



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

---

VOLUME 142 • NUMBER 032 • 2nd SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

---

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, December 6, 2007**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

## **CONTENTS**

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

**<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 6, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

---

*Prayers*

---

• (1005)

[*English*]

## POINTS OF ORDER

ALLEGED BEHAVIOUR OF MEMBER FOR PORT MOODY—WESTWOOD—  
PORT COQUITLAM

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday the member for London—Fanshawe rose on a point of order concerning alleged behaviour by the member for Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam. I also spoke on this point of order and made comments that I would like to apologize for if they caused any undue concern and embarrassment to the member for Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam.

**Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to the chief opposition whip for that apology.

I would like to point out though, on this point of order, that all too often some members in the Chamber jump to conclusions and they can do other members a lot of damage and cause a lot of hurt unnecessarily.

Obviously, we look forward to the apology that I understand will be forthcoming from the member for London—Fanshawe as well, but the point is that what we have seen in the Chamber is some of the worst. When people are unjustly accused, it becomes a national media circus and story.

On behalf of my colleague who is not in the Chamber at the moment, and I know I am not supposed to say that but I think that is obvious, I will accept the apology of the hon. member.

However, I would point out that, especially as whips, we are the people who are responsible for the morale and the discipline of our respective caucuses. I think it is incumbent upon us to reflect on that and not jump to conclusions.

**The Speaker:** I thank both whips for their submissions. The hon. member for Vancouver East is rising on the same point of order.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say, listening to the opposition whip and the government whip, that certainly the member for London—Fanshawe

will at the earliest opportunity be in the House to make an apology. Therefore, I just want to confirm that indeed that will happen.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. members for their attention to this matter. As I indicated yesterday, in my view it was a completely invalid point of order and I also indicated that it was not appropriate for it to have been raised in the House.

\* \* \*

## INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of a Canadian parliamentary delegation concerning its official visit to Germany from October 8 to 14, 2007.

---

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1010)

[*English*]

### TSAWWASSEN FIRST NATION FINAL AGREEMENT ACT

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-34, An Act to give effect to the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

**The Speaker:** Does the minister wish to rise on a point of order?

**Hon. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, after so many years of waiting, I just wish to put on the record that it is an honour to introduce in the House, in both official languages, the historic Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement Act.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order No. 91.1(2), this report contains the list of items added to the order of precedence, as a result of the replenishment that took place on Friday, November 23, 2007 under private members' business, that should not be designated non-votable.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled "Reclaiming Citizenship for Canadians: A Report on the Loss of Canadian Citizenship".

I am very pleased, after weeks of hearing witnesses, that our committee has been able to present today a unanimous report on this very important issue. I want to thank committee members for their involvement and the vice-chair as well, the member for Kitchener—Waterloo.

## FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in relation to Bill C-32, An Act respecting the sustainable development of Canada's seacoast and inland fisheries. The committee is requesting that the government consider the advisability of sending the bill to committee prior to second reading.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## CANADA PENSION PLAN

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-491, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan (episodic disability).

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in this House to introduce a bill that would protect people with episodic disabilities. I thank the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard for his support on this bill, which would make these people eligible for benefits from Canada Pension Plan programs. An episodic disability can be, for example, a disability related to a mental illness, diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis, HIV-AIDS, or sickle-cell anemia.

The purpose of the bill I am introducing is to eliminate the systemic barriers that prevent people with episodic disabilities from integrating, in every sense of the word, into the labour force, the community and society.

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

●(1015)

## PETITIONS

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table in this House a petition from the member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges, who is doing an excellent job.

This petition has to do with the mining industry, which is experiencing growth throughout the world. The petitioners are worried that the human rights, obligations and rights imposed by Canadian mining companies are not being respected abroad.

This morning, I would like to table in this House a petition with several names.

\* \* \*

[English]

## QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 27 was answered earlier by way of an order for return. I have supplementary material to provide to the House in response to Question No. 27. If it could be made an order for return, it would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed that the supplementary answer to Question No. 27 be made an order for return?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 27—**Mr. Wayne Marston:**

With respect to federal funds allocated to emergency disaster relief over the last ten years: (a) on an annual basis, what funds, from all federal sources, are available for such contingencies; (b) which departments, Crown corporations or federally funded organizations manage such funds and how much did each receive annually; (c) during which emergencies have relief funds been disbursed to local communities and property owners in disaster affected areas and (i) how much was allocated to each community for each emergency, (ii) what was the average disbursement to individuals or property owners in each instance; (d) what criteria is used to determine what constitutes a disaster and, after a determination has been made, what criteria is used to assess the levels of financial assistance; (e) does the current Mountain Pine Beetle infestation in British Columbia and Alberta constitute a disaster worthy of emergency relief and (i) if not, why, (ii) if so, on what date was it so designated and why; (f) what is the estimated cost of damage to property, to both commercial and private property owners, caused by the Mountain Pine Beetle in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta; and (g) how many applications for emergency financial help has the Minister for Public Safety received from communities affected by the Mountain Pine Beetle under the Disaster Relief Financial Assistance Fund and (i) which communities made the applications, for how much and on what date, (ii) what is the status of each application?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## POINTS OF ORDER

### NDP BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS IN ABBOTSFORD

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

During the last federal election campaign, the New Democratic Party of Canada publicized allegations made by our candidate in Abbotsford, B.C., Mr. Jeffrey Hansen-Carlson, of an attempt to bribe him in the course of the election.

We also arranged for Mr. Hansen-Carlson to repeat these allegations to the media across Canada on January 13, 2006. These allegations were specifically made against the candidate of the Liberal Party of Canada, Mr. David Oliver, and his campaign manager, Mr. Gordie Kahlon.

A press release was issued claiming that Mr. Oliver and Mr. Kahlon should be investigated for breaching section 481 of the Canada Elections Act.

These allegations should never have been made public, nor should we have encouraged Jeffrey Hansen-Carlson to repeat them without having done appropriate due diligence to check the factual basis and the law surrounding these allegations.

The New Democratic Party admits that we seriously erred in making the allegations public, and in putting a young and inexperienced candidate in the position where he felt justified in making those allegations and to repeat them on some 40 occasions to media across Canada. There were never any facts to support an allegation of bribery or attempted bribery.

As a result of our allegations and actions, David Oliver was dismissed by the former Prime Minister of Canada as the Abbotsford candidate of the Liberal Party of Canada.

The NDP formally apologizes to them, their friends, families, political supporters and, in particular, the voters of Abbotsford, who cast their votes while the candidate's character and conduct had been improperly put under a cloud by our campaign team's actions.

The NDP made another serious error in judgment. On January 23, 2006, the senior counsel for the Commissioner of Canada Elections sent a letter to us in response to a letter written by Mr. Eric Hebert to Elections Canada on January 13, 2006. We should have made it public immediately upon receiving it.

The result was that Mr. Oliver and Mr. Kahlon remained under a cloud of suspicion far longer than was appropriate. We erred in not making that letter public immediately and we acknowledge that.

Mr. Oliver and Mr. Kahlon have been paid damages by our party to resolve the lawsuit.

In addition, we want to make this public apology in the House of Commons to put into *Hansard* our acknowledgement of very serious errors and to set the matter right.

As deputy leader, I am not satisfied with the manner in which this was handled. The NDP now has a procedure to ensure all due diligence in matters of fact and law.

## *Business of Supply*

I am pleased to say that I have met with Mr. Oliver and Mr. Kahlon. This statement in the House of Commons is for them and their families.

I wish Mr. Oliver and Mr. Kahlon the best for their future in private and in public life, and wish to assure the House, Canadians and the voters of Abbotsford that this kind of incident will not be repeated again by the New Democratic Party of Canada.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—FEDERAL EXCISE TAX ON GASOLINE

**Mr. Paul Zed (Saint John, Lib.)** moved:

That, consistent with the spirit of the Liberal New Deal for Cities and Communities, this House believes it is in the best interest of Canadians, that the government should take steps to make permanent the sharing of the Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline with all Canadian municipalities for the purpose of enhancing local community infrastructure.

**The Speaker:** Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending December 10, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bill.

In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bill be distributed now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1020)

**Mr. Paul Zed:** Mr. Speaker, our motion today is as follows:

That, consistent with the spirit of the Liberal New Deal for Cities and Communities, this House believes it is in the best interests of Canadians that the government should take steps to make permanent the sharing of the Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline with all Canadian municipalities for the purposes of enhancing local community infrastructure.

Canada's cities are the engines that drive our economy. The continued growth and economic stability of Canadian cities are essential to provide opportunities for all Canadians. With 50% of both Canada's population and its GDP output coming from our largest 10 cities, their needs must be taken care of. To ensure the future sustainability of our economy, that is imperative.

It is also true that the development of Canadian cities will play a major role in determining how well we succeed in the global economy. As pointed out by the former Liberal prime minister, the member for LaSalle—Émard, "In a world in which talent, capital and ideas are globally mobile, it's Toronto and Montreal vs. Shanghai and Bangalore; Ottawa vs. Helsinki; Vancouver vs. San Francisco".

At the other end of the spectrum, it cannot be overlooked that cities are where most Canadians live, work and play. They are our homes and our neighbourhoods. Our standard of living is directly related to the recreational, cultural and educational opportunities that are available in our cities.

*Business of Supply*

It is a standard of living which relies on a strong, viable and sustainable infrastructure that allows us to take advantage of these opportunities. By and large, that responsibility is left to the municipal level of government. It is simple: municipal governments must have proper support to carry out that mandate.

I am very proud to be a member of a party that for over a decade engaged Canada's municipal leaders in an attempt to improve the quality of life in Canada's cities. Right from the very first budget brought in by the Chrétien government in 1994, Liberal governments made progressive investments in infrastructure across the country. The infrastructure Canada program, the Canada strategic infrastructure fund, the municipal rural infrastructure fund and other Liberal programs invested \$12 billion in Canada's municipalities.

Even while the member for LaSalle—Émard was working to tackle the deficit monster that Canadians inherited from the previous Conservative government under former prime minister Mulroney, he and the rest of the Liberal cabinet ensured that Canadian cities did not go without and that key infrastructure investments were made throughout the 1990s.

However, investing in infrastructure projects was only the first step in a long term policy and funding framework that Canadian municipalities badly needed. Municipalities need this even more so today. The fact is that Canadian cities are attempting to address 21st century policy needs under a model designed in the 19th century.

Unlike the vast majority of municipalities throughout the United States and western Europe, the majority of revenue for cities and communities in Canada comes from property taxes. Despite the fact that cities are expected to provide social services, immigration counselling, housing, public transit, roads, policing and a whole host of other measures, there has not been any change in the funding model for cities in Canada for over 150 years.

• (1025)

We cannot expect Canadian municipalities to fund welfare programs, immigration services and numerous other aspects of Canada's social safety net on the back of property taxes. Property taxes are ill-suited to funding these kinds of services.

If a widow owns a home in downtown Fort McMurray, Alberta, it is entirely possible that the value of her home has gone up fivefold or tenfold, but she is still living on a fixed income. Should we really be demanding that she pay 10 times the property taxes she paid a decade ago despite the fact that she is living on the same income? I certainly think not.

The biggest single reason for the increased scope of responsibilities of the cities is the steps taken by governments in the 1990s to tackle the ballooning deficit problem. Responsibilities for a wide array of policy fields were downloaded to lower levels of government without providing them adequate resources with which to manage the burden.

Cities, with no one to download responsibilities to, have been left with the duty to deal with all of the issues that have been heaped upon them. Legally, cities are not allowed to run operating deficits, although some can fund capital projects through deficit financing. The City of Edmonton, for example, has had a balanced operating budget for some time, but in 2005 its long term debt increased from

\$417 million to \$470 million due to capital expenditures. Interest payments alone are more than \$20 million annually.

As a result, although it appears from an operating perspective that municipalities have been able to manage things without getting into financial trouble, municipal debt levels are increasing right across Canada.

City after city and community after community across the country have to choose between long term investments in infrastructure versus meeting the day to day demand to balance the operating budgets. Most cities cannot even keep up with the day to day demands of their new responsibilities. They are desperately looking for new funds.

In an attempt to address this fundamental imbalance, the Liberal government worked extensively with its municipal and provincial partners to begin the process of building the long term fiscal capacity of Canada's municipalities and communities.

In budget 2004, the Chrétien government announced that the federal government would fully refund municipalities all of the GST that they were required to pay out. Alone, this simple step provides municipalities with more than \$700 million per year in revenue.

In 2005 the Liberal government went one step further, announcing its new deal for cities, which would begin sharing the federal excise tax on gasoline with municipal governments. In the 2008-09 fiscal year the program comes fully of age and provides municipalities, I am proud to say, \$2 billion in funding annually.

However, the program will eventually come to an end. It is legislated to stop providing money to municipalities in 2014. The motion that we are debating today would call upon the federal government to make permanent the gas tax transfer to municipalities.

Why is this so important? The answer is very simple: proper municipal planning. In order for cities to be able to adequately plan their investments in infrastructure and ensure they can replace key components in a timely and orderly fashion, they need to be assured of their income streams.

• (1030)

This is especially key for municipalities, because most of them are not allowed to take on deficit financing for large scale capital projects, so unless they can be fully assured of long term income streams, they simply cannot manage their local infrastructure. Making the gas tax transfer a permanent feature of federal government budgets would go part of the way toward providing Canadian municipalities with the long term funding they need to address their community and infrastructure needs.

Some members of the House may be wondering why municipal infrastructure is so important. They may be asking why we should care. In fact, I am guessing that the Minister of Finance is asking why he should be filling potholes.

*Business of Supply*

On November 20 of this year, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities released an extremely important report, which showed that as a whole Canadian municipalities face a \$123 billion infrastructure deficit. The FCM press release states, “The physical foundations of Canada’s cities and communities are ‘near collapse’”.

It went on to say:

Canada’s economy and quality of life and the health and safety of Canadians depend on the infrastructure our municipalities build and own, yet we don’t have the resources to maintain it. If we don’t act soon as a nation to tackle this deficit, we see more catastrophic failures in our roads, bridges, water supply and other vital infrastructure. Continued delay is unthinkable....

The \$123-billion figure, when compared with earlier estimates, clearly shows the municipal infrastructure deficit is growing faster than previously thought. Most municipal infrastructure was built between the 1950s and 1970s, and much of it is due for replacement. As assets reach the end of their service life, repair and replacement costs skyrocket. Across Canada, municipal infrastructure has reached the breaking point.

I do not think that any member of the House should be surprised by any of the statements from the FCM. Just to take recreational infrastructure as an example, each and every one of us has either a memorial rink or a centennial pool in our ridings. Let us think about those facilities. Many of them are in serious disrepair and are in need of a facelift, if not an outright replacement.

Liberal infrastructure programs started helping to address those needs, as they did in Sault Ste. Marie, where the Sault Memorial Gardens were replaced by a new arena, or in Grand Bay, New Brunswick, where partnership with the province and the municipality constructed new recreational facilities.

Let me give members another example. Montreal is one of the largest cities in our country and is home to millions of people. It is also a city where there are very high property values. This might suggest that the city would be able to take on significant projects, yet even in Montreal, the FCM found, there are serious problems with the city’s water and waste water systems. According to the report, 33% of its sewage pipe stock reached the end of its life in 2002, yet there is no plan to provide comprehensive support to Montreal’s water system.

• (1035)

Should the government sit on the sidelines while the water system of one of Canada’s largest cities continues to deteriorate? Montreal is an example of a city that has a pretty good water and waste water system right now. However, there are many communities across the country where raw sewage is dumped into our lakes and rivers.

Team Saint John lobbied long and hard to have all levels of government agree on harbour cleanup as a priority. We are now beginning the even greater task of renewing and replacing water pipes and systems at a cost in excess of \$150 million, and that is just one of dozens of infrastructure projects in Saint John, New Brunswick, my community. The sister communities of Rothesay and Quispamsis are typical of hundreds of communities across the country that need new roads, new water treatment facilities and new recreational facilities to address their growing populations.

There is no doubt that urgent action is needed now. All we need to do is look to the position of the Conservative Party toward cities before it actually had the responsibility of governing.

In June 2003, the Prime Minister said that he was opposed to the new deal for cities. It is true. He opposed transferring the gas tax to municipalities. He said, “That the federal government should have its own new deal with municipalities is not a view I would subscribe to”. That is not all he said.

In 2004, when he was running for the leadership of the Conservative Party, the Prime Minister said, A Stephen Harper government will not seek to create “boutique” programs—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member knows that he is not supposed to do indirectly what he cannot do directly. I am sure he can figure his way around that.

**Mr. Paul Zed:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Prime Minister went on to say that the federal “government will not seek to create ‘boutique’ programs or intrude into new areas like municipal policy and education”. If this view was not clear enough from the 2004 Conservative Party platform, it also said:

The reality is that the federal government does not focus enough attention on its core responsibilities. It is spending too much time on issues better left to the provinces and the municipalities. Infrastructure is an excellent example.

I guess we should not be surprised when the Prime Minister flatly refuses to be involved in any discussion with municipal issues with Premier McGuinty of Ontario.

The reaction by the Minister of Finance to the concerns of cities is even worse. In response to the FCM report, the minister told municipalities that they should quit their whining, that the federal government is not in the pothole business. That is pretty rich coming from the former Ontario finance minister who is largely responsible for the financial difficulties that Ontario cities find themselves in today.

I could not say it better than Carol Goar of the Toronto *Star* who wrote of the finance minister and said:

A decade ago, he was a senior minister in the Ontario government that imposed a massive restructuring plan on the province’s cities. It forced municipalities to assume half the cost of welfare, disability payments and an array of social services. It downloaded the province’s aging stock of public housing on local governments, with a one-time repair grant. And it cut off funding for child care and public transit....

Not only is [the Minister of Finance] refusing to take responsibility for a mess he helped create; he is insulting the victims. Not only is he behaving like a bully with cash spilling out of his pockets, he is expecting voters to thank him for his fiscal rectitude.

Canadian municipalities are struggling. When I hear the Minister of Transport talk about \$33 billion in Canadian municipality funding and referring to it as unprecedented, we need to quickly look at those numbers.

*Business of Supply*

First, the \$33 billion includes \$5.8 billion to fund the GST rebate to municipalities. That was a Liberal initiative. We are now down to \$27.2 billion. The funding also includes \$11.8 billion for the new deal for cities. Not only is that a Liberal program, but the Prime Minister repeatedly said that he would surely not provide that funding and opposed the money for municipalities. Surely the transport minister would not suggest that he gave that money to the cities. The fund also includes funding for a Pacific Gateway.

The commitment of the government actually dries down to less than \$7 billion over seven years. The bottom line is that the \$33 billion program that the minister speaks so highly of is, in fact, almost back to zero.

If we were to make the gas transfer permanent, it would do one thing. It would demonstrate that even though the government refuses to make a serious commitment to our cities and even though the government has shown nothing but contempt for these issues that Canada's mayors raise on a regular basis, the Liberal Party of Canada understands the very real problems that Canada's municipalities face and will work with our provinces, our municipal partners and our communities to address this very serious issue.

• (1040)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the presentation by my colleague across the way. I spent 13 years as a municipal councillor in the city of Burlington in the region of Halton. Infrastructure problems are not new to the municipalities. They have been dealing with them for years.

In my own municipality of Burlington, I was on council when we added a 1% increase to the tax base strictly for infrastructure use. We have a complete understanding of what the needs are for infrastructure.

It did not happen in the last 22 months that this deficit came about. It happened long before that. Municipalities have been talking to the federal government for years and years. Finally, this government has put together a package of \$33 billion to help municipalities meet their needs. Our government is taking action. We are not simply talking about it.

The municipalities are a function of the province. In actual fact, the province, with a piece of legislation, can completely wipe municipalities out. We are having trouble with provinces such as Ontario after signing the deal to ensure we are able to flow the \$33 billion to the provinces.

What is the Liberal Party doing to ensure its parties at the provincial level are signing on with us to ensure those infrastructure dollars will actually flow to the municipalities as we want them to?

**Mr. Paul Zed:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is a little bit rich, coming from the Conservative Party members, to use the number \$33 billion. The hon. member, as a former municipal councillor, will well understand the various previous Liberal infrastructure programs that were all re-gifted and repackaged into a program called "building Canada", when in fact "building Canada" has very little left in the funds to build.

I would ask the member a rhetorical question. Perhaps he would want to go back to his caucus and to his leader and ask whether they are absolutely committed to funding cities and communities.

It is clear to me, when we dissect the numbers, that in the 2005 budget of the member for Wascana there was an \$11.5 billion allocation to cities and communities. In the government's 2007 budget that amount was cut by \$7.5 billion.

How does the hon. member want to explain a \$7.5 billion cut to the cities and communities of this country? Surely the voters of Burlington will ask him that question if and when he ever goes back to the polls.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to refresh my colleague from Saint John's memory. He and I are both members of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Let us not forget that I had the good fortune of being the mayor of Quebec City from 1982 to 2000 and that I was the president of the union of municipalities from 1997 to 2000. My colleague seems to have forgotten a few things. He said that the Liberal Party began investing in infrastructure in 1994 and that it planned to eliminate the deficit. That is the problem: achieving a zero deficit. In the 1990s, the Liberals wanted to wipe out the deficit that the Conservatives had left behind. So what did they do? They cut provincial transfer payments for health and education. My colleague should keep that in mind.

What impact did those cuts have? In an attempt to maintain health and education services, the provinces, including Quebec and Ontario, were tougher on cities and school boards. That is what happened. Now, of course, there is a deficit. What did cities do? They were given all kinds of new infrastructure responsibilities for roads, bridges, overpasses and so on, but they were not given any money to carry out those responsibilities.

The Province of Quebec has just taken back the 4,000 bridges, structures and other works that it ceded to cities in 1992 because the cities have not invested a nickel to maintain these structures. The infrastructure problem started the moment the federal government decided to cut provincial transfer payments.

Does my colleague think that renewing the gas tax program is enough when cities need \$123 billion to fix infrastructure problems? Once again, we must remember that cities have not been able to update their infrastructure because, since the 1990s, they have been paying for Ottawa to achieve a zero deficit.

• (1045)

[English]

**Mr. Paul Zed:** Mr. Speaker, I am very aware of the hon. member's commitment and interest in municipal infrastructure. He has been a strong advocate for the national, provincial and municipal governments working together.



*Business of Supply*

In the 1993 election platform of the Liberal Party, Canada's infrastructure investments, the Canada strategic infrastructure fund and the municipal rural infrastructure fund, all of those programs were in the face of the huge deficit inherited from the previous Conservative government. There is no question it was a challenge. I want to assure the hon. member that Quebec was the very first province in Canada to recognize and sign on to the Chrétien Liberal government's Canada infrastructure program.

While I accept that there are challenges with balancing all of the moneys that we have as a Parliament of Canada to allocate to various projects, infrastructure is in a crisis. I agree with the hon. member that the gas tax and GST rebates are part of a larger problem. I would encourage the hon. member to continue to oppose the Conservative government's neo-con approach that looks at municipalities but does not have money for them. It does not have money for the mayors, councillors and communities. The Minister of Finance said they should stop their whining and do their jobs. The Minister of Human Resources and Social Development said we should be cutting infrastructure programs. The Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities said it was a large amount of money when in fact if we go through the numbers and look at the 2005 commitment made by the previous government, we find that there was in fact an investment of \$11.5 billion for municipal infrastructure which got cut by \$7.5 billion by the current government.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Liberal Party for his comments and the breakdown of some of the numbers. That is helpful to the debate.

I want to ask him a question about the resources available to our cities and the infrastructure of our country. He referenced the FCM report. It is very helpful. There have been other reports that concur on the infrastructure deficit in our country. My question is with regard to where we are with the government right now and its fiscal update. Notwithstanding the importance of sharing things like the gas tax, recently, in front of the Commons, I shared a stage with local politicians who are concerned about finances and passing on the equivalence of 1¢ of the GST.

My question is in the area of corporate tax cuts. Recently in Parliament a tax package went through and I was very deeply concerned with his party's stand on it, because it did not take one. Where I come from, not standing up and voting against the government's tax package basically is an admission and conceit and maybe an approval of it.

In the fiscal analysis of the government, what is the right level of corporate tax in the country? I think we need some clarity on that. I would certainly like to know his and his party's stance on where corporate taxes fit into this equation.

•(1050)

**Mr. Paul Zed:** Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member shares the Liberal Party's interest in investing in cities and communities in the country. It is really important for all members to acknowledge that there is not just a \$123 billion infrastructure deficit in the country but there is also a growing gap in poverty. This party's commitment to improving the lives of Canadians who are living below the poverty level has been made very clear by the leader of our party, the Leader of the Opposition. He—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I am sorry but the time for questions and comments has expired. Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during the course of today's debate, Canadians will hear a lot of things from members of the Liberal Party regarding the state of Canada's infrastructure. In fact, I think we have heard some rather unsubstantiated claims, not the fact that the infrastructure is in need of repair, but that the Liberals even attempted to do anything about it is blatantly obvious in the fact that it is in need of repair.

Canadians are going to hear Liberal after Liberal get up and proclaim that Canada's cities are facing an enormous infrastructure deficit that only phantom and mythical Liberal initiatives could solve in that deficit. What we will not likely hear is an honest assessment of the facts. They are at a point where much of Canada's public infrastructure has deteriorated with age and requires upgrading and replacing. Additionally, a failure to do so will likely cause Canada to fall behind in the global economy.

Rather, the Liberals will simplistically blame our government, a government a little under two years old. We all recognize the false accusation in that claim. They will not talk about the 13 long years of Liberal rule where the infrastructure needs of Canada's cities were largely neglected. Those 13 years contributed to the critical and challenging infrastructure deficit our Conservative government has inherited.

Again, this is rather simplistic and disappointing, especially considering the fact that our Conservative government has already started to take swift and decisive action. We are building the world-class infrastructure Canadians need and deserve.

As one Ontario mayor, Brampton's Susan Fennell has so accurately pointed out, the Conservatives have done more for municipalities in the last two years than the federal Liberal government did. That is a pretty condemning remark. Indeed it is quite lamentable that the Liberals have made this into such a partisan political issue.

Rebuilding Canada's infrastructure is a vital issue. Infrastructure and ensuring it remains both reliable and efficient is something all Canadians can relate to in their everyday lives. After all, we all use the roads to get to and from work, to bring our children to school, hockey or ballet. We all rely on clean drinking water and safe waste management systems for our health and that of our families.

But Infrastructure is much more than that. Infrastructure drives productivity, supports trade and fuels economic growth to build strong competitive communities. Without a doubt, strong infrastructure makes a strong country. This government like no other before recognizes the significance of infrastructure in its broader economic sense, in terms of building a world-class economy that can meet the challenges of the 21st century, and more important, win.

*Business of Supply*

The old Liberal government's approach was to advance stand-alone plans that failed to integrate infrastructure into overarching and coherent economic visions, unlike the way our long term economic plan, Advantage Canada, has done. I would like to elaborate on this important plan for the edification of the House.

Advantage Canada is based on the understanding that Canadians must have the tools necessary to compete and win in the global economy if they hope to realize their dreams. This simple basic understanding seems to have eluded the old Liberal government. Instead of building a coherent economic vision that would allow Canadians to take greater advantage of a booming global economy, the Liberals were asleep at the wheel. They responded to critical economic priorities like infrastructure on an ad hoc basis without vision, without purpose, and most important, without results.

This Conservative government understands Canadians deserve better, and more important, we are acting on that understanding.

• (1055)

With Advantage Canada, our government is giving Canadians what they need to succeed. We are doing so with a tax advantage that will reduce taxes for all Canadians and establish the lowest tax rate on new business investment in the G-7. We are doing so with a fiscal advantage eliminating Canada's total government net debt in less than a generation. In doing so, we are creating a strong foundation on which to build lasting prosperity. We are doing so with an entrepreneurial advantage that will reduce unnecessary regulation and red tape and lower taxes to leverage business investment. We are doing so with a knowledge advantage that will create the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world.

Last and most relevant for the purposes of today's discussion, we are doing so with an infrastructure advantage. This will help create modern world-class infrastructure and ensure the seamless flow of people, goods and services across our roads and bridges, through our gateways and via our public transit systems. This is not just rhetoric. This is not a plan gathering dust in some government building in Ottawa. We are putting it into action.

Budget 2007 began delivering on our Advantage Canada commitment to implement a comprehensive plan for infrastructure. Under budget 2007's long term plan for infrastructure this Conservative government provided an outstanding \$33 billion in support for provincial, territorial and municipal infrastructure over the next seven years.

This new funding provides municipalities with certainty in planning long term infrastructure projects that make our communities better, healthier places to work, to live and to play. But that is not all we have done in budget 2007 that will benefit the municipalities and communities which are on the front lines of Canada's infrastructure efforts.

Municipal projects such as public transit, water and sewer infrastructure and local roads will also be eligible for funding under the budget's \$8.8 billion building Canada fund. Also, municipalities pursuing innovative public private partnerships, or P3s as they are referred to, will be eligible under the \$1.26 billion national fund for public private partnerships. This is an important tool in ensuring Canadians get value for money in their infrastructure investments.

Municipalities will also benefit from budget 2007 funding that provides each province and territory with an additional \$25 million per year in equal per jurisdiction funding. This investment of \$2.275 billion over seven years will help all provinces and territories participate in building a modern infrastructure network in Canada that reaches smaller jurisdictions with limited basic infrastructure and lower populations.

There should be no question our long term \$33 billion plan for infrastructure will have major, major benefits for Canadian municipalities. It is not only us saying it; it is provincial governments like Nova Scotia, whose deputy premier said:

Nova Scotia and other provinces and territories have lobbied the government of Canada for long-term, stable and predictable infrastructure funding for many years. Up until the recent federal budget, these appeals fell on deaf ears. However, the new cost-sharing programs announced in the federal budget this year will go a long way toward enabling Nova Scotia to achieve its full potential as an international transportation gateway and to facilitate much needed road improvements.

Manitoba's NDP premier said, "The infrastructure funding I should say also is very positive for Manitoba. You know, I think that it is a very positive announcement".

It is major Canadian newspapers like *The Globe and Mail* which recently wrote about "Ottawa's healthy record of funding those infrastructure needs...Ottawa's contribution is substantial, and it is provided even though municipalities are not a federal responsibility".

Occasionally, it is Liberal MPs who are forced to admit reality and depart from their poorly thought out talking points, Liberals like the member for Charlottetown who praised budget 2007's infrastructure spending saying, "There is \$25 million in there for infrastructure. That is good news. That is money that can go to federal priorities like transportation".

• (1100)

However, it is also important to remember our major \$33 billion long term plan is not just inward looking. It is also based on the understanding that our ability to connect and trade with the world will ultimately determine our quality of life at home.

Canada is well-positioned, in terms of its geography and its human and natural resources, to harness the tremendous economic opportunities presented by the rapidly expanding and dynamic economies of Asia. However, as the government understands, infrastructure is key to unlocking this potential.

*Business of Supply*

For example, our east and west coast ports and our transcontinental rail system represent important but perhaps under-exploited links between Asia and North America's heartland. This infrastructure holds enormous potential in harnessing a greater share of the economic activity that is being generated between these regions while, at the same time, better connecting businesses across all of Canada with markets in Asia and beyond.

That is why we took action and made a huge, nearly \$600 million, investment in Canada's Asia-Pacific gateway and corridor initiative. This initiative is an integrated set of investment and policy measures focused on trade with the Asia-Pacific region and establishes the best transportation network facilitating global supply chains between North America.

This undertaking will pay tremendous dividends for Canadians, with a large increase of container traffic at British Columbia's major commercial ports by 2020, thus boosting Canada's share of west coast container traffic from 9% to 14%. Budget 2007 further increased total federal investment in the Asia-Pacific gateway and corridor initiative to \$1 billion.

I would be remiss if I were to continue discussing the importance of international infrastructure links without addressing our most important gateway to the largest economy in the world, the Windsor-Detroit corridor. Fully 28% of our merchandise shipments between Canada and the U.S. pass through the Windsor-Detroit corridor. That being the case, delays at congestion at the Windsor-Detroit border crossings can, and do, have a significant impact on our economy, particularly, on the high value-added auto sector.

It has therefore been widely acknowledged that a new crossing is required to meet Canada's long terms needs in this regard. That is why budget 2007 confirmed our government's commitment to construct, with our partners, a new border crossing at Windsor-Detroit, including: exploring a public-private partnership to design, build, finance and operate the new bridge; covering 50% of the eligible capital cost of building the access road from the new crossing to Highway 401; and providing \$10 million over three years to Transport Canada to support its efforts to implement this important project.

These targeted investments are directed to where they are needed most and where they will leverage the maximum economic effect. No wonder even Ontario's Liberal Minister of Finance, Dwight Duncan, called them, "good news....It's a good step forward and the kind of thing we wanted to see".

Before concluding my response to today's motion, I will make one final point.

While base level funding, like the gas tax share for municipalities, is important and necessary, and, indeed, that is why we have increased this type of funding, sometimes we have to dedicate our resources where they are needed most and where they will yield the greatest economic benefit to the greatest number of Canadians. That is why we have a coherent and comprehensive plan in place, not just one-dimensional base level funding, as advocated by the Liberals.

We see this in the gateway initiatives that I have outlined before, but we also see it in investments that will make a real difference in

communities facing specific regional challenges that the gas tax share cannot, on its own, address.

• (1105)

For example, we have set aside up to \$962 million in funding for the FLOW project to help fund five transit projects in the greater Toronto area that include bus rapid transit systems in Mississauga, Brampton and York region, an extension of the Spadina subway line and a transit study in Durham region, projects that will help reduce traffic congestion in the GTA and improve air quality.

To be sure, one Vaughan councillor was ecstatic with the FLOW projects, especially the Spadina extension. She was happy to have a federal government that finally recognized, in her own words, "traffic gridlock is a problem, and we need the money to fund transit. This is the last piece of the puzzle".

Another would be a recent federal commitment to \$170.5 million to help Manitoba complete the expansion of the Red River Floodway to significantly improve the level of flood protection available to the residents of Winnipeg.

A final example is the \$26.6 million we committed specifically to help complete the Saint John Harbour cleanup. Is it not interesting? We are finally addressing the Saint John Harbour cleanup that the member who proposed this motion did not get done. This will provide long term environmental benefits for the riding of Saint John. It will remove sewage discharges and improve water quality in the harbour and the neighbouring waterways.

Even the sponsor of today's motion liked the investment specifically because of the flexibility address unique in community needs. He stated in his own words:

Harbour Cleanup is not about partisan politics; it is about good health, a clean environment, and a balanced quality of life....I am glad to see that the views of the community have finally been addressed.

For that very reason alone, it would be hard not to concede our infrastructure plan is superior to a one dimensional plan promoted by the Liberals, if we can call it a plan.

We are promoting a vision that acknowledges communities from coast to coast to coast face differing regional challenges. Our immense \$33 billion investment represents a comprehensive, coherent and multidimensional infrastructure plan, a plan that is, in turn, a key element of the government's comprehensive and coherent long term economic plan, a plan that will create, in a way that simple base level funding the Liberals suggest could never, a better life for Canadians in their communities.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. I would like him to talk to us about Advantage Canada and about his goal to reduce the debt, but I hope he bears in mind that this debt was created by the Conservatives, that is, by his party. Because the Conservatives created the debt, the Liberal Party, in order to achieve zero deficit, slashed transfer payments to the provinces in the areas of health care and education. That is the reality.

What did the provinces, particularly Quebec and Ontario, do? They slashed their investments in cities and school boards.

I hope he is aware of this situation: while he is paying off his debt, cities and towns are going into debt. Representatives of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities told us that the deficit for infrastructures alone is \$123 billion. I hope he is aware that, while he is paying off his debt, cities and towns will go further into debt to deal with infrastructure, and that some of them will not be able to do so.

And this is all because the Conservative government drove Canada into debt and is now trying to pay off that debt. I have a very hard time with this.

Since the gas tax rebate is one of the measures he suggested, will he support what the Liberal Party is proposing here today?

• (1110)

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for making that statement. Talking about debt, it brought to mind some points that I like to keep on my BlackBerry, and I will quote some.

In 1963, at the beginning of a Liberal rule, we had a \$15.7 billion debt left by the Trudeau government. By 1984, when the Progressive Conservative government took over, that had ballooned to \$195 billion. This is amazing. That debt was handed to us.

Let us talk about the deficit that was left at the end of the Progressive Conservative government. It was down to \$12 billion. Those are amazing numbers. The Progressive Conservative government of that day dealt with something that was handed to it, which was inexcusable, and with which it dealt. We were handed an infrastructure deficit that was inexcusable.

The hon. member who proposed the motion today talked about all the things that the Liberals were going to do but never did. If they had done them, they would not be asking that question today. Why have we not fixed, in 22 months, what they could not even address in 13 years?

We are all aware that infrastructure weakens over time. We deal with that in our houses. We deal with that in our office buildings. If we do not invest in it, in a structured way with a long term plan, we will end up with the kind of infrastructure deficit that we face today. It is the lack of planning that the Liberal government put into those 13 years that has left us with this.

The hon. member mentioned, in answer to a previous member's question, about it being a little rich. I think it is a little rich that the

Liberals would ask us to fix their mistakes of 13 years in 22 months, but we are moving forward. We have a plan and we are investing in it.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this debate. I am glad we are talking about the gas tax fund. There are important facts about the GTF. I find it interesting that the Liberals today are want to make this a permanent measure. They were the ones, when they wanted to put this into place, who took a measured back-ended approach over five years and did not take a long range perspective at this.

It is important to know that we have extended it, not at 2¢ a litre, not at 2.5¢ or 3¢, but at the full 5¢ for an additional four years. That is an important distinction and a good long range planning tool for municipalities. I have heard a lot from my mayors on it.

The infrastructure debt about of over \$100 billion is more than what the gas tax fund can handle. The gas tax fund is for roads and bridges, for example, or it might be for solid waste or some other issues that attack us. Our major ports need to become competitive and that requires massive investments. We need a new crossing at Windsor and Detroit. That \$100 billion encompasses things that the gas tax fund alone simply cannot address.

Is the Liberal proposal today enough to tackle that \$100 billion or do we need a suite of different funding mechanisms to address the significant infrastructure needs and leverage the kind of private dollars into infrastructure development to make our country much more competitive?

• (1115)

**Mr. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his work on the Windsor—Detroit crossing. He was kind enough to take me on a visit to show me and many of my colleagues the weakness in that crossing. In talking with his constituents, I began to realize how serious an infrastructure deficit we had. If that is our weakest point in trading with our largest neighbour, then we absolutely need to make that part of our plan.

With respect to my colleague's question about the plan, the commitment in budget 2006 to provide municipalities with gas tax funding needs to continue, but it cannot continue as a stand-alone.

The Windsor-Detroit crossing is one example. The Asia-Pacific Gateway and the Atlantic Gateway corridors are all necessary infrastructure pieces that allow our exporters a smooth flow to export their goods so we can continue with this strong economy that this Conservative government is building upon.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, over the last 20 years, both the Liberals and the Conservatives have shown clear irresponsibility in their budgetary approach. If they were running a household, they would be out buying Ferraris rather than taking care of the house, ensuring the roof is repaired or ensuring everyone is fed and clothed. That is what the Conservatives have done.

Just like the Liberals, the Conservatives are giving billions of dollars away in corporate tax cuts when our essential infrastructure is collapsing. It is fair to say that 60% of our municipal infrastructure is over 40 years old. Our highways and transportation infrastructure, which was put in place in the sixties, is now well past the due date for renewal.

Why are the Conservatives taking the same approach as the failed Liberal government in corporate giveaways when the essentials are not being taken care of? Why are they so irresponsible? Why do they not understand that fiscally they need to take care of the essentials first before they start shovelling money off the back of a truck to their friends in the corporate sector?

**Mr. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I guess there was a question in that.

I reject the premise that we could be likened to the Liberal Party in any way, shape or form, other than that we are a federal political party that is actually participating in this debate today.

I fail to recognize the credibility of a question that asks why we, as the new Conservative government, are not funding infrastructure when the hon. member knows full well that the \$33 billion commitment is the largest infrastructure investment in Canada in history. As the hon. Minister of Finance has suggested, we may be able to leverage that up to \$100 million through leveraging with public-private partnerships.

• (1120)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** \$100 million?

**Mr. Ted Menzies:** I know the hon. member who is heckling me from behind does not quite understand that concept, but there is an opportunity to make more effective use of taxpayer dollars to provide the infrastructure that this country needs and that this government is willing to provide.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motion by the Liberal Party. The purpose of the motion is essentially to make what has been called the gas tax rebate to municipalities permanent.

Ultimately, we all know that this is all about appearances. The gas tax is not going directly to the cities. Only part of it is. That is the essence of what the Liberals introduced as part of their effort to tackle the infrastructure deficit. That fight has become very important here in Parliament, because it is ultimately here that the problem being experienced in all cities in Canada, including in Quebec, in terms of that infrastructure deficit begins.

Why does it begin here? The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance started out well when he was explaining to us just now that Trudeau and the Liberals, followed by the

Conservatives, had left us a deficit of over \$120 billion. The parliamentary secretary concluded by telling us that the debt had been reduced to \$12 billion. It seems to me that the figure he was reading from his BlackBerry was not right, because the last year the Conservatives were in power, the debt grew by \$12 billion.

Today, I can understand that the Conservatives are uncomfortable with the debt, a large part of which was left to us by them. In fact we have the Conservatives to thank for the bulk of the present debt. They would very much like to eliminate the debt with the surpluses they are producing, surpluses that the Bloc Québécois has estimated at \$69 billion over the next five years.

The problem, in terms of the Conservatives' terrible management methods, is that in the meantime there is a whole domino effect. Under the Chrétien government, with the member for Lasalle—Émard as Minister of Finance, the Liberals decided to cut transfers to the provinces in order to achieve a zero deficit, because in order to eliminate the debt they had to start by stopping spending. That is the reality and no one can deny it. They cut health and education transfers.

The result for all the provinces was terrible. Our Liberal colleague gave the example of Ontario earlier. The same thing was done in Quebec. To try to maintain the same health care and education services, the decision was made to have the other levels of government pay a share, even though they are not recognized as governments. Municipalities and school boards can tax, but they are not recognized as governments, even in Quebec. And there was pressure brought to bear on those levels to increase their contribution.

Those who are somewhat familiar with the political history of the 1990s in Quebec will recall that the first reform was called the Ryan reform, under a Liberal government. The decision was made to transfer responsibility for a majority of roadworks and roads that were not so-called "national" roads to the cities. Across Quebec, municipalities found themselves with 4,000 bridges, overpasses, real works of art, culverts, and other road infrastructures, but were given no money to maintain them.

It was simple: the government had no money, so the cities had to be capable of maintaining them. The result was that no maintenance was done. That situation has reached the point that two months ago the government of Quebec decided to take back responsibility for the 4,000 overpasses, saying that the cities had not been up to it. Quebec is therefore going to have to pay to rebuild those infrastructures itself.

If the cities were unable to maintain the infrastructures for which the Government of Quebec had given them responsibility, it was the same thing for their own infrastructures because the transfer of responsibility to the cities included not only roads but also services.

*Business of Supply*

More and more, cities have been forced to take charge of other things besides services. In theory, property taxes are supposed to be reserved for services to buildings. It is probably the most regressive tax imposed on our fellow citizens by cities. It is a property tax; it is not a service to the public. It should not be used to underwrite a series of programs introduced by the cities or transferred directly to them. They have increased the burden of services to the public delivered by the cities. Probably, this has been done in all Canadian provinces. At any rate, it has been done in Quebec. All of that came about because the federal government decided to achieve a zero deficit. Since then, it has begun to accumulate surpluses.

• (1125)

The Liberals have explained that they tried to introduce support programs, probably because they felt embarrassed. Today, after 13 years of Liberal rule, the Conservatives are even more embarrassed because they are the ones who left behind the bulk of the debt and the problems associated with reducing or eliminating the debt. They are trying to create programs, but the malaise is real and very widespread.

Today's remarks by the Minister of Finance illustrate this; so do those of the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Last month, the Canadian Federation of Municipalities released a report which showed that the current infrastructure deficit is \$123 billion.

The amount of money that cities would need in 2007 to bring their infrastructures up to standard is \$123 billion. We are not talking about rebuilding but just about maintenance to bring everything up to a safe and secure level for the public.

The Conservative government is proposing to inject \$33 billion over a period of seven years. That amount does not apply to this year. Often, they throw out the figure of \$33 billion, so that, once again, the public is misled. People might feel that it is a good thing the government is putting up \$33 billion to meet the deficit of \$123 billion. But no, that amount is not being injected this year. It is spread over seven years. What is more, not all of the \$33 billion will go to municipal infrastructure. The public should not be misled either.

Unless I am mistaken, we are talking about \$33 billion that will indeed be injected into infrastructure. However, the amount going to cities is less than \$33 billion. In particular, the building Canada fund involves \$8.8 billion. There are negotiations with the provinces; and they may add other projects, perhaps airports or many other kinds of infrastructures that will require lots of money but which are not directly related to the needs of the cities.

It is important to understand that. It is the position that the Bloc Québécois has traditionally taken: the infrastructure deficit must be resolved. The federal government must understand that the reason why the cities have a \$123 billion infrastructure deficit is that it slashed its transfers to the provinces, which then downloaded on the cities, with the result that they can no longer afford to maintain their infrastructure properly. That is the reality.

Where does this amount come from? It is important to know exactly. The \$123 billion comes from a scientific study—the only scientific study that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has

done. That is why everyone was surprised. It was not expected because of how hard it is to do a study of this kind when there are more than 4,000 cities and towns all across Canada. So the study was done. It was the first time that someone had asked every city to fill out a form detailing its needs. Then expert analysts and engineers studied the whole situation and arrived at a total of \$123 billion.

What does this mean? It means \$31 billion for water supply systems and sewage, \$21.7 billion for transportation, and \$22.8 billion for public transit. People know what the problems are with public transit. In Quebec, there are problems with the metro in Montreal. Very large sums will have to be invested. Some metro lines simply stop because the infrastructure itself is crumbling in places. Cracks are appearing and pieces of cement fall off. That is the reality. There are also \$40.2 billion for cultural and social infrastructure and \$7.7 billion for waste management.

All this is ultimately due to the way in which the federal government decided to restore its own financial health by squeezing the provinces.

All parties in the House must acknowledge a certain reality: cities are the creatures of the provinces. Any attempt to deal directly with cities is therefore contrary to the Canadian constitution adopted by most of the parties here. Any direct negotiations or direct agreements between cities and the federal government would be contrary to the proper procedure.

The Bloc Québécois has always maintained that we must deal with this \$123 billion deficit. In order to do so, there must be direct transfers from the Government of Canada to the government of each of the provinces. There needs to be a single transfer so that the provinces—Quebec, Ontario and the others—can establish infrastructure programs. What is attractive about this is that when the provinces set out to do it, they often make some investments of their own. As a result, the \$123 billion can probably be divided into three parts: the federal government's share, the share of each of the provinces, and the cities' share so that the infrastructure deficit can finally be eliminated.

• (1130)

Whether it is the Liberal Party deciding to create one, two or three infrastructure programs or the Conservative Party adding programs, in the end, under the Canadian Constitution, that party has no choice about negotiating with each province.

The building Canada fund has been mentioned; it is the latest program announced in the 2007 budget. Quebec has not yet received one penny of this fund, because the agreement with the Province of Quebec has not yet been signed. In fact, to score political points, the government tried to please everyone by creating a framework within which offers are made to each city, whereas in fact, according to the Constitution, cities have to negotiate with the provinces.

The whole process therefore becomes bogged down in discussions and negotiations. The federal government is trying to have the right to interfere, especially the Conservatives; it was less flagrant when the Liberals were in power, because they had a good grasp of the Canadian Constitution. The Conservatives, likely because they want to have a majority at any cost, are using every means possible to try to direct policies and impose their conditions on the provinces. For that reason, Quebec still has not reached an agreement on the building Canada fund. The \$8.8 billion agreement has not been signed.

It is all well and good to tell us today that the infrastructure budget is \$33 billion. It is true that the program that uses the excise tax on gasoline is already established. The Conservatives cannot do anything about this, because the Liberals introduced this program. The funding amounts are known; cities know that until 2012, they will be receiving their share of that tax.

What I take exception to is that today the Liberals want to extend this established program by eliminating the 2012 end date and making the program permanent. In fact, this is not what cities need. The \$123 billion infrastructure deficit must really be corrected, and this will take more than simply negotiating with each province. Moreover, they have to stop acting like the Conservatives who are trying to create new programs and, more importantly, give themselves the power to make choices on behalf of the cities and provinces, although cities are creatures of the provinces.

For the Bloc Québécois, it is simple: had the decision been made, Quebec would be a country today and we would have resolved the matter a long time ago by negotiating directly with our cities. However, there is the Canadian Constitution. I am always taken aback when the federalist parties do not respect it and that happens every time we talk about infrastructure. Why do they do that? It comes down to electioneering. Once again, with the building Canada fund, they are attempting to create various funds to be distributed to the cities by the office of the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities or that of the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, giving them the impression that it is a gift.

If there were some awareness of the problems created by attempting to balance the budget by downloading responsibilities onto the provinces—which in turn balanced their health and education budgets at the expense of cities—the issue of the \$123 billion would be resolved. There would finally be money for everyone. There would be only one program and all cities could rest assured that, by the end of the negotiations, they could deal with their infrastructure deficit. Thus, cities would not have to fight one another to see which one would be first or second. The program should be announced, specifying that it would extend over five years, for example, giving each city that time to work things out and solve their infrastructure problems by the end of that period. The cities could arrange their loans and negotiate accordingly. The necessary money is not always available for the cities' share of funding; loans must be arranged and the citizens convinced. In short, if there were only one program, things would be much simpler.

Unfortunately, the government in Ottawa is once again bypassing the Constitution for purely partisan reasons. It has decided to go over Quebec's head and is trying to negotiate directly with the cities. As a

### *Business of Supply*

result, no agreement on the building Canada fund has been signed in Quebec. Only two provinces—British Columbia and Nova Scotia, if I am not mistaken—have signed agreements so far, even though this fund was announced in budget 2007.

Once again, it is easy to understand. The Bloc Québécois is all in favour of dealing with the cities' infrastructure deficit. We want this \$123 billion deficit of the cities in Quebec and the rest of Canada to be paid off once and for all. We would like this to be, to be applied to solving infrastructure problems. That way, each province could negotiate with its cities as to when each city could receive their share.

• (1135)

That would be a very easy and realistic approach that is respectful of the fact that the cities, in large part, had to pay down the federal government's deficit. It was the Liberals and the Conservatives who added to the deficit. They flagrantly forget history. Perhaps some—because they are new—do not remember. Nonetheless, the cities are running deficits for their infrastructure today because in the 1990s, the Liberal government had to wipe out the deficit that had been shamelessly created by the Conservatives and the Trudeau government.

The Conservative member mentioned it earlier, and he was right. To try to pay off the annual deficit, to try to pay its grocery bill, the government had to cut transfers to the various provinces for health and education. It was easy to do. The federal government does not provide services in health and education. Why not cut transfers to the provinces and let them sort it out? The provinces cannot perform miracles to maintain the same level of health and education services.

Even Jean Chrétien had the nasty habit of saying that although he was cutting transfer payments, he was the one setting the national standards. Imagine how this nice, beautiful Canada was built. He was not even the one providing the service, but he set the national standard in order to get re-elected. And people bought that line and said that he was defending their interests.

But that is not at all what happened. He was cutting transfer payments to the provinces, who in turn had to cut services or try to find money elsewhere. What did they do in most cases? They transferred responsibility to the municipalities, who had no money themselves. The municipalities ended up fixing the interior of the house, but not the foundation or the structure. All municipal infrastructures suffered.

I am very proud of the study done by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which I have examined. It is the first serious study. The \$123 billion infrastructure deficit is accurate. It is the first time a researcher has really examined this issue. The 4,000 municipalities were asked to describe their own problems with infrastructure deficits.

*Business of Supply*

We must start addressing this now. We must not do what the Liberals did and keep saying we will fix this by extending the gas tax rebate. Besides, what government would dare eliminate the gas tax transfer in five years? It is already guaranteed until 2012. I do not see how the government could get rid of gas tax transfers to municipalities. It would pay the political price.

The question today is not about making the gas tax rebate permanent. There is a much more serious deficit. The gas tax rebate represents \$11.5 billion over five years. And this year's needs, if we wanted to wipe out the infrastructure deficit for all municipalities, total \$123 billion. Thus, it is clear that this \$11.5 billion over five years is—yes, it is true—part of a solution. However, at present, we are not about to try to do what the Liberals did, by claiming that this is the one and only solution, that we came up with it, and that this is what municipalities need.

They need more than that. This is what the Conservative government should focus on. Furthermore, the Bloc Québécois is trying to exert pressure where pressure is needed, so that all the federalist parties in this House clearly understand that this country, Canada, has a Constitution, which specifies that cities and towns are under provincial jurisdiction. These federalist parties must understand that, if they want to negotiate, there must be a direct agreement. If they are going to tackle the \$123 billion, they must negotiate. We must ensure that all levels of government participate and that the federal government will make a transfer payment to Quebec. The province, in cooperation with its cities and towns, can then distribute annually the amounts needed for infrastructures.

We hope this can all be spread over five years, so that each of the towns and cities can really resolve its infrastructure deficit problem by the end of that period. That would be excellent. However, once again, the Conservatives will not have the courage, because they will likely try to fix one mistake with another. They will try to pay off Canada's accumulated debt and forget that, in the meantime, cities and towns are going further into debt for their infrastructures. I am not saying that they will borrow the money, necessarily, because some of them do not even have the financial ability to do so. Instead, they will continue to allow infrastructures to deteriorate.

One day, citizens will pay the price. Once again, I hope it will not be the citizens of municipalities, when the problem lies here, in Ottawa.

• (1140)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated listening to my friend. He is a very distinguished gentleman and sits on the same committee as I do. He is very passionate about his constituents and I appreciate that.

Of course, he recognizes that infrastructure is an issue of provincial and municipal jurisdiction. I am sure my friend would not suggest that we should intervene in provincial jurisdictions by trying to control that aspect of it. I was glad to hear that a member of the Bloc was actually relying on the Canadian Constitution as well.

I am sure the member is aware that we are very thankful to have a Prime Minister and a minister who have come forward with this

initiative. They have listened to stakeholders and to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. They have come up with the largest infrastructure plan that Canada has seen since the second world war.

I want to clarify with the member that at least 50%, approximately \$17 billion of this \$33 billion, is going directly to cities. There are other large projects that will be included with the \$8.8 billion of the building Canada fund, et cetera.

I would be interested to hear the member's comments on a couple of quotes that I have here. I also want to point out to the member that when I first came to this House the member for Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam was actually the first person in the House who started asking questions about municipalities.

In my opinion, and based upon what I saw as a backbencher at that time, the member embarrassed the Liberals to the point where they began to actually listen to municipalities. The Liberals came forward with a plan, but it was never implemented.

I would ask the member to comment on a couple of quotes. The first quote is from the then intergovernmental affairs minister, who of course now is the Leader of the Opposition, when he told mayors from across Canada:

—you know full well that the Constitution clearly establishes that municipal affairs fall under provincial jurisdiction, and that the provinces are determined to keep it that way.

The second quote is from the Liberal MP for Pickering—Scarborough East who said:

It's hard to make the argument that Toronto has great needs when it's doing so extraordinarily well economically. It's a hard argument to make in the weaker regions of the country.

We have seen what the Liberals do. They talk about it, but they never fulfill the action. I would like to hear what my friend from the Bloc has to say about those two quotes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities for his question.

I wish that he had been the one to deliver his party's speech. The fact that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance delivered it indicates that the infrastructure file has been taken away from the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and given to the Standing Committee on Finance. That really worries me because the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities is much closer to the problems cities are experiencing than the Standing Committee on Finance or the Minister of Finance can be.

I hope he will be able to discuss this with his party to find out why he did not deliver today's speech, which I would have appreciated. I do not mind his questions, but I would have liked him to deliver the speech. Hearing it from the person in charge of finance means that the issue has already been addressed and that cities will not be getting any more money.



That brings me to the other part of his question about the Constitution. I do not mind him pointing out that I emphasized the Canadian Constitution here. I would much rather have a Quebec constitution, and I would rather not be in this Parliament to discuss these issues. I would rather talk about them in Quebec's National Assembly and resolve problems with cities directly.

Nevertheless, I am obliged to respect the country's Constitution, which says that municipalities are a provincial responsibility. The Leader of the Opposition was right about that. However, the problem is that the infrastructure deficit was created by the federal government. I hope he got that from my speech. When the federal government decided to cut provincial transfer payments in order to achieve a zero deficit, cities paid the price. That happened in Ontario and Quebec alike.

It makes sense to transfer a program to the provinces so that each one can take care of the infrastructure deficit with its municipalities. That is what we are asking for, and we hope the Conservative Party will understand. Like the Liberals, they tend to try to negotiate directly with cities without going through the provinces.

• (1145)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a few questions.

As usual, and like the Liberals before them, the Conservatives have announced that they will provide billions of dollars in funding. Specifically, they are talking about investing \$33 billion in infrastructure. However, judging by Conservative promises, which are always announced with fanfare and are greatly exaggerated—take for example the announced investment of billions of dollars in British Columbia—when we later look at the specifics of these investments we realize that very little money actually trickles down. That is exactly what the Liberals did. They are engaging in political manipulation rather than providing an appropriate solution to the infrastructure deficit that currently exists in Canada and which, as the member stated, totals \$123 billion.

Thus, there is a tremendous gap between the \$33 billion over ten years promised by the Conservatives and the real needs of Canada. I would like the member to comment on the gap between what the Conservatives are promising and what the country's cities really need now.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I miss him. He used to sit on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Perhaps he will join us there again soon. I know he has received a well-deserved promotion.

Clearly, when we break down the \$33 billion over seven years—it is important to understand that this is over seven years—we see that the gas tax represents \$11.5 billion; the GST, \$5 billion; and the building Canada fund, \$8.8 billion. The rest is made up of border infrastructure and other programs that do not affect cities directly. As for the building Canada fund, the \$8.8 billion could be used, I admit. However, the projects that could be funded by this fund have to do with airports and lots of other things that do not necessarily come under cities.

### *Business of Supply*

Consequently, let us say that \$25.3 billion might be used for cities. This amount is spread over seven years. If we divide this amount by seven, we get \$3.5 billion a year in round figures. However, this year alone, cities would need \$123 billion if they wanted to take care of everything in one year, which is impossible.

So when we break down the figures, we see that the \$33 billion becomes \$25.3 billion over seven years for cities, or \$3.5 billion a year. This is far less than what cities are expecting or could expect to receive to address their infrastructure deficit.

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would much rather have asked this question of the government.

However, during the election campaign of 2006 the Conservatives were on record as saying that they wanted to implement the full 5¢ of the gas tax toward infrastructure and to do so immediately. Now we see the figures in the update and the government says this will not be so until 2009-10, while the FCM report mentions a deficit of \$123 billion. It strikes me that the government is prepared to fast track corporate taxes but not to fast track help for our cities. Does the member not find that ironic?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. He is absolutely right.

The reaction of the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities on finding out that the deficit was \$123 billion, was to say that it was not serious. Let us remember that. And yet, this is the first real, in-depth analysis the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has done. Every city was sent a questionnaire on their infrastructure needs. This is the first municipality by municipality analysis. The minister's first reaction was to say that it was not serious, when things have never been more serious.

The problem is that the government miscalculated things because it does not know the cities. Such is the cold hard reality. Perhaps also because this is not a federal jurisdiction. The federal government should have talked to the provinces in order to understand the situation before creating programs that it is now trying to defend in an effort to make political gains. The harsh reality is that a very large amount of money is needed, which the government did not foresee.

We have a problem right now. The government is being told to sit down and quickly create a program for negotiating a one time cash payment with each province so that each province can settle the infrastructure problems in each of its municipalities. The \$123 billion figure suggests that we must address this today. We are beyond calculating the fuel tax, which represents \$3.5 billion. As I mentioned earlier, this comes to \$25.3 billion over seven years. This is completely disproportionate to the needs of the cities. When we talk about infrastructure, we are talking about public safety.

*Business of Supply*

I have been saying this all along. History shows that the cities are having infrastructure problems today and are practically endangering the lives of their citizens because the federal government, in the 1990s, in trying to achieve a zero deficit, cut transfers to the provinces, which in turn had to cut transfers to the cities.

• (1150)

[English]

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

I am very pleased to speak to this motion today. I believe that the issue of municipal infrastructure is a fundamentally important issue. When I speak with the members of the board of trade, the mayor of my city or business people around our town, they all agree that the number one concern is our crumbling infrastructure, in all places but certainly in the town that I come from, Toronto.

We have seen study after study and report after report detailing the enormous and growing infrastructure deficit in our country. The Conference Board, the board of trade, as I mentioned, the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the big city mayors—in short, everyone in this country—agree that we have a massive infrastructure deficit. It is a hindrance to business. It is a danger to our environment. It is creating huge personal problems in terms of inconvenience, by lengthening travel times for people and through disruption and costs related to water pipes breaking because they are old and ought to be replaced. There are huge problems.

Everyone agrees that we need to address this problem, yet there seems to have been a paralysis in the previous government and now there are problems with the current government in addressing this issue. Therefore, I want to not only address the issue but discuss how we should address it.

I want to reinforce what the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is saying, which is that the deficit in infrastructure has now reached \$123 billion. It categorizes “sub-deficits”, that is, certain parts of our infrastructure that are particularly deficient. Water and waste water systems have a \$31 billion deficit. Transportation has a \$21.7 billion deficit. Transit has a \$22.8 billion deficit. Solid waste management has a \$7.7 billion deficit. Community, recreational, cultural and social infrastructure has a \$40.2 billion deficit.

We know that this deficit will only grow exponentially and that all governments and parties need to work together in order to come to grips with it and deal with the ongoing challenge to our quality of life.

However, the expectation that municipalities alone can deal with infrastructure deficits by increasing property taxes is clearly ludicrous. It is simply not sustainable, nor is it possible for them to do so.

Let us take a look at the gas tax, which is specifically referenced in this motion. The federal gas tax is 10¢ a litre. It generates over \$4 billion a year. Even half that tax, \$2 billion, would be a substantial investment in our municipalities. That is certainly what we have been proposing: that this tax, on a permanent basis, be made available to municipalities to deal with their infrastructure deficit.

The previous government made some promises about municipalities getting up to 5¢ a litre in future years, which would be \$2 billion, but of course that was never fully realized. What was realized, of course, were the massive corporate tax cuts, the largest we had seen. They were certainly escalated. We have seen that continue with the current government in the previous budget, and then the mini-budget the government brought in certainly fast tracked corporate tax cuts.

I would submit that what needs to be fast tracked is the funding for infrastructure. We have seen our communities stagnating. I hear complaints constantly about the amount of taxes people pay and the deterioration of their cities. This is an urgent issue that ought to be addressed.

• (1155)

The building Canada fund that was announced last year is a flawed program. All it does is repackage already designated federal dollars into a scheme that is designed to profit certain interests from the infrastructure crisis in municipal services and ultimately lead to their privatization.

Municipalities need support to repair and replace their aging infrastructure and what they are facing in fact are threats that if they do not agree to public-private partnerships, they will not get the funding that they need.

Therefore, we see the rising funds put into the building Canada infrastructure program which includes a mandatory P3 review for any project of more than \$50 million of federal funds. These reviews can be skewed to make the public sector look inefficient and in fact the head of Partnerships BC, responsible for privatization, said himself that:

—public sector comparators won't do you much good because I can make the public sector comparator as bad as I want to in order to make the private sector look good.

I think that often these privatizations are a false economy. We certainly saw this with the upgrading of the London subway system and the failure of a public-private partnership there. There were cost overruns of over £2 billion, or over \$4 billion.

While the proponents of privatization argue that P3s take away risk from government, clearly it is government and the public sector that is still on the hook for any cost overruns. The risk just reverts back to the public sector at a cost much higher than if they had just undertaken the work themselves.

I want to say a few words more about transit because we are talking about gas tax and I believe that transit infrastructure is fundamentally important for our communities. As I said earlier, it is important clearly for our environment and our businesses. It is important to the quality of life for people in large centres to be able to get to and from their homes, to work, and to other places where they have to travel to in a timely fashion.

*Business of Supply*

If we look at what happens if we replace cars with a bus, a regular TTC vehicle, one bus during rush hour can replace 45 private vehicles, which is very significant. If we put in an additional six car subway train, that replaces 900 vehicles. We are talking about an incredible bonus, incredible assistance, to unclogging our streets, unclogging our air, and simplifying the lives of people in the community.

We ought to have the finest transit systems in the world. We are a vast country. We specialize in transportation. It is what we do to keep our communities connected, yet we have let our transit systems lag further and further behind.

I believe we ought to be making significant investments in all infrastructure, but transit is very near and dear to my heart. I know that when the NDP was able to take \$5 billion earmarked for corporate tax cuts in the previous government's budget and invest some of that money in transit, it not only put new hybrid energy efficient buses on the streets of Toronto but what it did was order those buses from a plant in Mississauga and kept workers building those buses.

It was a big order for a Canadian plant. Not only was it good for the environment it kept people employed, and the people and the company paid taxes. It was good for the economy. It stimulated our economy. It was a win-win-win situation. This investment in infrastructure was done properly, not privatizing our infrastructure but investing our public dollars for the good of all Canadians That is what we ought to be doing

While I support the motion, I want to move that this motion be amended by adding the following: "And with the provision of an additional dedicated component for public transportation".

● (1200)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The amendment is in order. However, it is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Saint John if there is such consent.

**Mr. Paul Zed:** No, there is not Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is no consent. Therefore, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask some questions. I am curious if the member has had an opportunity to look at budget 2006, where the government committed \$1.3 billion to public transit capital investments.

I am curious, indeed, if the hon. member has taken a look at the proposed structure on some of the new investments and the \$17.6 billion over seven years that goes straight to municipalities. The building Canada fund will benefit municipalities and benefit all Canadians because it is for large projects such as transit, sewage and other municipal projects with \$8.8 billion.

I am also curious whether the hon. member has seen the \$25 million per jurisdiction per year, which is estimated at just over \$2.2 billion, and indeed, if she is aware of some of the investments the government has already made in the last two years: the Saint John Harbour cleanup, which of course is very important to Canadians of \$26.6 million; and Autoroute 30 near Montreal, which is very important to the people of Montreal and the people of Quebec?

Indeed, is the hon. member aware of the FLOW, the five transit projects that we have already funded in the greater Toronto area of \$962 million and we have already committed to the funding of that? Is she aware of the issue in Manitoba, the \$170.5 million for the Red River floodway, which is very important?

Is the hon. member aware of any of these initiatives, including the Asia-Pacific gateway upgrade of over \$1 billion? Is she aware of what the government has done and is doing?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, what I do know is that the money that was committed to the extension of a key subway line in the city of Toronto is not moving forward because of the ideology of the government. The Conservatives are insisting on mandatory public-private partnership reviews before they will spend this money to expand our transit system.

We have recently seen the incredible failure of a public-private partnership for upgrading large sections of the subway system in London, England. We saw over \$4 billion Canadian in cost overruns with a private consortium. The people of Britain are on the hook for that cost overrun.

The argument is that somehow these public-private partnerships take away risk from the public. The reality is, they simply do not. They privatize public infrastructure, public services and then leave the taxpayer on the hook for any cost overruns.

There may be money committed, for example, to transit in Toronto, but the money that has been pledged is not being spent and it really is a very ideological way to spend money. The city of Toronto has the sixth largest government in our country and we ought to leave it up to it to decide how to provide transit in the way it knows how to do best.

● (1205)

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned one of the ideological barriers that the Conservative government has placed on moving forward with public transit.

In my city of Victoria, B.C. Transit has increased its ridership to 21 million people, and this despite the increase in demand. For example, bus drivers must continually pass by waiting passengers.

*Business of Supply*

In the past decade, it is clear that the disinvestment by the former Liberal government has caused these problems in infrastructure. FCM members and mayors I spoke to a couple of weeks ago are concerned about the Conservative government's desire to absolutely end this infrastructure program.

I am wondering if the hon. member would comment on that real possibility. The Conservatives have extended it for a number of years, but there is no commitment about its going forward in perpetuity, and that is a real concern to all of us.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Victoria is absolutely right. I fear what is happening is less a commitment to renewing infrastructure and more a commitment to enriching some sections of the private sector. I would argue that there are lots of possibilities, as I said, with the provision of subway cars and buses in Toronto. There are lots of provisions for business opportunities, but not at the expense of privatizing our services.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is an important debate for Canadians to follow. It is unfortunate that the NDP seems to have a majority in the House right now because we are very concerned about this issue.

We are talking about the \$125 million infrastructure deficit that is now growing at \$23 billion a year and is estimated to be a \$400 billion deficit by 2020. That is important because when we talk about what this infrastructure deficit means, we are talking about the quality of life of people in cities and towns right across this country.

We are talking about the kind of transportation options that people have, whether or not they can actually take a SkyTrain or a subway train or a bus to work and have those kinds of options. We are talking about whether or not people actually have safe water to drink and whether or not people are going to be spending more time in hospitals because of water-related illness because our water infrastructure is not being kept up.

We are talking about waste water treatment. Whether it is in Victoria, British Columbia, or right across this country, it is to make sure that the waste that our society creates is actually dealt with in a way that is environmentally effective. We are talking about the actual quality of life in our cities when we talk about social or recreational facilities.

We know that the quality of life of most Canadian families has eroded over the past 20 years. In fact, for two-thirds of Canadian families, since the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement was signed, their real income has gone. For two-thirds of Canadian families, even though they are working longer and longer hours, they are getting less and less pay.

So, essentially, their personal quality of life is diminishing, they are working longer periods of time, and they are getting less money in their pockets, which is why the debt load for most Canadian families has doubled over the same period.

Yet, at the same time, we are seeing this deterioration of our public infrastructure, and that is fundamentally important. When we are talking about the public infrastructure deficit, we are also talking about the safety of people driving to work, whether or not we are going to see the kind of overpass collapses that tragically took place

in Minnesota recently because there was not the upkeep on the transportation infrastructure.

So, when we are talking about transportation infrastructure, transit infrastructure, water treatment, waste treatment, and social and physical and recreational centres, we are talking about the very quality of life that is at stake. With a \$400 billion deficit growing over the next 12 years, one has to ask what has actually happened.

Under the former Liberal government the cutbacks started. We used to, up until the 1980s, maintain an infrastructure investment of 5% growth per year. That was decimated under the Liberal government. Now the Conservatives have come to power. What have they done? In their own words, today, they said that they are going to invest \$33 billion over seven years. That is their own words. I am not trying to change what they have said. The parliamentary secretary was very clear: \$33 billion over seven years.

What does that mean? Simple math tells us that is less than \$5 billion a year, when the infrastructure deficit is growing over \$22 billion a year. What that simply means is that we are going deeper and deeper into a hole that affects the quality of life and safety of Canadian families from coast to coast to coast.

Every single year, the deficit grows by another \$18 billion because the government is not taking it seriously. That is even assuming that it will invest the money that it is pretending it will invest over the next seven years.

We have seen, with the pine beetle funding, big announcements of around \$200 million going to support pine beetle programs in British Columbia. And after that big announcement and after the media had packed up and gone home, we have seen the devil in the details: only \$24 million, in other words only about 12¢ on the dollar, has actually been invested in pine beetle programs.

So, the Conservative government, like the Liberals before, is making this promise of \$33 billion over seven years. Even if the Conservatives keep their promise, and we strongly doubt that, this government has very little credibility on financial matters. We have seen how they treat fiscal matters, and I will come back to that in a moment. Even if they invested this money, we are going into the hole almost \$20 billion a year over the next 12 years. The deficit will get worse and that will have an even greater impact on Canadian families.

● (1210)

Let us go back to the fiscal prudence of the Conservative government. It is shoveling \$17 billion off the back of a truck to the wealthy corporate sector. We have \$1 billion a year going to one of the wealthiest industrial sectors in North America, the petroleum industry. The government is willing to hand out all this money to the wealthiest and most profitable Canadian corporations while it is underfunding Canadian cities.

What does that mean? It is like the Canadian people sent the Prime Minister to the store to buy bread, eggs and milk, and instead, the Prime Minister bought a whole bunch of candy. He did not buy the bread, the eggs and the milk for his brothers and sisters waiting at home. He then comes back and says that he has 25¢ left, that he has a surplus, so he will give that up to the corporate sector.

*Business of Supply*

The Conservatives are not investing in what Canadian cities and Canadian families need but they are giving billions of dollars to the corporate sector that does not need it because it has record levels of profit. The net result is that our water safety is in peril. Our transportation safety is in peril because we know that the highway systems, built in the 1950s and 1960s, have now come to a useful end and serious renovation is required.

It means that our transit systems, such as the SkyTrain system in British Columbia, continue to function undercapacity, even though the need is staggeringly great, particularly in the South Fraser region of the lower mainland. It also means that waste water treatment is not put into place so our environment continues to deteriorate. The quality of life that Canadian kids have with regard to recreational and cultural facilities is virtually non-existent.

That is how Conservatives handle their fiscal management. They buy candy or they buy Ferraris and go gambling rather than taking care of the house itself, repairing the roof, making sure the kids have shoes on their feet and that the bread, eggs and milk are on the table and in the fridge. That is what is so deplorable.

Let us look at the impact in my riding. In Burnaby—New Westminister, there are crying needs. Mayor Derek Corrigan and the Burnaby Citizens' Association have done a phenomenal job with scant resources. They tried for years to get the former Liberal government and now the current Conservative government to fund lake rejuvenation projects for Burnaby Lake and to apply for funding for SkyTrain, not the P3 model that is excessive in the costs, because the financing costs are higher when they go through the private sector. As we know, they have to build in the profit component so obviously they will spend more. Any accountant can tell us that.

Instead of providing for SkyTrain funding, public transit funding so the people in Burnaby, New Westminister, south of the Fraser and other parts of the lower mainland actually have transportation options, they underfund. They provide scant pennies when dollars are needed.

We have seen the chronic underfunding in policing, in the RCMP. This is something that started under the Liberals and continues under the Conservatives, something that Burnaby City Council and Mayor Derek Corrigan have been speaking very clearly about. We are talking about underfunding in a whole variety of areas.

This past spring, we saw the underfunding in flood control. The federal government is not stepping up and providing that necessary funding. Instead, it is going off and buying candy when bread, eggs and milk are needed on the table. As a result of that, municipalities, like Burnaby and New Westminister, suffer the consequences.

In New Westminister, Mayor Wayne Wright and New Westminister City Council have been pressing for funding as well for a variety of infrastructure projects. There has been talk in New Westminister for some time of a museum and arts centre, that physical and recreational infrastructure that is so desperately needed. The federal government is not there because, instead of investing in that much needed infrastructure, those fundamentals of bread, eggs and milk for Canadian cities, it chooses to go off and shovel money at the corporate sector again.

That is just not acceptable. Under the current Conservative government and under the former Liberal government, we have seen time and time again that the needs of the main streets of the cities of our country are neglected, while both of these same old, same old political parties shovel money off the back of a truck to the corporate sector.

●(1215)

Canadian cities need the fundamentals taken care of. They need funding so they can take care of waste treatment plants and water treatment plants to ensure water is clean and healthy. They need funding to upgrade their transportation infrastructure so it is safe. They need much more funding for public transit because it is good for the environment. Funding is important to ensure Canadian cities thrive.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my friend was on the transportation committee and he certainly is passionate about his interests. I compliment him on being an excellent orator but I would like him to get the facts correct. It would be helpful for the people who are listening today and for the people who read the information that we provide correct facts.

I am very interested in the pine beetle as well. I represent northeastern Alberta primarily but the pine beetle is now in my constituency. My understanding, from many experts, is that what we are doing is working. Many say that the pine beetle is likely in remission, which is good news for Canada and the logging industry.

I do agree with the member in relation to the Liberals talking a lot about infrastructure but not getting anything done. I would hope that he is not suggesting that we violate the Constitution of the country, because this is not the federal government's responsibility.

We are coming to the table to help the provinces and the municipalities because we see the dire needs. This government, the Prime Minister and the minister have listened to municipalities and to the FCM and we recognize that there is a deficit. We saw this deficit even when we were in opposition. The Liberals had an opportunity to do something but they did nothing.

The greater Toronto area will receive over \$829.6 million from 2005 through to 2010. Municipalities within the GTA have already received a one time payment of over \$112 million under the public transit fund. I spoke earlier about all the transit initiatives that this government has undertaken because we understand clean air and the value of the environment. We committed \$83 million for Mississauga and GO Transit improvements in the city. This is great news for Canada.

Those were just examples but this government is moving forward with good things for Canadians, like better air and better transit, which is good news.

*Business of Supply*

•(1220)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I wish the Conservatives could take credit for the small amount of investments that are going forward but, as the parliamentary secretary well knows, in both the housing investments and the transit investments, which are inadequate, those investments came from the NDP budget of 2005. How long will the Conservatives campaign on the NDP budget amendments?

In our budget, we threw out the Liberal tax cuts to the corporate sector, tax gifts that were being thrown away, and said that the money had to go to Canadian cities. The Conservatives took the figures from that budget and have been campaigning as if they actually have done something ever since. The NDP budget amendments did that and it would be nice for the Conservatives to give credit where credit is due.

However, the amounts are inadequate. We always said that the NDP budget of 2005 was just a start. According to the FCM, the accumulated deficit now in public transit systems is \$23 billion and it will continue to grow every year. The parliamentary secretary just referenced a little less than \$1 billion when the deficit is \$23 billion.

Canadians are not fools. They can do the math. They know that what the government is doing is completely inadequate.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Toronto Transit Commission has put forward a wonderful plan to expand the street car lines all across Toronto. The population of Toronto is expected to grow by one million people over the next 10 years, which means a lot more people will be going into the city of Toronto. A lot of condominiums are being built. It is a vibrant city. The city of Toronto needs the money. How does the NDP plan to address this issue?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Trinity—Spadina has been an incredible advocate on behalf of greater Toronto, as has the member for Toronto—Danforth and the member for Parkdale—High Park.

As the member well knows, the NDP is the only party that has put forward a comprehensive plan to deal with the population growth that the greater Toronto area will be experiencing. Toronto, under the former Liberal government and under the current Conservative government, is not being treated fairly. That has to fundamentally change.

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to join in the debate today. I am very much supportive of the initiative by my colleague from Saint John in the motion, which reads:

[*Translation*]

That, consistent with the spirit of the Liberal New Deal for Cities and Communities, this House believes it is in the best interest of Canadians, that the government should take steps to make permanent the sharing of the Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline with all Canadian municipalities for the purpose of enhancing local community infrastructure.

[*English*]

I am pleased to speak to the motion. It is a topic for which I, along with many of my colleagues on this side, have worked. We remember very well when some of us were elected almost 15 years ago and the issue of supporting municipalities had long been

neglected for a series of reasons, and it was clear to most Canadians. In 1992-93 the country was gripped by recession after eight years of Conservative government. We had deficits that were spiralling out of control.

The leader of our party at the time, along with the then finance minister, who later became the next leader of the party, made it abundantly clear that investment in people and in cities and partnering with cities was one of the best ways to achieve a better, stronger Canada. I represented many communities at the time, Pickering, Ajax and Uxbridge, and I also represented Whitby at the time, which is now the riding of the Minister of Finance.

I see the Minister of Transport is here with us today to participate in the debate. He will have the opportunity in a moment.

It seems to me that we have built a tremendous amount of goodwill in the country based on recognizing the need for affordable housing, public transit, restoring our sewer and our water facilities. These are not only goods in and of themselves. We want to ensure that we maintain a standard of living. All governments have an important role, regardless of the questions on the Constitution, to ensure that Canadians from coast to coast are able to at least access the kinds of resources that build stronger and safer communities and build the kind of communities that build a stronger Canada.

I had a bit to do with this at the outset. In 1998 I chaired a committee of Liberal members of Parliament. It looked at the idea of using gas taxes that were derived from municipal and federal coffers to assist municipalities. Members will recall that in August 2001 I wrote a letter to the then minister of transport, asking him to consider very strongly the idea of using a portion of gas tax, which I felt was the GST compounded on the other taxes, and that this amount could go to municipalities to leverage some effect in building and restoring some of the transit needs.

In my region of Durham at the time, which is now part of my riding in Toronto, the need for transit back in 2000 was over \$300 million. Today, in 2007, we know our transit needs are certainly not being met.

The Conservative government, which walked into town back in March 2006, said that it would be put \$800 million into Toronto. In fact, it put a pittance in eastern Toronto. Ridings anywhere east of Bayview or Yonge Street, all the way out to Oshawa, received \$2.5 million for transit. This is an area of well over two million Canadians and it received \$2.5 million for transit. No wonder our roads are blocked. No wonder there is a sense of cynicism that all the proposed money went into one basket.

I heard the parliamentary secretary quote some money that was given to the city of Mississauga, and that is great. However, I also am cognizant of the position taken by the mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, who was extremely upset, along with other members of the FCM, at the new arrangement by the government to do a smoke and mirrors approach to funding.

*Business of Supply*

Some of the money was taken from previous programs, which we introduced under the new deal, and some of it was taken from gas taxes. This how the government came up with the so-called \$33 billion. Cities cannot even access a good portion of that \$33 billion. The hon. member from British Columbia, who spoke before me, talked about the P3 project. Others talked about border crossings. These are not areas that the cities will be readily able to access to meet their needs.

Our party has taken the position, as it has in the past, of ensuring that there is an important link between cities and the federal government. While the Conservative government's approach is that cities do not necessarily rate and that it is more interested in working and making arrangements with the provinces, we believe respect for municipalities from all levels of government is paramount.

More important, there are realities in our country today. The presence of so many new Canadians coming to our communities and the need for settlement, the need for affordable housing, the need for recognizing the burdens that have been placed on many of the municipalities, compels us to looking more deeply, more intensely and more respectfully to the provinces.

• (1225)

Under the Liberal government, of which I was a proud part, we had a cities mandate. Issues of cities were very carefully treated. I would not say we had a secretariat, but it was an area within government, within cabinet, that was taken very seriously. It has now been rolled up.

[*Translation*]

I hope that the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities is well aware that this is now his responsibility, as it comes under his mandate.

[*English*]

That is nice, but it demonstrates once again that the Conservatives are not serious about cities. They are not serious about treating them in a respectful way, the way in which they clearly deserve.

In 2005 the Liberal government renewed the municipal-rural infrastructure fund, the Canada strategic infrastructure fund, the border infrastructure fund and the public transit capital. That commitment was worth \$1.65 billion annually through 2014 for a total of \$11.5 billion from 2007 to 2014.

The Conservative budget, which the hon. member believes is such a great thing, only includes \$4 billion of the funds that were renewed from these same programs, a cut of \$7.5 billion to municipalities. The Conservatives have also included in their grandiose scheme \$11.8 billion in gas tax funding and \$5.8 billion in GST rebates for municipalities as part of that \$33 billion what they call building Canada fund. Both the rebates and the gas tax transfer were Liberal government initiatives. I know the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities does not like that, but that is the reality. They are picking and choosing and trying to cobble something together.

Above all I think what is most vexing for any objective onlooker is the fact that the money will not be given in a predictable sense over the long term. That is exactly what our motion calls for today.

We would like to see the government ensure that there will be ongoing predictability and funding for municipalities and in particular, I will speak to this more passionately in just a moment, ensure that gas tax revenues are dedicated permanently to municipalities, not just for the next year or two and then re-appropriate the money somewhere else.

With all due respect, many of our cities are on life-support. I believe only four municipalities, and the record will clearly show this, do not run something equivalent to a debt in Canada. All other municipalities are sinking. It is clear to me that Canadians readily identify with or understand the problems of crumbling infrastructure, bridges that fail, climatic concerns with respect to bridge and sewer infrastructures and to ensure the quality of our water.

Ontario had an inquiry two or three years ago with respect to how the water systems failed the people of Walkerton. Since the municipalities are on the front line of delivering services every advantage, every optimal opportunity that we have as a Parliament must be given to ensure municipalities can continue do the work that they do while recognizing ever increasing burdens.

There are issues that we will try to work with in time, but let us talk a bit about the gas tax for a moment.

Right now in my province of Ontario, the province takes 14.7¢ on every litre of gasoline. That price does not go up and down with the price of gasoline. It is a fixed price. In 1998 we recommended that the amount be dedicated strictly to roads and to the provision of transportation for which the tax was intended. I am not here to tell the provinces what to do, but it is clear to us that it would have been opportunity for consumers and would have given the provinces an opportunity to give back some of the downloading that took place, admittedly by the federal and provincial governments during that period of time.

The second component on the taxation is 10¢ a litre, which is the federal excise tax. The federal excise tax does not change with the price of gasoline or other fuels. On any non-commercial type of fuel like gasoline used by passengers day in and day out, there is also the provision of a 6%, soon to be 5%, tax that is added to it.

Here is the issue of contention. In 2000 the then leader of the opposition, now public safety minister, challenged the Liberal government to ensure that those taxes went back to consumers, using the report I had written in 1998. In fact, what he did was pick and choose. We said that amount of tax, the GST applied to the 10¢ in Ontario and to the 14.7¢, should find its way back to consumers. Since no provision could be made to do that, the next best step was to ensure that it went toward public transit.

*Business of Supply*

●(1230)

A number of colleagues will be nodding their heads, recognizing that this would be a way of ensuring that public transit or roads or infrastructure to better finance our highway system and municipalities would be an extremely important and useful mechanism ensuring that Canadians could take advantage of some of the best roads in the world, particularly in my community.

Highway 401, which goes through my riding, and I suspect the ridings of a good number of members of Parliament, is really the backbone of our economy. Without that infrastructure, it would be hard to imagine any type of success in economic vitality. Yet what the government has failed to understand is the need to ensure that tax power, through gasoline going to municipalities, is absolutely indispensable in providing long term viability, not only for our roads but for the health and well-being of our communities. Time and time again Canadians have accepted the primacy and importance of ensuring municipalities are properly funded.

I have had an opportunity to look at what it has done for communities in my riding over the years with respect to infrastructure. Communities that I formerly represented, Ajax, for instance, were able to take advantage of some of the initial infrastructure funding in 1993. That would be the same infrastructure the then Reform Party said would be like trying to use a penlight battery to start a 747. A 747 is up in the air and flying. That was one heck of a battery.

However, what we also understand and recognize is that governments will make proper investments not as a means for the private sector to take advantage of it, but to recognize that governments have a very important role in ensuring that all players in the lives of Canadians, all structures of government, all offices and agencies, have an opportunity. Clearly, I hope what will come out of this debate is a recognition by the government that it got it wrong with respect to cities.

We had a very good relationship with the municipalities. We received the support of a lot of municipalities across the country. Yes, there may be some partisan considerations that are given to this, but overall there was no doubt in anyone's mind that if they had to choose a time between 1993 and 2005 as one of the hallmarks of the government, which I was very proud to be part of, it would be the deal we had with cities to make cities a better place.

We all have a responsibility to ensure that the priority here has to continue to be looking after the well-being and interests of our cities. They are important players. While the Constitution of 1867 has them as kind of a consideration within the purview of the provincial governments, I think very few Canadians would dismiss or not readily recognize this. When we talk of communities like mine in Durham region or York region to the north of the city of Toronto, these institutions and communities have matured and have a very important stake to play in the lives of Canadians.

We cannot ignore the fact that our municipalities are going through a very difficult time in terms of financing. Perhaps there are creative ways coming down the road. Our party has certainly suggested some. My colleagues have talked about some of the priorities we would like to see. Some of those ideas come in

demonstrating not only a difference between our party and the governing Conservative Party, but we would direct money to transit systems to allow them to increase service and purchase new equipment.

The Conservative plan gives a tax credit to users and does not give anything to municipalities to allow expansion or improvement of the current transit system. That is very serious, considering buses, trains and rapid transit ideas will not get the benefit of expansion. Buses that are some 35 years of age are being literally kept on the roads because there is only enough money to cover that amount of vehicles.

The federal government has said that it will give money to users. It is great to give a tax credit to users for buses that do not work. I cannot see a more nonsensical approach to not recognizing the problem as opposed to dealing with the symptom. Riders will not ride a bus that is will break down or cannot arrive on time or worse, that it will get stuck, or lose a wheel, or the engine will break down, or whatever the case may be and there is no opportunity to take advantage of those credits.

●(1235)

We have to recognize that with transit communities like Toronto, transit among communities in Durham, transit across this country, particularly green transit, which I think brings us into a whole different field, it is not just the benefit of building better transit and better municipalities but also the outcomes, such as more people riding transit, with newer technologies being introduced. Yes they are costly, but they will pay dividends for the country in ways that are numerous.

We have talked to the manufacturing sector. I am a vice-chair of the industry committee. We have talked about the need to ensure that green technologies are used and new technologies are brought forward in order to advance better employment opportunities for Canadians.

There is a very important trickle down effect in terms of the federal government recognizing its responsibilities with transit.

In terms of general infrastructure programs, it is clear that the government has only promised to maintain the current agreements we have in place with no mention of any future investments. What Canadian cities have long called for and what this motion addresses in very plain language is the promise of long term funding and support.

Plans and programs that are one or two years in length are of absolutely no help. The reality is that cities need to look ahead with 10 to 20 year programs. That is important. They need to have that kind of sustainability and predictability in their funding. The federal government could play a much better role in doing that, not rehashing old programs, or mixing up a few and saying that the provinces can decide, or that it is not a federal responsibility and therefore the federal government will not have anything to do with it, or worse, trying to make it look like a \$33 billion commitment when in fact it is a cut of \$7.5 billion in terms of real money going to cities.



*Business of Supply*

We as a government created a separate department, as I mentioned earlier, to promote cities at the federal level. I had the opportunity to be with the minister of transport who had made some comments. It was not a full ministry but it was a separate seat at the table, something that had not existed since the days of Prime Minister Trudeau. It is clear that once the swearing in of the new government took place, the cities department was rolled into the Department of Transport. That is unfortunate. It sends the wrong message.

We need to know that cities are growing. They need our help. They deserve our attention but they also deserve respect. This is not some kind of political football between parties. We need to recognize once and for all, the Constitution notwithstanding, that cities are here to stay. The role of cities and the importance they have is not just in terms of the representation they carry, but they are the distant early warnings in many of our regions across the country. It does not really matter where we are, the government in the first instance for a good number of Canadians, in fact for all Canadians, is their municipal governments.

We must not fail to address their needs. We must recognize them, as we did as the Liberal government with respect to the GST rebates, as we did with respect to the federal government providing one-third of the financing to help municipalities meet their needs, in particular as it came to water, transit and infrastructure.

We must continue to recognize these things, not just in terms of piecemeal approaches here and there and several other priorities. It is incumbent on Parliament tonight when it deliberates on this particular important and very successful, I believe, resolution by my colleague from Saint John that we can never overemphasize the need to support our municipalities in tangible ways. The need is real. The growth is real. If we want to plan ahead and grow consistently, I suggest that Parliament adopt this motion. It is a very worthwhile motion. It is high time Canadians understood that this Parliament stands firmly behind our cities.

• (1240)

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the comments of my colleague across the way. He highlighted from 1993 to 2005, those years which he says shine on the previous Liberal government's record.

During that period of time I was a city councillor and those were tough years. Those were years of cut and slash. Those were years when the federal government downloaded onto local government. We are now seeing the consequences of those mistakes, mistakes where the Liberals cut and cut and cut at the cost of our local citizens. It cost the infrastructure.

We now have a government that is providing a renewal to the infrastructure, working with the provinces and local government to see a renewal and it is called "Building Canada". A couple of items are highlighted in my mind, such as the Saint John harbour. In my own riding of Langley, I saw first-hand what those cuts from the Liberals cost us. It cost us in health care also. They cut \$25 billion from health care.

For years the Liberals were aware of the problems in Saint John harbour. It was under this Conservative government that finally the cleaning up of the harbour was dealt with. Why did the Liberals not

participate in that? We have heard a lot of rhetoric from them, but again no action. That is their legacy: rhetoric and no action. Why did they not deal with that?

In my own riding we had a problem with the sewer structure. It was our government that finally funded that. I was pleased to announce \$3 million on a \$9 million project, one-third, one-third, one-third. Why did the Liberals neglect the infrastructure when they knew it was crumbling?

• (1245)

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member commented about one-third, one-third, one-third. Unless the hon. member wants to swallow his comment completely, he would have to recognize that the one-third that has gone to municipalities for the past 15 years is the result of the federal government making a priority, notwithstanding at the time the recognition of the debt in this country which was putting a greater burden on municipalities and all Canadians.

Would the hon. member like to remind this Parliament where his former party stood when it brought the deficit and debt in this country into uncontrollable levels? Municipalities would have had to borrow money at 15%. We recognized that. We made cuts that were necessary, but we also ensured that municipalities at the same time had funding to meet those needs.

What has that given rise to? Canadians are spending better. The standard of living is much higher. Municipalities have decent infrastructure. That member has no idea of the damage that would have been done if our federal Liberal government had not responded accurately, precisely to understand and address the gravity of the situation of a nation which was going out of control, which was the basket case of the international community.

Had we listened to the member and his party at the time, of course, we would all have been bankrupt. The reality is that his party is now making announcements while doing a bit of smoke and mirrors, cutting here, cutting there, based on the good work of the Liberal Party in bringing financial order to this country with prudent spending. We brought it to a position where the country's financial house is now in order.

The member of Parliament can talk about what he might have done in hindsight, but he will not do what the province of Ontario did. When it had those cuts, what did it do? It turned it into a tax cut which is exactly what those guys over there are doing. They clearly understand that their priorities are on tax cuts, not on Canadians, not on cities. It is time for the member to admit the charade he is trying to put forward in the House of Commons today.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP supports a marvellous plan that would move 175 million riders a year and build 120 kilometres of track. It is called Transit City. It was put forward by the City of Toronto on March 16 of this year. It would have seven streetcar right of way networks all across Toronto and along 11 kilometres of waterfront. Imagine street carriages would go right through the waterfront, through the GO Transit corridor using existing tracks. There would be 14 kilometres of light rapid transit in Sheppard East, Don Mills, Eglinton Crosstown, Scarborough Malvern, Jane, Etobicoke Finch West, all the way to Humber College.

*Business of Supply*

This plan has seven streetcar right of way routes that would extend across Toronto. It would move millions of riders. It would reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It would take about \$6 billion of combined city, provincial and federal dollars. At the rate we are going in terms of our infrastructure funding, we will never be able to see this as a reality.

If we look at the [transitcity.ca](http://transitcity.ca) website, we will notice that the federal government is completely missing in its contribution, in its announcement, in its support. It is really important to invest in public transit, to invest in this wonderful transit plan.

The hon. member is from the GTA. Would he support this plan? He said that we need to invest in public transit. It would be good for our riders. It would be good for our environment. It would be good for creating jobs. Would he support it?

• (1250)

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** Mr. Speaker, not only would I support it, but let me refer to the August 29, 2001 issue of the *Toronto Star*, the Greater Toronto section, and the third paragraph of an article by Royson James, “There has to be a better way; TTC needs \$300 million”:

On the agenda [of the FCM] is a copy of a letter to federal Transportation Minister David Collenette from Liberal MP [my name] (Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge). He asks Collenette to divert 1.5 cents a litre federal gasoline tax to municipalities for transportation needs.

We are talking about something that this member of Parliament and the Liberal Party recognized some time ago.

The Conservatives simply ignore transit and would like to revise what happened 10 years ago, but with respect to the greater Toronto area, the fact is if there was any money that could be given to the municipalities to help realize those kinds of initiatives, I am from eastern Toronto and in my speech I mentioned that well over two million Canadians will not benefit one iota from the federal government's announcement on transportation and transit in the GTA because it all goes to the North York region. We are frozen out. We are the poor sisters from the Conservative perspective. It really begs the question, what do the Conservative have against big cities? What do they have against Toronto?

If they want to make any inroads in that city, I would suggest they do the right thing and begin putting money into infrastructure. That is one of the worthwhile projects I would support.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of questions, I do have a question for the Liberal member for Pickering—Scarborough East. What did he mean when he said, “It's hard to make the argument that Toronto has great needs when it's doing so extraordinarily well economically. It's a hard argument to make in the weaker regions of the country”?

I want to know what he meant by that, because we did not listen to him when we decided what to do on this side of the House. This government put over \$2.3 billion in funding for infrastructure in the greater Toronto area. We have also committed over \$144 million in funding for infrastructure in Mississauga.

I would like to know what he meant when he said that the city of Toronto was not important enough to get funding.

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** Mr. Speaker, I have no idea where he is quoting that from. I am sure it is part of the Conservative Party blog which the Conservatives use from time to time when they take selective quotes out of context. We know the Conservatives like to do that.

Let us deal with the fact of what the Conservative government is trying to do. It is smoke and mirrors. The Conservatives are telling Canadians that it is the largest investment in the city's infrastructure. It clearly is not. They cannot take a position that they are doing something when in fact they know full well they are not. Municipalities are suffering right now.

That hon. member wants to spend his time being cute by quoting out of context. Let me give that member one right back.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** You said it.

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** Where is the half a billion bucks for my community and for my city of Toronto and Durham region for transit? I can tell the member where the money has gone.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Where is the sponsorship money?

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** Mr. Speaker, there is heckling from both sides of the Conservative Party because they think it is all about sponsorship

Let me tell the hon. member, get on with governing this country, not shortchanging cities, not shortchanging Canadians and leaving our cities in a position where they cannot fend for themselves. Shame on the Conservative Party.

Let the public understand once and for all that the Conservative Party does not support cities. It does not support the people within them. It could not give a damn about Canadians in terms of their concerns. When it comes down to it, let us understand where Conservatives stand on cities.

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after that outburst from my hon. colleague, I have a chance to set the record straight on exactly what we have done and what we are doing.

[*Translation*]

I must say I was a bit surprised by the motion by my hon. colleague from Saint John, who would like us to be guided by the action of the previous government in renewing our infrastructure.

It is true that the previous government introduced the gas tax. We recognized the merits of that initiative. Moreover, our government has extended it by four years, which the hon. member forgot to mention.

In this way, we are providing municipalities with an additional \$8 billion that they can use to improve their water and sewage systems, public transit and, of course, local roads. However, for 13 long years, the Liberal government turned a deaf ear to municipalities' concerns and made massive cuts—I repeat, massive cuts—to transfers to the provinces, which had a serious impact on every municipality in the country.

*Business of Supply*

Early in our mandate, in 2006, our government recognized that action and infrastructure investment were urgently required as a direct result of the inaction and negligence of the former Liberal government. I sincerely believe that instead of setting itself up as a model when it is actually the cause of the problem, the party opposite should take note of what we have done and what we are doing. We acted quickly to introduce a world-class infrastructure program in Canada.

On November 6, together with the Prime Minister, I had the honour of launching the new \$33 billion building Canada plan, the most important infrastructure program of modern times in our country. It provides for fixed financial assistance over seven years. That is the longest commitment made by a government in the past 50 years.

I would like to remind the members opposite that, in 2006, we consulted the provinces and the territories. We also met with municipalities through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in order to deal with the infrastructure deficit unfortunately created by the previous government. During these consultations, we learned that cities would particularly like to have stable, long-term, flexible and predictable funding. That is exactly what we delivered.

The building Canada plan includes base funding of \$17.6 billion—more than half of the plan for municipalities until 2014—including a 100% refund of GST and \$11.8 billion from the gas tax fund.

I realize that the member has not said a word about the GST. It is very risky for a Liberal member to attempt to explain his party's position on this tax. During the career of the member for Saint John, he was forced, when in opposition, to defend the abolition of the GST and then, when in power, to defend keeping it. All members will remember that.

Base funding of \$25 billion per year to provinces and territories has been allocated for a period of seven years. This totals \$175 billion in allocations to each administration for basic infrastructure needs such as bridge safety. \$8.8 billion will be available through the building Canada fund for strategic projects in major urban centres and for projects in small communities.

•(1255)

Indeed, special attention will be given to communities with populations under 100,000. The sum of \$2.1 billion will go to the new gateways and border crossings fund to improve border and cross-border trade with the United States. An investment of \$1.25 billion will create a new national fund for public-private partnerships and \$1 billion will be allocated to the Asia-Pacific gateway and corridor initiative.

These investments are a historic contribution that meets the infrastructure needs of municipalities, provinces and territories. It is financial assistance dedicated to things that are important to Canadians. I am talking about clean water, more efficient public transit, safe roads and bridges, and of course green energy.

No federal government in the history of this country has ever made such a large investment over such a long period of time to modernize infrastructure. No level of government, however, can tackle the infrastructure problems our country is facing itself. All

levels of government, federal, provincial, territorial and municipal, have to work together in partnership to meet these challenges. That is why this government has been careful to consult the provinces, the territories and the municipalities in developing this plan.

This stems also from our desire to establish open federalism in the spirit that led to the Confederation of Canada. The Government of Canada is doing its part. We have put \$33 billion on the table. Now the provinces, territories and municipalities have to act. After all, at the end of the day, they are the ones who manage the infrastructure and who must ensure that the construction or rebuilding is done, with our financial support.

For the provinces and territories, the time has come for framework agreements to be signed so they can access the funds available under our new program. For municipalities in most provinces and territories, it is time to urge their provincial and territorial governments to sign the necessary agreements so they can submit projects and improve the public infrastructure of Canada, as British Columbia and Nova Scotia have done. I would also note that we are engaged in other initiatives in this regard and things are working well.

For example, on July 30 our government announced the Ontario-Quebec continental gateway and trade corridor initiative, which will provide central Canada with a strategic transportation system, one that will be integrated and competitive and will promote more efficient movement of international and domestic trade, inside and outside Canada.

•(1300)

[English]

Canada's federal government is doing its share. We have put \$33 billion on the table. It is time for Canada's provinces, territories and municipalities to follow our lead. After all, they are the ones that directly manage our infrastructure and look after its construction and renovation, with our financial support.

For provinces and territories, it is time to sign the framework agreements within the context of the building Canada plan so that they may begin accessing available funds.

For municipalities, it is time to invite their respective provincial or territorial government to sign the necessary agreements so they can begin submitting their projects and begin improving public infrastructure, as is already the case in British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

However, I want to underline other important initiatives that we have undertaken.

For example, last July 30, our government announced the Ontario-Quebec continental gateway and trade corridor, which will give central Canada a strategic, integrated and competitive transportation system and promote the efficient movement of international trade and links from central Canada to global markets.

*Business of Supply*

Moreover, last October 14, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador for the development of Canada's Atlantic gateway.

By signing this protocol, the five governments show their support for a shared vision. Establishing an Atlantic gateway that is part of an integrated and competitive strategic transportation network will clearly facilitate international trade on the North American east coast.

We are also looking at the potential of northern regions as possible gateways as well.

The government will continue to seek better cooperation and collaboration with provinces and territories to prioritize the financing of this infrastructure.

Expertise and private capital can fill gaps and make a larger contribution to the construction of infrastructure in our country. This is why we must now turn to the topic of public-private partnerships.

The government will incite public-private partnerships by providing \$1.3 billion to the PPP fund, or the public-private partnership fund, within the building Canada fund.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

We are also studying the potential of our northern regions as a possible gateway. In that regard, in addition to being a powerful instrument of economic development, the infrastructure will also contribute to asserting our sovereignty in an area of the world that is attracting ever increasing interest.

The Government of Canada will be continuing to work with the provinces and territories to make infrastructure funding a priority. We are aware, however, that governments cannot meet all infrastructure needs themselves. Private expertise and capital can fill many of the gaps and make a significant contribution to building the infrastructure.

That is why we will encourage opportunities for public-private partnerships, through building Canada's public-private partnership fund. We will also be working, as we are now, in fact, to create a public-private partnerships office that will promote the use of such partnerships for infrastructure projects.

I would need a lot more time to give a complete description of the initiatives we have undertaken to improve infrastructure in Canada. However, it is important, above all, to remember that our government has made massive investments, in consultation with our provincial partners, to create a strong economy, a healthy environment and more prosperous communities.

[*English*]

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the minister go on about his huge commitment, but I will speak to that later.

Since the Conservatives took office, I have asked the minister several times about the commitment regarding the transit expansion for the GTA, and in particular, the route that was to go to York University. I continue to get non-answers from him.

I ask him today, where is the commitment that the Liberals made? You had initially said that you would support it. Where is it now? When will that be followed through?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** I would just remind the hon. member for York West to address her questions through the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Transport.

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon:** Mr. Speaker, this is the first time, I believe, that the hon. member has raised this issue, but I might be mistaken. I am happy to respond to that.

The Prime Minister and my colleague the Minister of Finance earlier this year made a historic announcement of roughly \$960 million in which the FLOW initiative was put forward. There were also a certain number of elements within it. That commitment is ongoing.

This government, contrary to the previous government, on average is committing over \$5 billion yearly to help municipal and provincial infrastructure through 2014. That is our contribution. The Liberals, during the course of the 13 years they were in power, acknowledged roughly \$1.3 billion for that period of time. One can see that their commitment and their vocabulary around infrastructure issues is nothing but a lot of hot air.

We are getting the job done on these issues. The money is there. The programs are there. The financing is there. Infrastructure framework agreements are in place with two provinces and we are looking forward to having many more over the course of the coming weeks.

We are contributing to bettering Canada and making sure that Canada has globally recognized important infrastructure.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed hearing the minister say that, ultimately, the Liberals had put pressure on the provinces' finances because of the elimination of the deficit and that they were largely responsible for the problems facing the cities today. He forgot to mention that, in the end, the annual deficit was also largely brought on by successive Conservative governments. He forgot to say that, but history always gets forgotten a little.

In terms of agreements, we know that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities asked for \$123 billion. From the very first announcements, the minister did not accept that amount of \$123 billion. He made a few little comments, which I will not repeat here today. It was nevertheless a very serious study.

Is he aware that, regarding the amount he announced today, that is, the \$11.8 billion from the gas tax combined with the \$5.8 billion from the GST, if he were to add the building Canada funds and even the \$25 million a year for seven years, this would total approximately \$28.75 billion over seven years? It is not nearly enough to meet the immediate needs, which require \$123 billion. I hope he knows this.

*Business of Supply*

I would like to ask him why the agreement with Quebec still has not been signed? Will he promise to stop asking Quebec for clauses providing, for example, that the Official Languages Act replace the Charter of the French Language, or that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act replace the provincial legislation? He knows very well that we have our own legislation in Quebec. Will he stop attaching such conditions and is this not why he has yet to sign the agreement with Quebec?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon:** Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to respond to a question from my colleague, who is familiar with municipal affairs since he worked as a municipal councillor and mayor. We both have the same background in that respect.

When we took power in 2006, I met with people from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the figure that came up was a \$60 billion deficit. Based on that information, we made a commitment to design a new program called Building Canada. At the time, municipalities asked for long-term, flexible and predictable funding. That is what we gave them.

As for the negotiations between the Canadian and Quebec governments, they took some time: over five years. We have been in power for only 20 months. I have worked on this issue with my colleague, the hon. Minister for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs, Benoît Pelletier, whom we know well, since he is from the Outaouais area.

Obviously, open federalism has its benefits. We were able to resolve this issue and—as the member knows—we were able to deal with the issue of the imbalance, which as everyone will recall, was brought up by the Bloc Québécois.

We also knew that we had to take action. Unfortunately, the Bloc Québécois was unable to resolve the issue. We did something about it. The Liberals did not think there was a fiscal imbalance. So we dealt with it.

Obviously, I am committed to making sure that negotiations with the Government of Quebec continue as they should.

• (1315)

[*English*]

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that traffic congestion has huge economic, social and environmental costs. In Toronto, between 2004 and 2006, there were 27 million extra riders, bringing up to 445 million riders per year. We know that we need a fast, reliable, electric, light rail transit system, which is why in March, Toronto had this new fabulous plan called Transit City, with 120 kilometres of light rapid transit, projecting 175 million riders a year.

I want to ask the minister, would he support a plan of this nature because it has dramatic impacts in reducing gas emissions? The new FLOW funding program does not include this plan.

We are looking at 11 kilometres along the waterfront. We are looking at light rapid transit going from the Ex onto the GO Train corridor to the east, Queensway/Lakeshore, Sheppard East, Scarborough/Malvern, Jane, Etobicoke/Finch West, Eglinton Crosstown and Don Mills. It is a great program. Will the minister support such a wonderful streetcar/light rapid transit plan?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon:** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to take a question from a fellow colleague who has served at the municipal level. There is a fraternity among people who have done that because basically a lot of the needs that are expressed in our communities are done through that level of government.

I want to indicate to my colleague that the extension of the gas tax from 2010 to 2014 will indeed give an additional \$1 billion, or close to \$1 billion, to the Toronto municipal government, so that it can pursue objectives such as the project she has indicated.

As well, when we came into power, we clearly indicated that we would not change the parameters of the gas tax. Indeed, we increased it. That is another \$1 billion, roughly, that is going to the city of Toronto.

Since we have been here, I can legitimately stand up in the House and say that through gas tax transfers, the greater city of Toronto will be receiving close to \$2 billion.

That does not exclude the city of Toronto from submitting projects under the building Canada fund, whereby we do promote, we want to promote, and the hon. member is absolutely right in talking about problems that are generated through congestion, and we do want to foster urban transit.

As a former chair of the Urban Transit Corporation in the province of Quebec, I am dearly committed to urban transit. If projects are put forward, the projects meet the requirements of the program, and the provinces are on side, I will be more than happy to accommodate those kinds of projects.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always good to have the opportunity to address various issues in the House.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River.

Today, we have the following motion before us. It reads:

That, consistent with the spirit of the Liberal New Deal for Cities and Communities, this House believes it is in the best interest of Canadians, that the government should take steps to make permanent the sharing of the Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline with all Canadian municipalities for the purpose of enhancing local community infrastructure.

It is an important motion and I am pleased that the opposition has put it on the table, so that we can have a true and honest debate on this very important issue.

In my opinion, the minority Conservative government has turned its back on Canada's communities and cities. It has cut infrastructure programs in spite of all of what it is saying and the cities are far worse off under the present government than they clearly were previously.

*Business of Supply*

The Conservative government has cut \$7.5 billion from infrastructure programs launched by the Liberal government designed to address the growing infrastructure deficit. Cities will now have to compete against each other and against large scale highway projects for funding under the government's new building Canada fund.

If large scale projects are approved under the Conservative funding plan, huge amounts of funding will be wiped out from Canada's smaller municipalities and no longer available to them. This misrepresentation, frankly, is a disaster for cities that need infrastructure.

To add insult to injury, the Conservative government claims that its \$33 billion infrastructure investment is the largest infrastructure program in Canadian history. Let us dispel that myth this afternoon.

Of the \$33 billion program that the minister speaks so proudly of, \$18.2 billion of that comes directly from Liberal government programs that it had committed to. Then the government adds everything but the kitchen sink into this program to make it look like a huge fund. However, it is all really just more spin. In actual fact, it has cut \$7.5 billion of funding that was critically needed in our cities and communities.

Liberals know that we need a vision to build a strong and prosperous Canada, which means that all three levels of government must plan and work together cooperatively if we expect to go forward.

The Liberal Party recognizes that urban communities play a vital role in Canadian society and it will keep fighting for cities through the newly established urban communities caucus. There is a very strong contingent of Liberal MPs and senators, and they are determined to make sure that Canada's urban communities get back on the national agenda.

I was very honoured last week to be appointed as co-chair of that particular caucus. I intend to work very closely with communities to ensure we have their support and that they know we are there for them.

The minority Conservative government has ignored urban communities from the day it took office and Liberals are going to change that. The quality of life in Canadian cities is clearly deteriorating.

The federal government needs to work with provinces, cities and communities, large and small, to improve living conditions and lay the foundation for a strong Canadian economy. Canada's competitiveness in the global economy is rooted in the strength of its cities, a fact that the government continues to ignore.

The new Liberal urban communities caucus will look at a variety of issues facing Canada's cities, including housing, poverty, transit, child care and infrastructure. It will build on the Liberals' excellent record of working together with urban regions.

In 2005 the Liberal government had renewed the municipal rural infrastructure fund, the Canada strategic infrastructure fund, the border infrastructure fund, and the public transit capital trust. This commitment was worth \$1.65 billion annually through to 2014, for a total of \$11.5 billion from 2007 to 2014. The 2007 Conservative

budget only included \$4 billion of the funds that were renewed for these same programs, a cut of \$7.5 billion.

• (1320)

Furthermore, the Conservatives have included \$11.8 billion in gas tax funding and \$5.8 billion of GST rebates to municipalities as part of their \$33 billion building Canada fund. Both the GST rebates and the gas tax transfer were Liberal government initiatives.

The \$33 billion also includes a substantial amount of money that is not available for cities, including funding for gateway and border crossings and funding for P3 projects. Even the building Canada fund includes funding for the national highway system and other non-municipal projects. Let us be clear here. This is not a huge fund for only our cities and municipalities to be able to draw on.

The physical foundations of Canada's cities and communities are near collapse, according to a report on the state of municipal infrastructure released last month by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The report, "Danger Ahead: The Coming Collapse of Canada's Municipal Infrastructure", says that Canada has used up "79 per cent of the service life of its public infrastructure". It sets the price for eliminating the municipal infrastructure deficit at \$123 billion.

What was the government's response to this important report? The finance minister said that the cities should stop "whining" and "do their job". He showed total disrespect for our municipal leaders when he said that the Government of Canada is "not in the pothole business".

This is nothing short of disgraceful. Municipal leaders are elected to represent constituents the exact same way that we are. They are looking for help. They are looking for partners as we continue to build Canada.

Canada's Minister of Finance is supposed to be the political minister for the GTA, which is stuck with him, I guess, because the Conservatives could not elect a single MP in Toronto. If they could not do it before, it does not look like they are going to do it now.

When it comes to investing in our cities, the government will not put its money where its mouth is. I remind this House and everyone watching at home that the previous Liberal government had committed \$800 million to public transit alone.

Sadly, transit has fallen off the Conservative government's radar screen. The minister said in June that this "national transit strategy is not about new funding". I asked him in the House "how many buses and rail cars he thinks cities can buy with his empty speeches". I am still waiting for an answer to that question.

Another failure by the Conservatives is their transit credit, another selective tax measure designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions by increasing public transit ridership in cities. However, a small price decrease in public transit has apparently done nothing to increase ridership. Those who use transit will continue to use it because it is convenient for them.

*Business of Supply*

Those who do not use transit will not suddenly run out and buy a transit pass for a \$12 a month tax break. I wrote the book on cities, so I know that this will do nothing to increase public transit. We would have been far better off investing this in the infrastructure that is part of our national transit objective.

The Conservatives can continue their charade of funding for our urban regions. They can continue to re-announce funding commitments that had already been made by the Liberals. Canadians are not going to be fooled by the Conservatives' repeated deceptions.

The government must apologize for abandoning our cities, bring them to the table and work with them to improve the quality of life in Canada's urban regions.

• (1325)

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to my hon. colleague from the Liberal side, but it is interesting that what we have at play here is the usual Liberal arithmetic.

As we know, our government has introduced the largest infrastructure investment in well over 50 years. I do not hear that member actually denying that fact, but she refers to some \$7 billion that our government supposedly cut from what she referred to as Liberal commitments. As we know, those Liberal commitments were never delivered on. There were promises made, but they were never delivered.

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** Of course they were. What are you talking about? You don't know what you're talking about.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Mr. Speaker, since the member for Pickering—Scarborough East has piped up and started heckling, here is what he had to say about investments in municipalities across Canada. There he is heckling. This is what he said back in 1999—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Order. I will ask the hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East to allow the member for Abbotsford to ask his question.

I understand that there was some heckling before. I did try to get a grip on that. I would ask all members to allow members to ask their questions.

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hope that you would have shown the same discretion when that member who is now speaking did the exact same thing during my comments. Fair is fair. If the hon. member wants to deal with debate a matter of substance, I am quite willing to do that, but he ought to recognize that this is a place for respect and he ought to abide by the rules.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Two wrongs do not make a right. Earlier I was asking the hon. member for Abbotsford to allow the hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East to ask his question. Again, I would ask all members to sit and listen with respect when someone has a question or a comment to make.

**Mr. Ed Fast:** Then, Mr. Speaker, let us talk about substance, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, or actually let us talk about the *The Toronto Star*, which is no friend of the Conservative government. Here is what it had to say back 1999 in quoting a comment by the member for Pickering—Scarborough East:

It's hard to make the argument that Toronto has great needs when it's doing so extraordinarily well economically. It is a hard argument to make in the weaker regions of the country.

• (1330)

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** When was that?

**Mr. Ed Fast:** That was the member for Pickering—Scarborough East in 1999. Suddenly he has changed his tune. I would suggest that when we are talking about \$33 billion in infrastructure investment in Canada clearly that is a commitment to building our country. I would ask the member who has just spoken to address that concern.

**Hon. Dan McTeague:** Where's the question?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Order. Order. I have a feeling we are going to be in for a pretty raucous question period if it is 1:30 p.m. and we are already having these kinds of problems. I ask all hon. members to sit and listen to the answer that hon. member for York West is about to provide the House.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know why my time is being used up between these two members and their heckling and attacks on each other, but we can all take things out of context. I do not think it is fair when we take shots at each other rather than address the very important issue of our cities and communities.

I am very proud of the work that we did on our cities. I remind members that we have to go back to 1993 when we were elected and had a \$42 billion deficit left over from the Mulroney era of government. We had to deal with all of that. Then we had to start reinvesting and bringing our cities to the table. We clearly have a very strong commitment and we had committed a lot of money.

What the Conservatives have done with this \$33 billion package is that they have taken seven or eight other programs and thrown them all in under “infrastructure” in their building Canada fund, so it looks like a huge amount of money. But a lot of our cities are going to have compete with each other, so again it is part of the Conservative mantra of dividing cities and dividing our communities to fight for the pot of money that is there.

Again, it is going to be used for national highways. That takes an awful lot of money. It would not take much to drain that fund very quickly. The Conservatives can bundle a bunch of things together and say it is the biggest infrastructure fund they have ever had. We could do the exact same thing.

However, what our cities want to see is investment. They want to be respected. They want to be invited to the table as partners because there is no way that we can build Canada on our own. It is going to take all three levels of government to work in a cooperative way to build a strong, successful Canada.

There is no way that we can do it on our own. Neither can the provinces or the cities. Not to cooperate lacks intelligence. Doing the right thing and the smart thing means that we work together with all three levels of government.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank and recognize the hon. member for York West for her wisdom and her astute presentation and also for the fact that she deserves considerable commendation for the amount of work she has done as a municipal councillor.

When the Liberals decided that the federal government had a role to play in assisting cities, communities, municipalities, towns and villages, it was to include funding for all provinces and territories, and in Ontario, not only our municipalities but also the roads boards.

To completely correct the Conservative member for Abbotsford, as someone who was directly involved in the formation of those programs I was also there on many occasions not only as the past president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, but as the mayor of Thunder Bay. I know that the GST rebate, the gas tax and the infrastructure programs as Liberal programs were very much a reality. To say that they did not exist is quite comical. I am sure that municipalities that received funding assistance or transfers from the federal government, of whom there are many if not legion, will have a field day refuting that.

Our goal as municipal people was to ensure that funding was made permanent and dependable. This motion does exactly that. It was meant to give municipalities additional sources of revenue. That is why we no longer call other orders of governments "levels". Liberals use the term "orders of government" to indicate respect for other elected representatives. The use of the word "level" by the government is another example of regressive, not progressive, thinking.

The Conservatives have rolled the \$1.5 billion for 2007-08 and the \$1.1 billion for 2008-09 in municipal infrastructure funding into a pseudo-fund or a rebranded building Canada fund. The government advises that municipal infrastructure will be a sunset program, so that next year will be the last year of this program.

So much for predictability and dependability. As municipal governments are wrapping up their current budgets for 2008, not one page of applications has been published, invited or even sent out. How do they plan for the coming construction season?

This government is by far the most incompetent possible, with no understanding whatsoever of municipal financing processes, needs or requirements. If municipalities only hear the announcement, which has been held maybe 20 times or so without one dollar flowing to them, we cannot blame them for feeling scammed by the government yet again.

Do we remember the Conservative promise to remove the 3¢ excise tax on gasoline? Or the removal of the GST once gas hit 85¢ a litre? That has been pulled on the public not once, but twice. As for small communities, and I will use Rainy River as an example, how are they expected to compete with a GTA city? This indicates that the government has totally missed the message from communities for fair funding. How can small communities pay for pre-design or pre-engineering studies if they cannot afford to replace the bridge in the first place?

All these environmental assessments and professional fees must be included in the total project costs, yet the Prime Minister has refused to listen to these very, very reasonable requests. The truth is

that the Conservatives have cut infrastructure funding and communities are now worse off. The infrastructure program is \$7.5 billion less than what was offered by the previous Liberal government.

To make things even worse for municipalities, they will now have to compete against each other. Last week, when the Federation of Canadian Municipalities was here presenting the data which confirmed that the cut had been \$7.5 billion, each and every mayor and councillor here told us they were totally in shock that the government would do this.

● (1335)

Municipalities understand what has been packaged together here and, when it all came together, it was less. This flim-flam gets more deplorable.

By lumping this reduced fund into a catch-all basket, then, if there are large-scale projects, huge amounts of funding will not be forthcoming to communities. This will be disastrous and demonstrates a calculated lack of awareness of municipal requests.

The issue of infrastructure must be categorized by population. We cannot have a simple lumping of it all. The problems of congestion, gridlock and exhaust emissions in a metropolitan area should not have to share a program with smaller, rural towns that have problems with distance, underpopulation and financing. That is why infrastructure is perhaps the most serious problem facing rural Canada and, with these small populations and a reduced property base, rural Canada is having an even more difficult time.

To see \$7.5 billion, which could have gone to them, lost altogether, rural Canada is starting to understand that it has been persecuted by the government. We have recommended, as a rural caucus, a policy that would renew and expand the rural infrastructure program, and make it permanent, dependable and achievable for communities of the smallest size. It would put emphasis on water, roads, sewers and bridges.

As someone who has been involved in the municipal field as a councillor, mayor and president of three major municipal organizations, and all of us in the House who have this municipal background, have some sort of camaraderie I believe, so that when organizations, such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities or the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, come to see us, we relate in a way that they know exactly that we are speaking the same language.

When \$7.5 billion is taken from municipalities, they know that they have been shortchanged.

As the programs were built up, they were championed by people such as the hon. member for York West and actually a whole raft of my colleagues. I see a former president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to my left. We understand this issue intimately and it is something we believe in passionately. Therefore, to see this scam going down is a great affront to everyone who serves in municipal office.

It is astonishing to have all these people come to us asking where the funds are. The minister keeps on making announcements about it but where is the flow? Where are the applications?



*Business of Supply*

Municipal councils across the country are in this perpetual state of uncertainty right now. They have been told that there is an increase, but it is \$40 billion to \$33 billion, and they are wondering, as they deliberate their capital budgets for the forthcoming year, where the federal promise is. They do not have any paper whatsoever, except for a media announcement. How can they plan for a construction season that will begin either in the spring or summer? How can they allocate their share? How can they approach the provincial government?

When municipalities are faced with this dilemma, it breeds the kind of understanding of just what kind of bumpkins are running the show for the feds. It is amazing that someone would actually get up on a challenge and say that the members here have not been at projects that were delivered by the previous government. It is absolutely astonishing.

When we talk about things like time, it is very important that each hon. member recognize that and recognize the Speaker for his fairness.

● (1340)

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after listening to the comments by the member across the way on the infrastructure deficit, I have a question for him. Should some of the blame for the infrastructure deficit in Canada not be placed on the way we have grown our communities in this country over the last 30 years?

Our government has committed a record amount to funding the infrastructure deficit, some \$33 billion. Should some of the blame not be focused on the way we have grown our communities?

I look at Statistics Canada's latest 2006 census results. I have a table here from Statistics Canada which says that the city of Toronto has a population density of almost 4,000 persons per square kilometre, while a city like Mississauga has a population density of only 2,300 persons per square kilometre. Montreal has a population density of some 4,500 persons per square kilometre and Vancouver, British Columbia has a population density of over 5,000 persons per square kilometre.

In other words, the ability of a city like Mississauga, built on low density sprawl, to raise property taxes from its population base is less than half of that of Vancouver and only slightly over half of that of a city like Montreal or Toronto.

Is it any wonder why these sprawling suburban regions are having trouble replacing infrastructure that is only 30 years new? Is that not part of the reason that certain communities, not all, are having trouble replacing their infrastructure?

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question because it recognizes the historical basis of a country that felt it had unlimited space in which to grow in the urban domain and now is faced with the dilemma where those rural and smaller communities, which are actually supplying the greater metropolitan areas, are facing a much more difficult time with their tax base to support that.

The hon. member mentioned the record cut from \$40 billion to \$33 billion for infrastructure and the municipalities of all sizes do not need a catch-all program. They need a program that is adapted to

their specific needs. Overcoming those issues of congestion, gridlock, urban sprawl, pollution and all of those things, must be dealt with by all three orders of government in conjunction with each other.

When we first brought forward the federal involvement in a major way, one could say that those were also record spendings because they were new programs and a new role for the federal government, at the request of municipal people who had come forward with their case.

Therefore, if there are to be programs, it is important that they be made permanent, accessible and dependable.

● (1345)

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted, both as the member of Parliament for Richmond Hill and as a former president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, to participate in the debate.

If ever there were a more fundamental difference between this side of the House and the government, it would be on this issue. The Liberal Party is the party of cities and communities. It is the party that understood the problems that cities were facing with a shrinking revenue base over the years.

In 1994, when the Liberal government came to power, it implemented the national infrastructure program, which was a program proposed by the FCM in 1983. However, when the Conservatives came to power in 1984, the Mulroney government ignored our cities.

Therefore, it is not surprising that today we see that same lack of understanding and vision when it comes to a very important order of government, the municipal government in Canada.

The Liberal Party is not resting on its laurels for all the work it did with cities for the last 12 years. We got the job done by working with cities. Now we have a seven point program to deal with the crying need to address municipal issues in Canada.

Although, under the Constitution, municipalities, and I hate this phrase, are creatures of the provinces, the reality is that we cannot ignore the fact that 80% of our citizens live in big cities across this country. We need to help as partners. What the FCM and provincial and territorial associations have been asking for, for years, is that they be treated with respect and fairness. They do not expect to come to Ottawa, which happened a couple of weeks ago, to be told to basically keep quiet, to get to work and that the government was not in the pothole business.

We are in the business of working effectively with our provinces.

I am very proud of the Liberal seven point program. I would note that we on this side of the House are addressing the kinds of issues that affect municipal governments. One of these issues is the transfer of the gas tax. This is not something new. It is only new in terms of how we will shape it.

*Business of Supply*

The prime minister in the last government announced a new deal. We understand these issues. In our proposal, we would immediately commit \$2 billion in transfers over five years and then we would extend that indefinitely beyond that. We believe it is important for municipal governments to have a source of revenue they can count on. Most municipal governments in Canada depend on property tax, which is antiquated at best. We think it is important to give certainty to municipal leaders across the country.

We are also proposing a transit infrastructure fund. My colleague referenced the fact that many colleagues on this side of the House have municipal experience, which is probably why we understand this issue better than others in the House. The fact is that we would have a transit infrastructure fund of \$7 billion, not only to deal with the issue of expansion, but also to deal with the replacement of existing infrastructure, transit in particular. This is very important.

We talk about the environment. We talk about getting people out of their cars and into transit systems but we need capital funding, which is where we are going with this particular recommendation. The motion today addresses this issue. The lack of understanding and lack of vision by members on the other side with respect to this issue is not surprising because they never embraced the infrastructure program that the FCM put forward back in 1983.

The Conservatives have a johnny-come-lately approach. They say that they are doing all of this but all they have done is basically repackaged money in this Canada fund and then they have municipal governments competing for a smaller pot. The \$17 billion is recycled money. Probably the only thing on the environment that the government understands is recycling, in particular, Liberal money from the past.

● (1350)

I am very proud of the physical infrastructure fund initiative that the Liberal Party undertook. Again we are talking about \$1 billion. We are talking about dealing with waste treatment plants and repairing bridges and roads. We are laying out very clearly not only what we are prepared to do as the government in waiting but also funding it. This is extremely important.

On the social infrastructure fund, our cities are home to 80% of the population. We understand the importance of having vibrant cities, cities that can compete not only on the North American continent but around the world. To do that, we want to support municipal governments across the country and allow them to have access to funding.

The areas of culture, sport and recreation are very important. They are simply not a place where people work, but where the activities of communities take place and people are able to participate in the arts. We want to showcase our arts not just at home but abroad. This is another piece of our platform that we are enunciating very clearly.

With regard to the border infrastructure fund and rural infrastructure, my colleague from Thunder Bay made it very clear that we are not only addressing the large cities and communities, we are addressing rural Canada. We understand better than any party in the House the needs in rural Canada and we want to address those issues.

Regarding infrastructure at the border, we understand the importance of commerce and being able to get across the border. Providing that kind of assistance is absolutely critical if we want to move ahead. Committing \$500 million and then \$200 million after that is part of the program.

We are also looking at the hub strategy. The Liberals came up with the gateway proposal in British Columbia. We know how important Asia is. We understand the need to move goods across the Pacific. We can look at that kind of hub strategy for other cities across Canada, including Vancouver and Winnipeg.

We also understand partnerships to deal with policy issues. I remember in 1989 when the Conservative government of the day, the Mulroney government, decided to bring in a significant hit for municipal governments without any consultation. Then it decided to give cities a 10% tax cut. That meant the CBC paid 10% less as a federal institution than CTV. Although the same fire services, et cetera, were provided to the CBC building, it paid 10% less than CTV. That is a lack of understanding and vision by the other side.

We point out that we will do active consultation on policies. If the Government of Canada is going to make policy that is going to impact cities and communities, as we are going to have the cities at the table. They are an order of government in our country. We cannot put our heads in the sand and say, "It is somebody else's responsibility. Let the provinces deal with it".

The other side likes to write cheques to the provinces and let them to take care of the cities across Canada. That is a paternalistic approach which this side of the House does not agree with and will not support. We believe they need to be part of the process. Therefore, policy is extremely important. If a policy issue is going to affect our cities, we are going to have them participate actively. At the end of the day they are consulted and they provide input. That is extremely important.

In 1996, as president of the FCM, I was able to address, for the first time, a joint federal-provincial-territorial meeting on environment and natural resources policy, which affected cities across Canada. Fortunately, the Liberal government of the day understood that and was able to work with the provinces and have the FCM do a presentation. We were not at the table for the whole meeting, but we had the ability to respond to these issues. That is extremely important because we need to consult our partners.

*Statements by Members*

This blueprint, as I said at the beginning, shows stark contrast to the understanding of the Conservative government. Making the gas transfer permanent will give assurances and stability to our cities and communities across the country. The Liberal Party has the cities and communities caucus. We understand their needs and are sensitive to those particular issues. Maybe that is why so many municipal politicians wind up running for federal politics on this side of the House and not elsewhere.

Many of my colleagues from across the country have been part of that discussion over the years. I am sure we will hear some nonsense from the other side, but the reality is the Liberal record is a solid record. Liberals are very proud of the record and the platform that we are presenting Canadians.

● (1355)

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am shocked at what I have just heard. The member suggested that all the former municipal politicians are on the Liberal side of the House and that no one else has any wisdom in the area of providing services to municipalities.

I will quote back for the record what the individual said. He said, speaking of himself and the Liberals, “We understand better than anybody about what the needs of municipalities are”. It is not surprising that Canadians threw the old Liberal government out of office.

I am a former municipal politician. My colleague, the member for Kelowna—Lake Country across from me was a municipal politician for nine years. The Minister for Transportation was in municipal politics for many years. The member for Toronto—Danforth was also in municipal politics. The list goes on and on.

To claim that they have a monopoly on wisdom in the area of providing services to municipalities is absolutely rubbish. How does he justify this kind of nonsense in the House of Commons?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Order, please. I had a great deal of difficulty hearing the hon. member for Abbotsford. We are a few minutes away from question period. I would ask, for the last two or three minutes, members allow the hon. member for Richmond Hill to answer the question.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the member. There is no question he may have some members on the other side who have municipal experience, but not municipal leadership when it comes to that caucus. Where are they on these issues? They need to show leadership. They have been silent. I guess it is part of the gag order that they do not talk about these issues. They pretend, but they do not act.

I make no apologies to that member or anybody else when it comes to what this party has done or for its platform and the policies. We got the job done by working with municipal governments. The Conservatives did nothing for 10 years on the infrastructure program. Now the johnny-come-latelies are saying, “Look at what we are doing”. They are doing nothing.

If in fact they have leadership on that side, where is it? Maybe they have talked about it and the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities have not listened, and that is the problem. Maybe I will give the member

credit that they have members over there, but nobody is listening to them, unfortunately.

On this side of the House, our leader and our party are listening to the members on this side, not only to those with municipal experience but to those who understand the social implications and economic issues for cities. They have been able to put together a very important dynamic program. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the provinces and the provincial and territorial associations believe it will address these critical issues facing Canadians across the country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** The hon. member for Richmond Hill will still have two minutes available for questions and comments after question period. Right now we will move on to statements by members.

The hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings.

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADIAN FORCES

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with Canadian Forces Base Trenton adjacent to my riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, I come into contact with thousands of Canadian Forces personnel. I am continually thankful and humbled by the work that our men and women in uniform do for our country.

Our government is committed to rebuilding the Canadian Forces, to treat our personnel with respect and to give them the tools they need to get the job done.

Our Canadian Forces do tremendous work every day under the toughest of conditions. Our sailors, soldiers, airmen and women deserve a fair compensation and benefits package throughout the course of their career, wherever they may be posted.

We are standing up for our troops by adding more than \$100 million to the DND payroll in order to provide for pay raises of 2%. In fact, the raise is retroactive to April 1 of this year.

Many of our troops will be away from their families this Christmas. Their safety, as well as the concerns their loved ones have for them, will be on the minds of myself and my family during Christmas.

As we approach the festive season, let us all give a moment of thanks and reflection for what they sacrifice for our country.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark our National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

*Statements by Members*

Violence against women is a significant, persistent social and economic problem in our country. For hundreds of thousands of women from all walks of life, it is a terrifying reality. Statistics Canada reports that 51% of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of violence since the age of 16.

There is a strong correlation between equality and violence, but instead of advancing women's equality, the government slashed funding for equality seeking organizations, even unbelievably removing the word "equality" from the mandate of the Status of Women.

In recognition of all Canadian women and girls who are victims of violence on a daily basis, I ask all members of the House to reflect on what we can do to help heal the victims and build a safe and secure tomorrow for all our daughters, wives, sisters and mothers.

Please remember that silence is complicity.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MANUFACTURING AND FORESTRY INDUSTRIES**

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the ridings of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou and Abitibi—Témiscamingue are going through an unparalleled crisis in the forestry industry. Bloc members are rising regularly in the House to suggest ways of resolving the situation.

In Chicoutimi—Le Fjord and Jonquière—Alma, sawmills are closing one after the other. In Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, where the Conservative member managed to get elected by promising to deal with the crisis, people watch powerlessly as their regional economy collapses.

Joliette, la Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, the Pontiac, and Beauce are also hard hit. Sawmills, paper mills and factories are closing their gates. The Bloc members condemn the government's inaction and demand that it do something.

But the government just sits there with folded arms, resting on its surpluses which will amount to more than \$69 billion in five years, and preaches free enterprise. In short, the Conservatives simply do not care about Quebec. They would rather please their friends out west, generate surpluses, and allow the crisis in manufacturing and forestry to ravage Quebec.

\* \* \*

**MANUFACTURING AND FORESTRY INDUSTRIES**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, since 2004, nearly 2,000 people have lost their jobs in northeastern New Brunswick because plants are shutting down like a string of dominoes.

Even when faced with the closing of Smurfit-Stone and two other mills in Miramichi, the government did nothing to stop jobs from going down the tubes.

This year, the UPM mill in Miramichi announced that its turn had come to close the gates. As if more were needed, the Finnish giant that operates the UPM mill in Miramichi decided to go and process our raw materials in Finland.

But still the Conservative government does nothing to protect our industries.

The decline is continuing. The two Atlantic Fine Yarns mills in Atholville and Pokemouche are on the verge of bankruptcy and AbitibiBowater has announced that it is closing its mill in Dalhousie.

The NDP urges the Conservative government to take immediate action to ensure that northeastern New Brunswick recovers these lost jobs.

\* \* \*

[English]

**BRITISH COLUMBIA DRAGOONS**

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister has said, "When the cause is just, Canada will always be there to defend our values and to help our fellow human beings".

On December 15, Okanagan constituents will gather in my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country to support the soldiers and families of the British Columbia Dragoons, who will soon be deployed to Afghanistan. In doing so, they carry on a long and proud tradition.

As the former 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, the B.C. Dragoons were members of the four Canadian divisions that took Vimy Ridge. Now, with the same vigour and fortitude, they will uphold the values of freedom, democracy and human rights.

It is with mixed emotions and feelings that we watch our soldiers go. I have heard from my constituents and seen within the House of Commons the struggle that falls upon Canadians as they come to terms with Canada at war. Nevertheless, with enthusiasm, we show our support for our men and women in uniform who serve our country voluntarily.

Valour in war and persistence in peace, the B.C. Dragoons continue to make a difference in places around the world. We wish them Godspeed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JUVENILE DIABETES**

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, November 14 was World Diabetes Day. It is worth mentioning here because many Canadian children struggle with this terrible disease and many of our fellow citizens are working hard to fight this scourge thanks to the exceptional work of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Over the past 30 years, the foundation's support has led to encouraging research results, such as medical innovation to develop multiple therapies that have the potential to cure the disease. This year alone, the foundation has invested over \$34 million in research. These achievements deserve to be recognized in this House.

I have no doubt that my colleagues from all parties will join me in expressing our gratitude and our sincere support for the foundation's remarkable efforts to improve our children's health.

*Statements by Members*

●(1405)

**NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, December 6 is National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

In 1989, 14 young women lost their lives to an outrageous act of violence at the École polytechnique in Montreal. These young women with a promising future were targeted and killed because of their sex. As we commemorate this tragedy, we remember that we need to keep up our efforts, since violence against women is still a serious problem in Canada today.

This government has adopted measures to fight violence against women. For example, \$7 million a year will go to the family violence initiative. In memory of the 14 young women killed in Montreal on December 6, 1989, let us continue our commitment to put an end to violence against women.

\* \* \*

**MEDIA FUNDRAISING DRIVE**

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the seventh annual Grande Guignolée des médias is being held today, December 6, in support of those less fortunate. Yet the federal government prefers to allocate its \$10 billion in surplus to the debt, while poverty continues to increase and the demands continue to grow.

In response to this urgent need, many media outlets and hundreds of volunteers are coming together and taking to the streets of Quebec to collect nonperishable food items and cash donations to be given to various organizations. This outpouring of love and sharing is also supported by loyal partners, such as Groupe Jean-Coutu, Banque Laurentienne, HBC, and the Bay and Zellers stores, which will collect cash and gift donations until December 24.

The Bloc Québécois would like to congratulate the Grande Guignolée des médias organizers, partners and many volunteers, and urges the people of Quebec to give generously.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HALIFAX EXPLOSION**

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today we commemorate the 90th anniversary of the devastating Halifax explosion.

At 8:40 a.m. on December 6, 1917, the French munitions vessel *Mont-Blanc* collided with a Norwegian supply ship. Twenty-five minutes later, at 9:04 a.m., the ship exploded in what was at the time the largest and most shocking detonation in history. Approximately 2,000 people were killed and 9,000 were injured.

While the Halifax explosion is one of the most traumatic events in our nation's history, we must never forget the bravery of the railway dispatcher, Vince Coleman, who stayed at his post to warn incoming trains of the impending danger.

The Boston Red Cross was among the first to respond. Every year the people of Halifax show their thanks by donating a Christmas tree to the city of Boston.

Today we remember the dead, the firefighters, doctors and nurses, and the many people who rebuilt the great city of Halifax.

\* \* \*

**ASBESTOS**

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a well-informed Canadian, Lynda Hill, and many others are urging the government to implement a ban on the mining and export of asbestos.

Thousands of Canadians, including Ms. Hill's father, August Kuiack, have been exposed to high levels of asbestos at their work sites. The very high levels of asbestos and the numerous health conditions which workers have developed are well documented.

The science is clear: all forms of asbestos are carcinogenic. More and more industrialized countries are banning asbestos and recognizing that there is no safe level of exposure to it.

Canada has a justified international reputation for upholding human rights and being a global leader in social justice issues, yet the practices of both mining and exporting asbestos represent a gross disregard for human life.

I urge the government to take a leadership role on this issue and ban both the mining and export of asbestos.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS**

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois representatives are voting against Quebec again this week. How can they vote against \$2.6 billion in tax relief for manufacturers and then claim to defend them? How can they explain to agricultural producers and their new president that they voted against the throne speech, even though it firmly supports supply management? Even worse, how can they deny Quebecers \$12 billion in tax relief, an average of \$400 per family, right before Christmas, by voting against the economic statement?

How can the Bloc, which is confined forever to the opposition benches, hurt Quebec like this? In 1991, more than 16 years ago, Lucien Bouchard said: "The shorter our stay, the more successful our mission will be". Today, he should say: "The longer our stay, the better our pensions will be".

Fortunately, the Conservative members from Quebec are working very hard for a strong Quebec within a united Canada.

*Statements by Members*

●(1410)

*[English]***VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on December 6, we not only remember the 14 young women who were murdered at the École polytechnique, we vow to act. We must ensure that no woman, no matter where she lives, the colour of her skin or her race, suffers violence simply because she is a woman.

Sadly, in the years since the massacre, we have made little progress toward ending gender violence. In Canada, nearly two women a week die at the hands of men they loved, the men they shared their lives with. Across the world, women are overwhelmingly the victims of war. Rape is used as a weapon of war to violate and shame women.

We are quick to make a trend out of crimes like gun violence, but so slow to link together spousal abuse and rape and sexual assault to form a pattern of global and endemic violence against women.

Today is not just a day to remember. It is a day to act together to end the horrific abuse of women in Canada and across the world.

\* \* \*

**MIKE GARDENER**

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Reverend Mike Gardener of Iqaluit on receiving the Order of Canada in recognition of his lifelong work as a missionary and Anglican minister.

Arriving in the early 1950s, Mike travelled throughout the eastern Arctic by dogsled and helped set up the Arctic's first theological college in Panniqtuq. Unusual for that era, Mike had the unilingual Sunday school teachers use their own resources to teach the children.

Mike and his wife, Margaret, brought up four girls in the Arctic. The family is well known for its tireless community work in all the places the family has lived. Mike is a great example to us all of one who helps his fellow man without expecting anything in return.

Congratulations to Reverend Mike Gardener.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on December 6, 1989, 14 students, 14 women were gunned down by hate in an act of violence beyond comprehension. Subsequently, Quebec declared, "never again!"

However, with the arrival of the Conservative government, women find themselves in a more precarious position.

At present, 85% of the victims of domestic violence are women. Some 6% of Quebec women aged 18 and over will be victims of domestic violence in their lifetimes, not to mention that about 20 of them will die every year.

The Bloc Québécois vigorously condemns violence against women, inequality of the sexes and the lack of consideration for women demonstrated by the Conservatives.

The Bloc urges the Conservative government to revisit its position on the gun registry, to work towards improving the status of women and to stop sabotaging women's rights.

\* \* \*

**ABITIBIBOWATER**

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 29, AbitibiBowater announced that it is closing its Dalhousie plant for good.

The people of Dalhousie, Restigouche and my riding are going through an unprecedented human and economic crisis. I indicated to the Conservative government the extent of this crisis a number of times and each time it did nothing about it.

Today we learn that the federal government will grant financial assistance to one of the plants that closed and wants to discuss with AbitibiBowater what happens next.

In the meantime, there is no discussion about the plant, the workers and the families affected by this unbelievable crisis. The people of Restigouche have the right to know why they were not considered in these talks. The people of my riding will never accept this government's attitude toward their future.

Is it because we live in Atlantic Canada? We know how the Prime Minister feels about the people from Atlantic Canada.

The Conservatives should be ashamed to show such lack of compassion for the people of my riding. It is unacceptable.

\* \* \*

*[English]***LIBERAL PARTY LEADER**

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, did you ever know that you are my hero? Today marks the first anniversary of the Liberal leader declaring himself a hero, and many agree.

For starters, with his heroic plan to hike the GST, the Save the GST Society says that the Liberal leader is the wind beneath their wings.

Convicted criminals also call the Liberal leader their hero, as he and the Liberal Senate are blocking the tackling violent crime act.

The greenhouse gas monster called the Liberal leader his hero as well. When he was environment minister, emissions could fly higher than an eagle.

Ebenezer Scrooge agrees as well. Just as kids are preparing to gather around the Christmas tree, the Liberal leader says, "Bah humbug, I will take away your \$1,200".

While the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore once said that the Liberal leader did not get it done, he now says to his seatmate, “You are everything I would like to be”. Bette Midler could not have said it better herself.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

[Translation]

#### NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**The Speaker:** I invite hon. members to rise and observe a moment of silence to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

[A moment of silence observed]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and today, we remember that horrible day, December 6, 1989, when 14 women were murdered at Montreal's École Polytechnique just because they were women.

At the time, I was teaching a few blocks away, and I will always remember that terrible day. But we must do more than just remember. We must take strong action to stop violence against women in Canada and around the world.

I would now invite the Prime Minister to make his own statement.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what happened 18 years ago was a terrible criminal act against innocent young women in Montreal. Nothing can possibly excuse such an act. Today, as we commemorate the tragedy, this government encourages everyone to think of these young women, their families and their friends, and to pray for them.

At the same time, members of this government and, I hope, of all parties in this House, reaffirm our commitment to fighting crime and violence against women and all people.

---

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the world has come together at Bali to try to prevent environmental disaster, but the government is standing in the way. The government is undermining years of work by the international community to take real action against global warming.

The Prime Minister has turned Canada from leader to laggard to saboteur.

Will he now reverse his position in Bali and commit to absolute greenhouse gas reductions?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government believes strongly there needs to be absolute greenhouse gas reductions in Canada and across the world. That is why this is the first government in Canadian history to

### Oral Questions

actually impose mandatory greenhouse gas reductions on Canadian industry.

Our position is that countries like the United States should also accept mandatory reductions. They have not yet taken that position and neither has China.

We will not be able to reduce emissions until those two countries and other large emitters accept reductions. We are working to make sure all countries accept mandatory emissions reductions globally.

• (1420)

[Translation]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, nobody agrees with the Government of Canada's position in Bali. Well-known environmentalist Steven Guilbault said, “Everyone is disappointed and outraged.”

I would therefore ask the Prime Minister to order his minister to lead by example and commit to absolute reduction targets.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government's system will bring about absolute reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2010-12. That is our government's position.

His government, however, refused to adopt mandatory targets. In contrast, we have targets for all major emitters, including the United States and China. The Leader of the Opposition seems to think that big countries like China should not have targets. That position is irresponsible.

[English]

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, so the Canadian position is that if China and the United States do not sign on, Canada is going to do nothing? The position does not add up.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, order. The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore has the floor to ask a question. We have to be able to hear the question.

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff:** Mr. Speaker, when will the government move from impossible positions which say it will not do anything until everyone does something? When will it move from aspiration to obligation? When will it move from being a bad model to a role model?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the position the deputy leader of the Liberal Party articulates is the position that his government had. It was his government's position that it was not going to do anything about greenhouse gas emissions.

This government is the first government that has mandatory greenhouse gas emission reductions in this country.

The Liberal Party is trying to argue internationally, along with countries like China, that big developing countries should not have emissions reductions. If they do not, we will not reduce emissions and that is an irresponsible position that this government will not adopt.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if he cannot get our position right, I have no confidence that he will get Canada's position right.

[*Translation*]

There is only one way to stop climate change. Aspirational targets are not good enough. Intensity targets are not good enough. What we need are absolute reduction targets.

When will the Conservative government negotiate mandatory targets?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we support mandatory targets now. That is our position in Bali. However, that is a pretty ridiculous position for the member to be taking after he said, during the leadership convention, that the leader of his party did absolutely nothing.

[*English*]

If the Liberal Party had done nothing on climate change, that would have been a gift. But that party did not do nothing. It sat back and increased emissions by 32.9% above 1990 levels. Those members should be standing up, they should be apologizing, and frankly, he should resign.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the premier of Quebec has asked the federal government to show leadership in dealing with climate change. With its plan, Quebec has the best per capita results on greenhouse gases in Canada. It is the complete opposite of the federal government which is using China and India to play the game of the Americans and the oil companies.

Why does the Prime Minister not show leadership at Bali by working to adopt a plan based on the polluter-pays principle, with absolute targets and using 1990 as the reference year, while taking per capita emissions into account?

•(1425)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is not like the Government of Quebec. This government has established mandatory greenhouse gas reductions. We are insisting that all countries, all the large emitters, adopt targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is not per capita emissions that cause global warming; it is the emissions that cause global warming.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we know that if you take the volume of reduction and divide it by the number of residents of a country that is the per capita reduction. It is rather simple to understand.

That being said, the premier of Quebec repeated today that we will all pay the price for the federal government's inaction on climate change.

Does the Prime Minister realize that, by refusing to implement a real plan on climate change with binding targets and 1990 as the reference year, his attitude will have unprecedented financial and social costs for Quebec and Canada?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government's plan is to impose mandatory targets for all industries in Canada and the plans of the provinces, including Quebec, are funded by the Canada ecotrust. The position of the

leader of the Bloc, like the position of the Liberal party, is that the large emitters, like China, should not have mandatory targets. It is completely impossible to have absolute global reductions without the participation of all the large emitters. That is the position of this government.

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Stern report, it will cost us 10 to 15 times as much if we do nothing about the environment. It is irresponsible to play off the environment against the economy, as the Conservatives—in cahoots with the United States and Japan—are doing in order to derail the Bali conference. The Prime Minister should know we need fixed, binding, short-term targets, with 1990 as the base year, in order to establish a real carbon exchange, which will also contribute to the efforts that Quebec is making.

Will the Prime Minister finally get it through his head that success in Bali will have a positive effect not only on the environment but also on the economy and especially on the economy of Quebec?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government agrees that we need binding targets and must have absolute reductions. That is why we are taking action.

By regulating big industries, we have a national target of an absolute reduction of 20% by 2020. This government is taking action, something that the Bloc has never done over its many years here.

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should know that Quebec's economy needs 1990 to be used as the base year, rather than 2006, so that Quebec companies can benefit from their past efforts. He should also know that we need fixed, binding, greenhouse gas reduction targets and not the targets the Conservatives have set to please their friends in the oil companies.

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that in order to establish a real carbon exchange in Montreal, he will have to give up his polluter-paid principle in favour of polluter-pays?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I must answer this question by saying that the Bloc's position is self-contradictory. It insists that the government should set up a carbon exchange in Montreal but it is opposed to any federal regulation of exchanges. They are contradicting themselves.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the Prime Minister is in no position to give anyone lessons. He refuses to take on the big polluters and tell them something specific and practical, namely that they must reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. He would rather talk about big polluters elsewhere in the world.

Why will he not take seriously absolute emission reduction targets for the biggest polluters in Canada, such as the big oil companies?



*Oral Questions*

•(1430)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, as I just said, this is the first Canadian government to establish binding targets for all Canadian industries. It is on the basis of this program that we encourage the other large emitters in the world to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Without the participation of all the large emitters, these emissions can never be reduced.

It is important for us to get an effective international protocol to achieve this objective.

[English]

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing is the same smoke and mirrors game that gets played by the Bush administration. It is exactly what we are seeing here and the big focus is on other countries. Let us focus on other countries and hope that nobody notices that our government here is permitting the biggest polluters to continue to pollute.

The Prime Minister likes to say there are reductions for the biggest industrial sectors, but these reductions, so-called, allow them to pollute more, a lot more, and the rest of the world knows it. That is why they are not taking Canada seriously.

Why is he trying to undermine international negotiations? Why is he—

**The Speaker:** The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the United States and many other countries, this government does have mandatory emissions reductions targets for all industries that will in fact cause significant cost to this economy.

When the leader of the NDP gets up and talks about contradictions, hypocrisy or whatever his terms are, I want to draw his attention to his party's behaviour yesterday when the member for London—Fanshawe got up in the House and fabricated a story against the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services. The member for Kitchener Centre apologized. She should be here to apologize.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GUN REGISTRY**

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 18 years later, we still remember the horror of the massacre at the École polytechnique. This unprecedented violence against women led to the creation of the gun registry. Police across the country consult this registry 5,000 times a day to plan their operations better. More than 19,000 gun permits have been refused or withdrawn from people who should not have a permit.

Why does the Conservative government still insist on depriving law enforcement authorities of a tool that is crucial to public safety?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, what happened at the École polytechnique 18 years ago is a tragedy. That is why we want to see a reduction in the number of crimes committed with firearms.

We have put in place our plan to have more police officers on our streets and to increase the number of checks on people who want to obtain a gun permit.

We are going to continue with these initiatives to reduce crime.

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is doing everything in its power to eliminate the gun registry. It recently introduced a bill to delete 7 million guns in circulation from the registry. It has appointed only people who are clearly opposed to the registry to its advisory committee. It has renewed its amnesty for people who refuse to obtain a permit.

Why does this Conservative government not recognize the legacy of the unfortunate incidents at the École polytechnique, Concordia and Dawson by maintaining the gun registry in its entirety?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, even the Auditor General said that a huge amount of money had been wasted in one part of the registry. That is why we are going to continue asking questions of everyone who wants a gun permit. We are also going to tighten the requirements for obtaining a permit.

I also want the Liberals to support our bill to introduce mandatory sentences for crimes—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for London West.

\* \* \*

[English]

**JUSTICE**

**Hon. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, despite the government's massive surplus, women who have been victims of violence struggle to get legal aid to fight their abusive partners in either civil court or family court.

The former Liberal minister of justice was working with the provinces and the territories to improve access to civil legal aid. The Conservative government is doing nothing.

When will the government start working with the provinces and the territories to secure an agreement which would help women and their children who are in abusive relationships?

•(1435)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the House what the previous government worked on while it was in office. The Liberals got rid of civil legal aid in 1995. What is the explanation for that?

We have a family violence initiative that provides a fund for innovative projects. We work closely with our federal and provincial counterparts. All government departments and agencies are engaged in tackling this difficult problem.

We do not need any lessons from a group that never got the job done in this area.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that the Conservative government did not inherit a \$45 billion deficit.

The truth is that it is easier for a man accused of assaulting his spouse to have access to criminal legal aid than it is for a woman who has been the victim of violence to have access to civil legal aid.

The government's insistence on ignoring this issue is characteristic of its backward attitude toward women's equality.

Will the government commit to immediately restarting the negotiations it abandoned with the provinces and territories to establish funds for civil legal aid?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are somewhat incredible on this, as they are on a number of issues.

I have to point out to them that women are also the victims of violence in gun crimes. We need better protection for 14 and 15 year old girls. What has been the position of the Liberals on this? They tried to gut our bill that would provide mandatory minimum penalties for people who commit serious firearms offences. Then they voted against it. For the first time, five Liberal members could not stand what their party did and voted against them. Now, supposedly, they are supporting it.

I am asking her to talk to her colleagues in the Senate. Let us get this back. Canadians need those laws.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the presidents of the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Canadian Association of Police Boards have all written to the Minister of Public Safety, asking him not to postpone the implementation of the firearms marking regulations once again. At great length and over four pages, they explained to him how this measure could help solve more crimes faster.

Why are we seeing yet another delay, which can only benefit criminals who use firearms?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, according to our information, only one country has introduced the bill called for by the United Nations. We want to wait and continue studying the situation. I received telephone calls from police officers, opposition members and other groups in order to carefully consider the situation. That is why we want to wait.

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that country is the United States. If we are behind the United States when it comes to firearms, we are way behind.

The government turns a deaf ear when police officials say that the firearms registry can prevent crime. Now it is again ignoring police officials when they say that firearms marking can help them solve crimes.

Why does it listen only to the gun lobby, for which it has been denounced by the presidents of those three major police associations?

[English]

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for the member's information, the country I was referring to was Brazil. I can say that we are 1 of 64 countries out of over 200 that have signed this particular UN ratification, but we are deferring its implementation.

We are hearing from police officers who work on the street. We are hearing from a variety of organizations. I am hearing from Liberal MPs who are asking that we defer and study the implications of this. We do not want more programs that take officers off the street. We want to keep them on the street.

\* \* \*

• (1440)

[Translation]

**POLLS**

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the unelected Minister of Public Works, Senator Michael Fortier, says one thing about the policy on polls and then contradicts himself. This leads us to believe that the real minister in this matter is his director of communications, who seems to be more familiar with the policies than his minister. Apparently we will have to wait for the Paillé report to obtain more coherent answers.

For the third time, I will ask the parliamentary secretary the question again and the citizens expect something other than a terse "soon" in reply. When exactly will the Paillé report be made public? We want a date.

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the report will be made public very soon.

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, bravado may come easily, but in any case people are able to draw conclusions.

Could it be that the real reason why the Minister of Public Works is delaying publication of the Paillé report is that the government will be embarrassed and hindered by stricter guidelines for the use of public money for partisan polling? Is that the real reason?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, not at all. The report will be made public very soon.

\* \* \*

**PRIME MINISTER**

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the Prime Minister is a hockey fan. On February 10, 2007, he dropped the puck at the World Pond Hockey Tournament in Plaster Rock, New Brunswick. That does not seem to be the only thing he did.

*Oral Questions*

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether he had a personal meeting with a senior member of Irving Shipbuilding, set up by lobbyist Fred Doucet, on February 10, 2007?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I met with the president of that company, and the meeting was arranged by my office.

[*English*]

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Fred Doucet is not the only problem.

This meeting took place on February 10. Irving Shipbuilding filed a lawsuit before the Federal Court against the Government of Canada regarding its \$1.5 billion submarine maintenance contract on February 9. Since then, the defence minister has always said that the matter was before the courts and that it would be improper for the government to interfere in that process.

Why did the Prime Minister meet a senior executive from that company the day after it launched its lawsuit? Was it to please Fred Doucet?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Irving, who is a prominent New Brunswick business man, asked to meet me and I was delighted to meet him.

At the same time, I think everyone knows that the government is proceeding with the submarine contract and, obviously, there is a case before the court and that case will continue.

\* \* \*

**WIRELESS INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know the previous industry minister opposed wireless set asides. We know his senior policy advisor, Martin Masse, opposed wireless set asides. We know that Brian Mulroney's spokesperson, Luc Lavoie, demanded that Masse be fired.

Did the Prime Minister, at any time, discuss the wireless spectrum auction with Brian Mulroney?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was responsible for the wireless decision. The answer to the question is no.

For six years in the House of Commons, session after session, day after day, the member for Kings—Hants stood in this chamber praising Brian Mulroney, worshipping him and idolizing his record, accolade after accolade. For six years, he was the main cheerleader of the Brian Mulroney fan club, missing only the Mickey Mouse ears.

Why has he suddenly de-friended him?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for more certainty, we need an answer from the Prime Minister himself.

Has the Prime Minister ever discussed wireless spectrum with Brian Mulroney? Yes or no?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I made clear to the House previously, as the Minister of Industry, I am responsible for the decisions relating to the spectrum option. The decision was made by myself, following a period of consultation

when I met with the CEOs and people in the industry. Based on all of the information before me, it was my decision as the Minister of Industry.

\* \* \*

● (1445)

[*Translation*]

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in Canada, voter turnout is on the decline. To resolve this problem, the government has introduced a bill to add two days to the advance poll, which will be held on the two Sundays before election day.

Can the Minister for Democratic Reform inform the House of the status of this important democratic reform?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, voter turnout is essential for a healthy democracy. We introduced this bill on adding more opportunities to vote in order to help resolve this important issue. Unfortunately, the opposition—particularly the Bloc Québécois—gutted the bill in committee.

Canadians are increasingly busy with school, work and family commitments. We want to make it easier for them to participate in the democratic process. The opposition is deliberately depriving Canadians of more opportunities to vote.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the United States has had gun marking import regulations since 1968. Canadian police chiefs have now called on both Liberal and Conservative governments to put this marking system in place.

Why does the government continue to delay the implementation of a program that police say will save lives?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all firearms coming into the country and all firearms manufactured in the country must be registered and must have a marking system, and those are all filed.

With regard to the particular program that has been talked about at the United Nations, which our information so far is that only one country has implemented, that being Brazil, there are significant concerns that go with that, which have, in our view, questionable effects on reducing gun crime.

We want to consult, not just with groups and organizations in Canada, but with the European community, which is being very slow to implement this because it has concerns. Liberal MPs have raised it with us. That is why the previous Liberal government deferred this. We will continue to look at it.

**Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the United States has had this program in place for well over 30 years.

Presidents of the Canadian Police Association, the Association of Chiefs of Police and the Canadian Association of Police Boards have all told the government that they need the regulation in place.

*Oral Questions*

However, gun lobbyists are thrilled and thank the minister and Prime Minister for their “clear understanding of this important issue”.

Will the minister acknowledge that we are clearly violating UN firearms protocol and the Organization of American States Firearms Convention to which Canada is a signatory?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we comply with and are in sync with the protocol that has been signed by only 64 of close to 200 countries, which means that only about one-third of the countries in the world have signed it, but we are there. We are deferring the decision to implement because of many problems that have been raised with it.

We do not want yet another system put in place that detracts the attention of police officers. What I am hearing from police officers is that we should be careful about signing this. They want to focus on reducing crime on the streets, which is what we are doing by deferring this particular implementation for the time being.

\* \* \*

**AIRBUS**

**Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we presume the public inquiry will be looking into the financial dealings between Karlheinz Schreiber and Brian Mulroney.

However, after today's shocking testimony, will the Prime Minister assure us that the inquiry will also examine the financial dealings between Mr. Mulroney, Frank Moores, Gary Ouellet and Fred Doucet and where the money from those dealings came from?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when a number of these matters came before the public's attention, the Prime Minister acted very quickly with the appointment of an independent third party in the person of Professor Johnston.

Professor Johnston has a wide mandate and we look forward to his report in January.

**Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister can delegate authority, Canadians will recognize that he retains the responsibility and cannot hide behind Professor Johnston.

Today, Mr. Schreiber testified under oath that he had received \$4 million because the Government of Canada signed a memorandum of understanding on the Bear Head project. Mr. Schreiber confirmed that money ultimately went into the bank account that financed Brian Mulroney's \$300,000 cash windfall.

Will the public inquiry examine all aspects of the Bear Head project and who profited from it?

• (1450)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if I remember correctly what happened, the Prime Minister indicated we were going to have an independent third party look into this. The Liberals all wanted a public inquiry. We immediately agreed to a public inquiry and we brought the mandate to Professor Johnston and we look forward to his report in January.

**HEALTH**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Health claimed he has no control over the functioning of the nuclear reactor at Chalk River. He admitted that we cannot stockpile radioisotopes for future emergencies.

However, given that he had ample warning of these problems, given that critically ill cancer patients had to stop treatments because of lack of supply and given that he has a duty as Minister of Health to protect the needs of Canadians, why did he not have a plan in place for an emergency provider so that cancer patients would not have to miss vital treatments?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government, of course, is concerned about the impact of decisions by independent arm's length agencies, but what Canadians do need to know is that I have directed three things: first, looking for alternative sources of supply in other countries; second, looking at other isotopes that can be reapplied to alleviate the situation. I have in fact talked to the minister of health in Alberta who may be helpful in this regard. Finally, we are looking at alternative methods and coordinating with provinces to use other methods that could be helpful for emergency procedures.

All of these things are happening and Canadians should know we are concerned about this situation and are acting.

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, those are not excuses. The minister's only responsibility was to have another emergency radioisotope provider in place so critically ill patients would not have to miss vital treatments. He did not do this. He now promises to do so too late.

The minister speaks movingly of controlling wait times. This is one wait time he could control but it is one wait time he actually caused.

Why did the minister fail to protect Canadian patients?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I declared, we are concerned about the situation and we have a three point plan to deal with the shortages that are in fact worldwide.

If the hon. member could direct me to which desk drawer the Liberal plan that was supposed to be in place would be, then perhaps that would be helpful, but I suspect there was no Liberal plan.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's position on criminal justice abroad is completely inconsistent. On one hand, the government is saying it does not want to reinstate the death penalty here, but, on the other hand, it is refusing to sponsor a UN proposal for a moratorium on the death penalty.

*Oral Questions*

Could the government explain this moral double standard of abolishing the death penalty here and tolerating it abroad?

[English]

**Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, Canada has abolished the death penalty and the government does not intend to reopen the debate here in Canada. We support the abolition of the death penalty internationally and support UN efforts to ensure respect for safeguards in its use.

With respect to clemency, our government will deal with the issue on a case by case basis.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today the opposition members of Parliament are sending a joint letter to the Governor of Montana calling for Ronald Smith's death sentence to be commuted by reason that under Canadian law, the death sentence constitutes cruel and unusual punishment.

Does the Minister of Justice intend to take this opportunity to join his voice to the voices of the opposition members to intervene with the Governor of Montana in order to have Mr. Smith's sentence commuted?

[English]

**Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is aware that consular officials do continue to provide consular services to Mr. Smith, who is a gentleman who has committed a double murder and has confessed to this murder.

We will continue to provide those services, but again, she has to listen very clearly to what we are saying here. Canada abolished the death penalty and we are not going to engage in opening that debate.

\* \* \*

• (1455)

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the 18th anniversary of the massacre of 14 women at Montreal's École Polytechnique, yet the glorification of violence toward women continues. We do not tolerate incitement to violence based on ethnicity, race, religion or sexual orientation. All are protected by law, yet incitement to violence toward women is not included.

Will the minister agree today to adding one word, "sex", the legal description for gender, to existing hate crimes legislation and end gender-based incitement to violence and hatred?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we stand four-square against violence toward women in all forms and in all manners.

I would ask the hon. member about this. He knows that the fighting crime agenda we have before Parliament right now, the tackling violent crime act, is with his colleagues. These are concrete steps to protect young women and to protect women against firearms crimes. I hope he will impress upon his colleagues in the Senate to

move that bill through. Canadians and Canadian women deserve that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week in Charlottetown, federal employees will move into their new building. Many consider this building to be an extraordinary ecological attraction.

[English]

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works report on the building's green features and why it has attracted so much attention?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can, but I actually wanted to take just a brief second to talk about what happened yesterday, if I may. I want to thank all my colleagues in the House for the kind words from all sides and for the support they gave me yesterday. I want—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. James Moore:** I want to let the House know that the NDP member who made the accusation made a full retraction on the phone yesterday and apologized. I look forward to her making that public. When she does, I will consider this matter behind me and behind this House. I hope nobody in this House goes through what I did in the last 24 hours. Let us leave the ugliness behind. Let us serve our constituents and build a better Canada.

\* \* \*

**LNG TERMINALS**

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has come out against liquefied natural gas tankers travelling through our waters off New Brunswick. The Minister of Foreign Affairs said in September, "We want to protect our people and the environment...The prime minister has been very clear on this".

Before that, when the Prime Minister attended the SPP summit in August, he made the same point that these tankers are too dangerous. He made it to George Bush.

Why is this government not standing up for the people of Quebec who are concerned about these same tankers on the St. Lawrence to the proposed Rabaska terminal?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yes indeed, under the navigable waters portion of the legislation we are looking at this file. We have not yet made a determination. As soon as cabinet has been seized of this issue, we will make our report public.

*Business of the House***ENERGY**

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on the eve of Bali there are many other considerations about LNG. The government is not showing leadership on energy issues. If it were, it would heed the call from provincial premiers and its own National Energy Board to create a Canada first energy strategy.

Importing LNG from Russia does nothing to build a future for Canadians. When it comes to energy issues, can the minister explain why the government is more concerned with the interests of big business rather than protecting the people of Quebec and Canada?

**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member's comments are absurd. Of course we take all of these matters very seriously. We have a duty and obligation to ensure the supply of energy, but we also first and foremost take the environment seriously in every way, shape and form.

The Minister of the Environment has led the way, bringing in regulations that are changing this country like never before, something that has not happened in 13 years. We are all very proud of his leadership and how he will take our position to Bali. We should all be applauding his efforts.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, under this immigration minister, relatives of Canadians are routinely denied visitor visas for important family events, even when they have come to Canada numerous times under the previous government.

This government claims to champion family values, yet no compassion or concern is shown in these cases. When will this government stop discriminating against the families of these Canadians and reform the visitor visa system?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is very important to this government that we maintain our reputation as a welcoming country. We have done that by raising our levels of acceptance for permanent residents to the highest in many years. We have worked to streamline our programs, so that visitors to Canada and temporary foreign workers can get here faster and easier. We have shown great progress on that as well.

First and foremost, our job is to protect the safety and security of those who are already here, so we must make sure that those who are applying to come to this country are legitimate.

\* \* \*

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has been delivering real, tangible results on aboriginal issues. Since coming into office just 22 months ago, we have reduced by half the number of first nations communities with significant water issues.

Sadly, however, the opposition is blocking Bill C-21, our attempt to empower first nations with the same human rights that all other

Canadians enjoy. It is also stalling Bill C-30, which would address the backlog of specific claims.

Can the Minister of Indian Affairs tell the opposition why this bill on specific claims is so important, not only to aboriginals but for all Canadians?

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-30 will help us settle hundreds of outstanding specific claims quickly and fairly, something for which first nations have been asking for over 60 years.

National Chief Phil Fontaine says this bill deserves speedy passage, yet once again we see that the Liberals and other opposition parties are paying lip service to it and doing everything they can to stop this bill here in the House of Commons. I urge all MPs to stop the games and support Bill C-30. This is good news for first nations. It is good news for economic development. That is good news for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, cluster bombs are much like landmines. They are vile killers of innocent civilians. They violate basic norms of international human rights.

Unfortunately, the government has been opaque on its position with respect to banning cluster munitions, so I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Will his government support an international ban on the production and use of cluster munitions?

**Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as has been said in this House many times, Canada has given the direction to destroy any cluster munitions that we do have in existence. Canada has never used cluster munitions. We supported the Oslo process.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the government House leader would indicate his full agenda to take the House through to December 14.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 2007 has been a great year for Canada and a great year for the House of Commons.

Next week is the last week of the fall sitting and the last week before the new year. The sitting and the year have been extremely successful for the federal government, as we have introduced legislation in all of our priority areas and have delivered results for Canadians.

[Translation]

However, since we have only a few sitting days remaining this year to address important tax cuts, security issues and other priority bills still pending, Canadians are expecting us to work very hard in the coming days to produce results for them.

• (1505)

[English]

We want to see our priority bills passed in this House and sent to the Senate so that they may become law before Christmas. As a result, next week will be 2007, a year of results week.

[Translation]

We plan to build on our past achievements by debating and passing the budget implementation bill, which would lower taxes for all Canadians by reducing the GST to 5%, as well as by bringing in tax cuts for individuals and corporations.

[English]

We will debate Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Canada-United States Tax Convention Act, 1984, which must be passed by Parliament before January 1 to ensure that it is implemented and we can benefit from that.

We will also debate our railway transportation bill, Bill C-8, and our bill on the settlement of international investment disputes, Bill C-9. Both bills will help create jobs and provide economic certainty for Canadians.

Our government will continue to show Canadians that we are serious about tackling crime and strengthening the security of Canadians. Next week, we expect that our security certificates bill, Bill C-3, will be reported back from committee. The bill will then be debated at report stage and third reading. We hope the hon. members of the House understand the importance of passing this legislation so that it may be considered and passed by the Senate before the deadline imposed by the Supreme Court.

[Translation]

We will debate any amendments made to our Bill C-13 on criminal procedure, currently being examined by the Senate.

[English]

Speaking of the Senate, the government hopes that the tackling violent crime act will pass the Senate so Canadians can feel safer over the Christmas holidays knowing that the bill has been enacted into law.

Canadians also expect their institutions to be more accountable and democratic. We have built a record of results on this file as well, with the passage of the Federal Accountability Act and Bill C-31 to improve the integrity of the voting process. Next week we will continue with our plans in this area by debating Bill C-29, which closes a loophole in our campaign financing laws that Liberal leadership candidates used to bypass campaign contribution limits last year.

[Translation]

We would also like Bill C-6, on the visual identification of voters, and Bill C-18, on the verification of residence, to be sent back by

### *Business of Supply*

committee. It is important for these bills to become law, so that they can be implemented in time for the next byelections.

[English]

Tomorrow I will also seek consent to send Bill C-30, the specific land claims bill, to committee. This bill to create certainty and allow land claims to be resolved more quickly is a welcome addition and the country will be better off the sooner its process is put in place.

[Translation]

This year, 2007, has been an excellent year for Canada. Our economy is booming, the country is united and there is integrity in government.

[English]

We have achieved a lot this year. Our government has delivered real results for Canadians in 2007 and will continue to do so next week and in the new year.

---

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—FEDERAL EXCISE TAX ON GASOLINE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** Before question period, the hon. member for Richmond Hill had the floor and there remained two minutes in the time allotted for questions and comments consequent on his remarks. I therefore call for questions and comments in respect of the hon. member for Richmond Hill.

The hon. member for Thornhill is rising on questions and comments.

**Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, could the member for Richmond Hill explain why it is so critically important that the federal government invest in much needed mass transit infrastructure like the extension of the Yonge Street subway north to Highway 7, Langstaff, for growing communities like Thornhill and Richmond Hill?

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the members from York region on this side of the House have been very supportive of this project.

In 2004 the federal government of the day, a Liberal government, along with the province of Ontario and the municipalities supported a wide-ranging GTA transit proposal. Unfortunately, the Conservative government does not like to see things happen. It does not like to see success, and that proposal was basically mothballed.

*Business of Supply*

The province of Ontario earlier in June of this year announced support for the extension of the subway to Richmond Hill.

I want to point out that we on this side of the House have written to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transport as well. We want to see this project go forward. There is absolutely no reason that it should not. We need the partnership. That is why the federal government's participation is critical. Given the cost of infrastructure, it is important that the federal government come to the table. As I said earlier, the Conservatives do not understand it and that is why they are lagging behind.

The residents of York region and particularly south York region are very anxious to see this go ahead. On this side of the House we will continue to push the government on this very fundamental issue, which I am sure, with the right amount of pushing, we may get.

The Minister of Finance is in the House. We hope he will respond accordingly in very short order.

● (1510)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate on the Liberal Party motion on its opposition day. I would like to read the motion, for the benefit of those listening:

That, consistent with the spirit of the Liberal New Deal for Cities and Communities, this House believes it is in the best interest of Canadians, that the government should take steps to make permanent the sharing of the Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline with all Canadian municipalities for the purpose of enhancing local community infrastructure.

First of all, everyone will agree that municipal and strategic infrastructure is in urgent need of major investments, given their ageing and deteriorating state. This is particularly true in Quebec and many regions of Canada. A good portion of our highway system, in particular, and in terms of infrastructure, our schools and hospitals, for example, were built between 1960 and 1970. At that time, Quebec society in particular had some catching up to do in order to update all its highway systems and other public systems. I would remind the House that many highways, overpasses, bridges, schools and hospitals were built at that time throughout Quebec.

That was in the 1960s, which means that many of these infrastructures are now 45 years old. They have suffered the ravages of time. Furthermore, in the late 1970s and early 1980s in particular, and in 1990, there were not nearly enough investments in this area, particularly on the part of the federal government. For example, in the early 1980s, Quebec went through a major recession and the Government of Quebec was struggling to balance—or rather, was trying to reduce—its deficits. The Government of Quebec therefore had no other choice but to spend less on maintaining infrastructure. This was also true for subsequent governments.

As I said earlier, despite the sustained efforts of the Government of Quebec and the municipalities, given their limited means, the money allocated to repairing and developing infrastructure was and still is insufficient. On its own, the government is not in a position to increase its participation in any significant way. As everyone knows, the Government of Quebec is struggling to balance its finances. Barely two years ago, the minister at the time, Mr. Audet, had to sell

approximately \$800 million worth of assets in order to wipe out the deficit.

The federal government has been recording surpluses since 1997 or 1998. Thus, it has the means to help the provinces to assume their responsibilities regarding infrastructures. In addition, we must remember that the quality of infrastructures is extremely important to the prosperity of the country. We need a proper highway network that will facilitate rapid transportation of goods. We need railway infrastructure. That is not the case at present, but we know we should be going in that direction. Public transit infrastructure must respond to concerns that are not only economic but, as a result of the Kyoto protocol, are now also environmental.

Some will tell me that it is not in the plans of the Conservative government to respect the objectives of the Kyoto protocol. However, some cities and some provinces are committed to meeting the objectives of that protocol and are working to achieve them. This is true for Quebec, in particular, but also for other provinces.

It is therefore necessary to ensure that Quebec and the municipalities have the means to put in place the infrastructure that is needed not only to meet economic demands, but also to meet environmental requirements.

As I have also mentioned, in recent decades, the federal government has made relatively modest contributions. It is true that since the start of this decade we have seen a gradual investment in the renewal of infrastructure by means of different programs and funds, including the transfer of part of the gasoline tax that we are discussing today.

● (1515)

However, these interventions by the federal government have simply slowed the aging of our public infrastructures and have not led to the renewal, the modernization or the completion of this infrastructure in a way that responds to today's challenges.

There is still a deficit to be addressed. For a number of years, a coalition led for many years by the Mayor of Laval, Gilles Vaillancourt, has come here to Ottawa each year to promote awareness of the infrastructure deficit that, although it is not apparent every day, has a daily impact on our ability to get from one place to another and to develop in economic terms.

Sometimes, tragic events take place, such as the collapse of the Concorde overpass at Laval. Those events remind us that even though, on the surface, our infrastructures appear sound, sometimes, the deterioration underneath is much greater than we would like it to be.

Inevitably, someday, we will have to spend money in this area to achieve an acceptable quality of infrastructure. At this time, the resources are not there and we are living with situations that could lead to other tragedies like the collapse of Concorde overpass. Those events have made the Government of Quebec and the entire population aware of the importance of much more massive investment in rebuilding our infrastructure.



*Business of Supply*

As I said, Kyoto protocol compliance and the urbanization of Quebec mean that public transit infrastructure development projects are becoming increasingly important. We know that the northern ring of Montreal—the riding of Joliette is northeast of Montreal—is paying close attention to the public transit infrastructure facilities that the Agence métropolitaine de transport may be constructing there.

We now have a project for a commuter train linking Terrebonne, Mascouche and Montreal, and we are hoping that it will be carried out as speedily as possible. Some communities are hoping that eventually that train will go through L'Assomption and later even reach Joliette. I know that this is not something that is going to happen overnight, but the first segment at least has to be constructed so that we can then think about extending it to Joliette, for example, or as far as L'Assomption at least. One could envisage parking lots being constructed so that people in the riding of Joliette who have to work in or travel to Montreal will be able to use that infrastructure.

This is a concern that arises in particular from the reality of how people travel. People who work in Montreal, some of whom lived in Montreal in the past, now live in Repentigny, Terrebonne and L'Assomption, and sometimes even much farther away, for all kinds of reasons. I also know people who live in Montreal and work in the northern ring. I even know some teachers who work at a school under the Commission scolaire des Samares or at the Joliette component of the Cégep régional de Lanaudière and live in Montreal, and have to travel every morning and evening.

With an adequate public transit infrastructure, I am convinced that these people would choose a much more ecological and probably more efficient way of travelling than what is available to them in the present situation, with all its traffic jams. I think that many of us are aware of the fact that building more bridges is not the solution to this problem. The solution, rather, lies in public transit and car pooling. In all cases, substantial amounts of money will be needed for infrastructure.

As I said, since the beginning of this decade, and even more recently, more funding has been announced than in the past. Those funds are available, but Quebec will still not have complete assurance that it will be in charge of spending those funds in areas under its jurisdiction.

There are things that we sometimes hear said.

● (1520)

For example, I recall something else along the same lines. When the Minister of Labour arrived in Alma—if memory serves me—in the Lac-Saint-Jean region, he said that he was going to ensure that the downtown area of Alma would get substantial projects. And yet, in my opinion, he has absolutely no say on this subject. Negotiations have to be conducted between the municipalities and the Government of Quebec. It is the Government of Quebec that is responsible for ensuring that the municipalities are capable of carrying out their environmental and social responsibilities, in terms of the things that a municipality manages on a day to day basis.

There is something in the motion presented by the Liberals that bothers me a bit: it contains a reference to the “New Deal for Cities and Communities”. We remember that. We clearly see that the

Liberals, as they had in the past, have a vision of a federal government that has to have its say in areas that are under Quebec’s jurisdiction, allegedly to be sure that the money will be spent responsibly.

This paternalistic attitude in the Liberal motion bothers me. It is true that at the time when this agreement was announced, we were quite favourable to the excise tax idea. It seemed then to be the best way for Quebec and its municipalities to get the money they needed to meet their very urgent needs.

In the meantime, a lot of water has passed under the bridge and I think that we now need a much more comprehensive view of infrastructure funding by Quebec and its municipalities and the federal government’s contribution.

As I said, it would have been preferable to have a motion that completely revised our approach to infrastructure and that required something else of the federal government other than just to multiply its programs.

I can assure the House that our infrastructure critic, the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, often explains to our caucus how all these various funds work. He is our teacher and I take my hat off to him because we would certainly be lost if not for his erudite elucidations of this great tangle of programs and how each of them works.

It would be much simpler, therefore, to consolidate them in the form of a fund for the provinces from which a single transfer could be made with no strings attached so that the federal government kept out of the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. We would obviously want this fund to be substantially increased and much larger, therefore, than the sum of the current programs because the needs are huge.

The Bloc’s position is clear and firm in this regard as in so many others. Quebec has full authority over municipal affairs and regional economic development. It is up to Quebec, therefore, to determine which priority projects would be most beneficial for Quebecers, acting through such organizations as the Société de financement des infrastructures locales du Québec.

Not everyone here will be familiar with this Quebec institution, known as SOFIL, and so I remind the House that its exclusive mission is to provide financial assistance to municipalities and municipal agencies in order to help them complete infrastructure projects having to do with drinking water, sewage, local roads, mass transit, and projects with urban or regional economic spin-offs.

At the present time, each federal program targets a different clientele and has different schedules and criteria. This results in considerable confusion, especially among municipal officials who sometimes expect to receive phenomenal amounts that usually end up being relatively modest and producing great disappointment in the grandiose announcements of Conservative ministers. Personally, I think we should avoid disappointing our fellow Quebec citizens in this way.

*Business of Supply*

●(1525)

If the federal Conservative government put all of those funds together and transferred them to Quebec, which would be responsible for managing them properly—these are matters that fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec—it would not be creating expectations it cannot meet, and the frustration that many elected officials at the municipal level are experiencing would diminish. Everyone would win—taxpayers, municipalities and Quebecers in general. This would enable the federal government, especially the Conservative government with its talk of open federalism, to make things happen.

Nearly a year has passed since the motion recognizing the existence of the Quebec nation was passed in this House, but the government is not walking the walk. Once again, for the federalist parties, it seems that this motion was, at best, symbolic, and at worst, completely artificial. Surely it is time to bring some substance to this recognition, which is still more virtual than real.

As I said, this would help eliminate the confusion that currently reigns. This would enable the Government of Quebec to set its own priorities for areas under its jurisdiction.

The Budget Plan 2007 provided for the creation of a federal office to identify opportunities for public-private partnerships. This does not bode well for Quebec. They say they will do what used to be done, which is respect the fact that the provinces, particularly Quebec, are in charge of municipal infrastructure programs. The government also plans to offer a little incentive for using public-private partnerships for public projects, a formula that is being hotly debated in Quebec and elsewhere in the world.

Currently, a huge debate is going on about extending Quebec's Highway 25. Major transparency issues have come up. I remember a study conducted for Quebec's union of municipalities by researchers in the urbanization program at Quebec's national institute for scientific research. Pierre J. Hamel, whom I know well, was one of the researchers. The study showed that, barring evidence to the contrary, public-private partnerships cost more than the public sector taking on the responsibilities itself.

Why be so ideological as to provide a special incentive for public-private partnerships by creating a fund that favours such partnerships? Once again, the federal government is encroaching on Quebec's jurisdiction.

As I said, having a federal office responsible for identifying opportunities for public-private partnerships could very well create even more confusion, when it is up to the Government of Quebec not only to choose projects, but also to determine whether a project should involve a public-private partnership. Once again, as I said, Ottawa is interfering in one of Quebec's jurisdictions.

If the federal government were to combine all the different infrastructure funds, transfer them to Quebec and sweeten the pot, it would not only be better able to respect the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces, but it could ensure that Quebec, like the other provinces, gets its fair share. Since the funds are extremely complex to monitor and the criteria can vary, it is very difficult at present to determine whether Quebec, for example, is getting its fair share of federal infrastructure spending or transfers.

With regard to restructuring the funds announced in the 2007 budget, for example, we still do not know whether Quebec will be assured of receiving its fair share when it needs it. Creating a single, unconditional transfer fund would provide an opportunity to abolish the infrastructure programs that have no real criteria for distributing money among the provinces and enter into an agreement with Ottawa that would respect Quebec's demographic weight, as is done for other transfers, which would give Quebec about 25% of the money.

Not only would creating this single infrastructure transfer better meet the obligation the federal government should have to respect the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces and ensure that Quebec and the other provinces receive their fair share, but it would also allow investments in municipal and strategic infrastructure to be much more predictable, recurrent and tailored to local needs.

●(1530)

As I said, there is some merit in the Liberal motion, but parts of it concern us. We would have been more receptive to the idea of creating a single transfer fund for the provinces and Quebec. Quebec could have used this fund unconditionally to invest in infrastructure for Quebec as a whole or for the municipalities.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague from Joliette, our distinguished House leader who was promoted. Previously, he was the finance critic. He is an economist by training.

The infrastructure file should be the responsibility of the Department of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Therefore we were surprised this morning when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance spoke first.

I asked the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities about this and he replied that the finance department was responsible for the gas tax and that it should carry the debate.

However, it is important for us to understand this. The cities of Quebec and of the rest of Canada felt the impact of the Liberals' attempt to eliminate the deficit in the early 90's. They cut health and education transfers to the provinces. The result was that the provinces finally had to look elsewhere for resources and transferred responsibilities to cities in order to maintain the same level of service in the health and education networks.

I found it quite amusing because the Conservatives accused the Liberals and the Liberals accused the Conservatives. We should remember that it was the Trudeau government that got Canada into debt, although my colleague knows that the debt grew under the Conservatives with the result that cities are in debt today. That is what they are telling us when they speak of the \$123 billion infrastructure deficit.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance told us this morning that they had finally given enough and that what was important to them was reducing Canada's debt. Only then, can we begin reducing the infrastructure deficit. In the meantime, the infrastructure deficit of cities is growing. This does not mean that cities will have the money or the capacity to borrow to make repairs. It means that the infrastructure will age and that the corresponding debt will balloon.

I would like my learned colleague, an economist, to speak to us about this.

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel for his question. Once again, I congratulate him for how well he has handled this rather complicated file, given the multitude of funds. As I said, he is a tremendous help with his explanations in caucus.

What we are dealing with here is a philosophy shared by the Liberals and the Conservatives, quite simply, a short-term philosophy. As for the Liberals, what did they do? They said they would reduce the deficit in two ways. First, they dumped more financial responsibility on the provinces, while at the same time, cutting transfers to the provinces. The federal government will not get any thanks for doing that under the Liberals. Second, they redirected some of the money from the employment insurance fund. That is basically how the Liberals managed to take care of the deficit. The federal government really did not make any great effort in that regard.

Quebec and the other provinces therefore found themselves struggling with growing financial problems and they, in turn, transferred some responsibilities to the municipalities, without any additional funding. I am sure that my colleague, as a former mayor and former president of the Union des municipalités du Québec, is in a better position than me to recall that there was quite a debate in Quebec, particularly surrounding the Ryan reform. Yet it must be clearly understood that the primary responsibility was that of the federal government.

From the time when, in 1997-98, a surplus began to materialize, one would have expected the federal government to resume its investments. However, we had to wait until 2004 for the government to make a move. From 1994 to 2003, the government invested barely \$1.15 billion in Quebec municipal infrastructures, through transfers to Quebec.

It is very clear that the government took its time to act, that problems intensified and costs increased. That is the problem. Often, the regular maintenance of an infrastructure costs much less than having to rebuild it entirely or do major work on it. Now that not only has the deficit been cleared since 1997-98, but the debt is now the lowest of all G-7 countries, there is no reason to make paying off the debt such a priority, as the Conservatives are doing.

It is the same short-term mindset. It seems like a good idea to reduce the debt, and to keep reducing it. But to my knowledge, only very underdeveloped countries are unable to incur public debt. All industrialized countries, all civilized countries are able to maintain a reasonable debt to properly invest in their infrastructure and their public education, health and research networks. In this case, we are mortgaging the future for a purely ideological obsession with

### *Business of Supply*

reducing the debt. Municipalities and Quebec will pay the price for this philosophy. This is why we asked this week that the expected \$11.6 billion surplus for the current fiscal year be invested in various areas, including those affecting municipalities.

In conclusion, I would like to say that for five years, the federal government has used \$69 billion of so-called unexpected surplus to pay down the debt. If we had cut the number of workers in the bureaucracy, as the Bloc Québécois has been wanting to do for several years, there would have been a \$111 billion surplus. There is more than enough federal money to ensure that Quebec and the municipalities have the money they need to properly maintain and develop their infrastructure. We have these difficulties because the federal government, Liberals and Conservatives alike, is unwilling to do anything. Correcting the fiscal imbalance will give us the necessary financial autonomy to assume our responsibilities in Quebec. Sovereignty would be even better, but that will be for another day.

• (1535)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first, I listened attentively to my friend and I disagree on some points. However, I think we can agree that infrastructure is overall a provincial responsibility and the P3s may not be appropriate in every case.

However, has the member had any experience in relation to successful P3s, public-private partnerships? I have seen both the Kicking Horse Canyon in British Columbia and the Edmonton ring road in my province of Alberta, and I would call them feats. They are amazing structures and developments that have been quite successful.

My understanding is not only did those projects come in well ahead of schedule, but they gave real value to taxpayers. There was a lot less risk for taxpayers. There was greater cost certainty and greater structure and follow-up with these projects.

The Conservative government is interested in what is in the best interest of taxpayers. That is why we took hold of Autoroute 30 near Montreal and started with that project, and we want to help complete the western section of this.

Has the member had any experience with P3s? We heard of one example in another country that was not successful. In our country in recent years we have had tremendous success with it. It has given really good value for taxpayers. Could he comment on that?

[*Translation*]

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

First, this is not the place to settle the issue of whether public-private partnerships are a good way for the Government of Quebec and the people of Quebec to fund public infrastructure. That will be decided in Quebec.

*Business of Supply*

That was what I was criticizing in the 2007 budget. In some respects, the federal government is interfering itself in a debate that is taking place in Quebec. The Liberal government of Mr. Charest, the Parti Québécois and the ADQ may take different positions. However, this debate belongs to Quebeckers, to the Quebec government, to the political parties and members of the Quebec National Assembly. For example, they will decide by themselves whether to complete Highway 25 with the help of a public-private partnership.

Nevertheless, the 2007 budget encourages the use of that formula, which has yet to prove its worth. I referred to a report that I could share with the member. Two researchers in the urbanization program at Quebec's national institute for scientific research who studied that formula for funding public infrastructure reached the conclusion that, often, the costs are higher, there is a lack of transparency in the contracts, and, in the final analysis, taxpayers do not come out ahead.

I will be glad to bring him that report for the vote this evening.

• (1540)

[English]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, about 23 schools were built in Nova Scotia under the P3 system. If my colleague from Fort McMurray were to check with his counterparts in Nova Scotia, he would find that a Conservative premier got rid of that because of the huge additional financial costs to taxpayers. It was one that did not work.

Provinces continually ask for federal funding of some sort, either for health care, education or infrastructure. Roy Romanow's health care report talked about accountability. If the federal government, regardless of the party in power, transfers X number of billions of dollars to a particular province, would he not agree that the province would have some obligation to at least be accountable for that federal money, explain where it went, what projects were built, so Canadians across the country, including Quebeckers, could have a clear understanding of where it went?

[Translation]

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

That is the crux of the problem in terms of funding all the mandates of the provinces and Quebec. It is not right that the federal government should collect so much money that it can not only assume those responsibilities that are constitutionally its own, but that it should also have the flexibility to transfer funds to the provinces, including Quebec. That indicates that over the years, the federal government has taken a share of the tax base that is much bigger than its responsibilities. It is the same taxpayer who pays both levels. That is what we call fiscal imbalance.

If the situation were corrected, there would be no more transfers from the federal government to the provinces and to Quebec in their fields of jurisdiction. They would have the financial independence to assume those responsibilities through the taxes they collected.

At the moment, the problem is that we cannot increase taxes in Quebec, so long as the federal government does not withdraw from the tax base. As part of a final settlement of the fiscal imbalance, we would like to see the Government of Quebec—and I would hope

other provinces do the same thing—negotiate, for example, the withdrawal of the federal government from the GST or the return of some tax points to the Government of Quebec. Let us do away with the transfers by the federal government for health and post-secondary education, for social assistance programs and for a number of other responsibilities that are under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. The Government of Quebec would then be accountable to the only people it should answer to, the residents of Quebec.

[English]

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with my friend from Sackville that in not every case would a P3 be appropriate, and I want to get that on the record. That is why the government is allocating enough money to do proper research and ensure that proper realms of accountability are there for taxpayers.

On this side of the House we recognize that although the federal government does have some surplus, the money is not ours. It does not belong to us. It belongs to the Canadian people and we will ensure they get proper value for money.

I thank the member for Saint John for the motion. It gives me a great opportunity to discuss, in detail, the important commitment that the government is making to infrastructure needs in cities and communities across this great country of Canada.

On November 6, the Prime Minister launched the \$33 billion building Canada infrastructure plan. This plan is strategic, comprehensive and responsive to the infrastructure needs of provinces and territories and critically, in the context of the motion before us, the most important area, the area that deals with Canadians on a face to face basis, the municipal sector.

This historic plan provides stable and predictable funding for the longest period of time ever committed by any federal government over the last 50 years.

The member surely knows that in the spirit of open federalism that characterizes this government, we have consulted with the provinces, territories and municipalities. This is what they have asked for and that is what we will deliver.

We have provided the breakdown of the funding many times before, but it is worth repeating for the benefit of my hon. colleagues across the floor: \$17.6 billion in base funding directly going to municipalities until 2014. That includes a full GST rebate and \$11.8 billion through the gas tax fund. It is a lot of money and we want to have it respond best for Canadians.

This is the money municipalities can use on infrastructure priorities, which they have identified for us: \$25 million per year over seven years in base funding to each province and territory. That is \$175 million for each jurisdiction. Again, this is a large sum of money. There are \$8.8 billion for the new building Canada fund, which will be applied to strategic projects across the country as well as projects in smaller communities with less than 100,000 people.

*Business of Supply*

We listened to municipalities and that is what they told us they want. We are going to deliver that.

As well, there are \$2.1 billion for the new gateways and border crossing fund, which is so important to our country, to improve the flow of goods between Canada and the world. We are a trading nation and we must take that part of the economy very seriously.

There are \$1.25 billion for a new national fund for public-private partnerships, again a large amount of money, and \$1 billion for the Asia-Pacific gateway and corridor initiative.

That is \$33 billion, the largest investment in over 50 years by any federal government.

Let me be clear with regard to the hon. member's motion. This Conservative government will produce results that matter to Canadians. We have listened, and they want clean water, efficient public transit, safe roads and bridges and green energy. We are going to deliver these results to the Canadian people

May I remind the member as well that when the current Leader of the Opposition first ran for office, his party said it would get rid of the GST, that it would no longer exist if elected. Then Liberals decided to keep it after they got into office. Now in another flip-flop move they have suggested they will increase the GST. They will tax Canadians more.

This government is providing cities with 100% GST rebate. It is great news for our communities.

Let me provide some concrete examples of how we support cities and communities across the country. As I am sure my hon. colleague across the floor is aware, we are already providing funding in New Brunswick, his home province, such as the \$100 million investment in the national highway improvements and the \$26.6 million investment in the Saint John Harbour cleanup. It is a very important investment, an investment he acknowledged but did not say much in the House about it. These are two of the earliest investments the Conservative government has done.

• (1545)

What has the member done for the people of New Brunswick? We know his record on the environment regarding Petitcodiac and, quite frankly, it is not something to be proud of.

This government is getting results for Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and we are proud of that. This national infrastructure plan is the most significant investment made by a federal government, as I said, in 50 years.

May I remind the member of the fact that his previous government left us with a \$123 billion deficit, which the FCM has recently acknowledged.

This government, in its very first budget, and again upped it in the second budget, took swift and decisive action to speed up a world class infrastructure program for this country, and that was well before the \$123 billion deficit report from FCM came out.

Talk is cheap. Let us look at the Liberal record, speaking of cheap.

The numbers speak for themselves. Between 1993 and 2005, the previous Liberal government's commitments to infrastructure

averaged about \$1.3 billion a year. By comparison, since 2006, since we came into office, and over the course of the seven-year building Canada plan, this government will invest \$5 billion a year in public infrastructure. That is a significant amount more than what was invested before.

If that is not a significant investment, I do not know what is. It is an investment that reflects consultations with provinces, territories and municipalities because we listen to the stakeholders. The people who sign our paycheques are taxpayers and we listen to them.

In this motion, the member for Saint John calls for immediate funding toward infrastructure.

While I am happy to report that we are way ahead of the game, way ahead of that party over there, municipalities across the country are already benefiting from the 100% GST rebate and they also have access to the gas tax funding currently. This money is already bearing fruit across the country, where communities are investing in their infrastructure needs, such as, as I mentioned, clean drinking water, which is very important to my residents in northern Alberta, better water treatment facilities, and improved roads and bridges that are so important to the people in Quebec, especially in the Montreal region. It is going to projects in New Brunswick, as it is going to communities in other parts of Canada.

There is a deficit. In Calgary, a \$10 billion deficit has been identified. In my own home town of Fort McMurray, there is approximately a \$2 billion deficit. There is no section of this country that has been left untouched by this Liberal neglect.

As the member's motion speaks to the gas tax, let me say further that this Conservative government has extended that program by \$2 billion per year over the life of the building Canada plan. That is \$8 billion in brand new funds for municipal infrastructure. That is good news for our municipalities. That is money municipalities can use to improve the infrastructure they manage and to build the new infrastructure they need in areas such as transit, water and sewage treatment.

I heard the member earlier speak on that very topic. It is correct that it is not just for new infrastructure; it is to manage what is existing now.

On top of that, municipalities will also be able to access the other funding components of our overall plan. So, it is not just the gas tax they can rely on, but a more robust suite of programs that respond to local needs and, at the same time, national priorities.

As well, this government is making clear commitments to infrastructure priorities all across the country in every region.

*Business of Supply*

For example, on October 15, we announced a commitment of up to \$50 million to the clean water Huron Elgin London project. This initiative will improve clean drinking water access for 500,000 residents in Ontario. That is great news for some 20 southwestern Ontario municipalities. That is real results.

On November 15 we announced additional funding for the expansion of the Ottawa Congress Centre: \$50 million to help this project move forward.

No one level of government can meet every need. All governments, federal, provincial, territorial and municipal, must work together to meet Canada's infrastructure priorities. That is why the building Canada plan involves cooperation among all levels of government, with respect for individual jurisdictions.

• (1550)

This is another example of this government's policy of open federalism. We are going to work in cooperation to get the best results for Canadians.

I am very happy to report that this cooperation is showing real results. We have already, in a short period of time, signed framework agreements under the building Canada fund with British Columbia and Nova Scotia. We look forward to signing more agreements. We are proactively working on that with other provinces and territories.

These agreements provide the means by which we can flow more building Canada dollars to Canada's municipalities and to every Canadian. We are moving forward with key infrastructure priorities with provinces and we are getting positive results.

As part of the framework agreement signed with British Columbia, we announced a commitment of up to \$64.2 million toward additional improvements to the Trans-Canada Highway through the Kicking Horse Canyon. When we signed the framework agreement with Nova Scotia, we also announced our commitment of up to \$25 million toward the twinning of Highway 104 outside Antigonish. I have seen that highway and it needs it. It is another response by the government for the people of Nova Scotia.

This government, together with the government of Quebec, also announced a commitment of up to \$13 million for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and another commitment of up to \$40 million for the Quartier des spectacles. It is great news for the people of Quebec.

In addition, together with the Government of Alberta, we announced a commitment of up to \$15 million for the Kinnear Centre for Creativity and Innovation at the Banff Centre, as well as up to \$40 million for the Centre of Sport Excellence in Calgary. Those are just some of the examples, but we are getting positive results. We have already started implementing these results and we are going to do much more.

We are also working with the provinces and other key stakeholders to develop strategies to take advantage of Canada's key international gateways and trade corridors that are so important to so many jobs in this country. While the Asia-Pacific gateway and trade corridor initiative was the very first, we now have signed two memorandums of understanding, one with Ontario and Quebec, and

another with the Atlantic provinces. It is great news for those regions, great news for the people who work in those areas.

These MOUs provide analytical frameworks for the development of continental and Atlantic gateway strategies. These will help Canada and its cities and communities meet the challenges of globalization, and support Canada's economic prosperity and global competitiveness. Let us face it, we have to be competitive in order to continue to keep our quality of life as high as it is. However, it takes more, a lot more, to meet all these needs and we are going to deliver those needs.

It is no secret that the private sector know-how and capital can make a huge contribution to infrastructure renewal if done properly. The number of public-private partnerships, or P3s as they are called, have multiplied in recent years in many countries around the world.

Governments in these countries are implementing programs aimed at fostering stronger, more flourishing P3 markets. They want to get better results for their citizens just as this Conservative government is going to get and is getting better results for Canadians.

For this reason, our plan provides for the implementation of a public-private partnership fund with a budget of \$1.25 billion. Through this fund Canada's government is taking a leading role in developing P3 opportunities and we are getting it right.

We will support innovative projects that provide an alternative to traditional government infrastructure procurement, that offer incentives to attract private sector investment, and that increase knowledge and expertise with regard to other funding solutions that give Canadians real value for their money. Canadians work hard for their tax money and we are going to make sure we get good results for them.

With our building Canada plan and the activities we have already undertaken, we will finally have the means to rebuild our infrastructure on solid foundations, which is necessary for any building, in partnership with Canada's provinces, territories, cities and communities. This is a remarkable challenge, but this Conservative government is up to the challenge.

What we are doing with the building Canada fund goes well beyond the Government of Canada's financial contribution to infrastructure. What we are doing is helping build a Canada of the 21st century, a Canada that will be stronger, safer, and have a better quality of life for all its citizens.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I patiently listened to my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, talk to us about his government's investments.

Nonetheless, there is something he may not have understood. I enjoyed listening to him because he gave examples, but his examples do not apply to the matter at hand, namely help for the municipalities. I do not take issue with him talking about infrastructure investment for the Pacific gateway, but that has nothing to do with the \$123 billion municipal infrastructure deficit. That is what we are talking about today.

I wanted to hear the parliamentary secretary talk about how he plans to settle this \$123 billion city infrastructure deficit. This deficit was created by the federal government. That is what I have been saying all along.

Since the Liberals decided in the 1990s to achieve zero deficit, they have cut transfers to the provinces. The provinces offloaded more responsibilities on the cities. As a result, the cities have not been able to maintain their infrastructure.

Now the debt is \$123 billion. Obviously this needs to be addressed. It is all well and good to say that we can invest in other infrastructures, and that there is money for Highway 30, but that is not what the cities are asking for. They need solutions to their water supply, sewage, public transit, cultural and sporting facility problems; they want to take care of their own infrastructure, not that of the provincial governments.

I wanted the parliamentary secretary to explain how he intends to deal with this \$123 billion infrastructure deficit declared by the cities, according to a serious scientific study conducted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

• (1600)

[English]

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with my friend across the way. He is on the same committee and we have had many discussions. We do not always agree, but we respect each other's views.

In this particular case, I agree with the hon. member 100%. I will not make excuses for the poor job the Liberals did in getting us to this \$123 billion deficit in infrastructure across this country. I cannot make excuses for what they did.

What I can say is that we will be part of the solution and \$33 billion is part of the solution. We will work with the provinces. We are working with the provinces, as hon. members have heard me give examples, with the territories, and with cities and communities across this country to provide part of the solution.

However, we all have to pull together. We are looking at it as one big picture to solve what is missing in this picture: Canadians' quality of life. We are working to make it better and we are.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I gave my hon. colleague from Alberta one example of a very poor system, the P3 system. I would like to give him another one called the Joe Howe Building in Halifax. This will not sound true, but it did happen.

Years ago the provincial government under the Conservatives had a building that it owned and it sold it to a real estate company. It leased it from the company for a period of time. When the lease expired, the provincial government was going to leave, but the

### *Business of Supply*

realtor who owned the building said that if the government left, he would get into serious trouble because of his finances.

The provincial government was going to leave. The assessment on the building dropped. The realtor was going to lose a lot of money. He sold it to another real estate firm. That other real estate firm convinced the then government that it should stick around.

Usually when I rent a place, I pay the rent, but the taxes and all the other things are paid for by the landlord. That is part of what I pay. However, the then provincial government, which was going to leave the building, stuck around and signed a 25 year lease with the new owners of the building it was going to leave.

It did not just pay for the rental of the building. It paid for all the heat, all the maintenance, all the taxes, all the insurance, everything. The provincial Conservative government signed on to all the costs associated with the building.

At the end of the day, the building still does not belong to the taxpayer, and the cost of renting and leasing those things out was phenomenal. It is a huge scandal in Nova Scotia. Conservatives did that. They did it with the schools and now with this program. Then we have our sanitation, which is picked up by a private contractor who has to make a certain profit at the end of the year, which costs the taxpayer even more money.

Those are just three examples that I have given this fine gentleman of the P3 system. What guarantees will he put in place of any P3 system that, first of all, before it goes to that, there will be wide public consultation before that happens? What assurances can he give the House, to the people of Nova Scotia and others, that if the federal government does this—

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

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore that is the reason we have not jumped into this and just thrown money to the four winds. We are actually going to be accountable and responsive to taxpayers. We are going to make sure it is done right.

I own several commercial buildings in northern Alberta and I rent them out, none to the government, I promise. I can promise that we do not do business like that, because it is a family business. Government should be run like a family business, and our family in this business is every taxpayer in Canada, every Canadian citizen, every person who lives in Canada. We should treat them all with respect. We should be accountable to them. We should be honest with them. We should make sure that they can plan long term for the future to make sure that their needs and their quality of life stays at a certain level.

I cannot be held accountable for what happened in Nova Scotia or other places. I can give my colleague examples and we can debate those examples and debate issues, but the reality is that P3s do work if they are done properly. We are going to make sure they are done properly.

*Business of Supply*

•(1605)

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

Does he and his party intend to support the Liberal motion that is being debated here this afternoon? This motion would make more permanent the movement of gasoline excise tax in eight of our municipalities for infrastructure. Does his party intend to support that? I hope it will.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** That was an excellent question, Mr. Speaker. I am going to have to ask the member to be patient. Christmas is right around the corner and he will find out very soon as to whether or not we support it.

I would like to ask him a question. Does he support the former intergovernmental affairs minister, his current leader, who told mayors from across Canada, “You know full well that the Constitution clearly establishes that municipal affairs fall under provincial jurisdiction, and that the provinces are determined to keep it that way”.

Does he also support the Liberal MP for Pickering—Scarborough East who said:

It's hard to make the argument that Toronto has great needs when it's doing so extraordinarily well economically. It's a hard argument to make in the weaker regions of the country.

Is he actually going to leave Toronto and the rest of the municipalities in Canada out in the cold if they get back into government, like some of the members of his party would do? Is that their hidden agenda?

**Hon. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like very briefly to speak of P3s because the NDP member just spoke of them.

I had a P3 in my constituency. It was a \$140 million highway project in the Kicking Horse Canyon. It obviously was a gigantic project. That highway project came in completely on budget and amazingly came in 19 months early. Cars and trucks are safely travelling that section of the Trans-Canada Highway as a direct result of the arrangements that were made under a P3 program.

P3 is not a panacea; it does not answer all of the questions. It can be used as leverage where there are specific projects so that we can get as much as 15 or 20 years ahead on projects with the amount of capital that we presently have.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary would like to comment on that.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I would like to comment on that, Mr. Speaker. I have been to that particular area. I was aware of that. I used it as an example earlier, along with the Edmonton ring road that came in under budget and well in advance of the deadline.

I think P3s are one of many tools that we must use in order to recover from the \$123 billion deficit that the former Liberal government left us with. We have to use as many tools as we can. We need to make sure that we are accountable to taxpayers and that we are honest with them. We need to get that quality of life where it

should be. This government and this Prime Minister are committed to do that, and we are going to do it.

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe.

This is a fairly simple motion. It makes common sense. It talks about making permanent a fund that will go toward cities so that they can do all of the things that they need to do.

In the old days, cities fixed the roads, looked after the lights and those kinds of things. In the 21st century, they are responsible for so many things. Cities are now the places where immigrants come to live. Cities are responsible for physical infrastructure. They are responsible for social infrastructure. They are responsible for public health issues. They are responsible for arts and culture. They are responsible for tourism. They are responsible for sport. They are responsible for crime prevention and enforcement.

Today, municipalities and cities carry the burden which, in the old days, provincial governments and federal governments carried. That is a good thing for cities to be able to do, not to carry the burden but to do those things, mainly because they are the level of government that is closest to the people. It is the level of government that understands the local ways of delivering things that will actually be effective and efficient.

It is one thing for Ottawa to say, “We think you should do things this way”, when locally in a particular rural municipality or in a particular urban municipality, they know it will not work that way. What works in Toronto I know never works in Vancouver, and what works in Vancouver does not work in Winnipeg.

It is common sense for cities to have to do this. However, because cities have taken on this major burden, we as a federal government need to play a role in helping them to shoulder that burden.

Some people have said that cities have a deficit of \$60 billion. I think the recent studies by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities said it is \$100 billion. This is increasing at the rate of \$2 billion a year. We can do the math. In the past, federal governments had programs, a little program for this and a little program for that, and we put a few million dollars into this and a few million dollars into that. Each year cities did not know whether those programs were going to be continued, whether they were going to be there for three years, five years or whatever.

It is time to treat cities and municipalities with respect, to treat them as an equal level of government. This is what the Liberals began to do in 2005 when we started to talk about a new deal for cities. We started to talk about communities. A sign of that respect was the creation of a minister responsible at the cabinet table for dealing with municipalities. We realized that we should not be handing down charitable things to the municipalities. We need to work with them.

Partnership is important. The word “partnership” actually indicates respect. It indicates equality. It indicates sitting at a table and asking what we need to do to make a difference, not merely giving a handout and attaching 2,000 strings to it, saying cities can only use it for this or that. We began this move forward in 2005.



*Business of Supply*

I heard many speakers on the government side say that they have given the gas tax to cities. Actually, that is not quite true. This is something a Liberal government did. We transferred the gas tax. They also talked about how they gave a GST rebate. Actually, the Liberal government did that. If we look at it, we are talking about \$11.8 billion in gas tax and we are talking about \$5.8 billion in the GST rebate.

What we are saying is it is not good enough for that to be a one-shot deal, to give it this year but maybe not next year. We are talking about sustainability and permanence, the ability for cities to plan.

As members well know, cities do not have a lot of ways to get money. They do not have huge tax bases. They tax housing and property and that is about it, yet they have all of this need for money to spend. They are not allowed to go into a deficit, so they borrow. Cities every year put these balanced budgets forward and in the meantime they are racking up their debts. Cities are deep in debt as well. Therefore, we need to think about this because for every dollar taxpayers pay, it is the same taxpayer paying the dollars to three levels of government.

•(1610)

It is time we did things differently. It is time we sat down and respected each other and came up with integrated, comprehensive ways of doing things. It does not mean we say to cities or communities that this is what has to be done and then hand them money and let them wait year after year. It is time to set permanent structures to do this.

There has been a lot of talk across the way by the government members that they did this and they did that. I have given a nice compliment that the government accepted the Liberal gas tax and the Liberal GST rebate. The government has said it will make that permanent. At the same time, the government has put new money in. I heard an hon. member say that this new money is money the federal government should have been spending anyway. When it talks about national highways, that is not a municipal agenda, that is a national agenda. The federal government should not be counting that as something it handed over to the cities. We are talking about gateways. Again, these are national programs. Those should not be included in the money the government gives to cities to pay for the things that cities need to build.

Cities are now responsible for housing. We can go into the big cities of this country and the situation is bad. There is homelessness everywhere. There is drug addiction. There are urban aboriginal people on the streets in the west who live a dire existence in absolute poverty. They are depending on the city to provide for them, when of course the federal government has a fiduciary responsibility to provide for them. The aboriginal people move into cities and there are problems. We have to focus on funding cities in a stable manner, so that the cities can deal with some of these challenges and problems.

We talk about simple things such as health care and water. Everyone talks about clean water as if it is some sort of wonderful thing that suddenly it was decided that Canadians must have to drink. This is not new. This is a basic, fundamental human right.

Many of us remember the Harris government in Ontario. We know that the present federal Minister of Finance was the minister of finance in that government. This is the kind of attitude that government had in those days. We remember Walkerton. We see how Toronto, a great city of Canada, is now literally on its knees. The city is trying to fix things, trying to provide housing and infrastructure. There are transit problems. The cities are getting bigger and bigger and the problems will get worse.

When we talk about infrastructure, it is not simply roads and bridges. We are talking about all the social infrastructure. I recall that the Liberal government during the last election talked about how big cities needed law enforcement. We have to take some kind of responsibility for dealing with crime, guns, the kinds of things that have been going on in our cities. The previous Liberal government said that it would help to provide police in our cities. I remember when the Conservative government made a promise about police. The first thing that the government said in its last budget was, "Don't look at us. We gave money to the provinces. Let them hand it over to the cities. Let them look after the cities". It is that kind of arrogant attitude that says, "Let them eat cake, and if the cities have a problem, let them go to the provinces on their knees and beg for crumbs". All of this is happening when the provinces themselves are having to deal with some of the major issues.

All of this is smoke and mirrors when the government says that it gave \$33 billion over a period of time. We know that many of those are purely federal initiatives, things that the federal government should be doing anyway.

Today's motion talks about giving cities, communities and municipalities the opportunity to build, the opportunity to grow and the opportunity to provide people with all the things that we talked about that they need to provide.

We talked about the fact that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities came to the federal government with a plan. The municipalities have long term plans. These are accountable people. We can tie in accountability and in other words make sure that the money is spent on certain things, but not attach the kind of strings that the government is attaching. The federal government says that they cannot do certain things with the money. They cannot spend it on housing. They must only spend it on the things that the federal government thinks they should spend it on. This is so degrading to duly elected municipal representatives who have to deliver to their people.

I know the Conservatives do not like to do anything the Liberals suggest. They seem to think that we do not do things right, but history has shown that we have done things right. The municipalities were very pleased with our new deal for cities. I am suggesting that for once the Conservatives park their bias at the door and give permanent funding through the gas tax to cities. Then the cities will be able to plan and build and will be able to sustain the quality of life for the people who live in those municipalities.

*Business of Supply*

•(1615)

**Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know in British Columbia, as in the rest of the country, we have serious infrastructure problems. Would it make a lot of sense for the government to double the excise tax revenues that we introduced to go to the municipalities and also ensure that the municipalities have three year base funding?

One of the problems that the municipalities have is that they have no idea of what they are getting from one year to the next. As a result, they cannot intelligently plan out for the programs that their communities need.

I have a private member's motion to do just this. Would it not make more sense for the government to double the excise taxes going to the municipalities and ensure they have three year stable base funding so they could plan out for future infrastructure needs for their communities?

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has been very active in this area. He is a very passionate member of Parliament and his idea of three year funding is a good one.

However, I would like to look at us giving the cities the infrastructure funding and the other money they need in terms of the gas tax for an indefinite period of time or at least until they are able to dig themselves out from all the debt that they are buried under. Until they are able to have a clear way of changing the way cities are right now, changing their infrastructure and developing and building on it. Then we can go back to the table and discuss how to deal with this on a three year basis.

I really think that right now three years is not enough. I think there needs to be a longer period of time for cities to move away from the problems they are facing.

•(1620)

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to the member's speech. I appreciated her mentioning that our government has actually introduced some new money for municipalities. At least she is fair about that.

However, she was fairly critical of our government and claimed that we were doing very little for municipalities, when in fact our \$33 billion infrastructure program over some seven years is perhaps the largest investment, if not in Canadian history, certainly in the last 50 years, and we need to acknowledge that.

The member has all kinds of proposals and suggestions and, of course, the Liberal plan for municipalities. The member and her government, the previous Liberal government, had 13 years in which to implement that plan. Somehow it never got done and I am asking her why.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Mr. Speaker, it is just a matter of simple math. When the Liberal government came into power, we had to dig ourselves out from under a \$42 million deficit left to us by the Conservative government. We then had to balance those budgets.

In spite of that, we saw the dire situation in many municipalities and we started, even then, at the very beginning of our term as a new government, a tripartite funding system for basic infrastructure.

The problem is that we were just keeping everyone's head above water. When we started to get money, we sat down and talked about the permanence of things. We then put in the gas tax and did the GST rebates. We realized that it was like running to catch up. Cities have so much debt load and they have so much infrastructure to catch up with that it is not reasonable for a federal government to give the money, as the member said, \$33 billion over seven years, and then tie strings to them and also introduce programs that are purely federal in nature and not really going to the cities at all.

The national highways program is not a cities program nor is it a municipalities program. This is where the sort of smoke and mirrors come in, and that is what I was being critical of.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, would the Liberal Party not agree that because of the fact that there are such cutbacks in the municipal-provincial transfers from the federal government in terms of infrastructure, that companies are coming out of the woodwork saying that they will look after our water systems, our sewage systems and our sanitation systems but that there will be a major fee?

In the case of Halifax, for example, and in other countries like England and France where water systems are now going to the private sector, we are finding that a lot of people cannot afford water services and are being cut off from basic water rights. The cost to the taxpayer in the end, in those examples, is much more than if the water systems had stayed under a public regime. Would the member not agree with that?

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Mr. Speaker, the member makes some common sense there.

Of course we need to tie in accountability to the money but I think the days when we used to give cities money and told them what exactly to do with it and what not to do with it, tied the hands of the cities. It did not deal with them with respect.

Some cities or municipalities may believe that the best way to provide certain services is to come together with other small municipalities around the area and maybe contract it out privately or do it publicly. I am not prepared to tell municipalities how to do that. I am prepared to see that access is there for everyone and that is the issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before resuming debate, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Mount Royal, Justice; the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, Maher Arar.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to talk about communities and municipalities.

In New Brunswick, where I am from, we have big cities, small cities and communities that are not organized, also known as local service districts.

•(1625)

[English]

I would like to craft my comments knowing what I do know from New Brunswick and the Maritime provinces but also having served on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities finance committee and having been the president of the Cities of New Brunswick Association, to bring to the discussion, which I think we need to have in this Parliament, about this order of government called municipalities in Canada and what has happened to them recently and in the recent past.

In a question earlier from the parliamentary secretary, although it is odd that he would ask an opposition member for advice, but knowing that he asked the member for Scarborough—Rouge River for advice was probably a good decision because of his sage advice often given in this House over his many years here.

However, it is interesting because that member represents the greater Toronto area and we often look at cities as if it were just Toronto, but it is not. There are 10 major cities in Canada that comprise some 75% of the GDP in this country, but there are other communities. There are hub cities and metropolitan areas. The census now recognizes places like Moncton as a census metropolitan area. We have to remember that cities, towns and villages are organized areas that can all profit from the motion that is before this House with respect to the sharing of gas tax revenue.

There are orders of government in this country. During the debates that predate Confederation and the reports that Confederation was based on, and one in particular is Lord Durham's report, there was much discussion of making municipalities a formal order of government, a government with its own constitutional sphere of powers. That never came to be.

If I may be permitted, municipal scholars have looked at the Confederation debates and there was some talk of making municipalities in that sphere. It never happened but a lot of things were discussed at the Confederation debates that never made it into the Constitution Act, or the BNA as it was then in 1867.

However, it is important to underline that communities existed at the time Canada was formed and they became an order of government, on paper, subservient to provincial governments.

The question about whether municipalities' acts in the various provinces are enacted and create and regulate municipalities may seem like a moot one. This is clearly a division between federal and provincial jurisdiction.

However, not so fast, I would say, because over the course of history the federal government and the provincial government, those two levels or orders of government, have either let municipalities continue with their powers in their own sphere, uninterrupted, not invading that territory, so that by right municipalities have constitutional status, by default as it were, but more recently, there have been involvements by federal and provincial governments in allowing municipalities certain powers or agencies of government certain powers being devolved to municipalities, which make our cities, towns and villages a true order of government which, I may say, without doubt, as an experienced veteran in the field of

### *Business of Supply*

municipal affairs, were treated much better under the past Liberal government than they are being treated today.

If we want to just cut the debate short, all questions could be answered by asking this one question: What do municipalities, cities, towns and villages across this country think of the Conservative infrastructure program?

Are the cities in Canada that do not have borders and do not have bridges happy that over half the money that is called infrastructure is going to borders and bridges? I do not think so. Are they happy that this government will not have the guts to say that after one more year it will cut out the gas tax transfer?

The government is just putting this in its aspire budget so that it can skate passed the next election and then get really to the point about cities. It does not respect cities. It does not respect them as orders of government. It is going to take away that hard-earned money from our communities and leave them pretty bereft. It is quite certain.

Let us put this in contradistinction to what the Liberal government did. When I was a city mayor, a lot of lobbying and work was done on behalf of the Liberal government by people like the member for York West who authored a report, which was accepted by the government in 2001, and the member for Don Valley West who became a secondary minister responsible for municipalities and infrastructure.

After a lot of work, progress was being made. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities was a little happier and our cities could see forward a few years. They could keep the lights on along the roads. They could keep shovelling the snow off their highways. They could ensure that they could grow and become the economic generator they are for Canada today.

Is it lost on the government? In listening to the debate, is it lost on the House that cities and municipalities are growing? Sadly, our country is becoming less of an urban nation, as it was at the time of Confederation, than it is now. That is part of the character of Canada that is being lost, but it is very much in sync with what is happening in the rest of the world. It is a fact that cannot be ignored. If we look at progressive legislation over the years, recognizing facts that happen is a lot better than reacting to something that is evident after a disaster happens. I will provide two examples.

In the 1970s the Liberal government instituted its first minister of state for urban affairs. This was followed, as I mentioned, with the appointment of the member for Don Valley West. There is a continuum under Liberal governments of respecting municipalities.

What happens under Conservative regimes is a downloading of authority without an uploading of financial resources. I can give one example that will ring true to everyone who knows anything about disasters, human health and governance for our citizens, and that is Walkerton.

*Business of Supply*

Before Walkerton, municipal infrastructure programs, and I do not care which government I spatter with this, were very much at the whim of the political desires of the local representatives, affecting very important strategic infrastructure like water treatment plants. What is more important than delivering clean drinking water to our communities and citizens? Very little except national health care, maybe.

After Walkerton it was very much realized that the infrastructure programs had to take care, through its strategic initiatives, to ensure the money was well spent. That is why there has been a return to the days. The Conservative Party in power now wants to take infrastructure money, put it into friendly communities, that is, Conservative communities, and spend the money for pork barrel politics. That is what is happening here.

Let us also remind ourselves that it was a Conservative regime that created the Walkerton mess in the first place. One does not have to look far afield from this place to realize that people like the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health and the Minister of the Environment were involved in a government that devolved authority to municipalities, which did not have the resources to follow through with their very heavy responsibilities.

It is a sad tale in Walkerton. The fellow who was in charge of putting chlorine in the water purification system also had duties cleaning rinks at night. This is because the Harris government decided that it had better cut money to the municipalities. Does it not ring true in a continual chain when we hear the Minister of Finance so ungraciously and unimaginably insult cities and their mayors? He did it publicly and openly. He had a chance to retract it and he did not. It is the way he feels. It is the way the government feels.

The young member for the riding of Nepean—Carleton was on an Ottawa talk show and completely insulted mayors, as if mayors were aliens that came out of nowhere, asking for money that did not belong to them as representatives of citizens. In many ways, municipalities respect the rule that the voter or citizen, the person they deal with and see every day, wants his or her garbage picked up and snow removed.

Those are the people who the Minister of Finance and the member for Nepean—Carleton have no respect for and that is why the government has no guts and will not support a motion that extends the transfer of gas tax revenue. I can see no other reason except it has an agenda of getting a majority government, spending money in the communities it likes for big boondoggle projects, doing nothing about extending gas tax revenues to municipalities and letting them wither on the vine.

● (1630)

It is shameful. This motion is positive. It follows an historic chain of recognizing and supporting municipalities. I urge all members of the House to support it.

● (1635)

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's comments were insightful and interesting, notwithstanding that they seemed a bit illogical and not based on fact.

I understand he had to look back to the seventies to find something historically that he could brag about for the Liberals in relation to the secretary of urban affairs. However, some members in the House were not even born at that time. I will look to more recent times.

The member talked about human health and clean drinking water. First, would he comment on Environment Canada's move some time ago when he was the mayor of his city? I understand it was the first city ever that was fined by Environment Canada for polluting in Petricodiac.

Also would he comment on why it took the member from Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, who had two motions in 2003, to call upon the then Liberal government to help cities and municipalities, and it never got the job done? It took this government and the Prime Minister to do something for municipalities.

Finally, why did the Liberals do nothing for 13 years to clean up Saint John Harbour? It took this government to allocate \$26.6 million to finally get the job done.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, there was a lot there. I am glad that the parliamentary secretary gave me an opportunity to talk about the Petricodiac River, a major environmental cleanup project on which his government completely closed the door after a federally sanctioned EIA project. A federally funded project was entered into and the previous federal government and the current provincial government said that they would abide by the findings.

In the 1990s a landfill closure took place, which was sanctioned by both levels of government. Environment Canada found that there was pollution getting into the river. Through a court settlement, it was agreed that the city of Moncton, for the first time, would contribute economically to the restoration of the Petricodiac River. For the first time, a city of Moncton council said that river restoration was a very important thing.

I am very proud, having been the mayor of that municipality, to own up to responsibilities. I only wish the Conservative government would own up to its responsibilities and say that the Petricodiac River restoration is just as important as the Saint John Harbour cleanup, as many of the other projects in Conservative ridings that get environmental funds.

When the parliamentary secretary talked about 2003 and the member for Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, I was a mayor in 1998 and on when the Liberal government came down, after much barking from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, not some backbench Alliance-Reform-Conservative Party, or whatever they were then, MP. It was the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, of which I was part, that got a government going on the best infrastructure program for municipalities in the western hemisphere. It is a Liberal invention that the member should not destroy.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe. He was the mayor of his municipality, and I was a city councillor for six years back in Edmundston. Being part of a city council really means providing basic services to people.

I remember some of the debates we had when I started out in 1998. My term as city councillor ended in 2004. I remember that early on in the debates, people talked about how hard we had to work. The Liberal government proposed some solutions. I was proud to be part of the Liberal government the day it announced that it would give a portion of the gas tax back to municipalities.

What we really want to do is make this a permanent program. The Conservatives do not seem to want to do that.

Can my colleague explain the repercussions on our cities, towns and LSDs—God knows there are lots of LSDs in my riding—if the Conservatives reject our motion and simply drop the gas tax?

[English]

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, in New Brunswick it was quite well done. The cities, the incorporated areas, got half the money and the unincorporated areas and the small villages got the other half of the money.

If this gas tax division of revenue in the province of New Brunswick does not take place, it means villages like Saint-Quentin, the towns of St. Basile, now part of Edmundston, and the other smaller villages, Kedgwick and other places in his riding will not have enough money through the gas tax sharing of revenue to maybe pave or renew their streets and roads that their tourists go through. They will not have any money to do any economic development, restoring things like the great Restigouche River salmon fishery.

They will not have the money to see infrastructure projects like winter skiing, Palais des congrès, all these things that take place in the vital area of the Breyonne, which he represents, Madawaska, take place because there will be no long term funding formula for those poor municipalities.

I appreciate he is doing all he can—

• (1640)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Victoria.

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore.

First, the NDP will be supporting this motion.

As a former city councillor in Victoria, I have seen the financial squeeze experienced by my city as a result of downloading and increased responsibility over the years. It meant reduced transit service, despite increasing demand. It meant storm water systems could not be fixed. Libraries, already too small and inadequate for the need, could not be expanded. On and on it goes.

We know what infrastructure means for a city. We know how crucial it is for quality of life. Infrastructure involves our transportation system. It involves our water system in distribution,

supply, and treatment. We are all aware of the problems in many parts of Canada with the basic water supply. It involves waste water treatment, sanitary and storm sewers and related treatment facilities. It relates to transit facilities, equipment and rolling stock. It also involves many other public facilities like cultural and social centres, sports facilities and waste management facilities.

We are not talking about just any kind of infrastructure. As a result of the crisis of climate change, we should be thinking about green infrastructure to allow our cities to reduce their carbon footprints. This makes the investment in infrastructure by the federal government even more critical at this time. It cannot be business as usual as the Conservative government is proposing.

The recent FCM report talks about the near collapse of our infrastructure. Mr. Steeves, the president of FCM, said, “both the size of the deficit and its accelerating growth point to a coming collapse in Canada’s municipal infrastructure”. We know the impact this will have on our communities.

This deficit has been a long time coming. The federal budgetary cuts in the mid-nineties were part of the problem. As a result, municipalities had no choice. It was a question of fixing the storm sewers or fixing something else. The competing demands could not be met.

In 1992 the infrastructure deficit was \$20 billion. By 2006, that deficit had grown to \$60 billion. Now we are told by the FCM report that it has grown to \$128 billion and will continue to accelerate because the infrastructure has grown older and has not been replaced. This will affect Canadians in their daily lives in many ways and very seriously.

Right now municipalities have difficulty managing current infrastructure demands let alone the accumulated backlog that has resulted from many years of Liberal under-investment and neglect. This is being compounded by population growth and migration to cities.

The Conservatives promised in the 2006 election to, “fully implement the transfer of the equivalent of five cents per litre of gasoline to cities and communities”. That will not happen until 2009-10. The full \$2 billion of gas tax transfers will not be implemented, again, until 2010. Given the problems that we have been made aware of through the FCM report, this is just unconscionable.

*Business of Supply*

●(1645)

I would like to talk about how this will affect Victoria specifically. We know that it will have social and economic impacts. In fact, it already has, just from the transportation perspective. We know from a recent board of trade study that the congestion and gridlock across major cities in Canada is costing the economy up to \$3.7 billion a year, not to mention the human costs in premature deaths because of growing air quality problems in our city.

It is also about problems with greenhouse gas emissions, which is what is being discussed right now in Bali. It is about air pollution. It is about water pollution. It is about the need to keep our kids healthy and have a healthful walking environment and healthful sports facilities where they can go. It is about the need to have libraries, where we can create a better learning climate in our cities.

This has resulted in local taxes having to be increased. The choice is either to increase taxes or to continue to allow infrastructure to fail. Only irresponsible governance would allow that. That is what is happening right now in Canada.

The Conservatives' proposal will allow at best under \$5 billion a year for infrastructure. We know from the report that the infrastructure deficit will increase to \$400 billion within the next 12 years. Just the simple math makes it very clear that we are not going to be able to keep up with the problem. The backlog will continue.

In Victoria, for example, I have seen an aging stormwater system causing polluted and contaminated water to go into our harbour.

Also, I have seen our transit system just trying to keep up with the current demand. We had 21 million in ridership for our city last year, but the system still cannot keep up with the demand. There are continual pass-bys in high ridership areas where people are going to the university or downtown.

Canada is the only G-8 country without a national long term and predictable investment in public transit. That has lasted way too long.

Citizens in greater Victoria want healthy and sustainable communities. A number of groups have been pressing the government to act on this. For example, the IslandTransformations coalition has shown the viability of light rail that is fast, comfortable, safe, non-polluting and inexpensive to operate.

The student-run We Ride campaign is pressing for an improved transit system and affordability. The students cannot get back and forth from university.

The Victoria Transport Institute is working toward concrete solutions for a paradigm shift toward viable alternative transport models, but the federal seat at the table is still vacant. The Conservatives are still talking about a transit strategy and re-announcing old money from what I might say is the NDP budget of 2005.

If we are serious about cutting emissions and keeping our cities livable, we must support long term transit.

I heard one of my colleagues chuckle when I talked about the 2005 budget. The amendment to the Liberal budget was the first reinvestment in transit that had occurred. Or should I say investment? I should not even say reinvestment because we remain the only country without a national strategy for transit.

●(1650)

The Conservative government certainly looked good in last year's budget when it provided a top-up to the municipal rural infrastructure fund and the strategic infrastructure fund to maintain spending. However, the 2006-07 allocation never made it out the door because the government delayed signing agreements.

I suppose it wanted to repackage and re-profile the infrastructure program. The result for municipalities and cities was that there was no new money available for the 2006 construction season—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Sorry, but the hon. member's time has run out. On questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my friend describe our government as ineffective. I am sorry, but I just cannot agree with that. She and her party supported a Liberal government that was spending \$1.3 billion per year for 12 year or 13 years. We are going to \$5 billion a year. She supported that government. I wonder why she will not support us.

If she calls us an ineffective government when we are spending almost four times more, why were she and her party supporting the previous Liberal government that spent so much less? Those members kept the Liberals in power. Obviously she must be embarrassed by that now, because she kept a much more ineffective government in power.

However, we are not saying that we can solve all the infrastructure problems ourselves. There are three levels of government. We are also going to try to leverage public-private partnerships to leverage enough money to make up for the Liberal shortfall, that Liberal deficit of \$123 billion in infrastructure.

My question is specifically in regard to British Columbia, where the member's riding is. I wonder if this is what she means by ineffective government: there is a commitment by our government to spend \$11.3 million on the E&N Rail Trail, which connects the west shore and downtown Victoria. Or does she call it ineffective government in regard to \$7.4 million for stormwater improvements for the Town of View Royal? Is it ineffective government to provide \$307 million for TransLink for a purchase of 225 new buses? Is it ineffective government to provide \$62.5 million for the Kicking Horse Canyon highway improvement project?

*Business of Supply*

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly the last one who would be supporting the Liberal government. I agree that its investment of \$1.1 billion annually was shameful and inadequate. I am saying that faced with the reports and the new information we have, the Conservative government's investment is equally inadequate.

My colleague mentioned the E&N. I am pleased that he raised the issue because I was delighted to hear that announcement. This is precisely an example of a re-announcement of money that had been committed two years before, which was being announced out of the strategic infrastructure program. It is a great project and one that I personally worked on with my colleagues on council. I was pleased to see it, but again, it was a re-announcement. It was not new money.

**Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I are neighbours on Vancouver Island and what a lovely place it is. We are lucky to represent it and our magnificent constituents.

I have a question for the hon. member. We share similar challenges. It is a question of degree and commitment. We know the government is absolutely wallowing in large amounts of money, with massive surpluses right now. A good chunk of that should be given back to the public. Some of that has happened, but in terms of strategic investment, does the member not think that in our community housing is a huge problem in Victoria? It is outrageously expensive. It is unaffordable and thus inaccessible to people, particularly for those in low income and middle income areas.

Does she not think the government should come out and support the type of plan that we did, which was a committed national housing strategy for low income and middle income people? In particular, it involved co-op housing, affordable housing and emergency housing for those who need it. For heaven's sake, our area desperately needs this and needs it now.

• (1655)

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I indeed share neighbouring ridings that are very beautiful but are experiencing very serious problems in housing.

Unfortunately, I have to say on the issue of housing that we would not be needing to reintroduce a program if the member's government had not cut affordable housing from CMHC. It cut the social mandate from CMHC and really left municipalities stranded. We indeed have no national housing strategy. That was at a time during the biggest construction boom and certainly in our part of the world we were without any affordable housing. There was some housing money for shelters, but shelters, although welcome, do not equate to permanent housing and to making housing more affordable in our municipalities.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to start by commemorating the 90th anniversary of the Halifax explosion, when over 2,000 people were killed when two munitions ships collided in Halifax Harbour. On that 90th anniversary today, we will all be saying a prayer tonight and thinking of all those people who unfortunately were taken from us far too soon in the great city of Halifax.

I want to thank my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. He has been a historian of this event in Halifax. I also want to thank him for the Bloc Québécois commemoration of this event.

We are talking today about a motion brought forward by the Liberal Party regarding infrastructure and transfer of funds, et cetera. It can all get muddy in terms of who is responsible for what. In reality, I do not think anyone can clarify 100% the different responsibilities for what is going on.

The reality is that most citizens really do not care. If they cannot drink their water, if they cannot ride on their roads, if there is congestion in and out of their cities, and if they cannot have adequate services in terms of transportation, housing and so on, then they are going to look at all politicians at all levels and get really upset with all of us.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca stood and made it sound like life was just great, so where do I sign up for this program? It is wonderful, he said, and we will not have a problem in the world. Let me remind my Conservative colleagues of what Mayor Pat Fiacco said. He is the mayor of Regina. An article states that he “blasted” the Ottawa government for “the estimated \$123-billion deficit in rebuilding the country's roads, bridges, water and sewer systems” in his annual year in review address.

Mayor Fiacco is the chair of the Big City Mayors Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. He blasts the federal government. It is simply not doing anywhere near enough. He is from Regina and I do not know his political persuasion, although he is probably a Saskatchewan Roughriders fan, as I am. Again, we congratulate the Riders on their great Grey Cup victory recently.

However, Mayor Fiacco is not the only person saying this. We had a protest on the Hill the other day by local Ottawa politicians. We have had big city mayors from across the country express their point of view regarding this. What response did they get from the finance minister? He said to quit “whining”. They got condescending remarks.

One would think that the finance minister of Canada would be a little more judicious in his comments. Instead of complaining about the comments made by the Big City Mayors Caucus and the FCM, he should actually sit down and meet with them to discuss these various serious issues.

Lately I have noticed a trend not just in this Parliament but in other governments across Canada. The government starts to relinquish some of its tax ability, its revenue ability, and then of course when services are required the government says it does not have the money to do that, but it will go to the private sector to get it done. In other words, that means the P3 system. We have seen, as I have stated, certain examples of how P3 systems have been simply fiscally irresponsible.

*Business of Supply*

I am not here to say that all P3 systems are bad or wrong. For example, I think the Confederation Bridge is a very good example of a P3 system that works well. However, the reason it works so well is the accountability of that project. Other projects had no accountability, at least none as far as we can see, and the taxpayers, municipal, provincial or federal, were on the hook for a long, long time. Sometimes the projects cost three or four times more than if they had stayed in public hands.

Another concern is from CUPE, the Council of Canadians and many other organizations. They are very worried about water systems and water management going to the private sector, as we have seen in England and in other countries. The cost for water services has skyrocketed in England, because the corporations or the private entities must make a certain return on their investment in order to satisfy their shareholders.

• (1700)

In cases of that nature, where water services are really a mandatory item for a community, we think it should remain in public hands.

I remind my colleagues that the federal government does not own construction companies, as far as I know. It does not have water treatment experts in that particular regard. The government works with various companies in order to get the work done. If the federal government needs a certain project done, it generally puts it out for tender. Usually the best bid will come in, hopefully for the best value, the job gets done and hopefully everything is satisfactory, not just for the contractor who does the job but also for the taxpayer at the end of the day.

The reality is that there is nothing wrong with governments owning infrastructure in terms of municipalities, provincial or federal, as long as it is responsible, accountable and reasonable. In many cases, as I stated before, sometimes things go off the rails and we as taxpayers end up paying a lot more further down the road.

We have seen evidence before where the federal government sells a building and then leases it back. Even within its own departments as we heard over the last months evidence of where that was the wrong way to go.

I heard my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, say that it was not a question of his integrity, that it was a question of the previous government's integrity and the present government's integrity in ensuring that taxpayers will be absolutely protected and get the best value for their money.

There is just not that much trust happening. I would recommend to the parliamentary secretary that he talk to his government, because it has a long way to go in order to enshrine that trust in the hearts and minds of many Canadians.

On the aspect of surpluses, I would remind Canadians that a large part of these surpluses came from the employment insurance fund. I remember the Conservatives when they were in opposition lambasting the Liberals for using EI funds for purposes other than for what they were intended. Now they have been in power for roughly 22 months and they are doing the exact same thing. They are taking the surpluses in the EI fund and putting them into consolidated revenues, something they said that they would not

do. However, that is a side bar issue and one for discussion on another day.

I have said before that it is the government's responsibility to pay down debt and to look at strategic tax incentives and relief in order to help Canadians and small and medium size businesses. What I think is irresponsible is to take \$14 billion and apply it on one thing, the debt. I would never advocate spending \$14 billion on social services, if that was the entire amount of the surplus.

However, what I do advocate is a one-third, one-third, one-third approach. One-third of that \$14 billion would have been applied to debt relief; one-third would have been applied to strategic tax relief, for example, removing the GST on home heating essentials across the country or over the counter drugs or something of that nature; and the other one-third would go to reinvestment into programs such as: national housing; student debt relief; a pharmaceutical plan; increasing a promise the government made on the VIP program for all veterans and widows of World War II and Korea, something it promised to do immediately, which has not quite happened yet; and for infrastructure. Some of that money could have gone to help those areas that are most desperate.

I want to remind the government and the Liberal opposition that I just did a tour of Resolute Bay, Arctic Bay and Iqaluit. They are in desperate need of housing and infrastructure. If we invested in hydroelectricity for Iqaluit and got it off the 13 million litres of diesel fuel that it burns for heat and energy, it would be Kyoto compliant tomorrow.

• (1705)

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments but I have several quotes as well. I am always excited when I give some quotes.

This particular quote is from his home province of Nova Scotia. This was in response to an initiative our government put forward with the province of Nova Scotia, particularly in signing the building Canada framework agreement, \$634.4 million. This is what Premier Rodney MacDonald said of our government's initiative:

Today's announcement is a major step forward in improving our province's infrastructure—its roads, green energy, public transit, its water and wastewater systems.

That is a little bit of what the government has done.

What the government will not do is take the \$33 billion and scatter it to the four winds because we are accountable to those people who pay our salaries, the taxpayers of Canada who work very hard for their money, and we know that.

We will make sure that we do not do the bad governance and the bad management that was done by the Liberal Party and t allow people to take that money and squander it or give it to their friends. This government will make sure the taxpayers of Canada get the best value for their money.



*Business of Supply*

I have another quote by the mayor Saskatchewan regarding the \$20 million for the IPSCO Place revitalization project. He says, "We are very pleased with the Government of Canada's decision to make this major revitalization project a priority".

We are delivering results.

I would like to hear the member speak in relation to those results that we have already delivered on before the program was announced because we are being accountable to Canadian taxpayers.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about Premier Rodney MacDonald in the past tense because he will be gone in the next election. He is the same premier who encouraged Nova Scotia MPs to vote against their own Conservative budget. I would not quite use his quotes in future references.

The hon. member also talked about accountability with the Canadian taxpayers. In the paper it says that the government spent \$31 million on polling for themselves. I wonder if the member would consider that a wise investment of taxpayer money?

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the member's comments about P3 and public-private partnerships. He may or may not be aware that there is an institute that governs good public-private partnerships and comments on bad ones.

I wonder if the member would agree with me that it is not so much that the Conservative government over there is planning to set aside some money for triple Ps, but that it has set no guidelines as to how that money will be spent. We may in fact be in another era of Mulroney-Schreiber boondoggles where good friends of the government spend public money to no good end.

I wonder what the member's comments are on the difference between boondoggle/bad PPPs and ones that actually work with public ownerships and governed structures.

• (1710)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, the accountability aspect is the problem, the assurances that when the Auditor General comes looking years later that we do not need to revisit these issues because of a tremendous waste of money.

We in the NDP believe that it is okay for the government to own a lot of what is considered public services now, public transport, public water systems, public sewer systems, public libraries and so on. We think that is a good thing to do so the taxpayer has a continuous investment in those particular items.

We just want to ensure that any companies, anyone involved in these so-called P3s, is open, accountable, transparent and that all the facts are laid on the table for the people of a particular area before a contract is ever signed. Accountability is the key to this and we must be assured that it happens.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca regrettably cannot ask a question at this time. We have run out of time.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke will want to know that she will be interrupted at 5:15 p.m.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the chance to comment on the more than \$33 billion investment committed by the government to modernize this country's infrastructure.

This is an exciting time and we have clearly made an unprecedented commitment to Canadian communities that speaks directly to the point of the hon. member's motion.

Our government has put forth the building Canada plan because the country needs it. Our municipalities, large and small, need stronger economies, a cleaner environment and strong and prosperous communities. Working with the provinces and territories, in full respect of jurisdiction, we will deliver this.

For the first time in more than a generation, we have put infrastructure front and centre on the national agenda with the historic announcement of our building Canada plan and, for the first time, a federal government has put forward a long term plan with predictable funding providing until 2014.

As we all know, municipal leaders have highlighted the need to invest in our infrastructure. A recent report by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities rightly states what our government recognized, both in budget 2006 and budget 2007: the need to invest in infrastructure in order to maintain Canada's quality of life and economic competitiveness.

Because Canada has a critical and challenging infrastructure gap, we took swift and decisive action to speed up a massive infrastructure program for this country. It is an ambitious agenda and one we are moving forward on with the launch of the building Canada plan.

This \$33 billion commitment announced in November by the Prime Minister will be delivered over the next seven years. Our government will invest in modern, world-class infrastructure projects that foster a stronger economy, a cleaner environment and safer, more prosperous communities. I am talking about a particular emphasis on public transit, sewer and water systems, bridges, roads, highways and green energy.

Building Canada will contribute funding to local projects that will help improve the economy locally, the vitality and the quality of life in our communities, ensuring that Canadian families have shorter commutes, cleaner air, cleaner water, improved cultural infrastructure and access to safer roads and bridges.

As members know, the building Canada plan will provide substantial funds on a per capita basis in all provinces and territories: \$25 million a year per jurisdiction for infrastructure priorities. This is entirely new.

There is a further \$17 billion for municipalities that speaks directly to priorities they have raised with this government, including an \$8 billion extension of the gas tax fund, provided at a rate of \$2 billion per year from 2010 to 2014.

*Business of Supply*

● (1715)

**The Speaker:** It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**2007-2008 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A)**

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC)** moved:

That the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, be concurred in.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

● (1740)

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

*(Division No. 21)***YEAS**

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Alghabra
Allen	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	André
Asselin	Bachand
Bains	Barnes
Batters	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bennett	Benoit
Bevilacqua	Bezan
Blackburn	Blais
Blaney	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Boucher	Bourgeois
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruninooge	Brunelle
Byrne	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannis

Cannon (Pontiac)	Cardin
Carrie	Carrier
Casey	Casson
Chong	Clement
Comuzzi	Cotler
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cummins
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davidson	Day
DeBellefeuille	Del Mastro
Deschamps	Devolin
Dhaliwal	Dosanjh
Doyle	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Emerson	Epp
Eyking	Faille
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Freeman
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Gaudet
Godfrey	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Gravel
Grewal	Guay
Guergis	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Holland	Hubbard
Ignatieff	Jaffer
Jean	Kadis
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keeper
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Laframboise
Lake	Lauzon
Lavallée	Lebel
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemieux	Lessard
Lévesque	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
Lussier	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Malhi
Malo	Maloney
Manning	Mark
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayes
McCallum	McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Menzies	Miller
Mills	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Ouellet	Pallister
Paquette	Paradis
Pearson	Perron
Petit	Picard
Plamondon	Poilievre
Preston	Proulx
Rajotte	Redman
Regan	Reid
Ritz	Robillard
Rodriguez	Russell
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schellenberger	Scott
Sgro	Shipley
Silva	Simms
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	St-Hilaire
St. Amand	St. Denis
Strahl	Sweet
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thi Lac
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tilson	Toews
Trost	Tweed
Valley	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Vincent

*Business of Supply*

Wallace  
Warkentin  
Wilfert  
Wrzesneski

Warawa  
Watson  
Williams  
Yelich— 214

**NAYS**

## Members

Angus  
Bell (Vancouver Island North)  
Black  
Charlton  
Christopherson  
Crowder  
Dewar  
Julian  
Marston  
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)  
Nash  
Savoie  
Stoffer— 25

Atamanenko  
Bevington  
Blaikie  
Chow  
Comartin  
Davies  
Godin  
Layton  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
Masse  
Priddy  
Siksay

**PAIRED**

## Members

Barbot  
Bigras  
Demers  
Gagnon  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Laforest  
Prentice  
St-Cyr

Bernier  
Crête  
Dykstra  
Hinton  
Kotto  
Merrifield  
Richardson  
Stanton— 16

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC)** moved that Bill C-35, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2008, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

• (1745)

[*English*]

**Hon. Vic Toews** moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

[*Translation*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Bill Blaikie in the Chair)

(Clause 2)

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board to provide the House with the assurance that the bill in its usual form.

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the member for Wascana and others that the form of this bill is the same as that passed in previous years and he can check the record to verify that.

**The Chair:** Shall Clause 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Clause 2 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall Clause 3 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Clause 3 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Shall clause 4 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Clause 4 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall clause 5 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Clause 5 agreed to)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Shall Clause 6 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Clause 6 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall Clause 7 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Clause 7 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall Schedule 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Schedule 1 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Shall Schedule 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Schedule 2 agreed to)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Shall Clause 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Clause 1 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the preamble carry?

*Business of Supply*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Preamble agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Title agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the bill carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.  
(Bill agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall I report the bill?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.  
(Bill reported)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Vic Toews** moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Vic Toews** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed that all the members are in?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1755)

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

(*Division No. 22*)

## YEAS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Alghabra
Allen	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	André
Asselin	Bachand
Bains	Barnes
Batters	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bennett	Benoit
Bevilacqua	Bezan
Blackburn	Blais
Blaney	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Boucher	Bourgeois
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Brunelle
Byrne	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannis
Cannon (Pontiac)	Cardin
Carrie	Carrier
Casey	Casson
Chong	Clement
Comuzzi	Cotler
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cummins
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davidson	Day
DeBellefeuille	Del Mastro
Deschamps	Devolin
Dhaliwal	Dosanjh
Doyle	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Emerson	Epp
Eyking	Faille
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Freeman
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Gaudet
Godfrey	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Gravel
Grewal	Guay
Guergis	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Holland	Hubbard
Ignatieff	Jaffer
Jean	Kadis
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karetak-Lindell
Keeper	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laframboise	Lake
Lauzon	Lavallée
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemieux
Lessard	Lévesque
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	Lussier
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Malhi	Malo
Maloney	Manning
Mark	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayes	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Menzies
Miller	Mills
Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Ohrai
Oda	Ouellet
Pallister	Paquette

*Private Members' Business*

Paradis	Pearson
Perron	Petit
Picard	Plamondon
Poillievre	Preston
Proulx	Rajotte
Redman	Regan
Reid	Ritz
Robillard	Rodriguez
Russell	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schellenberger
Scott	Sgro
Shipley	Silva
Simms	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Strahl
Sweet	Szabo
Telegdi	Temelkovski
Thi Lac	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Valley
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Vincent	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Wilfert
Williams	Wrzesnewskyj
Yelich — 213	

(domestic prices), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-411, An Act to amend the Special Import Measures Act (domestic prices). The summary of the bill states:

This enactment sets out the conditions required for deeming whether domestic prices in a country are substantially determined by the government of that country and there is sufficient reason to believe that they are not substantially the same as they would be if they were determined in a competitive market.

I understand the concerns and issues, and I understand the spirit of the bill. It essentially targets two specific areas. One is dumping practices, which I will talk about, and the other is the pressure on our domestic market. I would say that the manufacturing, forestry, and textile sectors would be the relevant sectors that feel competition from imports, especially when it comes to our dumping practices.

Dumping is an anti-competitive practice that undermines domestic production. Dumping is the sale of a product for export at less than its normal value.

Artificial price reduction is illegal under the World Trade Organization rules because it harms producers in the export market. This strategy also harms exporters of similar products in third countries because they are unable to compete with artificially cheap exports from the dumping country.

If Canada can show that a foreign exporter is dumping products on its market and that these imports could harm Canadian producers, it is entitled to impose anti-dumping measures, such as charging an import duty to raise the price of a certain product to better reflect its actual value in accordance with WTO law.

As I indicated, that is definitely a legitimate concern and something that we need to address. I will allude to some of the concerns I have about this bill specifically around dumping practices. There are other concerns, as I mentioned earlier on, in the manufacturing sector and the forestry sector.

The manufacturing sector alone represents 18% of economic activity in Canada and its contribution to wealth creation is even greater. Since December 2002 until November, statistics indicate that over 210,000 jobs have been lost in manufacturing alone. This is enormous pressure on our manufacturing sector and it needs to be addressed.

What bothers me profoundly is that the current government is aggressively pursuing trade negotiations with the South Koreans and is putting in place a trade deal that would effectively further compound job losses in the manufacturing sector. I cannot understand why the government would pursue such an initiative. It wants to, in effect, create jobs in lower value-added areas that pay less and have less benefits. We would lose our high value-added Canadian jobs. This really concerns me.

There are other issues with respect to South Korea regarding non-tariff barriers that need to be addressed in that trade agreement that have not been addressed thus far by the minister. We have not had proper debate or discussion on that. We are working thoroughly in committee to address these concerns and hopefully that will shed some light on these important issues.

## NAYS

## Members

Angus	Atamanenko
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bevington
Black	Blaikie
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Comartin
Crowder	Davies
Dewar	Godin
Julian	Layton
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Nash	Priddy
Savoie	Siksaj
Stoffer — 25	

## PAIRED

## Members

Barbot	Bernier
Bigras	Crête
Demers	Dykstra
Gagnon	Hinton
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kotto
Laforest	Merrifield
Prentice	Richardson
St-Cyr	Stanton — 16

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

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

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being 5:55 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

---

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**SPECIAL IMPORT MEASURES ACT**

The House resumed from October 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-411, An Act to amend the Special Import Measures Act

*Private Members' Business*

Most important, this is about families. When a person loses a job, it compromises his or her family's position. It is a loss of income. It also has a direct impact on the community. This has to be addressed as well. Not only have we lost those jobs but we are fundamentally shifting the landscape of our country with respect to the economic outlook going forward.

The other sector that is obviously under a tremendous amount of pressure is the forestry sector. Not too long ago the government signed a flawed deal, one that is referred to as the softwood sell-out, a title which I think is appropriate. This deal has questioned our sovereignty when it comes to forestry policies. By signing this deal we left \$1 billion on the table, a substantial amount of money. It was a broken promise by the government. The government committed to collect the full amount of the tariffs, but it only collected 80¢ to the dollar, leaving \$1 billion on the table. The government threw all our WTO and NAFTA rulings right out the door to settle for a deal that puts on quotas, and charges higher tariff rates to our industry.

● (1800)

Every day in the business section of the newspapers we read about forestry companies closing, mills closing and people losing jobs. This is not simply a matter of jobs. It affects families and communities. It has a ripple effect across our country and our economy. Not only is there concern about particular job loss, but many of these jobs, specifically if we consider the auto sector, have seven to eight spinoff jobs that are lost as well because they are directly correlated with that initial job.

There are thousands of jobs being lost in manufacturing and forestry. I can understand the intent of this private member's bill is to make sure that our economy avoids dumping practices and also avoids the unfair pressure on our manufacturing sector, the forestry sector and the textile sector and other important key industries in our economy.

I indicated before that I do have some reservations and concerns about this particular bill. The bill seeks to codify the conditions used to determine if an export monopoly exists in a given country. It does this by outlining five conditions which, if any of them were not met, would automatically result in a country being deemed to have an export monopoly.

This bill is redundant and seeks to tell the president of the Canada Border Services Agency how to do his job. The president of the CBSA is the one who currently makes this determination.

In my opinion, the categories are broad and could conceivably result in almost any country being designated as having an export monopoly. This includes the United States and the European Union which the CBSA already relies on to determine "normal market practices". This again impairs the ability of the CBSA and the Canadian International Trade Tribunal to do their jobs.

These are legitimate concerns that our party has. The concerns that this bill wants to address can be dealt with through a variety of mechanisms, including the existing trade agreements, as well as trade tribunals. These issues are better addressed during trade negotiations.

The Liberal Party has always advocated for trade agreements which seek a fair balance, free and fair trade. We have done so and

have demonstrated this in our discussions on the South Korea free trade negotiations.

The Liberal Party is a party of free trade. We have a long history of promoting free and fair trade. If we look at our trade negotiations with South Korea, our concern generally has revolved around market access. We want to make sure that Canadian products have a level playing field when being sold in South Korea. We do not want South Korean products to come into our market and our companies and our hard-working Canadians have difficulty selling our products into the South Korean market. This is a legitimate concern that we have. This is the concern that is being addressed.

As I said in my remarks, that there were some concerns that we had around Bill C-411. I have addressed our concerns about the bill. I will again remind the members who are listening that we have reservations and concerns.

We have said that the bill seeks to codify the conditions used to determine if any export monopoly exists in a given country. It does this by outlining five conditions that if were not met would automatically result in a country being deemed to have an export monopoly.

Our party has expressed its concerns about this bill. We understand the spirit and the intent of the bill. We understand the pressures that are currently being felt in our economy from dumping practices. We have alluded to and explained the process around the dumping practices. There is a system in place to address this.

We feel that this bill is too simple. It does not have the wording and the mechanism in place to properly address the concerns that have been raised by some members.

As I have said before, the Liberal Party understands the concerns. We feel that those concerns can be addressed in trade agreements and through trade tribunals. That is something that the Liberal Party has supported as a party of free and fair trade. We look forward to further discussions on this bill.

● (1805)

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-411. I will begin by saying that we, the NDP members of the House, will be supporting the bill when it comes to a vote.

My community of Hamilton has long been one of the central manufacturing areas for all of Canada. For generations, men and women from my riding of Hamilton East—Stoney Creek have filled the plants of Hamilton, working hard to keep Hamilton's industrial engine turning. Lately, far too many of those hard-working Canadians have been put out of work. It is not just a Hamilton trend, but that trend plays across every province of Canada in all core manufacturing areas, with the greatest damage happening in Quebec, Ontario and B.C.

Clearly, the manufacturing sector must not be ignored any longer. Measures such as those contained in Bill C-411 are needed now to help prevent the further dumping of cheap foreign goods into Canada and the loss of manufacturing jobs that will absolutely follow.

As well, it is vitally important to the well-being of our country that Canadians start to buy Canadian. Cross-border shopping feels like an adventure to some, but I would ask Canadians to pause and take a moment to take into account the effect it has on their economy and their neighbours' livelihoods.

Not all is lost, though, because these days I am hearing more and more constituents of Hamilton East—Stoney Creek talk about buying Canadian to save Canadian jobs. Sadly, this has not begun to happen because of the leadership of the Conservative government. No, it is mainly as a result of a growing understanding of the impact that cross-border shopping has been having on our economy.

As well, everyone who is watching the media will know that the fear of toxins coming into North America imported from other countries, particularly from China, has begun to spur a buy Canadian attitude, so in a roundabout way, the common sense of Canadians is beginning to take hold and they are fighting back. We could use more of their common sense in this place. Then the members just might stop performing for the cameras and start performing for Canadians.

One point I want to be clear on, which will come as no surprise to government members, is that the NDP looks at the marketplace much differently than other political parties do. For instance, we do not believe health care should be a part of the open market, or we will wind up like the U.S. spending double per capita on health care than we do now in Canada and getting worse results.

On the other hand, we also believe that there are areas that need to be protected by the public sector. There is a role as well for the private sector to play here too. We believe that Canada must have market based definitions to protect Canadian jobs from foreign dumping.

The steel industry in Hamilton is a case in which the steel companies are very much at the mercy of foreign companies which dump their excess inferior steel into our market, undercutting our very best steel producers.

Going back to the broader manufacturing crisis, an example of the failings of both the Liberal and Conservative governments over the past five years is how they stood by and watched over 50,000 textile and clothing jobs simply disappear. After listening to the Conservatives during this particular debate and others when they so glibly shout out “a promise made, a promise kept”, today that rings hollow in the face of the deepening crisis and job loss in the manufacturing sector.

The record shows that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade while in opposition said:

A Conservative government would stand up for Canadian workers and work proactively through international trade policies to ensure Canada competes on a level playing field.

Fine words, but the Conservatives simply have not got the job done on this file.

### *Private Members' Business*

Today we have literally thousands of workers from Hamilton's manufacturing plants waiting for their federal government to do something, anything, to protect their jobs. The only standing up for Canadian workers that the current government has done to date, and the last government for that matter, is to stand up and wave goodbye to the jobs.

• (1810)

If I am starting to sound a little angry, it is because I am. In point of fact, Hamilton lost 11,000 jobs just in the last year. Between 2002 and 2007, close to 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost across the country. Then people wonder why poverty is on the rise. That is 300,000 breadwinners who have gone from well paying jobs to where?

I will wait for it, because of all its best lines about growth and the McJobs that the government will claim to have created with its policies. If we look around, older workers, and so many in manufacturing are older workers, get retrained and then they are handed a spatula and turned loose.

Canadian families are struggling. They have to do more and more with so much less money. The value of their earnings has dropped significantly and they have watched their buying power lose ground since 1989. Remember 1989, that was the year of the free trade agreement. It was free all right. It freed many Canadians of their jobs.

For close to 20 years, I have watched my friends and my neighbours lose their jobs, lose their homes and lose hope while they waited for the real intervention from their federal government to protect them. They cannot wait any longer. The government has a responsibility to act now. Stop the spin, stop the BS and put together a real and comprehensive manufacturing strategy, a strategy devoid of partisanship. Come together with business and labour and the best economic strategists in the country and do it now.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-411, even though I am somewhat less pleased now that I have heard what the Liberals have to say. They think that the Canadian International Trade Tribunal can resolve all disputes. But how many of the tribunal's decisions has Ottawa respected since it was created? None. They should not be telling us that there are measures in place to ensure that the Canadian International Trade Tribunal's decisions are respected because Ottawa has not honoured a single one of the tribunal's decisions. The argument does not hold water; it does not make sense.

Where did Bill C-411 come from? The answer is easy: it came from the manufacturing sector's report. The report submitted by the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology was unanimous. I will read the 10th recommendation from the report, a report that the Liberals, the Conservatives and the NDP all supported:

That the Government of Canada conduct an internal review of Canadian anti-dumping, countervail and safeguard policies, practices and their application to ensure that Canada's trade remedy laws and practices remain current and effective. This review would also include comparisons with other World Trade Organization members such as the European Union and the United States.

*Private Members' Business*

I did not write that text. The manufacturing sector did. We spent a year talking to representatives from industry, the manufacturing sector and unions. We included this recommendation in the report. I did not make this up. The report was unanimous.

As for making comparisons with the WTO, the European Union and the United States, the work has been done. We studied the issue because the Conservatives demonstrated zero political will to help the manufacturing sector. I thought the Liberals might understand because they have been asking the Conservatives to help the manufacturing sector. However, when it is time to walk the walk, they refuse to get up from their chairs. In contrast, the members of the Bloc Québécois are standing up for manufacturers.

I would like to read five criteria, which were not just pulled out of a hat. The United States and the European Union follow these criteria. The first is as follows:

Prices, costs and inputs have to be determined by supply and demand.

This is not the case in China, where things do not work based on supply and demand, but are determined by the president. Maximum salary levels, for example, would not be a production cost determined by the laws of the market. That is the first criterion.

The second and third criteria are as follows:

Firms have to have one clear set of basic accounting records, independently audited in line with international standards.

The production costs and financial situation of firms must not be subject to significant distortions carried over from previous non-market economy systems.

This could involve, for example, cheap privatizations. The fourth criterion states:

Firms are subject to bankruptcy and property laws.

They are therefore subject to these laws which provide legal security and stability for their daily operations. These types of companies are essentially unseizable, because bankruptcy laws are inadequate and cannot be enforced. So, these companies can operate indefinitely without paying their debts, which obviously cuts down on operating costs.

The final criterion reads as follows:

Exchange rate conversions must be carried out at market rates.

This includes a floating exchange rate determined for each transaction by the balance between supply and demand on the foreign exchange market.

This bill would specify the conditions for determining whether a country meets the economic definition of market during the assessment of the normal value of goods that are part of an antidumping investigation.

● (1820)

The United States and the European Union have these five criteria. Why is Canada going its own way? For us, it is no big deal to let all sorts of items and products into Canada. We will welcome them with open arms, even if companies close. That is what we are doing. We are lax. We are doing absolutely nothing.

While other countries have a certain number of criteria, we are acting like a second class country. To Canadians, it is not important that we protect ourselves. It is much more important to protect

others. We are going to let others profit at our expense, like good Canadians.

And on it goes. What is happening in my region today? Productions Ranger is restructuring. The story is in today's paper. The Ranger family has had to close five sewing plants, four they operated in Beauce, the riding of the former Minister of Industry, coincidentally, and one in Montreal, where 200 jobs have been cut.

Company representative Yvon Ranger said this:

We can compete against companies in Quebec or Canada, but we cannot compete against China. The major store chains buy almost nothing from Canada now. Everything is made in China.

This happened today. Five more plants have closed. Why? Because we are not doing anything. We are not doing anything because we do not have five criteria for analyzing another country's market economy. There is nothing complicated about this. It is not hard to have five criteria. But they still do not understand anything. I wish someone would explain to me why we cannot adopt these rules when other countries have adopted them.

Once again, the Bloc Québécois is looking for the support of all the members of this House to help the manufacturing sector. However, I believe that the Bloc Québécois and the NDP will be the only parties to support manufacturers. We are going to listen again to the Liberals ask the Conservatives to help the manufacturing sector.

This will be the second chance we have given them. The first chance we gave them was when we introduced a motion two weeks ago to save the manufacturing sector. But they stayed seated when it came time to vote.

We want to save the manufacturing sector. It would not cost a thing—not one dollar. We do not even need royal assent. We do not need anything. The only thing we need is votes to truly save the manufacturing sector in Quebec and Canada. Nonetheless, if people do not want to save it, then we will just have our simple little criteria that we can do nothing with.

In addition to doing nothing, we are told that the Canadian International Trade Tribunal is going to fix everything. I said this earlier and I will have to say it again. Ottawa has never given its approval to any ruling by the Canadian International Trade Tribunal. Never. Now they would have us believe that this tribunal is going to fix everything. It is the Minister of Finance who decides whether or not the Canadian International Trade Tribunal ruling will be applied. Give me a break.

Let us provide the people who control border services with the tools to investigate properly. This is currently not possible.

Do hon. members know what Canada's criterion is? I will tell them. The agency uses just one criterion in every individual case of dumping. Canada determines whether China should be considered a market economy based on the following—and there is just one—criterion: domestic prices in a country are substantially determined by the government of that country and there is sufficient reason to believe that they are not substantially the same as they would be if they were determined in a competitive market.



That is our criterion. As such, in the recent dumping case, the agency determined every time that the Chinese government was not setting the prices. Of course not, it was the companies that set the prices, but they are subsidized.

What is our criterion? Did the government set the price? If not, these companies can import their products here. That is why the other countries have five criteria. It is not hard to figure out. When these five criteria are met, there is no dumping.

In closing, this bill could provide the Canada Border Services Agency with the necessary tools for determining whether emerging countries are practising dumping. Our businesses would be better protected instead of having to abide by inadequate investigations that are unable to protect them from dumping.

● (1825)

Time is of the essence. Some 68,000 jobs have already been lost in Quebec since the Conservatives came into power. As I was saying earlier, and I will say it again, this bill presents the same criteria used by the European Union and the United States.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for the Ottawa valley riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I welcome this opportunity to comment on the private member's bill tabled by the member for Terrebonne—Blainville calling on the government to amend a Special Import Measures Act.

The bill proposes an amendment to the Special Import Measures Act, Canada's trade remedy legislation that governs Canada's anti-dumping and countervailing duties on imports of dumped or subsidized goods that are found to cause injury to domestic producers.

Anti-dumping duties are additional duties designed to offset an exporters underpricing in an importing country's market. Countervailing duties are designed to offset the effects of foreign subsidies on imported products.

The act seeks to balance the interest between parties requiring protection from injuriously dumped or subsidized imports and those requiring access to imports to ensure profitability of their economic activities. This recognizes that Canadian industries are entitled to protection under certain circumstances and in conformity with internationally agreed rules. It also recognizes that Canada is a trading nation that relies on predictable trade flows, including the flow of imported goods, in order to remain competitive in the global economy.

The act can protect Canadian manufacturers from the injury inflicted by dumped or subsidized imports but was not intended to serve as a shield for Canadian companies in the face of the economic competitive realities of the global marketplace.

As the Government of Canada, it is our role and responsibility to represent all Canadians, which is quite different from the Quebec isolationists or separatists who lack the broader perspective that Canadian prosperity depends on open access to a free market.

There is no greater advertisement for a united Canada than a sharing of the prosperity that comes with being a member of the

### *Private Members' Business*

Canadian federation. We all benefit from Canada's status as a trading nation.

In my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, my constituents depend on access to international markets for their products. Individuals, like Dave Mackay who is the local president of the National Farmers Union in Renfrew county, have expressed concern on behalf of members of what they feel is a serious financial crisis among hog and beef farmers.

I am pleased to confirm that I am working toward a meeting with our local agricultural producers in Renfrew county as together we will try to find solutions for problems in which there are no easy fixes.

The border has only recently re-opened to beef and exports for Canadian farmers to the United States. While we, on the government side, are working with our farmers and continue to be the most responsive government to farmers in over 14 years, I have a real concern that our hard work as a government could be lost as a result of this or some other private member's bill from a separatist member of the House of Commons.

The same situation applies to the softwood lumber industry. The lumber industry is a significant employer in my riding. I am proud of the fact that one of the first items of business, thanks to the leadership of our Prime Minister, was to negotiate an end to the softwood lumber dispute.

I appreciate the cooperation I have received from the Minister of International Trade on the softwood lumber file and look forward to his continued cooperation with my local lumber producers as we work together to improve upon the existing agreement.

The time had come to move forward. We got the job done.

I have many other industries in my riding that rely upon foreign markets. Under no circumstances do I feel that we should be taking any actions in this place to jeopardize employment for all Canadians, including constituents in the riding and province of the member who proposed this private member's bill.

● (1830)

Our new Conservative government has committed to enhancing Canada's international competitiveness with our long term national economic plan, "Advantage Canada", a plan designed to make Canada a true world economic leader.

From Ireland, to Singapore, to the United Kingdom, other countries are developing competitive advantages based on their own strengths. Given Canada's social, demographic and economic circumstances, we have the opportunity to create a competitive advantage of our own.

*Private Members' Business*

Advantage Canada is focused on creating five Canadian advantages to help improve our quality of life and succeed globally. These are: a tax advantage to reduce taxes for all and establish the lowest tax rate on new business investment in the G-7; a fiscal advantage to eliminate Canada's total government net debt in less than a generation; an entrepreneurial advantage to reduce unnecessary regulation red tape and lower taxes to unlock business investment; a knowledge advantage to create the best educated, the most skilled and the most flexible workforce; and an infrastructure advantage to create modern, world-class infrastructure to ensure the seamless flow of people, goods and services.

Our ambitious Advantage Canada plan was tremendously well received from numerous organizations. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce heralded it as "a great road map, it's got all the elements of the things we need to do". The Ontario Chamber of Commerce applauded it as a "good foundation to build on". The Canadian Council on Learning was pleased with the "welcome and positive initiatives" included in the plan. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business cheered the plan's focus and "the key issues that our members say should be focused on". That is just a small sampling of the reaction to Advantage Canada.

Our plan is optimistic, but realistic. It is visionary, but pragmatic and results-oriented. It is ambitious, but grounded in the realities of the world markets.

The world economy is changing. New players are emerging as major economic powers. Competition in world markets is fierce. Emerging economies, such as China, India and Brazil, with inexpensive labour, are becoming increasingly significant in the world economy. These countries have traditionally had low labour costs and their labour costs will remain lower than Canada's for the foreseeable future. This labour cost advantage is being maximized by increasingly effective trade and information and financial linkages with the global economy.

Since Advantage Canada's unveiling in 2006, we have taken significant steps in budget 2007 and in the recent fall economic update to implement its vision, including various measures helping businesses grow and compete.

Freer trade, advances in communications technology and relatively inexpensive transportation costs have helped firms to locate where they get the greatest advantage. Many labour intensive activities have moved to emerging economies, while developed countries are increasingly specialized in higher value-added activities, such as research and development, engineering and product design, that tend to be more capital and knowledge intensive. The rise of emerging economies creates both challenges and new opportunities for Canada. In the near term, emerging economies have increased the competitive pressure on low-skilled, labour intensive sectors.

In due course, the ability of developing countries to compete in higher value-added activities will also increase. Canada will need to continue to innovate and emphasize these higher value-added activities to maintain a competitive advantage and create better jobs. Yet these emerging economies bring significant opportunities for Canada and we look to capitalize and take advantage of these as our economy continues to grow and thrive.

• (1835)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the constituents of Fleetwood—Port Kells to take part in today's debate on Bill C-411. It gives me great pleasure to be responding on behalf of the Minister of International Trade and specifically to support the comments of my colleague regarding the proposed amendment to Canada's trade remedy legislation.

The bill, introduced by the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville, raises issues that are at the heart of any discussion of Canada's competitiveness in the ever changing global economy. The Government of Canada is well aware of the opportunities and the challenges that international development presents for Canadian trade and investment interests.

I welcome this opportunity to discuss the government's approach and plans in this regard. Let me start with a few words regarding the international framework that underpins Canada's international commercial relations in general and specifically Canada's anti-dumping regime.

The World Trade Organization provides the rules that govern trade relations among the organization's 150 members. The membership includes Canada, plus all of our most significant trading partners.

The WTO framework consists of a series of agreements that are specific to particular areas of international trade policy. The agreement pertinent to today's debate is the agreement governing anti-dumping measures. While the WTO aims at equal treatment and a smooth flow of trade among its members, it also permits certain exceptions. Anti-dumping measures are one of these exceptions.

For those who are watching this debate, dumping occurs when a company exports a product at a price that is lower than the price it normally charges in its home market. The WTO rules spell out the circumstances in which a member may take measures against dump imports from another WTO member and the procedure for applying such measures.

Canada has implemented our rights and obligations under this agreement by means of Canada's Special Import Measures Act. This act falls under the Minister of Finance and its implementation falls under the Canada Border Services Agency and the Canadian International Trade Tribunal.

I observe that Canada's anti-dumping framework involves a transparent, quasi-judicial process for the review of complaints by Canadian companies regarding dumping by foreign competitors. The process provides for a balanced and impartial review of the legitimate concerns of domestic industries in Canada and the evidence provided by foreign suppliers and their Canadian customers.

In announcing the introduction of this bill, the hon. member indicated that goods from China are a target of the proposal. Allow me to speak for a few moments about Canada's trade with China.

*Private Members' Business*

China is Canada's fourth largest export market and our second largest trading partner. Last year, our bilateral trade totalled over \$40 billion. In Canada's case, this meant \$7.7 billion in exports of goods alone. These indicators point to a strong and growing trade relationship with China, with tremendous benefits for both sides. One need only observe the accomplishments for Canadian firms in China, for example, in the engineering, financial, transportation and communication sectors, to see how strongly Canadian firms can compete in the dynamic Chinese market.

This is just part of the picture. There is another message that the statistics tell, the fact that imports from China are over four times our exports to China. Canadian consumers benefit from such imports in terms of price and choice.

• (1840)

We have also heard the concerns of certain Canadian producers regarding the growth in imports from China. Some of these complaints allege that these imports are being dumped in the Canadian market or that they benefit from subsidy programs in China.

Canada has 11 anti-dumping measures in place regarding imports from China. In three cases where the products were found to be subsidized, the goods are also subject to countervail measures. These actions demonstrate that Canada's trade remedy system is working.

Canadian firms have made use of the system by formally registering complaints regarding certain imports from China. Trade remedy measures have been applied to these imports where such measures were found by Canadian investigators to be warranted.

While it is useful to remind ourselves of Canada's current trade remedy actions against imports from China, the trade remedy system is not the mechanism we should be looking to in terms of addressing the broader issue of Canada's competitiveness in China and other key markets.

The government monitors our trading partners to ensure that they are living up to their WTO commitments. This includes China. In most cases China has implemented the commitments it took on when it joined the WTO in 2001.

There are exceptions however. Last year Canada filed a challenge against China at the WTO regarding China's tariff treatment of imported auto parts.

Canada has a strong interest in the auto parts sector. Last year Canadian manufacturers supplied over \$370 million in auto parts to China's growing auto sector.

Furthermore, the government has recently decided to join other WTO members in formal WTO consultations with China. These are consultations that focus on China's enforcement of intellectual property rights and on certain Chinese subsidy programs.

The consultations will provide opportunities for Canada to relay the concerns of Canadian stakeholders to Chinese authorities and to assess China's latest steps in both areas to bring its regime into compliance with its WTO obligations.

Consultation are the first step in the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism. If consultations do not succeed in resolving the matter

under discussion, Canada, like other WTO members, has the option of requesting a WTO panel to adjudicate the issue.

Canada's new government recognizes that many Canadian manufacturers are facing intensified competition and are adjusting to fast-changing global realities.

The government has recognized that Canada needs a more competitive business climate and is committed to government policies that encourage investment and job creation.

The Minister of Finance's economic statement last fall presented a road map of policy directions, "Advantage Canada".

"Advantage Canada" includes a plan, the government's global commerce strategy, to more aggressively engage the world beyond our borders. For instance, the government is committed to reinvigorating our trade policy while we continue to work toward a meaningful result in the Doha round of multilateral negotiations.

We are also committed to stepping up the negotiation of bilateral trade agreements, ranging from free trade agreements to improved relations and investment accords.

In the case of China a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement is a priority. In today's global market, investment drives trade and investment is the essential catalyst for technology transfer and the development of supply chain links.

We therefore see significant benefits for Canada from an investment agreement with China. As well, our plan is about showing the world that Canada is moving up the value chain.

• (1845)

We are getting the message out that Canada is a leader in science and technology, and a great place to anchor North American commercial platforms, particularly where science, technology and innovation links are key. The government's strategy is also about stepping up our presence on the ground in key—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to ask my colleagues to take this seriously and read the report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, which was released in February 2007 with the unanimous approval of all members from all political parties in this House. After reading the report, they will realize that a great many of the things said in this House tonight are simply not true. A lot of misinformation has been heard.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I listened carefully to the remarks, and I think some things require clarification. I would remind the members that dumping does exist and that under international law, dumping is illegal. Companies that engage in this unfair, illegal trade practice export products below the cost of production or for less than they would sell them on their own domestic market.

When a business uses practices of this nature, it must expect countries to impose antidumping duties in order to counter the effect of these unfair and unlawful practices. Trade legislation must really protect businesses against the unfair and unlawful competition known as dumping. It is not just the Special Import Measures Act or the Canadian International Trade Tribunal, since those two authorities are under the minister, and it is the minister who raised the question of antidumping duties.

At this time, the Conservatives have decided not to enforce the Canadian trade legislation that could temporarily protect our businesses, as well as give them time to adapt to the new context and become modernized.

We would not be the first country to bring in measures to ensure that our businesses are not forced to compete with countries or importers that use unfair and unlawful means. The United States, 25 countries in Europe and all the members of the OECD have adopted such measures, all except two countries—and guess which? Australia and Canada.

The countries that have antidumping measures have issued a series of criteria to assess whether the practices of the Chinese government, in particular, distort the costs and prices. For example, they look at the value of the currency. The regulations, especially in China, are also considered. However, these countries know full well that theirs are not always on a par with the universally recognized regulations, and feel free to hide data.

The EU and the U.S. also evaluate the suppliers. Once again, Canada is showing a complete lack of leadership. I am convinced that this government, which wants law and order, cannot allow something unlawful to take place. It must automatically support my bill. I understand that the Conservative ideology is focused on the open market. However, the open market does not mean illegality. Allowing this to continue now means allowing illegality.

I believe that members who vote against my bill will be demonstrating that they are in favour of an illegal practice that harms Canadian and Quebec businesses. Next Wednesday we shall see who supports our businesses.

The government boasts that it has reduced taxes and passed measures to help the manufacturing, forestry and agriculture sectors. The reality is that they are enabling those turning a profit to add to their coffers. It has not brought forward any measures to help companies existing on credit to deal with the devastating effects of the high dollar. It is now preparing to allow foreign companies to use illegal and unethical practices.

The Bloc Québécois believes that globalization can benefit taxpayers. It provides the opportunity to have more variety in the choice of products. However, we must not allow globalization to harm the efforts of our companies who do not have sufficient means to help them exercise their rights.

● (1850)

Therefore, I repeat, dumping, members of the House, my colleagues—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Unfortunately, I must interrupt the hon. member.

[*English*]

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 12, 2007, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

JUSTICE

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am speaking with respect to the issue regarding the question I posed to the government on the matter of capital punishment.

The Conservative government's decision not to seek clemency for Alberta born Ronald Allen Smith, the only Canadian on death row in the United States, is not only a reversal of longstanding Canadian law and policy, which would be bad enough, but it reflects a mindset where ideology and politics trump principle and policy.

Indeed, an appreciation of the government's decision reveals a government acting in ignorance of or indifference to law and precedent, both domestic and international, and even unaware of what its own departments are otherwise affirming.

For example, the Department of Foreign Affairs had reaffirmed Canada's traditional policy just days before the government's reversal by stating: "there is no death penalty in Canada...It is the policy of the government of Canada to seek clemency, on humanitarian grounds, for Canadians sentenced to death in foreign countries".

*Adjournment Proceedings*

But the unawareness or indifference did not end there. Witness the following: First, Canadian law prohibits the extradition of an American national to a state in the United States where the death penalty is practised. Yet, the Canadian government will not intervene in the case of a Canadian citizen sentenced to death in an American state.

Second, the Supreme Court of Canada in the Burns and Rafay case held that capital punishment was a violation of section 12 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and its protection against “cruel and unusual punishment”.

Accordingly, the court ruled that Canada could not extradite these Canadian citizens back to the United States unless it received an assurance from the requesting state that it would not impose the death penalty.

Is the government aware of this pronouncement, or is it indifferent to the decisions of the Supreme Court and prepared to proceed, notwithstanding the law of the land?

Third, on November 12, 2005, Canada ratified the second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, wherein Canada expressed, among other things, that as a state party to the protocol:

[It is] desirous to undertake hereby an international commitment to abolish the death penalty,

Is the government aware that we ratified this protocol, or in this case as well, is it prepared to act in disregard of or indifference to our international as well as domestic commitments?

Fourth, on November 1, Canada was notably absent from the list of co-sponsors of a UN General Assembly resolution seeking an international moratorium on the death penalty.

Fifth, the supreme court of the United States has stayed an execution by lethal injection in the state of Mississippi pending a review of whether this constitutes cruel and unusual punishment as prohibited by the American bill of rights.

In the case of a Canadian, Ronald Allen Smith, now sentenced to death by lethal injection in the State of Montana, is the government aware of the judicial review of the constitutionality of this practice now before the American supreme court, or is it yet again indifferent to and prepared to turn a blind eye to what is happening in breach once more of Canadian and international law and practice?

Sixth, a recent study by the American Bar Association demonstrates that homicide rates in non-death penalty states are no higher than in states that oppose the death penalty. As well, the study showed that the death penalty has a disproportionate impact on the poor, on people of colour, on those who have ineffective counsel and the like.

The question again, is the government aware of this data or is it indifferent to it if it does not comport with its ideological bent?

Seventh, is the government not aware that there is no appeal from the death penalty in the case of a wrongful conviction? We had a wrongful conviction in the case of Mr. Truscott. Had clemency not been given in that case, there never would have been any subsequent redress in that regard.

Moreover, the litany of reasons offered by the government for its—

• (1855)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada has the floor.

**Mr. Rob Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member was going on his to eighth point. Three is the number of times the opposition has raised this for the late show this week.

I will point out again, as I did yesterday, that there was no mention of victims of crime. We prefer on this side of the House to have a balanced approach to our criminal justice system where we take into account the rights of victims. I have not heard a member all week mention the plight of victims of crime.

The Minister of Justice has repeatedly stated in the House, on the issue of the death penalty, that the government is not changing the law in that regard. It was in 1976 that Canada abolished the death penalty from the Criminal Code.

Our government acknowledges that the legal systems of foreign jurisdictions have differing views on this issue. Although the government does recognize the sovereign decision of each state to determine its own laws, the government continues to advocate for the full respect for international safeguards where the death penalty is still in use.

On November 15, the UN General Assembly voted on a resolution that calls for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. Canada supported this resolution and, in keeping with our support for the objective of the resolution, voted with the co-sponsors against efforts to undermine the resolution.

As the hon. member can plainly see, we are taking a stand internationally on this issue.

With respect to clemency, the hon. member's statement is quite incorrect. The minister has said that our government will deal with these issues on a case by case basis. Potentially, however, if another country will only grant clemency on the basis of the offender being repatriated to Canada, we could have a difficult situation inasmuch as an offender who committed murder abroad could be eligible for parole in Canada and subsequently be free to live in our communities.

As is evident from our ambitious justice agenda, our government's first priority is to protect Canadians. We would be abdicating that responsibility by the potential release of a multiple murderer. I am confident that Canadians do not want murderers free to roam our streets, especially if they have not served a sentence proportionate to the seriousness of their crime.

As the Minister of Justice has said in the House:

—this country and this government, in particular, has had an outstanding record with respect to human rights at home and abroad. I think it is a record for which all Canadians can be very proud.

We will continue to fight for Canadians. We will also fight to ensure that our families and our communities are safe.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Speaker, the litany of reasons the government gives for its unreasonable decision are even less reassuring. The notion about Mr. Smith returning to Canada, nobody is speaking about Mr. Smith being repatriated to Canada. Our objection is to the death penalty. This is raised as a red herring.

The notion of protecting the security of Canadians, we are no less concerned about the security of Canadians nor about the victims of crime. This issue is all about the death penalty. Nothing the government does can deflect away from what this is all about. It is about the sanctity of life and the death penalty.

The government representative speaks about the fact that we do not care about victims of crime. In my remarks I brought up the very notion about the dangers of wrongful conviction and that there was no appeal from a wrongful conviction. The death penalty in the case of a wrongful conviction is the worst kind of assault on victims and their profound rights.

What we are speaking about is the sanctity and reverence for human life. A case by case basis is an—

• (1900)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

**Mr. Rob Moore:** Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what I was talking about. Once again, he is talking about a multiple murderer. There was no mention of the two native American victims in this case.

As a government, our position is extremely clear. We have said that we have no intention of changing our laws in Canada. Surely the hon. member acknowledges that our jurisdiction as a government is for our country and our country is Canada. We have no intention of changing the law in Canada.

In cases dealing with Canadians who are in other jurisdictions, the minister has said that this will be dealt with on a case by case basis. I think Canadians are satisfied with that. I will go back to my earlier remark. I do not believe Canadians want multiple murderers roaming their streets. Canadians have told us that they want us to have a justice system that protects them.

We are going to continue to respect our international obligations and our obligations to Canadians. We are going to continue to fight for human rights both here and abroad.

\* \* \*

MAHER ARAR

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, in 2002, a Canadian citizen, Maher Arar, was passing through Kennedy airport in New York when he was stopped, detained and held in solitary confinement for quite a while in Brooklyn without access to a lawyer and without being charged or having any idea of what was going on. He was then taken to Syria, on a private plane, I understand, and held there for a year, where he was tortured and suffered a lot of inhumane treatment.

A lot of this happened because of information that came from Canadian security agencies, be it the RCMP, CSIS or whoever. This

wrong information was provided to the American authorities. After questions were raised, after people started asking questions about it, other information was leaked from these agencies that impacted on Mr. Arar's reputation and public image and on the way everybody looked at his case.

Some time ago, I asked the Minister of Public Safety what was the status of the process to hold accountable the people who released this wrong information that caused Mr. Arar so much grief. At the time, maybe four or five months ago, he told me that there were three or four investigations under way.

I know that I was not the only one who asked about this. I know that the hon. member for Mount Royal as well as several other members asked if anyone was going to be held accountable for what happened to Mr. Arar. Mr. Arar suffered. His wife suffered. His children suffered. Canadian taxpayers paid a substantial price. Everybody has paid a price except the people who actually caused the problem. I believe they should be held accountable at some stage. To the best of my knowledge, that has never happened.

Last week, I asked the Minister of Public Safety about the status of these investigations and if he thought anyone would be held accountable eventually. He must have misunderstood my question, because his answer was that an “apology was given and also compensation”, and that the government continues “to appeal on behalf of Mr. Arar...in the United States”.

I am not concerned about the United States so much right now. I would like to know about the investigations that are ongoing in Canada. Again, I believe that someone should be held accountable. There should not be a double standard. I think this case screams out for justice. I do not believe the RCMP and CSIS should be left under this cloud. Someone should be held accountable for these actions.

Again, I would like to ask very specifically about these investigations. What are the investigations? What exact steps are being taken to determine who gave out the wrong information? What interviews are being done? Who is being interviewed? What officers are investigating?

• (1905)

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to the questions put to the House by the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley regarding ongoing investigations into Canadian involvement in Mr. Arar's imprisonment.

I respect the member's views and appreciate his concern with respect to this particular case. As hon. members know, the government took immediate action to begin implementing the 23 recommendations outlined in Justice O'Connor's report.

As a result of Justice O'Connor's recommendations, we have put in place new protocols and signed a new memorandum of understanding to establish guidelines on information sharing between the RCMP and CSIS, and also between Canada and our allies.

Our goal is to move forward and continue to make the changes that are needed to prevent what happened to Mr. Arar from happening again.

The Government of Canada, following the findings of the Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar, apologized to Mr. Arar last January. Furthermore, it was this government that negotiated compensation for Mr. Arar and his family.

The government accepted all of the recommendations made by Justice O'Connor in his "Report of the Events Relating to Maher Arar" and is implementing each and every one of them. This includes the recommendation that the Government of Canada register a formal objection with the Government of the United States concerning its treatment of Mr. Arar and Canadian officials involved with this case.

Immediately following receipt of Justice O'Connor's report, the Minister of Public Safety wrote to the United States Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, on September 21, 2006, asking for his support in ensuring that United States agencies were aware of the commission's findings and that appropriate steps would be taken to amend U.S. records accordingly.

In addition, the Prime Minister spoke to President Bush and the former minister of foreign affairs wrote to the U.S. Secretary of State to register Canada's objections to the actions of the U.S. government in the Arar case.

More recently, on October 24 before the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice admitted some deficiencies in the handling of Maher Arar's case.

While the government is encouraged by the comments made by the secretary of state regarding Mr. Arar's case, further action has been taken in the hopes that the United States government will continue to take action in order to fully address this matter. Immediately following Secretary Rice's appearance before the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Safety wrote another letter to Secretary Chertoff, encouraging the United States government to take appropriate steps to ensure that Mr. Arar's name is removed from all relevant lookout lists.

This government has taken a significant number of steps to ensure this does not happen again. It has implemented a number of recommendations that were made. This member needs to look forward and not backward.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, that answer is almost scary. I appreciate all that the government has done to ensure that this does not happen again in the future, but something awful happened in the past and a lot of people paid a huge price. What happened to Mr. Arar was wrong and I would say from the member's answer that the government is not going to bother trying to hold anyone accountable.

It is funny that both the answer from the other day and the answer from today are mostly focused on criticizing the Americans for their actions. What I want are answers about the Canadian government's actions in the investigations that I was told were ongoing.

The other day when I heard about the awful incident at the Vancouver airport, right away it was announced that there were three or four investigations under way. It sounded exactly like the answers we got in the Maher Arar case. There were three or four investigations under way and we have never heard anything from them.

I am asking the government if anyone is ever going to be held accountable. Is there any effort to hold anybody accountable?

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, there is no question but that a full inquiry has been held into the actions relating to Canadian officials in relation to Maher Arar. There has been a significant number of recommendations. The government has accepted and adopted all 23 recommendations in Justice O'Connor's report. Work on implementing them is largely complete. I think those are significant steps. Significant actions have been taken by the government.

In January 2007, the Prime Minister apologized to Mr. Arar and his family and compensated him. We have expressed and are continuing to express our opinion that Mr. Arar should not be on any United States watch list.

This government has taken many steps. There have been many recommendations. There has been a hearing and inquiry on this. I am not sure what the member is after, but there have been a good number of recommendations. Those recommendations have been taken to heart and have been implemented to ensure that something like this will not happen again.

• (1910)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:10 p.m.)





# CONTENTS

Thursday, December 6, 2007

## Points of Order

### Alleged Behaviour of Member for Port Moody— Westwood—Port Coquitlam

Mrs. Redman .....	1791
Mr. Hill .....	1791
Ms. Davies .....	1791

## Interparliamentary Delegations

The Speaker .....	1791
-------------------	------

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement Act

Mr. Strahl .....	1791
Bill C-34. Introduction and first reading .....	1791
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	1791

## Committees of the House

### Procedure and House Affairs

Mr. Goodyear .....	1791
The Speaker .....	1792

### Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Doyle .....	1792
-----------------	------

### Fisheries and Oceans

Mr. Manning .....	1792
-------------------	------

## Canada Pension Plan

Ms. Folco .....	1792
Bill C-491. Introduction and first reading .....	1792
Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed .....	1792

## Petitions

### Mining Industry

Ms. Bonsant .....	1792
-------------------	------

## Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lukiwski .....	1792
--------------------	------

## Points of Order

### NDP Bribery Allegations in Abbotsford

Ms. Davies .....	1793
------------------	------

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## Business of Supply

### Opposition Motion—Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline

Mr. Zed .....	1793
Motion .....	1793
Mr. Wallace .....	1796
Mr. Laframboise .....	1796
Mr. Dewar .....	1797
Mr. Menzies .....	1797
Mr. Laframboise .....	1800
Mr. Watson .....	1800
Mr. Julian .....	1801
Mr. Laframboise .....	1801

Mr. Jean .....	1804
Mr. Julian .....	1805
Mr. Marston .....	1805
Ms. Nash .....	1806
Mr. Jean .....	1807
Ms. Savoie .....	1807
Mr. Julian .....	1808
Mr. Jean .....	1809
Ms. Chow .....	1810
Mr. McTeague .....	1810
Mr. Warawa .....	1813
Ms. Chow .....	1813
Mr. Jean .....	1814
Mr. Cannon .....	1814
Ms. Sgro .....	1816
Mr. Laframboise .....	1816
Ms. Chow .....	1817
Ms. Sgro .....	1817
Mr. Fast .....	1819
Mr. Boshcoff .....	1820
Mr. Chong .....	1821
Mr. Wilfert .....	1821
Mr. Fast .....	1823

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Canadian Forces

Mr. Kramp .....	1823
-----------------	------

### Violence against Women

Mrs. Kadis .....	1823
------------------	------

### Manufacturing and Forestry Industries

Mr. Lévesque .....	1824
--------------------	------

### Manufacturing and Forestry Industries

Mr. Godin .....	1824
-----------------	------

### British Columbia Dragoons

Mr. Cannan .....	1824
------------------	------

### Juvenile Diabetes

Mr. Patry .....	1824
-----------------	------

### National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Mrs. Boucher .....	1825
--------------------	------

### Media Fundraising Drive

Ms. Gagnon .....	1825
------------------	------

### Halifax Explosion

Mr. Doyle .....	1825
-----------------	------

### Asbestos

Mr. St. Amand .....	1825
---------------------	------

### Bloc Québécois

Mr. Blaney .....	1825
------------------	------

<b>Violence against Women</b>	
Ms. Black .....	1826
<b>Mike Gardener</b>	
Ms. Karetak-Lindell .....	1826
<b>Violence against Women</b>	
Ms. Deschamps .....	1826
<b>AbitibiBowater</b>	
Mr. D'Amours .....	1826
<b>Liberal Party Leader</b>	
Mr. Poilievre .....	1826
<b>National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women</b>	
Mr. Dion .....	1827
Mr. Harper .....	1827

### ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>The Environment</b>	
Mr. Dion .....	1827
Mr. Harper .....	1827
Mr. Dion .....	1827
Mr. Harper .....	1827
Mr. Ignatieff .....	1827
Mr. Harper .....	1827
Mr. Ignatieff .....	1828
Mr. Baird .....	1828
Mr. Duceppe .....	1828
Mr. Harper .....	1828
Mr. Duceppe .....	1828
Mr. Harper .....	1828
Mr. Paquette .....	1828
Mr. Baird .....	1828
Mr. Paquette .....	1828
Mr. Harper .....	1828
Mr. Layton .....	1828
Mr. Harper .....	1829
Mr. Layton .....	1829
Mr. Harper .....	1829
<b>Gun Registry</b>	
Ms. Robillard .....	1829
Mr. Day .....	1829
Ms. Robillard .....	1829
Mr. Day .....	1829
<b>Justice</b>	
Mrs. Barnes .....	1829
Mr. Nicholson .....	1829
Mrs. Barnes .....	1830
Mr. Nicholson .....	1830
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Mr. Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin) .....	1830
Mr. Day .....	1830
Mr. Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin) .....	1830
Mr. Day .....	1830
<b>Polls</b>	
Mr. Guimond .....	1830

Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam) ..	1830
Mr. Guimond .....	1830
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam) ..	1830
<b>Prime Minister</b>	
Mr. Coderre .....	1830
Mr. Harper .....	1831
Mr. Coderre .....	1831
Mr. Harper .....	1831
<b>Wireless Industry</b>	
Mr. Brison .....	1831
Mr. Prentice .....	1831
Mr. Dion .....	1831
Mr. Prentice .....	1831
<b>Democratic Reform</b>	
Mr. Harvey .....	1831
Mr. Van Loan .....	1831
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Ms. Priddy .....	1831
Mr. Day .....	1831
Ms. Priddy .....	1831
Mr. Day .....	1832
<b>Airbus</b>	
Mr. Thibault (West Nova) .....	1832
Mr. Nicholson .....	1832
Mr. Thibault (West Nova) .....	1832
Mr. Nicholson .....	1832
<b>Health</b>	
Ms. Fry .....	1832
Mr. Clement .....	1832
Ms. Fry .....	1832
Mr. Clement .....	1832
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Mrs. Freeman .....	1832
Ms. Guergis .....	1833
Mrs. Freeman .....	1833
Ms. Guergis .....	1833
<b>Violence Against Women</b>	
Mr. Wrzesnewskyj .....	1833
Mr. Nicholson .....	1833
<b>Public Works and Government Services</b>	
Mr. Allen .....	1833
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam) ..	1833
<b>LNG Terminals</b>	
Mr. Bevington .....	1833
Mr. Cannon .....	1833
<b>Energy</b>	
Mr. Bevington .....	1834
Mr. Lunn .....	1834
<b>Citizenship and Immigration</b>	
Mr. Malhi .....	1834
Ms. Finley .....	1834
<b>Aboriginal Affairs</b>	
Mr. Albrecht .....	1834

Mr. Strahl .....	1834
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) .....	1834
Ms. Guergis .....	1834
<b>Business of the House</b>	
Mr. Goodale .....	1834
Mr. Van Loan .....	1834

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Business of Supply

<b>Opposition Motion—Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline</b>	
Motion .....	1835
Mrs. Kadis .....	1835
Mr. Paquette .....	1836
Mr. Laframboise .....	1838
Mr. Jean .....	1839
Mr. Stoffer .....	1840
Mr. Jean .....	1840
Mr. Laframboise .....	1842
Mr. Stoffer .....	1843
Mr. Lee .....	1844
Mr. Abbott .....	1844
Ms. Fry .....	1844
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) .....	1846
Mr. Fast .....	1846
Mr. Stoffer .....	1846
Mr. Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe) .....	1846
Mr. Jean .....	1848
Mr. D'Amours .....	1849
Ms. Savoie .....	1849
Mr. Jean .....	1850
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) .....	1851
Mr. Stoffer .....	1851
Mr. Jean .....	1852
Mr. Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe) .....	1853
Mrs. Gallant .....	1853
(Motion agreed to) .....	1854
<b>2007-2008 Supplementary Estimates (A)</b>	
Mr. Toews .....	1854
Motion for concurrence .....	1854
Motion agreed to .....	1855
Mr. Toews .....	1855
Bill C-35. First reading .....	1855
(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time) .....	1855

Second Reading .....	1855
Motion agreed to .....	1855
(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Bill Blaikie in the Chair) .....	1855
Article 2 .....	1855
Mr. Silva .....	1855
Mr. Toews .....	1855
(Clause 2 agreed to) .....	1855
(Clause 3 agreed to) .....	1855
(Clause 4 agreed to) .....	1855
(Clause 5 agreed to) .....	1855
(Clause 6 agreed to) .....	1855
(Clause 7 agreed to) .....	1855
(Schedule 1 agreed to) .....	1855
(Schedule 2 agreed to) .....	1855
(Clause 1 agreed to) .....	1855
(Preamble agreed to) .....	1856
(Title agreed to) .....	1856
(Bill agreed to) .....	1856
(Bill reported) .....	1856
Motion for concurrence .....	1856
(Motion agreed to) .....	1856
Third reading .....	1856
Motion agreed to .....	1857

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Special Import Measures Act

Bill C-411. Second reading .....	1857
Mr. Bains .....	1857
Mr. Marston .....	1858
Mr. Vincent .....	1859
Mrs. Gallant .....	1861
Mrs. Grewal .....	1862
Ms. Bourgeois .....	1863
Division on motion deferred .....	1864

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

<b>Justice</b>	
Mr. Cotler .....	1864
Mr. Moore (Fundy Royal) .....	1865
<b>Maher Arar</b>	
Mr. Casey .....	1866
Mr. Komarnicki .....	1866

**MAIL  POSTE**

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

**Lettermail**

**Poste-lettre**

**1782711  
Ottawa**

*If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:*  
Publishing and Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,  
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*  
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

**Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons**

**Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes**

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:  
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :**  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

---

**The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.**

**Additional copies may be obtained from Publishing and Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5  
Telephone: (613) 941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943  
Fax: (613) 954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757  
[publications@pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:publications@pwgsc.gc.ca)  
<http://publications.gc.ca>**

**Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.**

**On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires ou la version française de cette publication en écrivant à : Les Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5  
Téléphone : (613) 941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943  
Télécopieur : (613) 954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757  
[publications@tpsgc.gc.ca](mailto:publications@tpsgc.gc.ca)  
<http://publications.gc.ca>**