measures are required, but they are not being put forward. There is nothing planned in this regard. We have heard about some air pollution reduction effort, but in my book and that of ordinary people, that does not mean much. Real efforts are needed, but there is nothing planned right now—no measures and no

intention to revert even the slightest to Kyoto. That is extremely serious.

Quebec is being penalized because it has made enormous efforts to achieve the Kyoto objectives. Because of the federal government and because of Alberta, among others, with its tar sands which create five times more pollution than any other pollutant, we in Quebec will be penalized. That is absolutely unacceptable.

Everyone has heard about the crisis in the forest industry, everyone knows it is a reality, and yet no measure is proposed in the throne speech to deal with it. It is all just nice words and rhetoric, and it is totally meaningless. There is no concrete commitment. It is old stuff. This is not my first throne speech. I have been here 14 years and I have seen quite a few. This is extremely disappointing.

The federal spending power is a very important issue for Quebec. We are told that the government is committed to negotiating and reaching an agreement on the spending power, but that is utterly false. This government does not want to eliminate the spending power: it wants to control it. In any case, there are hardly any joint Quebec-Canada initiatives left, because over time we have managed to set up our own programs.

Everything that we are told in the throne speech about the spending power is absolutely false. They will create programs that we will probably not need, that we will not want, or that will not be useful to Quebec, because we do things differently. We will be stuck with those programs, and we will again be fighting with the federal government, rather than try to work and move things forward.

A large number of us have been here for many years. We defend Quebec and a number of major issues. One issue that is very dear to us involves women. However, the throne speech is totally silent on this issue. In fact, the term “women” is not even mentioned. That is really terrible.

In my riding, all the women's centres, which we so desperately need, are located in one large town. The female staff in these centres does an extraordinary job with young women and other women in need. These people are doing their utmost to fund their facilities. Yet, the throne speech does not provide a single penny to these people. This is extremely disappointing, and this is why we will definitely vote against the Speech from the Throne.

• (1315)

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's speech. She indicated that she was not happy with the throne speech. That did not create any surprise for me. What did create surprise was the fact that she said that we did not have enough information on Afghanistan. It seems as if she is relying on the newspapers for her information and is disappointed that they have not supplied her with adequate information. I suggest the member take some time to spend with those who have served in Afghanistan and listen to their stories.

The Address

Recently I hosted a town hall meeting in my riding at which I invited one such person to share his experiences and to outline the plans and priorities of the Afghan compact. With that information, the residents in my riding have been informed about what is happening there.

Rather than relying on newspapers for her information, has she taken the time to speak to some of the reservists and those who have returned to share their experiences?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Guay: Mr. Speaker, I do not wait for the newspapers to provide me with information. I am capable of speaking to people, to those who have worked in Afghanistan.

There is also the issue of wives of soldiers at the front, who have no means of support. This is a reality. They are looking for ways to get psychological help. It is very difficult to not know what is going on when their husbands are overseas—especially in Kandahar, where the battles are particularly tragic.

I have nothing to learn from my colleague. I read the papers and I speak to people. I know that there are people suffering, that some have been killed in combat, and that others are experiencing psychological problems after being sent over there.

This government is hiding all of that. It does not want us to know. It is worried that there will be increasing pressure from the public and from Parliament to bring back our troops as quickly as possible.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating our colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot on her victory, as well as the new member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean.

That said, we find this to be an odd government. Indeed, of this government, the philosopher Pascal would say that its centre is nowhere and its periphery, everywhere. No one knows where it is going; it has no direction. We are trying to determine what is guiding the government's actions.

The poverty that exists in our society is unbelievable. Our colleague began her speech by telling us about the homelessness awareness night. Although Canada is a rich country, we are seeing more poverty than ever in Canada and Quebec.

We must reconcile the need to have an efficient production system with healthy distribution policies. One way to fight poverty is through social housing.

All members received a copy of a study conducted by the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association—an association based in English Canada—which talks about a \$700 million decline in funding for affordable housing. Is my hon. colleague not saddened by how this government has abandoned people with housing needs? Does she have any hope that, together, the opposition parties can make this government listen to reason, despite its cruel insensitivity in this file? Just how discouraged does she feel?

• (1320)

Ms. Monique Guay: Mr. Speaker, this issue is of particular concern to me personally. CMHC is generating more than \$7 billion in surpluses at a time when the government is withdrawing from social housing, discontinuing its financial support in that area. We

should be aware of the fact that a family with two or three children may have to wait up to three, four and five years before getting social housing. Imagine how these people are living in the meantime.

I totally agree with my hon. colleague. This government has to focus on the real issues, not on things that turn out to be totally useless.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate. Before I recognize the hon. the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I would like to advise him that he has 20 minutes, of which only nine minutes can be used this afternoon.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise to speak on the subject of the throne speech. While the throne speech deals with the subjects of the Americas and Arctic sovereignty, I would also like to state what the Prime Minister has stated on many occasions, which is that the other regions of the world, specifically Asia, Africa, Europe and Australia, are also equally important for Canada and for Canada's foreign policy.

Since the throne speech dwelled on the Americas, I will keep my remarks today to just that region. The Americas are a region of potentially high economic trends and the region is growing faster because of favourable international conditions and generally more effective microeconomic policies.

The regional GDP expanded by an estimated 5.3% in 2006, marking a third consecutive year of expansion above 4%. The past decade has seen real gains in the advancement of economic openness in the region. Most countries in the region have embraced market based reforms and trade liberalization. There remain, however, serious income disparities and development challenges.

Politically, important gains have also been achieved in the Americas. In the past year alone, there were 10 national elections that met international standards in transparency and fairness. At the social level, however, the region remains the most unequal in the world in terms of income distribution. Despite high levels of growth in recent years, large segments of the population continue to be marginalized, and women, young people and members of the indigenous groups and of African descent are disproportionately affected.

At the regional level, the Americas benefit from a network of well established regional institutions. The Organization of American States stands at the centre of this network. The organization has increased its effectiveness in support of democracy, particularly in fielding numerous electoral observation missions with strong Canadian support.

The Inter-American Development Bank is the largest multilateral lender to the Latin American and Caribbean region, surpassing even the World Bank, with loan disbursements of \$6.5 billion U.S. in 2006. Other institutions of the inter-American system play a constructive role in addressing key challenges in the region. These include the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations economic mission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the key inter-American institution for the promotion of human rights in the region.

Private Members' Business

There is also the Summit of the Americas, the only leaders' forum for the entire hemisphere. The next one will take place in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009 and will provide a good opportunity to engage hemispheric leaders on a number of key issues for the region.

In sum, the western hemisphere has made substantial progress on democratization and economic development. Yet significant challenges remain, including persistent poverty and inequality, which in turn have fueled the resurgence of populist models of governance.

Canada is reinforcing its high level engagement in the region based on serious analysis of both the opportunities and the challenges that lie ahead, focusing Canadian leadership and making a difference. These political and economic opportunities and challenges found in the hemisphere require a multi-pronged engagement. Our engagement is based on the promotion of mutual interests here in Canada as well as the region.

Our approach is therefore based on three interlinked and reinforced objectives. The first is prosperity: to secure and expand our economic interests in established and growing markets in the region. Canada needs to act in support of progressive governments, and leaders in the region who demonstrate that democracy and an open market can deliver the economic benefits and security that people crave.

•(1325)

There are exciting commercial opportunities that can bring mutual benefits of employment and economic growth. Canada is now the third largest investor in the region. This, in turn, is generating increasing demand for Canadian products and services. Since 2003 Canadian exports to the region have risen considerably, more than 75% from 2003 to 2006, compared with exports to other regions of the world at 15.5% during the same period.

With its young population, growing middle class, sustained economic growth and abundant and diverse natural resources, the region has significant economic potential that is poised to bring benefits both to its people and to countries like Canada that develop strong commercial linkages. It is losing ground, however, to competitors like the U.S. and the EU that are aggressively negotiating and concluding new trade agreements.

Canada has benefited greatly from free trade. Trade agreements generate economic activity that contribute to healthy economies and the alleviation of poverty through the creation of remunerative employment opportunities.

Sustainable and equitable economic development strengthens the social fabric's foundation of countries and contributes to a domestic environment where human rights, good governance and the rule of law are respected. Canada is therefore committed to the pursuit of trade liberalization, particularly with partners in the Americas that share our objective of regional economic integration.

Building on the successes of NAFTA and our mutually beneficial free trade agreements with Chile and Costa Rica, FTA negotiations were recently launched with Colombia, Peru, the Dominican Republic and the CARICOM. Efforts continue to conclude the Canada-Central America Four free trade agreement with the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. All

of this trade translates into jobs and prosperity, both here and throughout the hemisphere.

I want to highlight why Canada is very much engaged in this. Historically, Canada has been engaged with these regions and we will continue to work with these regions, as I have outlined, most importantly because Canada is also in the Americas and it is important for us to make sure that our neighbours are also prosperous. Prosperity in our neighbourhood means greater prosperity also for Canada, hence the Prime Minister's re-engagement with the Americas. We will continue doing that.

Again, I am very happy to mention that this does not mean other regions will not be engaged. We continue to engage with other regions.

The recent announcement of providing honorary citizenship to Aung San Suu Kyi is one of those moments in Canadian foreign policy that gives pride to all Canadians as we stand up for democratic rights.

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

When we return to the study at hand, there will be 12 minutes left for the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

•(1330)

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ) moved that Bill C-357, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (Employment Insurance Account and premium rate setting) and another Act in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I feel as though I am in *Back to the Future*.

In a way, it is as if I were going back in time. I have already had the opportunity to speak to this bill, but the House was prorogued. We had to wait another month for work to resume in this House. That meant that the Conservative minority government did not have to answer certain questions about certain pressing issues that still urgently require attention. I am thinking in particular about the crisis in the forest industry.

Private Members' Business

I am also thinking about issues that affect my riding, Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, issues such as transportation. All the members took advantage of the extra month off to stay in their ridings. But in terms of the work of Parliament, we lost a month. It is not exactly clear why. It was not necessary to prorogue the House. There was already a legislative agenda. Parliament was already scheduled to resume, and the government had had the opportunity to give its first throne speech. Why give a second one? The people who are watching can form their own opinions. Personally, I have the feeling that the government wanted to buy time and create a diversion. I would even go so far as to say that the Conservative minority government took pleasure in making use of parliamentary procedure.

Now, it is my turn to take pleasure in procedure. For a number of reasons, it gives me pleasure to again raise the issue of creating an independent employment insurance fund.

There is a history to this issue. I also have a history when it comes to this issue, because in another life I was a reporter for CHNC New Carlisle, a local radio station. I was also involved in organized labour.

Indeed I had the opportunity to work in the labour movement for the Conseil central CSN Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine. My radio career lasted about 23 years, and I also worked for a few years in the labour movement.

Socio-economic development was one of the issues that was of particular interest to us. If you look for it, you will find it in certain places. I am thinking, for example, of the recent visit of my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry to Murdochville. We saw what is happening with wind energy, but it is not the be all and end all. Wind energy is just one element of what can be developed. And there has to be a maximization of these elements with regard to wind energy.

Members probably know that, over the next few years, that is by 2013 or 2014, several billion dollars will be invested in the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé regions.

In fact, there is a question as to the kind of real benefits this will bring in terms of job creation and so on.

There is LM Glassfiber in Gaspé and another company in Matane, but the latter is not located in my riding; it is outside the administrative region of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Apart from that, what is there? Yes, there are wind farms like the one in Murdochville, where hundreds of millions of dollars have been committed, spent and invested. But how many jobs remain in the region? Not necessarily a whole lot. That is why one must be very careful when quoting numbers that may seem very big, especially if they are spread over several years. We have to look at what the real situation is.

We are talking here about unemployment insurance, and I am still using the term unemployment insurance because I feel that calling it employment insurance is just a diversion, a way to lead us to believe that employment is the ultimate remedy and that as long as there are jobs, unemployment will no longer exist.

● (1335)

The bad news is that full employment, in other words a 0% unemployment rate, does not exist; not even in the flourishing economy of certain cities in Canada or in Quebec. For that reason, we can still talk about unemployment insurance.

This leads us to another reality, that experienced by the people in regions like mine or other regions in Quebec. An unemployed person is not necessarily unemployed by choice. Sometimes it is mandatory. I am sure that many people know what I am talking about. Whether we like it or not, tourism, forestry, fisheries and agriculture all provide seasonal employment. It is not the unemployed person who is seasonal. It is the work that is seasonal. The person would like to work 12 months a year, in certain sectors of the economy in particular. Nonetheless, the fishery being what it is, it is a seasonal activity. The same is true for agriculture.

As far as tourism is concerned, people try to extend the tourism season. Unfortunately, in some situations, there is still a long way to go, a bridge to gap between the end of one job and the beginning of another. In other cases, people wait to get the same seasonal job back again and that is why unemployment insurance is so important.

Over the years we have seen two big waves of cuts that have seriously harmed the unemployed and regions like mine. The Brian Mulroney government triggered the first wave. I do not know if people remember it, but I believe the people in my riding remember it very well. This wave hurt everyone's wallets. It did not stop at this first wave of cuts. The arrival of the subsequent government, that of Jean Chrétien, led to a second wave of cuts that hurt just as bad.

During that time, they realized that there was a lot of money in the so-called employment insurance fund. The latest figures from February 2007, show a \$51 billion surplus. This huge sum was misappropriated.

The creation of an independent employment insurance fund would prevent this theft from continuing. Because of the various cuts and measures, this theft has left people in regions like ours in extremely difficult situations.

I simply want to point out this sad reality. An unemployed person does not automatically receive hundreds of dollars in EI benefits a week in order to live a great life. It is not like that at all in most cases.

Take the case of a woman working in the hotel industry in Percé, or in another tourist area, where she works as a housekeeper in a motel. She works split shifts, for a total of 15 hours, 20 hours, 30 hours. Depending on the number of guests, the number of hours she works increases or decreases. This type of schedule means that from week to week, or day to day, she does not know exactly when she will start or finish. Obviously, it depends on the number of tourists.

Private Members' Business

Then, these workers find themselves in need of the much talked about unemployment benefits, which cover 55% of what they earn—we must not forget that it is minimum wage. It is not \$17 or \$20 an hour; it is minimum wage. At 55%, they find themselves straddling the poverty line.

In most cases, people must find another job or accumulate work hours in order to receive the so-called generous EI. This covers 55% of a relatively good wage, but leaves them struggling.

I will not go into what happens in the fisheries sector.

• (1340)

When people facing these situations see that more than \$50 billion has been diverted, they understand. They see it happening, that the wealth is poorly distributed and their situation is not improving. This is why Bill C-357 is so important.

The employment insurance program must be improved. By the way, one of my Bloc Québécois colleagues already introduced such a bill that made it to third reading.

There is also the matter of the creation of an independent employment insurance fund. Why is it important to have an independent fund? At the very least, it could involve three components.

First, there is the whole history which I just spoke about, all the real life factors. We must ensure that the money is not misappropriated. It is understandable that a bit more money is needed here and there. However, we can find ourselves unemployed for one reason or another. It might be because a business has closed. That has happened often in my region. For example, there was a fire at Anse-aux Gascons and workers were faced with a forced closure. That happened in Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Grande-Entrée and in various other places, I imagine, in Quebec and Canada as well. All their lives, these people paid into the employment insurance fund. I feel it was unfair because they should have been helped and not gouged over the years, supposedly to fight the deficit. At whose expense was this done? You know very well what I mean. It was at the expense of the unemployed and regions such as ours. For this reason these people consider it a scandal just like the sponsorship scandal.

Who is pleased with the realization that the fund is doing all right financially, that the money is being used for other purposes and that the contribution rate is constantly being reduced? If we lower the premium rate for someone who works only 15 to 20 hours per week, a few weeks of the year, in the tourism sector, how much will they save? One, two, three, five or seven dollars? No more than that.

An owner of a large business might find the premium reduction interesting—and the employee as well, depending on his salary. That is why the money from the employment insurance fund should not be used for other purposes. That is why we should have an independent fund with a premium rate that would be established by independent individuals, not on the basis of political considerations but based on reality, with consideration for the situation of employers and employees. Three parties would have a say in the proposed independent fund. In other words, there would be representatives for the employers, the employees and the government.

I have the impression that today I represent the large numbers of unemployed in regions such as ours who believe that the unfairness must come to an end and that an independent employment insurance fund must be created.

Just recently, I heard the Conservative government—and I will get back to this later on—say that it will ask for a royal recommendation regarding this issue. This is a roundabout way to avoid creating the independent fund that we are proposing. It hurts me to hear these comments. Personally, given the situation, I would feel bad if I were in their shoes, because they represent regions, they represent unemployed people.

• (1345)

This is why it is important that, ideally, Bill C-357 should get the unanimous support of the House.

[*English*]

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about premium rates. He did not really think that the dollar increase to premiums was important.

Manufacturing is very important in Quebec and small business is important. There is a huge constituency of people across Canada who have small businesses. In fact, about 98% of small and medium business enterprises have 500 or less employees and some of them less than 100. These are small businesses. I can see, and I want to ask this member if he can see, what an unfair burden this would be on small businesses?

These are large numbers. He speaks a lot about the industry in big numbers, but what about the big numbers of small businesses out there? There are very many small and medium business enterprises that have less than 500 and some less than 100 employees. An increase in premiums would mean a lot to these employers and employees. That is my question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Conservative member for her question, because it allows me to further explain our position on this issue, with regard to reducing the premium rate for businesses.

The example she gave of businesses with 100 employees or less is increasingly less frequent in a number of our regions. I could explain what happened at home, where three major companies, namely Gaspésia in Chandler, Mines Noranda in Murdochville, and Stone in New-Richmond, had several hundred workers, that is 400, 500 or 600, depending on the location. However, these companies are no longer in existence.

Most of the companies that are in operation in regions such as ours are very small businesses. I do not like terms such as small, major or big, because they are businesses nonetheless. However, they may have one employee or 50 or 10. When these people see that the premium rate is set, but then goes down continuously, they ask themselves this question: Is the fact that their premium rate, as employers, is going down such a good thing, considering that their business employs 5, 10, 15 or 20 people? The entrepreneur realizes that there is the clientele on the other side. Unemployed people also buy products. In a way, this is also part of the economy.

They realize, through the principle of solidarity—and that is what you must understand in my explanation—that it is more important to make even a slight improvement to the employment insurance program than to make a minimal reduction in the premium rate. In some cases, the reduction does not have any effect. Real savings are realized by companies with 1,000, 5,000 or 10,000 employees. In these cases, the premium rate may come into play and provide the shareholders of these large companies with a little more money. However, whether we are dealing with a very small, small, medium-sized or large business, it thinks in terms of solidarity.

That is what I would like my colleagues, and particularly my colleague who asked the question, to think about with respect to creating an independent fund. Setting a premium rate solely out of political interest runs the risk of again being a complete mistake. For this reason, the creation of an independent fund, with an independent commission where employers, employees and the government would be represented, would perhaps make it possible to correct this type of injustice.

• (1350)

[*English*]

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in May I rose to speak to important issues put forward in Bill C-357, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act, but unfortunately we ran out of time. I would now like to take the opportunity to finish what I have to say on the bill.

From the outset, let me state that the government supports the principles behind the creation of a separate EI account, but there are many aspects of the bill that we cannot support.

On Tuesday, the Speech from the Throne outlined the government's priorities going forward. Rest assured, the changes to the EI program to make it more responsive to the needs of Canadians is one of those priorities.

I note the opposition has proposed several changes to the EI program during the course of this Parliament, often without supporting evidence or clear objectives on what the proposed changes were supposed to address. This is not something in which the government will engage. We will only put forward measured changes backed up by evidence and supported by Canadians who pay for this program with their hard-earned money.

It is important to get these things right. Canadians depend on us to ensure that the EI system remains a system, one that is effective, sustainable and reflects the needs of all who need it. The proposals put forward here put the future of the EI system at risk.

Private Members' Business

There is a reason we need to have a debate on a separate EI account today, and it is simple. It was mismanagement by the previous Liberal government and it was allowed by the Liberal government over a period of 10 years, a \$51 billion surplus to accumulate in what many in the House have called the EI account.

The \$51 billion was not government revenue. It was the wages of workers and the contribution of employers. We have always maintained that these were supposed to be used for benefits or premium reductions. Instead it was used for program spending in countless other areas and some of it was lost to fiscal mismanagement.

During study of the previous incarnation of this bill, Bill C-280, during the last Parliament, my colleague from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock stated during committee study, “the Auditor General surely did not foresee that the government could continuously and deliberately overcharge employers and workers and allow this massive surplus to build up”, but they did. The Liberals allowed the surplus to grow and they became addicted to it.

Liberal mismanagement comes as no surprise to anyone in the House. We have seen the billion dollar HRSDC boondoggle under the Liberals watch. We have seen a \$2 million gun registry turn into a \$2 billion gun registry. We have seen \$51 billion in workers' and employers' money spent in other areas with no explanation and certainly with no apologies.

As important as the principle of a separate account is to our government, it is nevertheless important that we not look at the EI program in isolation, that the opposition's vision for employment insurance must be examined in its entirety. We must get a picture of what the opposition expects from this program and if it is a realistic vision.

The facts will show that the opposition's vision is anything but realistic. There is currently an incoherent array of 19 opposition private members' bills related to EI on the order paper, with a combined cost of just 10 of these at well over \$11 billion annually. This glut of opposition bills exemplifies the ad hoc and inefficient approach to EI reform being proposed by all opposition parties. The sheer magnitude of the changes being proposed to this valuable program leads one to believe that these changes have been proposed for political reasons because all these changes together do not make any sense. Yet the opposition has so far supported them all.

• (1355)

The opposition ad hoc approach to EI reform is telling of a larger problem.

Let us just examine a few of the other bills that the opposition has put forward in this Parliament.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-269 sought to drastically alter the administration and objectives of the EI system. It proposed a flat entrance requirement, a requirement designed to maximize labour market participation at a time when we had more jobs than people. It proposed vastly expanded benefit terms that were designed to provide a balance between adequate temporary income support and incentives to return to work.

These proposed changes would cost the EI system billions of dollars a year and have not been supported by a stitch of evidence.

Bill C-278 proposed a wide-sweeping change to the EI program by raising the sickness benefits from the current 15 weeks to a maximum of 50 weeks, all this despite the fact that all the available evidence indicates that the current system meets and even exceeds the needs of the vast majority of people who use the system.

There has been no study for either of these bills, which would \$4.8 billion annually in new spending on benefits.

We know the people who pay premiums, both employers and employees, have asked for some consideration, especially given this hot job market. They would not get it with either of these bills.

Why does the opposition insist on proposing changes to the program when the evidence does not support these changes? Could it be particularly for political purpose?

I believe that Canadians rejected this type of governance. Almost two years ago, Canadians elected a Conservative government, a government that would restore some accountability to the way things worked in Ottawa.

We cannot and will not make wide-sweeping changes to programs without proper evidence. Without understanding the full implications of these changes, we certainly will not enact these types of changes unless they are in the best interest of all Canadians.

The government will not act like the last government. We have a broad based labour market approach to the EI program. We have aimed our changes at providing opportunities for all Canadians to participate in our healthy and growing economy. This approach is outlined in our economic plan called "Advantage Canada".

The government has already taken action to address the quantity and quality challenges laid out in "Advantage Canada" by creating the apprenticeship incentives grant as a follow-up to the 2006 budget, working to improve foreign credential recognition and launching the targeted initiative for older workers and an expert panel to conduct a feasibility study on older workers.

We will continue to monitor and assess the EI program. We have made changes to the EI in the past year and we will consider further changes when it is justified.

One of the main reasons we initially advocated for a separate EI account was the previous government's inability to keep premiums in line with benefits.

The EI commission has set the 2007 rate at \$1.80. This will save employers and employees \$420 million a year. When combined with the increase in the maximum insurable earnings, this is the lowest

rate in 14 years, all the while we have acted to maintain and in many instances increase benefits for unemployed Canadians.

We believe this new rate setting mechanism is important. That is why we supported it when we were in opposition.

Canada's new government has shown that we are responsible when it comes to making informed changes to the EI system. The opposition has shown that it is not. I think all Canadians will understand if the government shows a little caution when such broad changes are proposed to a program as important as the employment insurance.

● (1400)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank and congratulate the member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine for again raising issues related to employment insurance, or unemployment insurance.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development has given us a real history and has berated the House and parliamentarians for raising employment insurance yet again in the House, asking to consider changes. That is our right and our responsibility. In certain regions of the country it is even more acute that those changes be considered.

Consider, for instance, the situation now in Alberta. There is no unemployment in Alberta. They are paying people in fast food restaurants twice what they are paid in most other provinces because they cannot find enough people. These people pay their employment insurance and will not collect any benefits because there is full employment in the extreme.

There are regions of the country where that is not the case. The member has laid out, on behalf of his constituents, his province and the Maritimes, where seasonal industries are a unique challenge for the system. Right now the system does not properly respond to that economic, industrial or business based reality.

We could ask why these seasonal workers do not get another job after that season is over and go into another business rather than another season. We could say that the onus is on them. That would be an ideal solution if there were another seasonal industry in the next season where they could readily get a job.

It does not happen that seamlessly. The reality is people are trying to work hard, trying to make a living and supporting their families and themselves, but there is a disruption and it is a constant disruption.

Maybe the question for the parliamentary secretary to ask of the minister is this. Do we want to pay some attention to the unique situations in regions and provinces of our country, where in fact the options are not as readily available? Do we really want to let it keep going?

Private Members' Business

Are there some options? Could there be some business development initiatives to create the work in those areas where there will be a skilled and ready workforce available for companies that are there? That is the party that talked about the Maritimes as having a defeatist attitude, that they did not want to work. That was the Prime Minister.

I know the Conservative attitude. Anybody who claims EI must be a burden on society, that they are doing it on purpose and taking money out of the system.

This is a rash condemnation of a lot of Canadians who are in that situation. In my own riding a lot of people who collect EI. Also a lot of people pay EI all their lives and never collect a penny of EI benefits in their entire working career. That is a good thing because EI is an insurance program. It is our wish that no Canadian would ever have to draw on those benefits.

The system should be there regardless of where a person lives in Canada, to ensure that there can be some support and assistance to allow people to live in dignity with their family when they cannot get a job.

We also know there are specific cases in the industries that the member raised such as the tourism, forestry and fisheries industries. These are vital industries. Some would ask this question. If they are so vital and if they are seasonal, which means they are in high demand for skilled people at the time when the season is at its peak, why are those industries paying so poorly and thereby reducing effectively the amount of benefits for which anyone would qualify? This is a problem to be addressed.

• (1405)

This bill needs a royal recommendation and it is clear that is not going to be forthcoming from the government. That has already been stated. The other day the Speaker reaffirmed that this bill requires a royal recommendation. It will get the debate, but at the end of third reading debate, the question will not be put, the bill will die and we will have had this discussion.

Every time we have this discussion the member should take some encouragement from the fact that in the Parliament of Canada we are raising again for the interest of anyone whose ears will listen that there are challenges that we can meet.

The parliamentary secretary preferred not to talk about the member's bill which is her right and I respect her right, but to say that it was the Liberals who mismanaged the fund, well there is a commission—

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Now.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Now she is going to argue with me and we will talk about it later.

The problem is that in the years of the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney, the EI fund, which currently is in a surplus position, was actually in a deficit position of \$12 billion.

I hope the parliamentary secretary will pay attention for a second. The Auditor General told the Government of Canada that this is a program for Canadians that has revenues coming in and expenses going out. It is inappropriate to have that accounted for outside of the

consolidated revenue fund, the bank of the Government of Canada, because it is not a fair reflection of the economic condition of the country and the performance of the programs which the taxpayers' dollars support.

Accordingly, the Auditor General told the government that it must incorporate the financial activities of the employment insurance program into the consolidated revenue fund so that we have a fair reflection of the finances. That is how it happened.

The commission that was set up continued to keep track of money in and money out. When there is a surplus, interest is being earned by the fund. It is not money just sitting there for the use of the government.

The commission is charged to do certain things. One is to ensure that there always is at least two years of benefits available in the event that the country would enter into a deep recession. The commission is to assess the trend line of the economy and the projected benefits, et cetera coming in and out to determine how much it can reduce premiums, or if there is an introduction of new programs, take those into account. In any event, the activities recommended by the commission are to bring that EI account into the direction of getting it down closer to the level of the two years.

What has happened? Under the government of Brian Mulroney, EI premiums were scheduled to go up to \$3. When the Liberals took office in 1993, we immediately reduced them and they in fact have been reduced each and every year since then by the Government of Canada.

Who would have thought when the U.S. went into a recession that Canada would not go into a recession? Who would have thought we would have the economic performance that we enjoy and the surpluses we have had, because we have had the lowest unemployment in 31 years because we have had a sound growth rate and good economic management? That is a reflection of why the EI surplus continues to grow. It is almost impossible to wipe it out too quickly.

There are ways to deal with this. Members could say that it is in the consolidated revenue fund. If we want to set up a separate account, first of all let us determine whether the Auditor General will be in favour for good accounting reasons and I think that is not the case, so that is not the option. The issue is how to bring it down in an orderly fashion so that it is fair to all.

Again, I thank the member for raising the issue. I think this is one that is clear from some of the statements I have heard from the parliamentary secretary that the government still does not understand from where we came, where we are, and where we are going.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-357, which is aimed at preventing the government from stealing money from this account that should be reserved for workers. This is a fundamental element of our social safety net that is wearing thin. Yet with important transformations in our economy and with the emergence of new technologies, it is increasingly important to have this safety net, which can help workers move towards better-paying jobs.

Private Members' Business

It is true that right now, in this country, there seem to be fewer unemployed workers. The figures come from Statistics Canada and other organizations. However, there is much more poverty. It is obviously more difficult to make a decent living in Canada today.

[English]

In fact, it does not matter what kind of difficulty people are in, but the government's approach is that people should pull themselves up by the bootstraps. I am thinking of the difficulties in the manufacturing sector and the difficulties in the Maritimes for seasonal workers where hard-working people are having difficulties making the transition to other employment. There need to be other initiatives to help them. Certainly, employment insurance was one of them. It was a fund used by the current and previous governments.

[Translation]

This government, just like its predecessor, has been helping itself to the EI account, and this must stop. According to the new figures from the Department of Finance, there is currently \$54 billion in that account, and there is every indication that the Conservative government continues to use the contributions paid by workers to increase its surplus.

Of course we know that it was the Liberals who designed this plan when they were doing their budget cuts in the 1990s. They changed the eligibility criteria in such a way that, currently, only 38% of men and 32% of women qualify for benefits. It is a shame.

First of all, these cuts made to the EI program were not aimed solely at achieving a balanced budget. The government wanted to create a flexible labour market and eliminate uncertainty among workers through a strategy favouring low-cost labour. Many workers were shortchanged by these cuts.

Of course, because of these cuts in the 1990s, several social programs—and this one in particular—became weaker. These programs were of national importance not only for those affected—and that is what concerns me the most—but also because they were an essential part of what binds us together as Canadians.

Perhaps we should take another look at the definition of insurance. When a worker is having major difficulties, when he loses his job, what happens? The government should be there for him, but it is not. There is a group of people in the government right now who do not believe in government. They prefer to go to the private sector for everything. Privatization reigns and according to those people, the market will solve all our problems.

We have to take another look at what insurance is. I just renewed my home insurance and the terms of it are clear. I read that if I pay my premiums and my house burns down, I will be reimbursed. With employment insurance, it is different. Employees contribute for years and when they need it, the funds are not there. They cannot get the help they should in these difficult times. Employment insurance should make it easier to get back to work, to get back to a good job, but that is not so.

In the Speech from the Throne, we see that the government intends to take measures to improve the governance and management of the employment insurance fund. This morning I heard the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development during oral

question period say that he did not really intend to meet the needs of the workers. That is worrisome.

• (1415)

[English]

The government seems to be in a hurry to devolve responsibilities for workforce training and funding to provinces with no strings attached. In my area we have seen training contracts given to private American companies at the expense of well established effective community agencies that did that work.

I would like to talk for a few minutes about employability, since the Conservative government has launched a study on employability, and my comments are particularly related to the topic of employment insurance. However, I have only a faint hope of seeing the government recognize the Canadian workforce as people rather than as commodities.

The primary objective of all policies surrounding the labour market and employability, indeed the primary objective of our economy, is how the government seems to see the worker. It is time that the labour market worked for the benefit of workers rather than just for profit as it does now.

The key to our success as a democratic society is to treat hardworking people decently and to give them the opportunity to improve their lives. They need a guarantee that employment insurance will be there for them. They need a guarantee that they will be able to access it in times of need as opposed to having doors shut on them.

As we do this study on employability we should look at employment insurance and the role that it could play. We feel strongly that the government should end the clawback of EI for recipients pursuing training and education.

My last words will deal with education and literacy issues. Nine million Canadians do not have functional levels of literacy and yet the government cut literacy programs last year by \$18 million. This is an example of where EI could be used for training to improve those skills. I hope that the government will review its position in this important area.

• (1420)

[Translation]

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise here today to speak to Bill C-357, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act. First of all, I would like to congratulate and thank my colleague, the hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, for having introduced and so rigorously defended this bill. He can always be counted on to defend the citizens of his riding. The Bloc Québécois is equally committed to defending the interests of all Quebecers.

With this bill, we are defending those citizens who are struggling with employment insurance problems. People need employment insurance for all kinds of reasons: because they are facing company closures, because they work in seasonal jobs or because a factory might eliminate certain jobs, for example. People can thus turn to employment insurance. However, for the past several years, this assistance has been reduced. Access to the program has been limited for many men and women in Quebec and throughout Canada. It is shameful. As we all know, the employment insurance fund has accumulated more than \$50 billion. Today, we hear it might be as high as \$55 billion. This bill is important, because it aims to establish two fundamental principles to meet the needs of workers who must receive employment insurance.

Since I was elected in 2004, the subject of creating an independent employment insurance fund has come up regularly in this House. We have also talked about an independent commission made up of workers to oversee it.

In their speech, the Conservatives said that they supported the idea of an independent employment insurance fund. A short time ago, when they were in opposition, they not only supported the idea of implementing an employment insurance fund, they wanted to create such a fund. Now they support the idea, but nothing is for sure. The Speech from the Throne mentioned a few things about this, but only one thing is clear: the surplus in the employment insurance fund has grown since the Conservatives came to power. They are doing exactly what the former Liberal government did. They should be ashamed.

Even though the employment insurance fund now has a \$55 billion surplus, the government is restricting access to it and reducing the eligibility of citizens who work very hard and sometimes under difficult conditions. These people are under a lot of pressure, just as we all are. We are under pressure because of our families, our financial obligations, responsibility for our children's education, and obligations with respect to access to health services that, like it or not, cost money. But we are not helping these workers. We strangle them and bleed them dry, and then we tell them that we cannot help them, we can no longer support them despite the \$55 billion surplus made up of their own contributions and those of their employers. That is shameful.

I have been here since 2004, and I have always found it surprising to observe the political games that go on here between the Liberals and the Conservatives. Now that the Conservatives are in power, we are seeing their true colours. They are doing the same thing. They do not care about the less fortunate or people in need in our society.

• (1425)

I listened to the Conservative members talk. The Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities made 22 recommendations to improve the employment insurance system. A number of measures were recommended. My Conservative colleague said that all these measures would cost about \$1 billion. Still, investing in people is better than investing in the military. We are talking about a program of military spending. The government plans to invest \$17 billion in the military, in arms and submarines, over the next five years. But it has difficulty investing in people in need.

Private Members' Business

Not only does the federal government have a \$55 billion surplus in the employment insurance fund, but it also has a \$14 billion budget surplus.

This \$14 billion surplus is tax revenue from individuals and companies. What is the government doing? It is saying that it cannot help the unemployed, it is slashing funding for literacy groups and women's programs, it is cutting the court challenges program and it is making it more difficult for people to qualify for employment insurance. Sometimes, seasonal workers need only a few more weeks to qualify for employment insurance, and they have to go on welfare to make ends meet at month-end and year-end. It is shameful. These governments seem insensitive.

What is the purpose of government? To redistribute the taxes and other moneys it collects. The government must be fairer and more just. It must invest in economic sectors that need help. It must invest in people and support their professional development. It must support workers. But that is not happening. We wonder what this government is supporting, exactly. People do not seem to matter to the government. The independent employment insurance fund is proof of that. I hope that this bill will pass at first reading, second reading and third reading and that it will come into law once and for all. If this government has any self-respect at all, it will pass this bill. The Conservatives promised this in their election campaign. They promised to resolve the independent employment insurance fund issue.

It is outrageous that some workers who do not have access to the independent employment insurance fund are also paying too much into it.

It does not make sense that working people who suddenly fall ill—with cancer, for example—can collect only 15 weeks of employment insurance benefits. When people get sick, they have to apply for social assistance because the system cannot meet their needs. That does not make sense.

It does not make sense that someone who works for 10 consecutive months and leaves their job is not entitled to employment insurance, even if they have found a new job and work there for one month. That person is not entitled to employment insurance, even though they have paid into it for a full year. Instead of staying home and relying on employment insurance, they go out and find another job, but the system penalizes them.

There are all kinds of glitches and problems within the employment insurance system. Creating an independent employment insurance fund is crucial, and so is improving the employment insurance system. It is our duty, as elected representatives, to support our workers, especially when the independent employment insurance fund has a surplus of some \$50 billion or \$55 billion and when the government is predicting a surplus of \$14 billion this year. The less fortunate in our society deserve fairness and equality.

• (1430)

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.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

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

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

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

MR. JAMES MOORE

MR. JOE PRESTON

HON. KAREN REDMAN

HON. LUCIENNE ROBILLARD

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Second Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage..	Kootenay—Columbia.....	British Columbia	CPC
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)	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 of Natural Resources and 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 Foreign Affairs	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 for Status of Women	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	BQ
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooog, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	Québec	BQ
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Pontiac	Québec	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Québec	BQ
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	BQ
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	Ind.
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	CPC
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 for 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
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	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la- Chaudière	Québec	CPC
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
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix— Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Harvey, Luc	Louis-Hébert	Québec	CPC
Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	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, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	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, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	BQ
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
Lebel, Denis	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Québec	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	BQ
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	CPC
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	BQ
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 National Defence 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 Finance	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
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 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
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	Québec	NDP
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 Revenue	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Québec	Lib.
Pallister, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of International Cooperation	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
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 Industry	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, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	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
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	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—Kapusking	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 Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	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.
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	BQ
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, Mervin	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 Canadian Heritage, Status of Women 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	Desnethé—Missinippi— Churchill River.....	Saskatchewan	
VACANCY	Toronto Centre	Ontario	
VACANCY	Willowdale	Ontario	
VACANCY	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Second Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CPC
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	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 Finance	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 Industry	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	CPC
Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Medicine Hat	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
Williams, John	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (35)		
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Bell, Catherine	Vancouver Island North	NDP
Bell, Don	North Vancouver	Lib.
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Chan, Hon. Raymond	Richmond	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	CPC
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Vancouver Kingsway	CPC
Fast, Ed.	Abbotsford	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	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 for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Priddy, Penny	Surrey North	NDP
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	NDP
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	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.
VACANCY	Vancouver Quadra	
MANITOBA (14)		
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill, The Deputy Speaker	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary for 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, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of International Cooperation	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, Mervin	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche.....	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Hubbard, Hon. Charles.....	Miramichi.....	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic.....	Beauséjour.....	Lib.
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Fundy Royal	CPC
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest.....	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	Lib.
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Byrne, Hon. Gerry.....	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East.....	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.....	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	CPC
Manning, Fabian.....	Avalon	CPC
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott.....	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor.....	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis.....	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Hon. Scott.....	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	Ind.
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark.....	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Central Nova	CPC
McDonough, Alexa.....	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West.....	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore.....	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Lib.
NUNAVUT (1)		
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut.....	Lib.
ONTARIO (104)		
Albrecht, Harold.....	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alghabra, Omar.....	Mississauga—Erindale.....	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
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	CPC
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
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, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	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 Revenue	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	CPC
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	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—Kapuskaing	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.
VACANCY.....	Toronto Centre.....	
VACANCY.....	Willowdale.....	

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 (75)

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 Foreign Affairs.....	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 for Status of Women.....	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.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	BQ
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	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
Lebel, Denis	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
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
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	NDP
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
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Ind.
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	BQ
SASKATCHEWAN (13)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and 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.....	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
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.....	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Skelton, Hon. Carol	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
VACANCY	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River .	
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon.....	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of October 19, 2007 — 2nd Session, 39th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FINANCE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

HEALTH

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

HUMAN RESOURCES, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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NATURAL RESOURCES

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Vice-Chair:

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

Yvon Godin
Gary Goodyear
Michel Guimond

Dominic LeBlanc
Pierre Lemieux
Tom Lukiwski

Pauline Picard
Joe Preston
Marcel Proulx

Karen Redman
Scott Reid
Lucienne Robillard

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

STATUS OF WOMEN

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

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Hon. David Emerson	Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics
Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn	Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec
Hon. Greg Thompson	Minister of Veterans Affairs
Hon. Marjory LeBreton	Leader of the Government in the Senate and Secretary of State (Seniors)
Hon. Monte Solberg	Minister of Human Resources and Social Development
Hon. Chuck Strahl	Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Hon. Gary Lunn	Minister of Natural Resources
Hon. Peter MacKay	Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Hon. Loyola Hearn	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Hon. Stockwell Day	Minister of Public Safety
Hon. Vic Toews	President of the Treasury Board
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 Revenue
Hon. Bev Oda	Minister of International Cooperation
Hon. Jim Prentice	Minister of Industry
Hon. John Baird	Minister of the Environment
Hon. Maxime Bernier	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Lawrence Cannon	Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Hon. Tony Clement	Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario
Hon. Jim Flaherty	Minister of Finance
Hon. Josée Verner	Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages
Hon. Michael Fortier	Minister of Public Works and Government Services
Hon. Peter Van Loan	Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform
Hon. Gerry Ritz	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Hon. Jay Hill	Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip
Hon. Jason Kenney	Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity)
Hon. Helena Guergis	Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport)
Hon. Christian Paradis	Secretary of State (Agriculture)
Hon. Diane Ablonczy	Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)

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Mrs. Sylvie Boucher	to the Prime Minister and for Status of Women
Mr. Rob Moore	to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Mr. Brian Pallister	to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of International Cooperation
Mr. James Moore	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics
Mr. Jacques Gourde	to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec
Mrs. Betty Hinton	to the Minister of Veterans Affairs
Mrs. Lynne Yelich	to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development
Mr. Rod Bruinoooge	to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Mr. David Anderson	to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board
Mr. Laurie Hawn	to the Minister of National Defence
Mr. Gerald Keddy	to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Mr. Randy Kamp	to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Mr. Dave MacKenzie	to the Minister of Public Safety
Mr. Pierre Poilievre	to the President of the Treasury Board
Mr. Russ Hiebert	to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification
Mr. Ed Komarnicki	to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Mr. Colin Carrie	to the Minister of Industry
Mr. Mark Warawa	to the Minister of the Environment
Mr. Deepak Obhrai	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Brian Jean	to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Mr. Steven Fletcher	for Health
Mr. Guy Lauzon	to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario
Mr. Ted Menzies	to the Minister of Finance
Hon. Jim Abbott	for Canadian Heritage
Mr. Pierre Lemieux	for Official Languages
Mr. Tom Lukiwski	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform

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