



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, December 12, 2007**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 12, 2007

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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● (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Cambridge.

*[Members sang the national anthem]*

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CP Rail's plans to build a bargain basement rail yard will bring dangerous road blockages, more noise, air pollution and an increased risk of environmental damage to the sensitive Nith River in my riding.

CP's flat out refusal to live up to its corporate and social responsibilities to mitigate any possible dangers to residents and the environment has residents concerned, and with good reason.

After meeting with senior representatives from CP, it is clear that the situation has not changed, as CP representatives simply regurgitate the same corporate line: we are within the law and that is the only place we have to be.

One would think CP would choose voluntarily to adopt a higher threshold of corporate responsibility, as so many other good corporations have done in Canada.

I encourage all members to hold CP accountable to a higher standard than it is willing to hold itself. Being railroaded in Canada continues and it will come to a town near you soon.

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### CELTIC COLOURS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Cape Breton has once again been recognized for its national award-winning entertainment. The Celtic Colours International Festival took home a great honour from the Tourism Industry Association of Canada.

The Celtic Colours International Festival was named the event of the year at a gala during Canada's leadership summit in Victoria, B. C. Held each fall throughout Cape Breton, the nine day festival of Celtic music and the beautiful fall colours attract over 7,000 visitors to Cape Breton each year.

The awards for tourism excellence, presented by *The Globe and Mail*, were developed in 2003 by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, which is a private sector advocate for Canada's \$67 billion tourist industry.

Celtic Colours is a leader in tourism excellence and a shining example of what Cape Breton Island has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, if you have not been to Celtic Colours, I encourage you, along with all the members of the House, to partake in Canada's Celtic heritage.

Again, the member for Cape Breton—Canso and I offer our congratulations to the performers and volunteers of Celtic Colours on winning this prestigious award.

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[Translation]

### O'CONNOR REPORT

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a year ago, the Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar released its second report, entitled, "A New Review Mechanism for the RCMP's National Security Activities".

Commissioner Dennis O'Connor came up with a series of recommendations for a new approach to reviewing the RCMP's national security activities. One year later, no significant progress has been made in implementing these important recommendations or developing an action plan for improving the review of national security activities.

The Conservative government is clearly lacking leadership in this area, as in many others, especially when we see how reckless it is about ensuring that the most basic rights are respected. We should be doing everything in our power to avoid another Arar affair, but the Conservatives are sitting around doing nothing about these fundamental issues.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**WOMEN AT RISK**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP, I express our deep sympathy to and support for the families, friends and communities of Vancouver's missing women. They have suffered terrible losses and a long, arduous trial.

Many troubling issues remain. Why did so many women go missing? Why are sex workers in particular at such great risk? Why are these women disproportionately aboriginal?

The verdict for these women must compel us to act, to seek answers and to make changes that will minimize the risk and harm that sex workers face.

In memory of all the women who have gone missing across Canada, we demand action from the government to repeal harmful laws, improve police training, and ensure basic human rights are met, such as affordable housing, a living wage, social supports, and an end to poverty and violence.

We call for a public inquiry into the policing issues surrounding the missing women. No person in our society should experience the danger and harm that these women faced.

Changes must be made at every level so that the women who are at risk today will not be at risk tomorrow.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the House will be rising soon and members of Parliament will be heading back to our ridings and families. I think it is time to reflect on the accomplishments of the House over the past few months.

We started the new session with a Speech from the Throne that set a new long term direction for the government.

Together we passed an economic update that gives billions back to Canadians and reduces our debt by historic margins.

We also brought in the tackling violent crime act, a tough new bill that will make streets safer for our children.

We brought in a series of amendments to the Canada Elections Act to expand voter opportunities.

We have tabled legislation that would see senators elected and therefore more accountable to Canadians.

No doubt there is still much more to be done, but for the next few weeks, I think all of us, members of Parliament and senators, should be proud of the job we have done in our respective Houses.

For all of my colleagues, to you, Mr. Speaker, and for all of our staff and all of our constituents, merry Christmas, happy holidays, and a safe, prosperous and happy new year.

**YOUTH IN PHILANTHROPY**

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 15 two special young people received a very prestigious award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals, when the Greater Toronto Area Chapter held its 2007 National Philanthropy Day Awards luncheon, witnessed by 1,300 people.

Sophia and Sanjay Sugumar were awarded the Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy award for their voluntary donation of \$2,033.05 to the Rouge Valley Centenary Hospital, where they were born. In October 2006, the brother and sister donated all of their piggy bank contents in an effort to give back to the community. They went on to raise another \$10,000 in a walkathon.

The dollar value of a philanthropic donation is not the criteria for recognition. What matters are the motivation, passion, discipline and commitment of the donor, which need to be celebrated.

Sanjay and Sofia say they have a simple recipe for fundraising success: hard work, determination, dedication, and a passion for the cause.

These young people can inspire people of all ages to volunteer, raise money for worthy causes and give back to their communities. Their dedication and hard work is to be commended.

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**GOLDEN JUBILEE**

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, Ismaili Muslims in Canada and around the world will congregate in prayer, feast and dance. They will be celebrating the birthday of their current imam, His Highness the Aga Khan.

This year is even more special as the community is celebrating the golden jubilee, which is 50 years of service of the Aga Khan to his community and the world. Our Conservative government is proud to join the worldwide Ismaili community in marking this celebration.

Earlier this week, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity sent out a video greeting to the Ismaili community, a first, I believe, for a government minister.

In addition, our government is proud to be supporting the Global Centre for Pluralism, which will draw on a wellspring of Canada's experience. This initiative builds on the pioneering work of previous Conservative governments, culminating in the passage of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988.

Today I know I speak for all of my colleagues on the Conservative benches in wishing the worldwide Ismaili community Salgirah and Khushiali Mubarak.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**LAURENT MCCUTCHEON**

**Mr. Raymond Gravel (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Laurent McCutcheon, president of Gai Écoute and the Fondation Émergence, who has been rewarded for his achievements and his tremendous contribution to improving the lives of homosexuals. Mr. McCutcheon was awarded the 2007 rights and freedoms prize. This prestigious prize is awarded annually by Quebec's human rights and youth rights commission to a person, group or organization having demonstrated outstanding dedication in the field of human rights and freedoms.

This award highlights Laurent McCutcheon's 25 years of dedication to Gai Écoute. He understands the challenges related to homosexuality and has fought many a battle. His dedication and leadership have long been recognized by Quebec's gay and lesbian community and by Quebec society.

My Bloc Québécois colleagues and I would like to congratulate Mr. McCutcheon on receiving the rights and freedoms prize. Keep up the good work, Mr. McCutcheon.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy of the Bloc Québécois knows no borders. The Bloc does not want China, India and the United States, although they are the world's largest emitters, to have greenhouse gas emissions targets.

As Quebec's environment minister said: "we believe that mandatory targets must be imposed upon everyone, and that is, yes, countries must participate in the fight against climate change, including the United States and emerging economies like China and India".

The Bloc knows that we deliver on everything we say. We committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020 and by 60 to 70% by 2050. Once again, while the opposition prefers to complain and live in the past, we are putting our words into actions by showing leadership in order to protect our environment.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere wishes for a happy holiday season to everyone.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**ANTOINE HAKIM**

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Dr. Antoine Hakim, a distinguished member of the faculty of the University of Ottawa, on being invested into the Order of Canada on October 26, 2007. Professor Hakim is recognized for his tireless work to increase public and scientific awareness of cerebrovascular disease. He is an internationally respected scientist whose research has influenced treatment strategies for stroke victims in Canada and around the world.

He has also received the highest distinction from the American Stroke Association for his work. In addition to conducting research, Dr. Hakim has been the catalyst for the development of the Canadian

Stroke Network, the Heart and Stroke Foundation Centre for Stroke Recovery and the Ottawa Stroke Consortium for Applied Research.

On behalf of the residents of Ottawa—Vanier, where Dr. Hakim lives, and on behalf of my colleagues, I thank and congratulate Dr. Hakim for his unstinting and dedicated work.

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[English]

**FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT**

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the one year anniversary of the Federal Accountability Act, the toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history.

Following years of Liberal theft and corruption, the act expands access to information to 20 additional organizations, outlaws big money and corporate cash from politics, and bans ministers and their staff from lobbying for five years.

Liberals want us to believe that all politicians are just as corrupt as they are, so they howl about an appointment for Terry Kilrea that was never made, or about election financing practices that they themselves have used for decades, or, worst of all, they dredge up supposed events that happened five prime ministers ago when I was only 13 years old, attending a grade nine dance, listening to *Achy Breaky Heart* which topped the charts at that time.

2008 is coming and Canadians can celebrate that accountability is now the law.

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**HOMELESSNESS**

**Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with a high today of four degrees, a low of minus one and a chance of rain turning to snow tonight, it is normal weather for the Comox Valley this time of year. It is winter after all, no worries unless one is homeless.

If people are homeless in the Comox Valley, they are making do the same as the homeless elsewhere. If there is room in the local 17-bed shelter, people may be using one of three shelter nights allowed per month. They may be couch surfing, sleeping in the car or sleeping in a tent provided by the Salvation Army.

Affordable housing is scarce and the competition for what does exist is fierce.

There are over 10,500 homeless people in B.C. today, according to a recent survey of 60 B.C. cities by the B.C. NDP homelessness critic, proving that homelessness is not just a bit city problem.

A 0.5% vacancy rate in Courtenay means that people spend far too much of their income on rent for unsafe and unhealthy living conditions and many are left out in the cold, literally.

*Statements by Members*

When will the government recognize the housing crisis in this country and adopt a national housing strategy and show it values all its citizens enough to ensure that they can live in dignity and be nurtured in the emotional and physical safety provided by a home?

\* \* \*

**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, religious freedom is under attack in many countries around the world.

Countless Iraqi Christians have been driven out of their country and many of these refugees have been approved for sponsorship to Canada.

The minister refuses to meet with their Canadian sponsors or offer any assistance. The member for Etobicoke North and I have tried countless times to secure a meeting with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration or her officials to work toward a solution. We have been stonewalled every time.

I call upon the minister to go and see for herself the suffering of Iraqi Christians who have had to flee to Jordan and Syria.

Local families and community groups are ready and able to sponsor these true refugees but, sadly, many of these applications are stalled as the minority Conservative government is turning its back on these very individuals.

The rest of the world is helping and Canada just watches.

I have raised this issue in the House before and I will continue to raise it until the government commits to helping the victims of religious persecution in Iraq and around the world.

What does this minister have against Christians?

\* \* \*

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

**BILL C-411**

**Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today members will vote on Bill C-411 on anti-dumping, at second reading. The Bloc Québécois is seeking the support of all members in order to help the Quebec manufacturing sector.

This bill will give the Canada Border Services Agency the tools needed to determine whether or not emerging countries are dumping goods. It provides for anti-dumping measures similar to those adopted by the European Union and the United States. I hope that this bill will pass the second reading stage and be sent to the Standing Committee on International Trade.

Our businesses will no longer be required to submit to incomplete investigations that do not protect them from dumping. Time is of the essence: 84,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Quebec since the Conservatives came to power. Passage of Bill C-411 is the opportunity to breathe new life into Quebec industries.

[*English*]

**PORK INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, leadership is about acting with solutions in times of crisis, but the government is failing dismally to show leadership to the Canadian hog industry in its time of need.

Past governments have acted with action and resolve in times of commodity crises and yet the present government sits on surpluses and dances away from solid solutions proposed by Canada's pork industry.

Canada's hog producers are in serious trouble. Families are suffering, communities are jeopardized and we are losing an industry.

Every day efficient producers exit, gone forever, financially ruined. For what? For having provided food to Canadians and meeting Canada's export needs. Canada's hog industry has lived up to its responsibility. It is time the government lived up to its responsibility.

Every day counts. I call upon the government to act with financial assistance and long term security for Canada's hog producers, now, immediately, forthwith.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to hypocrisy on climate change, the Liberal Party cannot be beat.

In recognition of its complete failure over 13 years to fight climate change, we continue awarding a special Liberal with the hypocrite of the day award during the course of the current United Nations conference on climate change.

Wait for it. Today's winner is none other than that Liberal leader himself who said, "I never, never will speak against my government when I am with international personalities".

The Liberal leader even went on further and said that to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality, "the Canadian government must first negotiate with its American neighbour".

When it comes to the environment, it is clear that the Liberal leader flips and flops. After four failed climate change plans and a lot of talk, the Liberal leader allowed greenhouse gases to skyrocket.

When it comes to fighting climate change on the world stage, only one party is serious about getting things down, and that is the Conservative Party of Canada.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***CHALK RIVER NUCLEAR FACILITIES**

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last night, the House had to clean up the government's mess and pull us back from a medical catastrophe. However, Parliament should never have had to deal with this situation in the first place.

Government negligence, pure and simple, landed us in this mess. We have a 50 year old facility in Chalk River, no functioning backup reactor and no guarantee that we will not run out of medical isotopes again.

When will the government get our nuclear house in order?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member, I hope, knows, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission are both agencies completely independent of the government. I think it is ridiculous that the government can only resolve an escalating dispute between those two agencies by actually coming to Parliament and passing a law.

However, this is an interesting question coming from a leader and a party that, as late as yesterday afternoon, was saying that the government should simply sit back and let Ms. Keen and the commission resolve this in their own good time.

• (1425)

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister well knows that this side of the House did its duty last night.

*[Translation]*

Since the Chalk River reactor will now be restarted, can the Minister of Health guarantee that Canadian patients will be the first to benefit from the isotopes produced, before the international markets are supplied?

*[English]*

Would the minister guarantee that worried Canadians will not be waiting in line for isotopes while other foreign contracts for AECL are fulfilled?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said last night, each hospital and each clinic has a contract that is sometimes with Nordion, AECL or with another supplier. Those contracts would be honoured.

At this time in the House, I want to give our thanks to the medical oncologists and the nuclear medicine specialists who have worked day and night across this country to ensure this particular situation did not create a medical crisis. I think they deserve all of our applause for doing so.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for 17 months, the Chalk River facilities were being run in violation of the licence. The backup reactor does not work. The operator let Canadians down; this government let Canadians down.

Since the minister failed to do his job, will the government immediately ask the Auditor General to conduct an inquiry?

*[English]*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government is ensuring this situation gets resolved. We have been working intensively with Atomic Energy of Canada and with others over the past several days to ensure this gets resolved. I can certainly assure the House that when this is all behind us, the government will carefully examine the role of all actors in this incident and ensure that accountability is appropriately restored.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last night, the House of Commons reluctantly passed an unprecedented law to cover for the incompetence of the Conservative government.

The situation in Chalk River turned into a crisis after a year and a half of inaction. The government should have been aware of the potential impact by the nuclear reactor shutdown by AECL.

I hope the minister responds to this question with sincerity and transparency. What concrete measures is the government taking to hold AECL accountable to Canadians and to parliamentarians?

**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said before in this House, our first and foremost priority was the resumption of the production of medical isotopes and the first steps were taken last night. Immediately upon learning of the situation, we took extraordinary measures.

As the Prime Minister has just stated, we will ensure on this side of the House that there is full accountability for all the players involved in this.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the minister did not answer the question. I do not know what the problem is. Is it that he did not know of the problem or that he knew and did nothing? I wonder which is worse.

In the last annual report, AECL did not report that it might have a problem with its licence. This is completely unacceptable.

I wonder if the minister will heed our call and ask for the Auditor General to conduct a special audit so that AECL is accountable to Canadians and parliamentarians?

**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has already stated, and the members can count on it, there will be a full accountability by all people involved in this.

I remind the member that we have also launched a review of AECL. We did that some weeks ago. Again, we will look at the results of that. We will get all the advice, all the correct information before us and then we will take concrete action.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when they were in the opposition, the Conservatives criticized the Liberals' plan to fight climate change, calling it too stringent. Now that they are in power, they are blaming the Liberals for not doing anything about climate change. And on the world stage they are sabotaging the post-Kyoto agreement.

Canada's hypocrisy has reached new heights in Bali. Is this not a true reflection of this Conservative government?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, this government has proposed a Canadian model of success for the next protocol to ensure an effective international protocol, namely the Montreal protocol. This government wants a mandatory international target and targets for all the major international emitters. That is the clear position of this government.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the clear position of this government is that it is not indicating a reference year. The reason is quite simple: it wants to have 2006 as the reference year because that would suit its friends in the oil companies. However, if it took 1990 as the reference year, then the aluminum plants and the manufacturing industry in Quebec, which have already reduced their greenhouse gas emissions, would benefit.

Is this not a true picture of this government, which has more or less sold itself to the oil companies?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in one question the Bloc is asking for stricter targets and in another question it is asking for less stringent targets for certain industries.

The reason we chose 2006 is that we can control future emissions. We cannot control past emissions.

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Montreal Exchange, which has expertise in derivatives, is ready to launch a carbon exchange. For this exchange to succeed, the federal government must adjust its regulatory framework immediately to recognize the past efforts of companies in Quebec and require polluters such as the oil companies to make absolute reductions.

Will the Prime Minister recognize that he is responsible for establishing that framework by selecting 1990 as the reference year instead of 2006, as is the case in his tailor-made plan for the oil companies?

[English]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member has asked that before and the answer is the same. The carbon market is part of our regulatory framework and the market will decide where that will happen. Whether it is Montreal or Toronto or Winnipeg, the market will decide.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, setting the economy against the environment, as the Conservatives are doing, is totally outdated. The Conservatives need to understand that the

Kyoto targets are business opportunities that could improve the economy and the environment at the same time.

Does the Prime Minister realize that he must abandon his polluter-paid approach, set emissions caps and set 1990 as the reference year so that the carbon exchange in Montreal can really get off the ground?

[English]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member is well aware that after 13 long years of Liberal government, emissions rose. In 2006 this government took over. We now have a plan, a U-turn on emissions. We are getting it done after the previous government was a total failure.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on the 10th anniversary of Kyoto yesterday, what was our government doing in Bali? It was pointing fingers at other countries, meanwhile hoping that nobody would notice what was going on right here at home with its friends in the tar sands.

The fact is the tar sands, when they are fully developed, are going to become the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the world, and this government is supervising and even aiding the rapid development of that whole project. This is going to undermine an area of the boreal forest equal in size to Florida, contaminating water courses, marshes, name it. It is going to produce three to five times as much pollution as standard and conventional oil production would produce.

My question is for the Prime Minister. When is he going to start reining in these big polluters?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all I can say is the government's emissions reductions targets apply across the country. They apply to all industries. They apply to the petroleum industry. They apply to the tar sands. In fact, the reductions required of the biggest emitters will be the biggest reductions.

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**CHALK RIVER NUCLEAR FACILITIES**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, frankly, we know that is simply not the case. These emissions from the tar sands are going to become the largest in the world. They are a cause for shameful behaviour by the government and reaction all around the world.

Yesterday we passed a law on the issue of medical isotopes. It needed to be done. Canadians are now focusing in on the issue of nuclear safety.

My question for the Prime Minister is this. In light of what has gone on, will he abandon his foolish suggestion, or his government's foolish suggestion, to privatize Atomic Energy Canada Limited and will he now agree that we have to raise the liability legislation so as to protect Canadians from any accidents?



*Oral Questions*

● (1435)

**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has launched a review of AECL. We will look forward to the information coming back from experts. We want the very best information available and only then will we make a decision. However, the member can rest assured that we will make a decision in the best interests of the country.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in this holiday season Conservative re-gifting just keeps on coming.

Yesterday, Conservatives re-announced \$7.5 million in Liberal funding for adaptation. Today, wait for it, the minister said that Canada's 700 largest polluters had better watch out or else they would be in trouble if they did not do what they had already done for four years. That is right, Canada's largest emitters have been required to report their emissions since 2004.

My question is for the Prime Minister. What is going on here? What kind of games is his minister playing? Who does he think he is fooling and when is this nonsense going to stop?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid these kinds of nonsensical questions will only stop when the House ceases sitting. What I can promise the hon. member is this. When the previous government raised greenhouse gas emissions by 35%, that is not an announcement this government intends to re-gift.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what this is—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Ottawa South has the floor now. We will have some order.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Mr. Speaker, what this is really all about is a minister who has been sent to Bali with a plan that nobody believes and nobody buys. He is a drowning man who has resorted to inventing headlines.

The government has wasted two years. The day it took office it had all the information and all the powers necessary to regulate Canada's largest emitters.

Instead of throwing a temper tantrum today in Bali and walking out on Canadian delegates because he cannot defend his climate change plan, why does he not just come home and spare this country from any further international embarrassment?

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the gift that kept giving and giving. Canada did not want the Liberals to keep giving and giving more in greenhouse gas emissions factors. It was the deputy leader who asked, "Why didn't we get it done?"

The deputy leader also said:

I accept the point just so it's clear... the next... Kyoto phase has got to have mandatory emission controls for all [major emitters] otherwise the agreement's not going to work.

I thank him for his endorsement.

**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday the OPP confirmed it would be forwarding its—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I know members love to hear questions from the hon. member for Ajax—Pickering, but they will not be able to hear it if we have this much noise. We have to have some quiet.

The hon. member for Ajax—Pickering has the floor. We will have some order.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, on Monday the OPP confirmed it would be forwarding its O'Brien bribery files to the RCMP, files that tie that government to the scandal. This was confirmed in two taped conversations with reporters by Superintendent Dave Truax, the director of the police anti-rackets unit. Less than 24 hours later, without explanation, in an unprecedented action, that senior officer had been overturned.

What happened in those 24 hours? Why did the government House leader just happen to have an advance copy of the release in his hand and read it on an unrelated question?

● (1440)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Ajax—Pickering is taking his role as Nancy Drew in the House very seriously. Every player in this saga has indicated that the Minister of the Environment had no involvement whatsoever. The OPP has publicly cleared the Minister of the Environment, yet he persists in repeatedly making these accusations.

He should follow the lead of his whip. He should acknowledge his questions have been misplaced. He should show one iota of class and graciously apologize to the minister.

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister misrepresents the facts. I would ask the minister to listen carefully and answer honestly. I am talking about OPP evidence, evidence that links the Minister of the Environment and other top Conservatives to a federal bribe, evidence that the director of police anti-rackets unit wanted to share with the RCMP, but was muzzled.

My question is clear. Did any members of the government have any communication with the RCMP or the OPP in the 24 hours prior to yesterday's flip-flop, yes or no?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us take this opportunity to examine the actions of the member for Ajax—Pickering. He repeatedly accuses the Minister of the Environment of a criminal act. The police cleared the minister of that criminal act completely and absolutely.

Does the member for Ajax—Pickering apologize? No. He turns around and then suggests that the police have been involved in a criminal cover-up.

It is an embarrassment to Parliament. He is not a rat pack; he is just a sad hack.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for two days, participants in the forestry summit taking place in Quebec City have been looking for solutions to help the forestry industry, which is going through an unprecedented crisis. During the prebudget tour I just did in all the regions of Quebec, all the stakeholders in Shawinigan, Gatineau, Cabano and Saguenay told us that the \$1 billion the Bloc Québécois is suggesting that the government invest in forestry is absolutely necessary and is one of those solutions.

Does the Minister of Finance, who has the resources, plan to take advantage of his meeting with his counterparts today to announce that he will commit the \$1 billion needed to help the forestry sector, which is in dire need?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure members opposite know the investment is well over \$1 billion. It is \$1.3 billion in accelerated capital cost allowance, which was announced in the budget in March. In addition, about \$12 billion for Quebec industry was announced on October 30 in long term business tax reductions that are permanent for manufacturers in Canada.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, this is not working. In no way has this money produced the expected results.

Following on the heels of the unions and the forest producers' associations, the Union des municipalités du Québec is saying the government must help the forestry sector. Everyone is saying that it is irresponsible to use the entire surplus to pay down the debt. If the minister is short of ideas, I invite him to adopt the Bloc Québécois' proposals to help the forestry sector, such as the refundable tax credit for research and development and loan guarantees for machinery purchases.

Will he do so? Will he shoulder his responsibilities and give a chance to the forestry sector, which truly deserves one?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to listening to my colleagues from the provinces and the territories later today when we meet about what ideas they may have.

However, for the member opposite, in terms of a surplus, yes, we have an operating surplus, but we have a public debt in Canada, built up in the seventies, eighties and nineties, of well in excess of \$400 billion. It is like saying, "I have a big mortgage on the house, but I got a raise at work and therefore I shouldn't be paying down the mortgage".

This is just an operating surplus. We have a large public debt and we are committed to paying it down.

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are hiding behind the Constitution to avoid acknowledging the primacy of the French language in the Canada Labour Code even though a legal scholar, Henri Brun, has stated that the constitutional element is not a problem. The Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages says that the government respects Quebec's areas of jurisdiction, but that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about the Canada Labour Code, which falls under federal jurisdiction and is her government's responsibility.

Speaking of responsibility, will the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages accept her responsibilities? Why is her government opposed to the fact that the Canada Labour Code recognizes the right of workers to work in French everywhere in Quebec?

• (1445)

**Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois have raised this issue many times here in the House, and many times, we have pointed out that our government will shoulder its responsibilities, which means that it will promote our two official languages at the federal level. I invite the Bloc to heed Mr. Landry's sage advice. The former Parti Québécois premier of Quebec asked the troops to cease provoking pointless confrontations.

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, statistics indicate that the French language is losing ground in Canada and even in Quebec. Even so, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages and her government are opposing the Bloc Québécois' bill, as we saw at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. More outrageous still is the fact that this minister, a Quebecker, who is also responsible for Quebec City's 400th anniversary celebrations, is saying that protecting the French language is a pointless confrontation.

Does the minister think that protecting the French language is pointless?

**Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has made a firm commitment to promoting both of our country's official languages, including French. The Bloc could have supported us when we announced consultations. We made a firm commitment to developing the next phase of the action plan for official languages. I invite the members of the Bloc to work with us on that.

## GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one might think that the government would want the RCMP to examine this issue, since it says it has nothing to hide. On Monday, Superintendent Truax confirmed that the OPP would hand over its files to the RCMP and said that his representatives would meet with RCMP officials this week to discuss the matter. This reversal is absolutely shocking.

Has the Prime Minister read the OPP files? Can he tell us what pieces of evidence concerning his friends are clearly false?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the statement from the Ontario Provincial Police could not be more clear. It was as follows: “Our investigation has not caused us to believe any further investigation should be conducted.”

The minister has been completely and absolutely clear. In a circumstance like this, one would hope that the Liberal Party would realize the error of its ways and apologize.

The following are members who have been complicit in dragging this smear on for months and they should apologize: the members for Ajax—Pickering, Hull—Aylmer, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Mississauga—Erindale, Halifax West, Vancouver Centre, York West, Beauséjour, and Saint Boniface.

They should all apologize to this House and they should be—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no guarantee that we will have any apologies and we have no intention of issuing any apologies.

We are simply raising questions about the OPP evidence. This evidence suggests that John Reynolds, the Minister of the Environment and other Conservatives played a role in a criminal offence involving a bribe in the form of a federal appointment.

Can the government confirm that it has conducted its own internal investigation of the matter? Will it make its findings public, yes or no?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will read again the statement from the superintendent of the Ontario Provincial Police, not an agency of the federal government. The statement is clear and it states: “Unless they were advised by us that wrongdoing on the part of a federal official was found and reported by us, no further action would be taken. Our investigation has not caused us to believe any further investigation should be conducted”.

The OPP has cleared the minister entirely and completely. Opposition members should apologize to the minister and to this House, and if they wish to persist in these smears, in the context of being cleared by the police, they should do it outside and face the consequences.

## Oral Questions

### ETHICS

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the ethics committee, Karlheinz Schreiber testified that he had numerous meetings and discussions with Brian Mulroney and his ministers concerning the Bear Head project, including at 24 Sussex, Harrington Lake and the Prime Minister's Office.

Has the government provided all its documents on the Mulroney government's Bear Head project to Dr. Johnston, so that he is able to set proper terms of reference for the public inquiry?

• (1450)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a process in place that is now at the ethics committee. In addition, the government took very quick action when allegations were made in an affidavit. We have tasked Professor Johnston with setting the terms of a public inquiry.

[Translation]

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister received all the details concerning Brian Mulroney's involvement in the Bear Head affair months ago, but we are told that no one read those letters. This excuse is almost as unbelievable as that of the Minister of National Defence, who said that all the letters he received from Mr. Schreiber were shredded before they were read. It is a little like receiving cash, so no one can find out.

Will the Prime Minister intervene and stop the shredders?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is incredible, the questions that come from the Liberal Party of Canada today. We have tasked Professor Johnston to fairly set the parameters for a public inquiry and we should let Professor Johnston do his work.

\* \* \*

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has introduced the toughest plan in Canadian history to reduce greenhouse gases and protect our environment. Under the previous Liberal government, greenhouse gases skyrocketed.

We are acting. For the first time ever, Canadian industry will be forced to reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution.

I have a question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment. Can he tell us what action our government is taking to turn the corner on the disastrous environmental record of the previous Liberal government?

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with our government's turning the corner plan, Canada is taking real action on climate change.

### Oral Questions

This morning the Minister of the Environment put industries in Canada on notice that they will have to submit their air emissions information within the next six months.

We have one of the toughest targets in the world and we are going to enforce those targets. The previous Liberal government talked about protecting the environment and did absolutely nothing.

This is the government that is getting it done on the environment.

\* \* \*

#### FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to cleaning up Canadian politics, the government did not get the job done.

It has been exactly 12 months since the Federal Accountability Act passed. There is still no public appointments commission to put an end to patronage. There is still no parliamentary budget officer to end the budget fraud engaged in by the government. There is still no lobbyist registration act to tie a bell around the necks of lobbyists and the government broke its promise completely on reforming the Access to Information Act.

When it comes to transparency, why does it not come clean with the Canadian people and admit it did not get the job done?

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP has its facts wrong again. The Federal Accountability Act is the toughest anti-corruption legislation in Canadian history.

We have created ironclad protection for whistleblowers with the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act. For the first time ever, secret donations to political candidates have been banned.

We have strengthened the power of the Ethics Commissioner by creating a new agent of Parliament and bringing into force a new Conflict of Interest Act. We will be announcing new Lobbying Act regulations in a few short weeks. We have a five-year ban on public office holders from lobbying.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on the first anniversary of the Federal Accountability Act, we have backwoods Tories lining up at the trough for their piece of the public action. The reason why is because the PM has kiboshed a key element of the act which is the public appointments commission.

Now we have had almost a thousand appointments in place and it is beginning to look like a rogues gallery of old style Conservative cronies.

My question is simple. Why is the government engaged in old style, pork-barrel, rum bottle politics that is without any accountability or transparency?

● (1455)

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that member has the audacity and the nerve to stand up in the House to ask why the public appointments commissioner was not in place when it was that member and his party who killed that process. He should be ashamed of what he just said in the House.

#### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, by 2011, 100% of Canada's net labour force growth will come from immigration. The minister in committee said that she requires more funding to fix the system. As a result, the government has broken its election promises on foreign credentials, allowed the application backlog to exceed 800,000, and short-changed Ontario \$100 million in immigration funding.

In an era of surpluses, why does the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration have to make excuses for the government's unwillingness to make immigration a priority?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our record on immigration, especially when we compare it to the one of the previous government. Those members left us with a bloated backlog of 800,000 people. We are working on that. In the meantime, we are delivering what they promised to deliver but did not deliver.

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office is now available in over 320 locations across Canada and three pilot projects around the world, not to mention a great website. We are getting the job done, but those members vote against every effort to do so.

\* \* \*

#### CHALK RIVER NUCLEAR FACILITIES

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government identified a former nuclear power executive at Pickering, Mr. Bob Strickert, as an independent expert who could verify that the research reactor at Chalk River is safe.

Can the government please confirm that Mr. Bob Strickert is the same person who serves as the executive vice-president of the Durham Conservative Party Riding Association?

**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have stated previously, we were very concerned. We went to great lengths to resume the production of medical isotopes. I approached my deputy minister and I advised her that we would like to have independent experts. The deputy minister provided those names.

We were happy that they went through extraordinary efforts last night to attend this Parliament to answer questions from all parties. We should be thanking all the people who came here, not laughing at them.

\* \* \*

#### TOURIST INDUSTRY

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Chinese government announced successful negotiations with the U.S., which means Chinese tourists can officially visit the United States.

One hundred and thirty-four countries are now on China's approved destination list, but strangely, Canada is not. This failure will cost Canadian businesses millions of dollars. The previous Liberal government had reached an agreement in principle with the Chinese government to get this done.

Did the government intentionally ruin our relationship with China, or did it just bungle it?

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is kind of interesting that a member from a party that did not get the job done is all of a sudden so impatient with this process.

He will know very well that these negotiations take time. I can assure him and the House that we are continuing to have dialogue and bilateral talks on this and other issues. These will bear fruit with a little patience and sensibleness on the part of the opposition.

\* \* \*

#### CANADIAN FORCES

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, veterans in the West Island of Montreal, including many from my riding of Lac-Saint-Louis, spent months collecting over 1,700 Christmas packages for members of the Canadian armed forces serving in Afghanistan. These Christmas packages have been ready and waiting since late October.

Earlier this week, these veterans were told a new policy no longer allowed these packages to be sent. Then, after the story appeared in the media, they were told that the packages might be sent some time later, just not in time for Christmas.

What specifically is the government doing to ensure these 1,700 packages reach our troops for Christmas?

• (1500)

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the first things we did was secure C-17 aircraft so we could get a lot of things to the Afghanistan theatre, something that party never did.

I should begin by saying that we greatly appreciate all of these packages that have been made available to Canadian troops in theatre. Naturally, we give priority to family.

I can assure the hon. member, and the rowdy crowd on the other side, that we will endeavour to get these packages to soldiers. We will do everything we can to ensure that they arrive there as soon as possible, and that has been communicated to them, not in a political partisan way.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### PORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the port infrastructure in the fisheries sector has been in a sorry state for a number of years now. Everyone, even the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, acknowledges that it will cost almost \$500 million to rehabilitate the active wharves. The funding currently allocated is ridiculously insufficient.

How much new money will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans seek from his cabinet colleagues to deal with a situation that everyone is describing as catastrophic?

#### Oral Questions

[English]

**Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I think I have told the hon. member, it is getting near Christmas, and I know he believes in Santa Claus. When the fat, jolly fellow comes to put toys in his stocking, I depend on another short, fat, jolly person to put money in my stocking and we will see what happens.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on August 24, 2006, the Quebec government promised to provide \$100 million over 10 years to the Lower North Shore council of mayors to open up the area between Kegaska and Vieux-Fort.

Since then the president of the Corporation de la route de la grande séduction has tried on several occasions to obtain funding from Ottawa for the extension of route 138, a priority project for the region and the Government of Quebec.

Can the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities tell us if the government intends to support the right of Lower North Shore citizens to a road link and to meet their expectations by providing the funding required to provide access to these communities.

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a few months ago I was in Havre-Saint-Pierre and Baie-Comeau and I had the opportunity to meet with Mayor Jones who was pushing for this project.

As you know, the Government of Quebec took a cooperative approach to this matter. It is part of the road network but unfortunately we have not officially received an application.

I indicated to them that the new infrastructure program will provide \$25 million each year to every province and territory. This is new funding. They could apply for that.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House knows that the people who feed us are the Canadian farmers. The pork producers of our country are having an extremely hard time. It is the worst crisis in their history. Bankruptcies and foreclosures are closing down even the most efficient producers and there is real misery raining down on hard-working families.

Will the Prime Minister instruct his Minister of Agriculture to bring forward an emergency federal package, above and beyond existing programs, to assist pork producers as they weather this crisis?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to the last government in power, I have the full support of my Prime Minister as we move forward in addressing agricultural crises in this country.

I have had tremendous discussions with the pork sector and with the provinces. I have another federal-provincial call tomorrow afternoon. I am meeting with the pork producers tomorrow. We have put \$600 million of new federal money only into play that will be delivered to this sector in January.

\* \* \*

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we approach Christmas, the NDP is saying, “Bah, humbug” to Canadians. While it likes to pretend it is the party of Bob Cratchit, the NDP really acts like Ebenezer Scrooge.

Can the Minister of Finance tell Canadians what is being delayed by the NDP's foot dragging on Bill C-28? Why the NDP lump of coal in Canadians' Christmas stockings?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in Bill C-28 there are several very important initiatives for vulnerable Canadians and low income Canadians. One is the working income tax benefit, which can come into force January 1, just a couple of weeks from now, to help Canadians get over the welfare wall, to help them get to work. The other is the registered disability savings plan, which can also come into force January 1, to help some of the most vulnerable people in our society and their financial security in the future.

The NDP is talking the bill out. It is time for action. I encourage them to act in the true Christmas spirit.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Don Bell (North Vancouver, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has been estimated that one in ten Canadians suffer from a rare disorder, yet Canada is the only country in the developed world without an official definition for rare disorders or an orphan drug policy. This complicates patients accessing necessary medications and hinders needed medical and pharmaceutical research for these disorders.

My private member's motion M-426 addresses this problem. Why will the government not rectify the situation and respond to the needs of Canadians with rare disorders?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, this government was the first government to act decisively when it came to the Fabry's disease issue which was of particular concern in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. We found a way to work with our provincial and territorial partners to get increased research dollars and increased supplies and medications for that particular disease.

I am working with the provinces and territories for a broader policy than that. If the Liberal Party wishes to press the Liberal

premiers that exist in this country to work with us, that would be of great help to us.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a unilingual francophone was turned down by Citizenship and Immigration Canada because she could not speak English. When the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages was questioned in committee, she said that it was possible for a unilingual francophone from another country to immigrate to Victoria, even if that person did not speak English. She even said that this was part of her action plan. But this is not what we are seeing with the decisions of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

I am tired of francophones being laughed at. Can the minister explain why unilingual francophones are being turned down by Canada?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this case has just come to my attention and I do not have any of the details yet. I did, however, ask my officials to look into this right away.

I assure you that this government will respect Canada's two official languages.

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it has already been a week. Clearly the minister does not understand what it is like to be a Franco-Columbian. One of my francophone constituents wanted to hire a unilingual woman to take care of her children, but the woman was turned down by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The only reason in her file was that she did not speak English. As a minority francophone, I thought my country was inclusive and welcoming.

Could the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages explain to francophones how they will be able to survive if the government not only shirks its responsibilities, but also prevents us from growing?

[English]

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, this case has just come to my attention. I do not have any of the details yet.

I have instructed my officials to look into the matter further. I can assure Canadians that as a government we are committed to respecting both official languages in this country.

*Privilege*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the Liberals who never did anything and the Bloc who can never hope to do anything, our Conservative government is reducing greenhouse gases. We have set strict targets for biofuels, namely, 5% for gasoline by 2010 and 2% for diesel fuel and heating oil by 2012. Massive investments have been made in order to achieve this, particularly in corn based ethanol. Some people, however, are challenging its environmental benefits.

Can the Secretary of State (Agriculture) set the record straight?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent question. Our targets will reduce greenhouse gases by four megatonnes a year, which is the equivalent of taking about a million vehicles off the road.

In order to achieve these targets, however, biofuels must be produced. Corn based ethanol is currently available. It reduces greenhouse gases and creates jobs for our farmers. This is why we have invested \$1.5 billion in its production.

We are not stopping there. We have invested \$500 million in the next generation of biofuels, which are even better for the planet. It is the next generation of Quebecers and Canadians who will benefit from them, as a result of the actions of this Conservative government.

\* \* \*

● (1510)

[English]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the winners of the 2007 Governor General's Literary Awards: Michael Ondaatje, Geneviève Côté, Don Domanski, Serge Patrice Thibodeau, Colleen Murphy, Nigel Spencer, Karolyn Smardz Frost, Annette Hayward, Duncan Weller, Lori Saint-Martin, and Paul Gagné.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** The Chair has notice of a question of privilege.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE**

HON. MEMBER FOR WESTMOUNT—VILLE-MARIE

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be resigning from my position as the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie effective January 25, 2008. I want to officially thank my electors who voted me in five times.

I entered politics almost 18 years ago: first in 1989 as the member for Chambly in the National Assembly of Quebec, and then in 1995

as the federal member for the riding of Saint-Henri—Westmount, as it was called at the time.

Often being a politician is a thankless job, but it can be extremely rewarding when we succeed in serving our constituents.

I must admit that I was privileged in my political career to have six different leaders, including four prime ministers, believe in me and I want to take this opportunity to thank them: the late Robert Bourassa, Daniel Johnson, Jean Chrétien, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, Bill Graham and the leader of the official opposition, the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

Throughout the years I worked wholeheartedly and I would like to think I have shown that it is possible to be in politics and stay true to one's self, by staying true to one's values, by being loyal and honest and maintaining a sense of duty.

I owe my success in this career to the great people around me: to the volunteers in my political party and my association, to Simon Potter, the late Hans Fluehler, and Brigitte Garceau; the staff in my constituency office under the direction of Nathalie Dallaire and the staff in my political offices led by Marc Saint-Pierre, Marie-José Reid and Yves Lemire. I have also worked with public service officials of the highest quality and I want to thank them.

None of this would have been possible without the love of my friends and the unfailing support of my life partner, Christian, who was there with me through all the ups and downs of political life.

I leave today with a sense of accomplishment, but also with high hopes for the future.

I dream of a Canada where respect and belief in the potential of every individual are the driving forces behind every government action and the inspiration for every parliamentarian.

I dream of a Canada where the children are bilingual and travel across the country and are open to the world.

I dream of a Canada where there is equal representation of men and women in Parliament.

I dream of a Canada where the partners in the federation trust one another and focus their common efforts on the best interests of the citizens.

I dream of a Canada that is an international leader in peace-keeping, the development of democracies, the respect for human rights and the preservation of this planet.

I dream of a Canada where our country's history is taught to children and new immigrants so that they come to understand that the presence of francophones throughout Canada, their attachment to their language and culture, and Quebecers' determination to affirm their unique identity have resulted in Canada being open to cultural diversity.

And I dream of a Canada where Quebecers take their rightful place in this country that belongs to them.

These dreams, or most of them, could become reality with the will of our political leaders.

*Points of Order*

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues from all political parties, it has been a pleasure and an honour to work with you and to serve my country.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

• (1515)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The Chair has notice of a number of points of order. I will start with the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, I take the veracity of the public record very seriously, and perhaps he was flustered, but the Treasury Board president did make an allegation in his response that was simply inaccurate. He claimed that the NDP had killed the public appointments commission when that is simply not the case.

We do know that the public appointments commission was set up. In fact, on January 13, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board said, “We will implement it because we are bound by law to implement it. We will do it as quickly as possible”.

Therefore, my point of order is to ask the President of the Treasury Board to retract his statement so that we have a clear and honest public record.

• (1520)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will very quickly clarify the reference by the President of the Treasury Board. It was of course to the actions of the opposition parties that united to oppose the nomination of the chair of that body, Gwyn Morgan, a very distinguished Canadian, selected as Canadian entrepreneur of the year and was willing to serve, I believe, for \$1 a year. They blocked that appointment, which is why this commission has not proceeded.

They need to take responsibility for their actions and that is all the President of the Treasury Board was asking them to do.

**The Speaker:** I think it is quite obvious that we are into a debate so we will not proceed with that. I do not think it is a point of order.

## TABLING OF A DOCUMENT

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would request that the government House leader table in the House the document he was reading from in response to a question that I posed today. The document he was reading from was not the same document as the press release issued by the OPP.

The OPP press release neither mentioned the environment minister, let alone exonerated him. Further, that release also contained the critical words “at this time”.

Therefore, I would ask that the government House leader table that document, which none of us have seen.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr.

Speaker, I think the statements from the OPP are a matter of public record. I would be happy to obtain them, in both official languages. They do not indicate the Minister of the Environment in particular. They indicate no federal official.

I think that is the clear point that we were trying to make. I am really surprised because I thought the member was getting up to apologize finally for the smears that he continues to make.

**The Speaker:** The minister has indicated that when he has the document in both official languages we will hear from him. The document cannot be tabled until he has it in both official languages. He said that he would be getting it in both official languages and then, presumably, we will hear more. Until then, we will have to wait.

[*Translation*]

Is the hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin also rising on a point of order?

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**HON. MEMBER FOR WESTMOUNT—VILLE-MARIE**

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** No, Mr. Speaker, I did not rise on a point of order.

As I believe we informed you, I am rising to pay tribute to the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie. I thought that was what you said. I will rise on a point of order later, if I may. It is unfortunate that so many people have left, but at least the person I want to honour is still here. I would like to pay tribute to her now.

Those of us in politics do not always put on a very good show. From time to time, some politicians stand out because of the way they practise politics. Typically, they stand out because of their respect for others and the respect they inspire. That is what the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie has done and will continue to do for another month or two. The member inspires respect wherever she goes. I knew her for a short time at the National Assembly. All members, regardless of party affiliation, respected her.

When she engages in debate, she does not attack her opponent. Rather, she discusses her points of view and raises the tenor of the debate. She is the kind of person who makes politics look good and who helps us improve our reputation, which can often use improvement. I have often seen her defend her points of view with vigour and a sense of conviction. She was known for her grasp of the issues she dealt with. She has been described as studious, always well prepared, and, as I said before, always very respectful.

The meanest thing I ever heard her say—actually, I read about it because I was not there at the time—while she was a minister in the National Assembly was this: one of her opponents asked her a question. He was outraged and insisted on his point of view. When he asked the speaker if he had been dreaming, she rose calmly to tell the speaker that if the member had been dreaming, then he must have been asleep. That is one for the books. It should be kept in mind because it may apply to some of my colleagues one day. That is an example of her sense of humour. Her approach to debate was never mean-spirited and was always respectful of others.



*Points of Order*

She has a number of degrees, including an MBA. Yet she worked as social worker and thus, for her, politics was an extension of her commitment to the public and, as she constantly demonstrates, to people, the poorest members of society and those who deserve to be defended. She also speaks several languages. Not only does she speak excellent French, which is only natural, since she is a former education minister, but she speaks excellent English. She speaks Hebrew as well. I have seen her speak off the cuff in Hebrew, and I did not understand anything, but what she said was very well received.

I am convinced that she will continue to help people. During her long career, she has been responsible for a series of departments. First, in the National Assembly, she was Minister of Cultural Affairs, Minister of Higher Education and Science, Minister of Education for more than two years, and Minister of Health and Social Services. She worked in the departments that were most important both to public service and to the quality of education.

I did not get to know her until the very end of her time in the National Assembly, when I was elected in a byelection. She began sitting here in the House of Commons in 1995. During her 12 years in the federal government, she was responsible for the federal campaign during the Quebec referendum, and she served as Minister of Labour, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship and Minister of Communications. She was also President of the Treasury Board for four years and Minister responsible for Infrastructure for three years. In addition, she served as Minister responsible for Crown Corporations, Minister of Industry, Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, President of the Privy Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

•(1525)

In fact, she has had an extremely well-rounded career. I know she is leaving, and I do not know what she is going to do from now on. I wish her every success in her future endeavours. I may not know what she plans to do, but I do know one thing: wherever life takes her, she will be serving the public. I extend my best wishes not only to this person whom I respect and who is leaving us, but also to the people she will be helping.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues in wishing the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie all the very best in her future endeavours. I have had the honour and the pleasure of knowing her since she first arrived on the political scene. At the time, I was the president of the Office des professions du Québec. As a senior executive—the president of an agency in my case—you learn to recognize various types of individuals, the different abilities of ministers, at the upper levels of the public service. Whether at the provincial or the federal level, you quickly come to know the ministers. In all sincerity, I have never known an individual who has elicited such admiration and respect from all senior officials as the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

It was her trademark that she always had an in-depth knowledge of her files. It was a point of honour for her to know them even better than the officials who were to brief her on the various issues she had to deal with.

She left her mark as the minister of education. At the time we belonged to the same political party and people were surprised and somewhat saddened to see her leave and come to this House. Having followed her career, I can say that she embodies the best of Quebec politics and Canadian politics.

The community that she will continue to represent for a few more weeks is very diversified. Her understanding of that community is a reflection of what is best about this parliamentary institution. As my colleague just stated, not only does she speak both of Canada's official languages but, to my great surprise, one evening I also had the privilege of hearing her speak in Hebrew, a language that she learned while working in a kibbutz some years ago.

That is what she is all about. She is an extremely generous individual who is very open to others. She represents the best of Canada and Quebec. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I wish to express all my admiration, respect and friendship. Quite simply, I wish you good luck in your future endeavours, Lucienne.

•(1530)

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like the other members, I would like to share fond memories I have of our colleague. We both sat in the Quebec National Assembly, and we both served in the cabinet of the late Robert Bourassa.

A few moments ago I heard her say that she had brought to political life the same values she espoused throughout her professional career. These values are what have always defined her. I have watched her lead an extraordinary political career, and she is leaving politics with the same values she held during that time. That is to her credit.

It was a great pleasure to meet with her when she was Minister of Higher Education to ask for more funding for a school or even an expansion in my riding. She was always generous with public funds in that regard. Obviously, I never had the chance to thank her for these things, and I am doing so today.

She is a courageous woman, a woman of conviction. On both a personal and a professional level, she sincerely believes that Quebec belongs in Canada. She is one of the great women of the Liberal Party of Quebec, one of the great women of Canada, and one of the greatest women this House has ever seen.

I call her my friend Lucienne. I wish you continued success, Lucienne; good luck in the journey ahead.

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Liberal Party, I would like to express my fondness for our hon. colleague from Westmount—Ville-Marie. I have tremendous respect for her and hold her in the highest esteem. She has devoted her entire career to the service of the public, as a committed social worker and public trustee in Quebec, as a member of the Quebec National Assembly and the House of Commons, as a provincial and a federal minister in many important departments, and finally, as deputy leader of our party.

*Routine Proceedings*

No one in this House can question her dedication to the public good or her political judgment. Whether it was about reforming Quebec's cultural policy, pay equity in the public service, education or economic development, she has made an immense contribution to Canada.

If I may, I would like to continue in my mother tongue.

[*English*]

Canada is a better place because of her public service.

[*Translation*]

We will miss her. We will especially miss her political wisdom, her laugh and her wonderful sense of humour.

[*English*]

In conclusion, I think the finest tribute I can pay my dear colleague and friend is to say that when she finished reading her statement a few minutes ago, a colleague of hers came up to me and whispered, "What a loss. What a loss to our party."

We want to thank her for her service. We want to thank her for her friendship and her devotion. We wish her *bonne route*.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** On behalf of all hon. members, I thank the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie for her exceptional service to this House, for the friendships she forged with all the members—for so many members conveyed their good wishes—as well as for her final speech here today.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1535)

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 11 petitions.

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### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-China Legislative Association respecting the co-chair visit to Hong Kong, China, on August 18.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the joint Canadian delegation of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group and the Canada-China Legislative Association, representing its participation at the 28th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from August 18 to 24.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group representing its participation at the third General Assembly of Interparliamentarians for Social Service held in Seoul, Korea, from August 22 to 25.

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## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding its order of reference of November 16. Your committee has considered Bill C-18, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (verification of residence) and reports the bill without amendments.

[*Translation*]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. This report is on the protection of language rights under the court challenges program.

### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

[*English*]

The report is in regard to our study into the beef and pork sector income crisis and makes our recommendations to the minister.

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present today, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled "Building Closer Economic Ties Around the World: Improving Canada's Trade and Investment Relations with Arab States, the EU and Southeast Asia".

### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

In accordance with its order of reference of Tuesday, October 30, your committee has considered Bill C-5, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident, and agreed on Tuesday, December 11, to report it without amendments.

## FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in relation to the study of the operation and maintenance of small craft harbours. This report calls upon the government to immediately allocate funds to ensure the adequate safety and maintenance of small craft harbour infrastructure.

It will be followed in the new year with a report that will address all aspects of the operation and development of small craft harbours, which are essential to many of our coastal and rural communities.

I would like to thank the committee members for their work on this report, and certainly our witnesses from across Canada, who provided great insight into the challenges faced by harbour authorities across the country.

Certainly this report was close to home. In my own riding of Avalon, the fishery is a major economic engine, and certainly anything to do with small craft and harbours is very vitally important to the success of that industry.

• (1540)

## HEALTH

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Health, entitled “Prescription Drugs Part 1—Common Drug Review: An F/P/T Process”.

From April to June 2007, the committee heard from over 46 witnesses on this important subject. Committee members agree that the CDR is a good federal, provincial and territorial process but that further improvements are necessary.

I ask members to please allow me at this time to recognize the hard work and dedication of all members of the health committee involved in this study in the previous session. They are: the former chair of the committee and member for Yellowhead; the member for St. Paul's; the member for Palliser; the member for Brampton West; the member for Oakville; the member for Barrie; the member for Sarnia—Lambton; the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia; the member for Québec; the member for Edmonton—Strathcona; the member for Thornhill; the member for Verchères—Les Patriotes; and the member for Surrey North.

We wish to thank them for making this report possible and for the resulting recommendations that will further strengthen the CDR. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, your committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

## SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations in relation to the issue of incorporation by reference. This is a matter of continuing concern for your joint committee. Our report canvasses previous positions taken by the Department of Justice, the concepts of sub-delegation and jurisdictional inter-delegation and court decisions, and hopefully clarifies for Parliament

*Routine Proceedings*

and the government the legal limitations in using open incorporation by reference in government regulations.

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## CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-495, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (emergency medical services workers).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to introduce my private member's bill, which will extend vital Criminal Code protection to paramedics across Canada. The bill will make it an offence to attack any MS worker while he or she discharges his or her duties, just as Bill C-400 will do for firefighters.

I call upon members regardless of party to work with me to pass these bills by unanimous consent to help protect paramedics and firefighters. They put their lives on the line for us. It is time to give them their due.

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

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## STATUTES REPEAL ACT

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.)** moved that Bill S-207, An Act to repeal legislation that has not come into force within ten years of receiving royal assent, be read the first time.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to reintroduce and once again sponsor Bill S-207, An Act to repeal legislation that has not come into force within ten years of receiving royal assent. Pursuant to Standing Order 86.2, I wish to state that this bill is in the same form as Bill S-202, which was before the House in the first session, and I ask that this bill be reinstated.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

**The Speaker:** The Chair is satisfied that this bill is in the same form as Bill S-202 was at the time of prorogation of the 1st session, 39th Parliament.

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 86.2 the bill is deemed read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion. I move: That, in relation to the third reading stage of Bill C-28, Bill C-28 shall not be subject to any amendments; and that, on any day that Bill C-28 is under consideration at third reading, the House shall sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment and shall not be adjourned before such proceedings have been completed except pursuant to a motion to adjourn proposed by a Minister of the Crown.

• (1545)

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Some hon. members:** No.

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**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 56.1, I move:

That, in relation to the third reading stage of Bill C-28, Bill C-28 shall not be subject to any amendments; and that, on any day that Bill C-28 is under consideration at third reading, the House shall sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment and shall not be adjourned before such proceedings have been completed except pursuant to a motion to adjourn proposed by a Minister of the Crown.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the government House leader or the Speaker would make it clear to all members of the House what the standing order is that the government House leader is trying to introduce at this point. It would be helpful to all members if he would explain what he is trying to do in terms of this procedure.

We know that Conservatives are trying to prevent debate and put closure on Bill C-28, but we would appreciate, first of all, seeing a copy of the motion. I believe all members of the House should have a copy of the motion in both official languages. I would ask the government House leader or the Speaker to make clear what motion is being put before the House at this time.

**The Speaker:** I will read the motion to the House and it will be translated for the hon. member. She can listen to the translation channel to hear it in the other official language. The motion is that the government House leader, seconded by the member for Prince George—Peace River, pursuant to Standing Order 56.1(1)(a), moved:

That, in relation to the third reading stage of Bill C-28, Bill C-28 shall not be subject to any amendments; and that, on any day that Bill C-28 is under consideration at third reading, the House shall sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment and shall not be adjourned before such proceedings have been completed except pursuant to a motion to adjourn proposed by a Minister of the Crown.

Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places?

*And fewer than 25 members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Fewer than 25 members having risen, the motion is adopted. Under Standing Order 56.1, 25 members must rise to object. In that case, the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn. Since 25 members did not rise, the motion is deemed adopted. The motion is therefore carried.

(Motion agreed to)

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**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the first report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, presented on Thursday, December 6, be concurred in.

First, I want to thank my hon. colleague from the Liberal Party from Newfoundland and Labrador for bringing this motion forward through the Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans to the

House so we can have a proper analysis and a debate in the initial stages of what is called Bill C-32.

First I will give a little history. Bill C-32 is former Bill C-45 from the last session. Bill C-45 was an attempt by the Conservative government to bring forward massive changes to the Fisheries Act of Canada. The Fisheries Act of Canada is the oldest legislation in the country. It has been around since Confederation, in British Columbia time, since 1871, and in Newfoundland and Labrador time, since 1949. We and many people within the industry from coast to coast to coast and within our inland waters had many objections and concerns to Bill C-45.

Through the delays and everything else, the House was prorogued and it came back as Bill C-32.

We said to the government then, and we are saying to it again, that we were willing to work with it. We are offering an olive branch, an open hand, to get the bill to the committee prior to second reading so we then can have the consultations from coast to coast to coast, to ensure that the people whose lives are at stake, environmental groups, first nations, fishing communities large and small, the industry, the provinces, the territories and the federal government, can get together and come up with the proper recommendations, changes and amendments to the bill.

Long after we are gone, this act, or whatever derivative comes out of it, will be left behind. We have to ensure we get it right. There is no sense in rushing this. We will assist the government in getting it to our committee before second reading so we can make the changes, the exact same principle and policy that my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley had asked for with the environment act, Bill C-2, which was fine legislation. This is what we aim to do with the fisheries act.

Recently in a press release, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said that all we wanted were NDP amendments. That is not true. We said very clearly that we wanted fishermen to write the bill, not bureaucrats. In 1992-93 one of the world's greatest collapses of a natural resource happened off the coast of Canada and, more specific, off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. It cost the Canadian taxpayer over \$4 billion to readjust the industry for the east coast, and we have not finished counting yet.

Not one person at DFO was ever held responsible, even though we now know the scientific information from DFO science was manipulated at the highest level and changed. Those are the facts, yet there was not one inquiry, not a public inquiry, not a judicial inquiry, nothing. Now we will trust the same department in one of the most vital areas of our industries in Canada, the fishery?

I remind members that sport fishing alone in our country is over \$7.5 billion to our industries. Commercial fishing is between \$3 billion to \$4 billion. It has sustained first nations people since their entry into the North American continent and ever since European contact as well. Many communities along coastal areas, including the north and our inland waters, were sustained by the fishery.

*Routine Proceedings*

It is our job to ensure that the number one goal of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is the protection of fish and fish habitat. What do we get from the government? Earlier this year, in the minister's province, two vibrant, healthy, fish-bearing lakes, two healthy aquatic lake systems, were being destroyed, to be used as tailing ponds for mining companies. In fact they are becoming cheap waste disposal solutions for the mining companies.

● (1550)

The NDP has nothing against mining. We only want to ensure that it is done to the highest environmental standards. We want to ensure, as other mining companies have, that it has independent, aligned tailing systems so it cannot leach out into water systems. The fisheries department has the authority to protect fish and fish habitat, but it simply has not done it.

After we raised this issue, the department did it again in Nunavut. We found out that two more lakes in Nunavut, which carry various species of fish, were slated for the disposal section of the mining act. The fisheries department allows these mining companies to dump their waste into healthy aquatic systems. Why would the government allow that? Maybe it wants to make it cheaper for the mining companies.

Once the ore is gone, then the fish are gone. If we do it right, the fisheries can be here for our great grandchildren. If we keep destroying the fish habitat, we are not only destroying it for our grandchildren, but we are destroying it for ourselves. That is the long reach we are looking for in this bill.

We also want economic opportunities for fishermen and their families from coast to coast to coast. We want members of Parliament to be able to grab a hook and line and take their children fishing, but in a healthy environment. We want them to have the opportunity to fish. However, a lot of our fish species on the east and west coasts and in the north are being reduced in numbers. In fact, many scientists are saying that the large pelagics on the east coast are down to 90% from what they used to be.

This is all under the watch of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and his department. I am not putting the total blame for all the destruction on the current government. For 13 years the Liberals had the watch and before that the Conservatives and back and forth.

We anticipate that in 2008 the runs up the Fraser may be very low. We know what happened in 2004. We are very concerned about the early Stuart run in the parliamentary secretary's area. He knows very well what I am talking about. There are great concerns about the future of salmon stocks on the west coast.

If we have proper and true consultations with fishermen, their families and their communities, including first nations, we could have an act that would be proactive and desired by everybody. We could move it forward. If the government had listened to us in December of last year, we may have had a new act by now. The government insisted that the bill go to committee after second reading. There was only one reason for that. The government knows very well that we cannot make substantive changes to a bill after second reading. Many of the changes that fishermen would have liked to have seen would be ruled out of order in the amendment process. The government knows that.

I remember very clearly when the current Minister of Fisheries and Oceans was in opposition. In February 2002 he said that the problem with DFO bureaucrats was that they sat around with their corporate fish buddies drinking cognac and ignoring the needs of small fishermen. When he became minister, I asked him about that statement. He jokingly said that he did not drink alcohol so he did not have time for cognac, but his people did great work.

A lot of people in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans mean well and do their best under the circumstances. If Canada is to have a brand new Fisheries Act, it should be written by the people who are most affected by fisheries, and that is the fishermen and their families from coast to coast to coast and those in our inland waters, not by politicians or bureaucrats.

One of the problems, besides the environmental concerns that we have expressed, is there will be a lot of downloading to the provinces. I remind the government that the terms of union in British Columbia for 1871 was the federal government had the financial fiduciary responsibility and management of all fisheries in tidal waters.

● (1555)

We see the government slowly but surely downloading the responsibility for our fisheries to the provinces. What happened a few years ago in the great province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the minister's own province? The government of the day cut the rivers keeper program. It was up to the province to hire 20 more people to keep an eye on the rivers for the protection of the wild Atlantic salmon.

In Prince Edward Island, every year around late spring we hear of another massive fish kill on the Tyne River. It is directly related to pesticide runoffs from the farms. The federal government should work with the provinces to have buffer zones near fish bearing lakes and rivers to ensure pesticides do not flow into the water system.

We cannot keep going and killing off massive amounts of fish for other industries. They can cohabit and they could work together, but we need a comprehensive plan that protects fish and fish habitat and not use it as an afterthought.

One DFO official asked me how far I wanted to go to protect fish. I told him his department received \$1.6 billion of Canadian tax dollars to do one thing and one thing only, and that was the protection of fish and fish habitat. It should not be an afterthought.

As I tell DFO officials, fishermen are not a nuisance, they are their job and so are fish. That is what we are asking the Government of Canada, through its Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to do.

*Routine Proceedings*

When the Minister of Natural Resources was in opposition, I remember he questioned, on many times occasions, what the people in the ivory tower at 200 Kent Street were doing for a living. Anywhere between 1,300 to 1,600 work at 200 Kent Street for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Every morning when I come to work, I walk along the Rideau Canal. I have yet to see a trawler, a seiner, a gill-netter, a lobster pot, a crab pot or recreational fishermen. I never see anybody fishing in the Rideau Canal, yet we have 1,300 to 1,600 people working for the fisheries department in Ottawa. When the Minister of Natural Resources was in opposition, I remember him asking what those people did. I wonder if he ever received an answer on that.

The country requires more habitat officers, more money to science and enforcement and more cooperation between everybody to ensure that fisheries are protected now and in the future. That does not mean downloading federal responsibility to the provinces. We are very concerned about this.

The other issue we are very concerned about is the corporatization of a public resource. We are pleased to see that the government, after saying absolutely the reverse, has inserted the words “common property resource” in Bill C-32. They were not in Bill C-45. We had to push and push to get it in there. However, it is only in the preamble. We would like to see it in the main body of the text to ensure that the fisheries is a common property resource owned by the people of Canada and not the Government of Canada.

It is ironic that today's *National Post* talks about the Magna Carta. That right was given to us by the Magna Carta. It is the public right to fish and the government must manage the fishery in the public manner to which we should be accustomed, not what happens now.

A public resource being slowly, or whatever way we look at it, privatized makes us ask this. Why does the Jimmy Pattison Group controls most of the salmon and herring stocks on the west coast. How is it that Clearwater control most of the scallop stocks on the east coast? If it is a public resource, how does one entity manage to have control of the vast majority of that public resource?

On trust agreements, again the government is very vague about this in the bill. This is when companies buy up licences and put them in other fishermen's names. Instead of the fishermen becoming independent, they end up working for the company store.

We want to ensure that the owner-operator and fleet separation clauses are intact in the legislation where they cannot have any wiggle room to get around them. If we have that, it would go a long way in protecting the interests of fishermen in the country.

● (1600)

Many times we stand in the House and we thank the fishermen very much. Every morning when I have breakfast I thank the farmers who give us our nutritious food. At the same time we must thank the fishermen. Fishermen risk their lives to give us the opportunity to have nutritious and good, wholesome food. We thank the fishermen for what they do.

It is our parliamentary obligation to ensure that fishermen can maintain their livelihood. Anyone who has been out on a gill netter off Texada Island off the coast of Vancouver Island at 4:30 in the

morning and watched the sun come up slowly over the horizon as the fisherman had his second cup of tea while he put his line out has watched God's work at hand.

There is nothing better than to go out at about 3:30 or four o'clock in the morning off the coast of Canso, Nova Scotia with a fisherman to lay his 200 lobster traps in the water. When the job is done at six in the morning and the fisherman comes back, that is a wonderful day.

There are fishermen out there who love to do that work. They love living in their coastal communities. They love being able to earn a living with their own two hands, but consistently, year in and year out, we make it more and more difficult for them to ply their trade. It is simply unacceptable.

What happened in Newfoundland and Labrador after 1992-93 was that over 50,000 people left that province to seek an economic livelihood elsewhere because of the collapse of the fishery. Have we learned anything from that? Absolutely not. Does this act reverse that and ensure that it never happens again? No, it does not.

If the government is so confident that this bill is the way to go, then it should send the bill to committee before second reading. If the government does that, it already has our pledge, and I am sure the government has the pledge of my hon. colleague from Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, that we will constructively work with the government to bring a new modern act to this country. We can do it fairly quickly. In fact, that is what we said almost a year ago. If the Conservatives had listened to us then, we would probably have a new act now.

We are asking the government to work in cooperation with the opposition parties. We do not want to kill this bill, but if forced to, we will. If the government brings it to us after second reading knowing full well that fishermen in their communities cannot make major amendments to it, then we will have no choice but to delay and destroy Bill C-32. That is something we do not want to do.

We want to be proactive. We want to be constructive. We want fishermen and their families to have real input into what will affect their lives for many generations to come.

This is the minimum Parliament should be able to give to fishermen. We are not the fishermen. In fact, at the last count I believe there were only two members of Parliament who were commercial fishermen. One is from the Delta area, and I cannot mention his name of course, and the other is from the Kenora area. They are the only two commercial fishermen in this place.

*Routine Proceedings*

Guess what happened to the Conservative member from the Delta area when he opposed Bill C-45. The government kicked him off the committee. He was the only commercial fisherman that we had and the longest serving member since 1993. He objected to the bill. He was standing up for his constituents. What did the government do? The government removed him from the committee so his concerns would be silenced, but he is not going to be very silent. The reality is we do not want that to happen to anyone else. We want to make sure that fishermen and their families have an opportunity down the road.

As a first nations friend of mine once said to me, we need to think in the seventh generation principle. We need to understand that what we do today will affect seven generations from now. If we do it right and if we protect the fish and the fish habitat, if we ensure an economic livelihood for fishermen and their families from coast to coast and on our inland waters, then that would be a bill we could all be proud of.

I look forward to further debate on this particular issue and any questions or comments that anyone may have.

• (1605)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is about the fisheries bill. This is about a bill that we truly believe is long overdue. The problem is we have to do it responsibly. We have just heard the first version which is kill bill volume one, and I represent kill bill volume two in this particular case. If my hon. colleague from Nova Scotia took exception to that, I meant no disrespect to him.

I wholeheartedly agree in that this is about doing what is right. This is about doing what is responsible. This is a new bill that replaces a 140-year-old act that needs to be addressed for the stakeholders, which include the harvesters, the plant workers, first nations, the environmental groups and the list goes on.

The government brought the legislation to the House first in the form of Bill C-45 and tried to ram it through second reading without any due care. It has tried to introduce a new bill with reckless abandon. Now the government is doing it again, as my colleague pointed out, with Bill C-32.

The government had a full year to engage stakeholders on one issue which is to bring in a new Fisheries Act. There was not one meeting about that particular Fisheries Act. As a matter of fact when we were in power, we made suggestions in four topic areas. The former minister of fisheries suggested four areas and it was turned down by one member of the standing committee because that member did not want to look at a new Fisheries Act. Guess who that member was. The current Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Why all of a sudden is it so important that the government has to bring in this new bill for second reading? Recently the Nova Scotia fisheries minister claimed that he liked the idea of a new Fisheries Act but I believe he got a letter from that minister which backs up our argument to send it to committee before second reading as opposed to after. Perhaps my hon. colleague can address that particular situation.

• (1610)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, when we talk to the people from Newfoundland and Labrador they have a serious vested interest in

the fishery. It is their culture, just like on the west coast, Vancouver Island and British Columbia. It is their culture. For the people of the far north, the people of the inland waters, it is their culture.

The reality is that Mr. Chisholm, the fisheries minister of Nova Scotia, very quickly drafted a letter. One of the first things we asked him is whether he read the bill. The chances are he did not.

We are going to be turning around and asking the minister to make sure that there is cooperation among everyone. We want to make sure that everyone has a say.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Order. The hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore is trying to answer the question he was asked. I would appreciate it if hon. members could allow him to do so, but it looks like he has finished answering the question. On further questions or comments, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague's discussion. He raised two issues that I felt had to be spoken to. One is he spoke at the beginning about changes to the mining act and the other is the effects that we need to look at in terms of seven generations.

I can tell the hon. member, that coming from the mining communities in northern Ontario, we see the effects seven generations on with the Great Lakes and the Cobalt area that have been completely poisoned with arsenic. There are some Great Lakes still going, but there have been other lakes that have been completely destroyed. In those days the tailings from the mill were simply dumped into the lake because it was so cheap and easy. We have learned a lot of lessons since then, but we still saw immense tailing ponds and damage in other hard rock mining communities, Elliot Lake, Timmins and Kirkland Lake. As we went along we realized that if we were going to do mining in the 21st century, we had to find better ways of doing it.

What astounds me at this point in our history is that we have a Conservative government that still abides by the flat earth theory on the environment and is completely turning back the clock. It will actually have a detrimental effect on mining development in the north.

What we have been trying to do in the north is build partnerships between the first nation communities and the Mining Association of Canada. Various miners are now recognizing that they have to have a proactive plan to work with first nations.

If the Conservative government thinks that it can go with a plan to dump tailings into freshwater lakes, if that is in any way going to open up any new areas in the north to mining, it has another think coming. The Conservative government was completely absent from any meetings that we have seen with first nations and the mining industry in order to build these partnerships.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague to comment on the issue of using the freshwater lakes of the north to dump tailings in the 21st century.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, one of the pleasures I have had as a member of Parliament recently was to travel with my hon. colleague to his riding of Timmins—James Bay. He has the utmost respect for hard rock miners, as we all do. He is right that in the old days practices were not very good and if there was a fresh body of water, everything was just dumped in to it. Lessons were learned from that and many mining companies have independent tailings systems free and clear of any fresh water.

But now, with the government's approval, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has said that Tail Lake and Second Portage Lake in Nunavut will be turned into cheap waste disposal systems because the mining companies do not want to set up independent systems. They want to use these lakes for tailings ponds. The answer we will get is that this is as long as there is no net loss of habitat. Fresh water is a precious, precious commodity. Even though it may appear that Canada has lots of it, if we keep acting in that way, there will not be very much left down the road.

We are asking the government to respect the Fisheries Act that is in place now, ensure that the mining companies set up independent tailings ponds where the tailings cannot leak out into the environment, for the protection of fish and fish habitat. Many of the communities are home to first nations people. This is their livelihood. They should not have to receive the poison that we give them. They should have a right to have a clean and healthy environment.

I also want to compliment my friend from Timmins—James Bay for the great work he did for the people of Kashechewan. Those are wonderful people out there. It is time the government listened to the hon. member. It just might learn something.

• (1615)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the current Fisheries Act is a century old. Hon. members will recall that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans introduced Bill C-45, which died on the order paper when the House prorogued.

Now he is introducing a new bill, Bill C-32. In my opinion, it does not make any sense for the government to draft a bill without consulting the fishers, the associations and those who process the fish.

What should happen before the bill reaches third reading, either after first or second reading? There needs to be extensive consultation to ensure that Bill C-32, An Act respecting the sustainable development of Canada's seacoast and inland fisheries, is effective. The current Fisheries Act, which is 100 years old, is open to too much interpretation.

I want to know whether the hon. member would agree, after first or second reading, to having the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans travel across Canada in order to meet with all the associations, fishers, processing plant representatives, all those concerned in the fishing industry, in order to have a bill that is functional and operational.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we would like to do. We would like to get control of this bill at our committee

before second reading so that we can have those cross-country consultations with fishermen and their families, first nations, environmental groups, the provinces, et cetera, so they can tell us what they want to see in the Fisheries Act.

We could then correlate all those recommendations and put them in a bill. I work on a very good committee. I have been on that committee for over 10 years. The committee members from all parties work very well together. We just submitted a small craft harbours report which was very well done. We can work together. We can be proactive.

The member knows that if the bill goes to committee after second reading, many of those changes will not be accepted through the amendment process and thus we would have a major mistake in that regard.

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House and speak to this motion. I should say at the outset that I fear this motion is more about not getting back to the debate on Bill C-28 than it is about the Fisheries Act, but whether that is the case or not, I always appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of a new, modernized Fisheries Act which is what Bill C-32 is about.

Today's motion though is about whether we should send the bill directly to committee. In reality we are wasting valuable time debating this motion when we should be able to get up in the second reading debate and talk about the merits of Bill C-32 and get it on the record. That is what we would like to do as the government.

Bill C-32 is good legislation. It will make a significant and positive difference to the future of fish and fish habitat in this country, to fishing and the fisheries and to those who rely on it for their livelihood. Therefore, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Call in the members.

• (1640)

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



*Routine Proceedings**(Division No. 26)*

## YEAS

## Members

Albrecht	Ambrose
Anderson	Asselin
Bachand	Bellavance
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Bonsant
Boucher	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Calkins	Casson
Chong	Clement
Cotler	Crête
Cuzner	Davidson
Del Mastro	Demers
Doyle	Dykstra
Faïlle	Fast
Fitzpatrick	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Gravel
Grewal	Guergis
Guimond	Hanger
Harris	Hiebert
Hill	Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Komarnicki
Kotto	Laforest
Laframboise	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Lessard	Lévesque
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lussier	MacAulay
MacKenzie	Malo
Manning	Mayes
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Ouellet	Pacetti
Paquette	Paradis
Pearson	Perron
Petit	Picard
Plamondon	Redman
Ritz	Roy
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Scott	Shiple
Skelton	Smith
Sorenson	St-Hilaire
St. Amand	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Thi Lac	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tilson	Trost
Turner	Tweed
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Wallace	Warawa
Watson— 105	

## NAYS

## Members

Atamanenko Priddy— 2

## PAIRED

Nil

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

The House will now resume with the remaining business under routine proceedings. We are under the rubric motions.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to what happened here tonight with the government of the Conservative Party and with the Liberal Party.

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

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** For the last 10 years that I have been in the House, there has been respect for all political parties in the House and for democracy.

I want to raise a point of order—

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Order, please. The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst is trying to make a point of order. I hope he is making a point of order and not engaging in debate. I will allow him to continue for a few more seconds.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, I hope I have the seconds that I need to make my point of order and not be judged like we have been by the Conservative Party tonight and the Liberals.

The bells were ringing. We have a trust in this House of Commons that when the bells are ringing we wait for the members to get to the House of Commons.

• (1645)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** I can understand the hon. member's concern but I will quote from Marleau and Montpetit. It states:

The party Whips may return to the Chamber before the bells are due to stop ringing.

It goes on to state:

...the bells had rung for the maximum period of time and Members voiced their objection by raising points of order.

It is an established practice that when the two whips, the government whip and the opposition whip, sit down that the vote will be taken.

Is the hon. member rising on a different point of order or the same point of order?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, I just want clarification. Was that rule made for the 1800s when there were only the Conservatives and the Liberals in this House of Commons. It forgets that there are four parties in this House and we should respect all members of Parliament.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** I think the rules are clear on this point. It is the government and opposition whips. If the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst wishes to examine the Standing Order, he can do so at the table.

The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina on a point of order.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Mr. Speaker, I am a new member. I was right by the door as the bells were ringing. Is there not common courtesy that if members are behind the curtains the Chair has allowed them to come in?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** The rules on this are very clear. If the hon. member, again, wishes to examine the Standing Orders, they very clearly set out that once the question is put members have to be in their seats for their votes to be recorded. She can do so at the table.

The hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore on a point of order.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, could you clarify once again what you just read? You talked about the whips of the government and the opposition party. Does it say anything about whips from other parties in the House of Commons?

Mr. Speaker, would you read the entire clarification to this House and put on the record what the ruling is on this particular matter?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** This is from chapter 12, page 485, of Marleau and Montpetit:

When the Government and Opposition Whips conclude that their respective Members are ready to vote, the Whips make a ceremonial return to the House, and the bells stop ringing.

I think both the Standing Orders and the House of Commons precedence are very clear on this. I do not think there needs to be more discussion on this.

I will allow the hon. member for Sackville-Eastern Shore a brief opportunity but we must move on.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, correct me if I am wrong, but you said whips with an S. There are more than two whips in this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** I just read it. It is very clearly the government and the chief opposition whips.

We will move on from this point. I think this matter is concluded. We are under the rubric of motions.

Presenting petitions. The hon. member for Oak Ridges—Markham.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## SRI LANKA

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from the good people of Oak Ridges—Markham, who call upon the House of Commons to condemn the targeted killing of the Tamilselvan, the Tamil peace negotiator, and urge the Sri Lankan government to stop its military aggression against Tamils in Sri Lanka.

●(1650)

## CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition on behalf of approximately 500 people in the St. John's area and in my riding of St. John's East.

The petitioners are horrified by pornography which depicts children. They are astounded by legal determinations that possession of such pornography is not criminal. They make the point that it is the duty of Parliament through the enactment and enforcement of the Criminal Code to protect the most vulnerable members of society from sexual abuse.

They are calling upon Parliament to take all necessary measures to ensure that possession of child pornography remains a serious criminal offence and that federal police forces should be directed to give priority to enforcing that law for the protection of children.

## LAIBAR SINGH

**Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition with over 3,000 names. These petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to grant Mr. Laibar Singh permanent residence in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

## DARFUR

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table two petitions today, collected by students and groups in my riding, including the Canadian Jewish Congress in Quebec. They are concerned with the genocide in Darfur.

[*Translation*]

These two petitions call on Canada to play a leading role in mobilizing and organizing the hybrid peacekeeping force in Darfur.

[*English*]

The first petition reminds us that more than 400,000 have already died in Darfur, that 4.5 million are on a life support system, and that mass atrocities continue unabated. It calls upon the government to take concrete measures to end the conflict, restore peace and stability to the region, and end the genocide.

The second petition is along the same lines. It also calls upon the government to use diplomatic initiatives to end the conflict and to specifically support the work of the International Criminal Court to end the culture of impunity.

[*Translation*]

If this government does not act, the peace accords could crumble, which would cause the destabilization of the region.

[*English*]

The petitioners recall that Canada played a role in authoring the responsibility to protect doctrine and that this must not be empty rhetoric. "Never again", tragically, is becoming yet again, again and again. While the international community dithers, Darfuris die. This must end.

## CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from citizens of Canada, specifically my riding of Cambridge and some from the riding of Oxford, who have raised concerns about Canadian Pacific Railway and its lack of civic, social and corporate responsibilities, as well as its refusal to cooperate and respect the communities it steamrolls through. CP is flaunting the fact that federal laws have little jurisdictions over it and the petitioners will not be railroaded by the railroad.

This petition, in total so far, consists of well over 2,000 signatories, who are asking the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Health to work together to influence Canadian Pacific Railway to become a better corporate citizen and show some respect for the environment, as all other corporations in this country are doing.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions from Alberta. Albertans are very concerned about the human trafficking issue and these petition encourage the government to continue its work to stop the horrendous crime of human trafficking.

## NORTHERN RESIDENTS TAX DEDUCTIONS

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the Minister of Finance from the people of the northern territories.

Some 700 people signed the petition informing the Minister of Finance that the people of Canada's north have the highest cost of living of all Canadians. The northern residents tax deduction was instituted to help offset this high cost of living. The residents portion of the northern residence tax deduction has not increased since its inception 20 years ago while the cost of living for northern Canadians has continued to increase.

The petitioners call on the minister to increase the residents portion of the northern residents tax deduction by 50% and that this portion of the tax deduction be indexed in order to keep pace with inflation based on a northern inflation measurement.

• (1655)

## INCOME TRUSTS

**Hon. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I present this income trust broken promise petition on behalf of some residents of British Columbia.

The petitioners remember that the Prime Minister boasted about his apparent commitment to accountability when he said, "The greatest fraud is a promise not kept".

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

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

## SRI LANKA

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition that contains the signatures of over 700 of my constituents.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to exert diplomatic pressure on Sri Lanka to respect the human rights of the Tamil people. The fighting in Sri Lanka has gone on for far too long. Far too many innocent people have suffered for it.

I agree with my constituents that the Government of Canada must become more involved in helping this country move toward peace.

## Routine Proceedings

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I once again rise to present a petition signed by 529 people from my riding of Red Deer, Alberta.

These citizens are outraged at the violent beating of a 61-year-old apartment caretaker by repeat offender Leo Teskey. The petitioners therefore demand that Parliament pass tougher laws regarding repeat and violent offenders, and provide adequate compensation for victims of violent crimes.

## CHILD CARE

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions signed by people from the Annex neighbourhood in my riding and other people across Toronto plus petitioners from Saskatchewan.

The petitioners are concerned about early learning and child care. They want the best for their children. The petitioners note that working families are now working five weeks more than nine years ago and that high quality child care is a benefit to all children. It enhances health and school readiness, reduces family poverty, and promotes social inclusion and workforce productivity.

The petitioners are worried that the \$1,200 universal child allowance is poorly designed and discriminates against lone parent families and two income families, and also that it is taxable. The petitioners state that a child care act needs to be passed.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to achieve multi-year funding to ensure that publicly operated child care programs are sustainable for a long term; to protect child care by enshrining it in legislation with a national child care act to be a cornerstone of Canada like the national health act; and lastly, to end child poverty by using the \$1,200 allowance to enhance child tax benefits without taxes and clawbacks.

## SRI LANKA

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, together with the petition that my colleague from Markham—Unionville has brought to the table, I also present this petition signed by residents from York South—Weston.

The petitioners condemn the targeted killing of Tamilselvan, the Tamil peace negotiator, and urge the Sri Lankan government to stop its military aggression against Tamils in Sri Lanka.

The petitioners are requesting the Government of Canada to exert diplomatic pressure on Sri Lanka to respect the human rights of the Tamil people.

## AGE OF CONSENT

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting three petitions. The first is on the subject of the age of consent.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners encourage the Parliament of Canada to raise the age of consent. They point out that 14 to 15 year olds are subject to sexual exploitation, including recruitment by pimps. They point out that among the many duties of Parliament, protecting our young people is extremely important. The petitioners point out as well that the age of sexual consent has been raised above the age of 16 in many jurisdictions.

• (1700)

## FIREARMS REGISTRY

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition relates to the long gun registry. The petitioners point out that the long gun registry has cost Canadian taxpayers over \$1 billion, more than 500 times its original estimated cost.

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition I wish to present today relates to the institution of marriage. The petitioners ask that Parliament return to the traditional definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

## IRAQ

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition regarding what is happening in Iraq. Many of the petitioners who signed the petition want to develop: first, an automatic way for interventions to be imposed by Canada against foreign governments, such as Iraq, that might support persecution or fail to prevent it; second, improve measures for refugees who have suffered religious persecution; and third, develop and set as a priority mechanisms to provide resettlement assistance to members of a group identified as suffering systemic religious persecution. This would come either by written policy or by specific designated humanitarian requests.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 4, 31, 97, 99, 102, 127, 129, 135, 137, 139, 140, 142, 143, 144 and 158.

[Text]

Question No. 4—**Hon. Sue Barnes:**

With regard to the Canadian Firearms Program: (a) what is the proposed budget allocation for fiscal year 2007-2008; (b) what are the line-item cost projections for fiscal year 2007-2008; (c) what are the cost projections by department and agency for 2007-2008; (d) what is the total cost of the program since its inception in 1995; and (e) how much did the government spend on fee refunds related to the amnesty in 2006-2007?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am informed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, that:

a) As published in the RCMP's 2007-2008 Reports on Plans and Priorities (RPP), the total planned spending on the Canada Firearms Centre (CFC) for fiscal year 2007-2008 is \$70.4 million.

b) Line-item cost projections for 2007-2008 are:

- \$21.2 million in salaries
- \$32.6 million in operating and maintenance
- \$12.7 million in grants and contributions
- \$3.9 million in employee benefits plan

c) The projected costs of the Canada Firearms Program by department or agency as published in table 12 of the special chapter on Canada Firearms Program in the 2007-2008 RCMP's RPP:

- From within CFC's \$70.4 million, CFC plans to transfer \$1.7 million to the Canada Border Services Agency, and \$0.8 million to the Department of Justice.

- Other departments/agencies that plan on spending money from the Canada Firearms Program are Public Safety Canada (\$0.3 million), Correctional Service Canada (\$9.3 million), National Parole Board (\$0.9 million) and PWGSC (\$2.7 million).

d) As published in Table 17 of CFC's 2005-2006 Departmental Performance Report (DPR), the total cost of the Canada Firearms Program since its inception in 1995 as of March 31, 2006 is \$1.127 billion.

e) According to the 2006-2007 DPR, \$17.2 million was disbursed in refunds under the "Fee amnesty" during that fiscal year.

Question No. 31—**Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regards to spending and allocation by all government ministries, departments and agencies in the riding of Burnaby—New Westminster, what is the total amount spent, including allocations, funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees for the period of January 24, 2006 to October 17, 2007 inclusive?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

*Routine Proceedings*

Over the course of the 39th Parliament, a number of government organizations have undertaken efforts to identify federal expenditures by postal codes which could then be summarized by electoral districts using a tool developed by Statistics Canada. While there is some promise in this approach, there remains a significant potential for error since many postal codes straddle two or more electoral districts. Moreover, the government would have significant concerns about the quality of the financial data derived by this approach because there is no way to track the geographic area in which federal funding is actually spent. For example, federal funding could be provided to the head office of a firm situated in one electoral district, while the funding was actually spent by a subsidiary located in another electoral district. This may also be the case for payments to individuals, organizations or foundations. For these reasons, and the fact that fewer than half of government organizations have acquired the Statistics Canada tool, it is not possible to produce an accurate and comprehensive answer to this question at the present time.

That said, Statistics Canada has initiated a process to enhance the accuracy of the tool that provides the link between postal codes and electoral districts. The process will allow departments which use the tool to better approximate by electoral district data gathered on a postal code basis. The improved tool is expected to be available at the end of January 2008, and training for government organizations on the use of this tool is planned for February—March 2008.

**Question No. 97—Ms. Dawn Black:**

With regards to the Prime Minister's Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan: (a) what is the current and expected cost of the panel; (b) what is the name and job classification of each civil servant who will be working full time, or part time with the panel; (c) when did the panel first meet; (d) how many meetings will the panel have; (e) when is their last expected meeting; (f) what remuneration or honoraria will be offered to the panel; (g) which government departments have been tasked with preparing briefing material; (h) will the panellists be provided with personal staff for the duration of the panel; (i) what are the terms of reference for the panel; (j) what foreign trips will the panel make; (k) which government department will be coordinating the final report of the panel; and (l) what is the government's position with regard to following the panel's recommendations on the four options, as announced by the Prime Minister on October 12, 2007?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the reply is as follows:

a) A Treasury Board submission is currently being prepared. Once it is complete, the details will be made public.

b) Independent Panel Secretariat: David Mulroney, Secretary, DM-01 Elissa Golberg, Executive Director, EX-01 Sanjeev Chowdhury, Director, Operations, FS-03 Col. Mike Cessford, Special Advisor, EX-01 Sam Millar, Special Advisor, EX-01 Cory Anderson, Special Advisor, PM-05 Kaitlyn Pritchard, Project Officer, FS-01 Elizabeth Thébaud, Administrative Assistant, AS-02

c) The Independent Panel first met on October 19, 2007.

d) The Independent Panel will meet regularly until the report is finalized. They have set up a number of regular meetings until the end of December 2007 and add meetings as required.

e) The Independent Panel's last expected meeting will take place after the report is submitted, in either late January 2008 or early February 2008.

f) The Independent Panel has been offered per diems in the range of \$1200 to \$1400 for the chair and between \$850 to \$1000 for panel members. However, some members of the Independent Panel have declined to be remunerated, either because they are in receipt of a government pension or for personal reasons. In addition, the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act contains provisions that limit the amount a former MP can earn from the government while in receipt of a pension under the act. As this is personal information, the particulars of each case are not made public.

g) The Independent Panel Secretariat prepares briefing notes for the panel. The secretariat has been approaching government departments for factual material for inclusion in those briefing notes, and thus far, the secretariat has consulted Foreign Affairs, DFAIT, Department of National Defence, DND, and Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA for factual information.

h) No.

i) The Independent Panel has been asked to consider four options, including:

i) To continue training the Afghan army and police so that Canada can begin withdrawing its forces in February 2009;

ii) To focus on reconstruction and have forces from another country take over security in Kandahar;

iii) To shift Canadian security and reconstruction efforts to another region in Afghanistan; and

iv) To withdraw all Canadian military personnel except a minimal force to protect aid workers and diplomats.

The Independent Panel may also identify and pursue additional options.

Over the next three months, the panel plans to carry out a series of consultations with Canadian and international experts, including individuals from the political, diplomatic, development and security sectors, in order to develop a series of recommendations on Canada's future role in Afghanistan.

The Independent Panel's final report will be delivered to the Prime Minister in January 2008.

More details on the terms of reference can be found on the panel's website: [www.independent-panel-independant.ca](http://www.independent-panel-independant.ca)

j) The Independent Panel is expected to travel to Afghanistan, the US and Western Europe.

k) The Independent Panel Secretariat will be co-ordinating the final report.

l) The Prime Minister has stated that the government will take the Independent Panel's recommendation very seriously. He also indicated that in the end Parliament will consider all the options that are deemed to be realistic by either the government or the Independent Panel.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 99—Hon. Scott Brison:**

Which laboratories, listed by name and location, are considered as non-regulatory laboratories under the mandate of the Independent Panel of Experts on Transferring Federal Non-Regulatory Laboratories to provide advice and options to the President of the Treasury Board on transferring federal non-regulatory laboratories to universities or the private sector?

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the Independent Panel of Experts, IPE, is not conducting a systematic review of all federal laboratories. Rather, the panel is seeking submissions through its website from government, academia and the private sector identifying opportunities for transfer. The laboratories that are identified through these submissions will then be reviewed by the IPE and a list of candidate labs developed by them.

**Question No. 102—Mr. Michael Savage:**

How many individuals, designated as students in a post secondary institution accredited by a province in Canada, filed income taxes in each year between 2000 and 2006?

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, does not collect the information in the manner requested in the above-noted question, as the income tax and benefit return does not require individuals to provide additional information relating to their educational institutions in the manner described, i.e., “post secondary institution accredited by a province in Canada”.

**Question No. 127—Hon. Marlene Jennings:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government, through its various departments and agencies, issued in the constituency of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine for the period of January 24, 2006 to September 13, 2007 inclusive, and in each case where applicable: (a) what was the program under which the payment was made; (b) what were the names of the recipients if they were groups, organizations or individuals; (c) what was the monetary value of the payment made; (d) what was the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received; (e) what were the specific eligibility requirements, admissibility conditions or criteria and evaluation criteria established for each program; (f) what was the number deemed eligible and the number approved for funding; (g) what was the median length of project life; and (h) what was the number of applications approved for (i) 1-year funding, (ii) 2-year funding, (iii) 3-year funding, (iv) 4-year funding, (v) 5-year funding, (vi) 6-year funding, (vii) 7-year funding, (viii) 8-year funding, (ix) 9-year funding, (x) 10-year funding?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

Over the course of the 39th Parliament, a number of government organizations have undertaken efforts to identify federal expenditures by postal codes which could then be summarized by electoral districts using a tool developed by Statistics Canada. While there is some promise in this approach, there remains a significant potential for error since many postal codes straddle two or more electoral districts. Moreover, the government would have significant concerns

about the quality of the financial data derived by this approach because there is no way to track the geographic area in which federal funding is actually spent. For example, federal funding could be provided to the head office of a firm situated in one electoral district, while the funding was actually spent by a subsidiary located in another electoral district. This may also be the case for payments to individuals, organizations or foundations. For these reasons, and the fact that fewer than half of government organizations have acquired the Statistics Canada tool, it is not possible to produce an accurate and comprehensive answer to this question at the present time.

That said, Statistics Canada has initiated a process to enhance the accuracy of the tool that provides the link between postal codes and electoral districts. The process will allow departments which use the tool to better approximate by electoral district data gathered on a postal code basis. The improved tool is expected to be available at the end of January 2008, and training for government organizations on the use of this tool is planned for February—March 2008.

**Question No. 129—Hon. Marlene Jennings:**

With regards to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly's expected vote in December, on the motion co-sponsored by 74 countries to pass a resolution entitled “Moratorium on the use of the Death Penalty”: (a) when was the directive to withdraw Canada's co-sponsorship of this resolution given to Canadian officials at the UN; and (b) does the government intend to focus efforts on co-sponsoring other resolutions within the UN system which it feels are more in need of support and, if so, which resolutions are these?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the response is as follows:

a) No such directive to withdraw co-sponsorship was given, because Canada had not co-sponsored this resolution.

The Canadian delegation to the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly was instructed to support the resolution entitled “Moratorium on the use of the death penalty”.

Accordingly, Canada voted in favour of the resolution and voted to defeat a series of hostile amendments designed to splinter support or undermine the resolution when it was considered by the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee on 14 and 15 November, 2007. With Canada's support, the resolution was adopted by the Third Committee with 99 votes in favour, 53 votes against, and 33 countries abstaining.

b) The resolution in question was considered by the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee, which deals with social, humanitarian and cultural affairs. Within Third Committee this year, Canada has co-sponsored the following resolutions:

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

Implementation of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities

Policies and programmes involving youth: youth in the global economy—Promoting youth participation in social and economic development

*Routine Proceedings*

Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Aging

Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women

Eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including as instruments to achieve political or military objectives

United Nations Development Fund for Women

Term of office of the members of the Consultative Committee on the United Nations Development Fund for Women

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula

The girl child

Rights of the child

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization

Protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons

Elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief

Human rights in the administration of justice

Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism

The right to food

Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Situation of human rights in Myanmar

Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Situation of human rights in Belarus

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol

Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

International cooperation against the world drug problem.

Question No. 135—**Hon. Keith Martin:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, including Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, for the period of January 24, 2006 to October 31, 2007, inclusive and in each case, where applicable: (a) what was the program under which the payment was made; (b) what were the names of the recipients; (c) what was the monetary value of the payment made; and (d) what was the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

Over the course of the 39th Parliament, a number of government organizations have undertaken efforts to identify federal expenditures by postal codes which could then be summarized by electoral districts using a tool developed by Statistics Canada. While there is some promise in this approach, there remains a significant potential for error since many postal codes straddle two or more electoral districts. Moreover, the government would have significant concerns about the quality of the financial data derived by this approach because there is no way to track the geographic area in which federal funding is actually spent. For example, federal funding could be provided to the head office of a firm situated in one electoral district, while the funding was actually spent by a subsidiary located in another electoral district. This may also be the case for payments to individuals, organizations or foundations. For these reasons, and the fact that fewer than half of government organizations have acquired the Statistics Canada tool, it is not possible to produce an accurate and comprehensive answer to this question at the present time.

That said, Statistics Canada has initiated a process to enhance the accuracy of the tool that provides the link between postal codes and electoral districts. The process will allow departments which use the tool to better approximate by electoral district data gathered on a postal code basis. The improved tool is expected to be available at the end of January 2008, and training for government organizations on the use of this tool is planned for February—March 2008.

Question No. 137—**Ms. Ruby Dhalla:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Brampton—Springdale for the period of January 24, 2006 to November 18, 2007, inclusive and in each case, where applicable: (a) what was the program under which the payment was made; (b) what were the names of the recipients; (c) what was the monetary value of the payment made; and (d) what was the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

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That said, Statistics Canada has initiated a process to enhance the accuracy of the tool that provides the link between postal codes and electoral districts. The process will allow departments which use the tool to better approximate by electoral district data gathered on a postal code basis. The improved tool is expected to be available at the end of January 2008, and training for government organizations on the use of this tool is planned for February—March 2008.

**Question No. 139—Hon. Larry Bagnell:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Yukon for the period of January 24, 2006 to June 21, 2007, inclusive and in each case, where applicable: (a) the program under which the payment was made; (b) the names of the recipients; (c) the monetary value of the payment made; and (d) the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

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That said, Statistics Canada has initiated a process to enhance the accuracy of the tool that provides the link between postal codes and electoral districts. The process will allow departments which use the tool to better approximate by electoral district data gathered on a postal code basis. The improved tool is expected to be available at the end of January 2008, and training for government organizations on the use of this tool is planned for February—March 2008.

**Question No. 140—Hon. Larry Bagnell:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Calgary Southwest for the period of January 24, 2006 to June 21, 2007, inclusive and in each case, where applicable: (a) the program under which the payment was made; (b) the names of the recipients; (c) the monetary value of the payment made; and (d) the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.



*Routine Proceedings*

Over the course of the 39th Parliament, a number of government organizations have undertaken efforts to identify federal expenditures by postal codes which could then be summarized by electoral districts using a tool developed by Statistics Canada. While there is some promise in this approach, there remains a significant potential for error since many postal codes straddle two or more electoral districts. Moreover, the government would have significant concerns about the quality of the financial data derived by this approach because there is no way to track the geographic area in which federal funding is actually spent. For example, federal funding could be provided to the head office of a firm situated in one electoral district, while the funding was actually spent by a subsidiary located in another electoral district. This may also be the case for payments to individuals, organizations or foundations. For these reasons, and the fact that fewer than half of government organizations have acquired the Statistics Canada tool, it is not possible to produce an accurate and comprehensive answer to this question at the present time.

That said, Statistics Canada has initiated a process to enhance the accuracy of the tool that provides the link between postal codes and electoral districts. The process will allow departments which use the tool to better approximate by electoral district data gathered on a postal code basis. The improved tool is expected to be available at the end of January 2008, and training for government organizations on the use of this tool is planned for February—March 2008.

**Question No. 142—Hon. Joe McGuire:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Egmont, for the period of January 24, 2006 to November 20, 2007, inclusive and in each case where applicable: (a) the program under which the payment was made; (b) the names of the recipients; (c) the monetary value of the payment made; (d) the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received; (e) the specific eligibility requirements, admissibility conditions or criteria and evaluation criteria established for each program; (f) the number deemed eligible and the number approved for funding; and (g) the number of applications declined for funding for each program?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

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another electoral district. This may also be the case for payments to individuals, organizations or foundations. For these reasons, and the fact that fewer than half of government organizations have acquired the Statistics Canada tool, it is not possible to produce an accurate and comprehensive answer to this question at the present time.

That said, Statistics Canada has initiated a process to enhance the accuracy of the tool that provides the link between postal codes and electoral districts. The process will allow departments which use the tool to better approximate by electoral district data gathered on a postal code basis. The improved tool is expected to be available at the end of January 2008, and training for government organizations on the use of this tool is planned for February—March 2008.

**Question No. 143—Hon. Andy Scott:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Fredericton for the period of January 24, 2006 to June 21, 2007, inclusive and in each case, where applicable: (a) what was the program under which the payment was made; (b) what were the names of the recipients; (c) what was the monetary value of the payment made; and (d) what was the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

*Routine Proceedings*

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Question No. 144—**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Beauséjour for the period of January 24, 2006 to November 15, 2007, inclusive and in each case, where applicable: (a) what was the program under which the payment was made; (b) what were the names of the recipients; (c) what was the monetary value of the payment made; and (d) what was the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

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Question No. 158—**Hon. Maria Minna:**

What funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Beaches—East York for the period of January 24, 2006 to November 29, 2007, inclusive and in each case, where applicable: (a) what was the program under which the payment was made; (b) what were the names of the recipients; (c) what was the monetary value of the payment made; and (d) what was the percentage of program funding covered by the payment received?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, government information on funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees issued by departments and agencies is based on parliamentary authorities for departmental or agency programs and activities. This information is listed by department and government organization in the public accounts and disclosed on the web sites of government organizations. However, government organizations do not compile or analyze expenditure information by electoral district. Consequently, at present, it would not be possible to provide the information in the form requested.

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*Routine Proceedings*

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\* \* \*

[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, if Questions Nos. 63, 90, 101, 107 and 111 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 63—**Mr. John Cummins:**

With regard to the expansion of the Roberts Bank Port Facility to include a third berth and a second terminal as per the Tsawwassen Final Agreement and related Side-Agreements, the Memorandum of Agreement between the Tsawwassen Band and the Vancouver Port Authority, and the related Settlement Agreement between the Tsawwassen Band, Canada, British Columbia (B.C.), Vancouver Port Authority, B.C. Ferry Services, B.C. Rail Ltd and B.C. Transportation and Financing Authority: (a) how many acres (or hectares) of farm land will be used for Roberts Bank port and rail related developments now underway or under study; (b) with the completion of the Roberts Bank port expansion, including both the third berth and second terminal, what plans, if any, are there to use the Brunswick Point farmlands; (c) is the affected Roberts Bank farmland presently protected by the B.C. Agricultural Land Reserve designation; (d) does the Tsawwassen Final Agreement address the issue of farmland protection and if so, how; (e) will the farmland continue to be protected by the Agricultural Land Reserve designation following ratification of the Tsawwassen Final Agreement and, if not, why; (f) did the Vancouver Port Authority undertake to work jointly with the Tsawwassen Band to ensure the removal of the Agricultural Land Reserve designation from the farmland and, if so, why and what alternate measures did it put in place to protect farmland adjacent to the Roberts Bank port, rail and highway expansion; (g) did the Vancouver Port Authority agree to jointly develop with the Tsawwassen Band a container handling facility on the farmland protected by the B.C. Agricultural Land Reserve designation and, if so, why did the Vancouver Port Authority enter into such an agreement rather than develop container handling facilities further inland in a less environmentally sensitive area; (h) did the Vancouver Port Authority agree that the land would be leased at lease rates based on comparable market equivalent rates for industrial lands associated with port terminals; (i) has the Vancouver Port Authority considered the secondary destruction of farmland and wildlife habitat from the expanded rail yards and the construction of the container storage area on the environmentally sensitive lands adjacent to Roberts Bank and, if so, what measures has it put in place to protect farmland and the ability of wildlife now making use of the area to continue to be able to rely on these farmlands; (j) how much farmland and wildlife habitat will be destroyed as a result of the rail yards and rail line expansion both on the farmland and Deltaport Causeway as part of the Roberts Bank port expansion and how much will be destroyed as a result of the related highway construction; (k) did the Vancouver Port Authority consider the use of less environmentally sensitive land further inland for the storage of containers as well as the unpacking and reshipment of the containers and, if so, what are the options considered and why did it not adopt such options for the port; (l) what part of the farmland adjacent to Roberts Bank is available for the wintering of migrating waterfowl of the Pacific flyway and how many birds did the farmland adjacent to Roberts Bank support in the winters of 2005, 2006 and 2007; (m) has the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment noted snow geese and trumpeter swan crowding in the over wintering areas adjacent to Roberts Bank; (n) what studies have been undertaken by the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada as to the impact of the loss of this land following ratification of the Tsawwassen Final Agreement and the further development of the Roberts Bank port and related rail and

highway infrastructure; (o) what impact on the over-wintering of migratory waterfowl did the studies identify with regard to the loss of habitat due to the Roberts Bank port third berth construction and related rail and highway development and are the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada working with B.C. to ensure that there will be a zero net loss of habitat; (p) was culling of the snow geese and trumpeter swan population considered as an option and, if so, how many birds would have to be culled due to the loss of farmland and wildlife habitat to the Roberts Bank port development; (q) has the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada (i) enumerated the number of barn owls that inhabit barns on farm land in the vicinity of Roberts Bank, (ii) considered the impact of the loss of nesting areas on the barn owl, (iii) identified the number of barn owl nesting areas that have already been destroyed and (iv) has any federal government agency put in place a plan to protect the barn owls and their nesting areas; (r) has the loss of this farmland to port expansion and related container storage and rail and highway infrastructure construction been studied by Agriculture Canada as to the effect on the economic viability of the remaining farms as viable farm units and, if so, what studies have been undertaken; (s) has the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) considered or studied the effect of the loss of the farm land and wildlife habitat on the quality of life and the value of residential property on the Tsawwassen Indian Reserve; (t) has the CMHC considered or studied the effect of the loss of farmland and wildlife habitat on the Tsawwassen and Ladner communities and in south Delta generally and, if so, what effects on the quality of life of the residents and the value of residential properties were identified; (u) did the Vancouver Port Authority agree to support efforts to remove the Wildlife Management Area designation or to refrain from so designating water lots at Roberts Bank and, if so, did the Port request the Province to refrain from making the Wildlife Management Area designation and, if not, has the Port requested the Province to designate the remainder of the Roberts Bank area a Wildlife Management Area and, if not, why; (v) has the Vancouver Port Authority received from B.C. the water lots identified in the Memorandum of Agreement and, if so, which water lots were received; (w) what measures has the Vancouver Port Authority put in place to ensure that migratory birds are not displaced from the foreshore area and that eelgrass beds are not destroyed during port expansion and have these protective measures been in place since the beginning of the Roberts Bank port expansion; (x) have eelgrass beds been destroyed or otherwise impacted and migratory birds been displaced from the foreshore by the work thus far in 2007 and, if so, what are the impacts and the mitigation plan for the loss of the eelgrass beds and the displacement of migratory birds; (y) have studies been undertaken or consideration given to the impact on migratory waterfowl from the shell fish aquaculture operation referenced in the Tsawwassen Final Agreement and, if so, what impacts on migratory waterfowl were considered; and (z) has the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada considered any plan to fill in the foreshore area between the causeways for the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal and the Roberts Bank port and, if so, what would be the impact be on fish and wildlife habitat?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 90—**Mr. Don Bell:**

With respect to the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative: (a) what is the amount the government currently has allocated to spend from 2006 to 2011; (b) since 2006, how many individual spending projects related to this initiative has the government approved for funding and how many have already received their funding; and (c) what are the details of these projects?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 101—**Mr. Michael Savage:**

How many students have accessed, in the last fiscal year, the federal textbook tax credit as outlined in the 2006 federal budget and what was the cost to the federal treasury?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders*Question No. 107—**Ms. Olivia Chow:**

With respect to federal investment and initiatives regarding the Toronto waterfront: (a) for each year, from 2000 to 2007, how much money has the government announced for investment in the waterfront; (b) for each year, from 2000 to 2007, specifying for each project or organization, how much money has been allocated specifically for projects related to the waterfront; and (c) since the year 2000, what reports, studies, polling, focus groups or audits have been conducted by the government with relation to the waterfront?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 111—**Mr. Scott (Fredericton):**

With regard to the Canada–New Brunswick Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund announced and signed in 2004: (a) which projects have been approved by the federal and provincial governments since January 2006; (b) which projects have been announced publicly; and (c) how much money remains un-allocated?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-33, in the name of the hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam, is acceptable to the government and the document is tabled immediately.

(Motion agreed to)

Motion No. P-33

That a humble address be presented to her Excellency praying that she will cause to be laid before this House a copy of the detainee transfer agreement signed between the Canadian Forces and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all other notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**BUDGET AND ECONOMIC STATEMENT  
IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2007**

The House resumed from December 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007 and to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on October 30, 2007, be read the third time and passed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre has four and a half minutes remaining his allotted time.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will use my four minutes to address Bill C-28, but I will preface my remarks by stating how I can barely give my speech on Bill C-28 because I am so angry. My blood is boiling over the way the Liberals and the Conservatives conspired to deny me my right to vote.

I am serving notice right now that I will be raising a question of privilege at a later time. I will be filing a formal complaint in that vein because these guys and you, Mr. Speaker, have been cobbled into this compact between the Liberals and the Conservatives to deny us our democratic right to vote.

I think you have been used by these guys, Mr. Speaker, and I draw your attention to the fact that the very chapter and verse that you cited said—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** The member for Wild Rose is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I think there is a time and a place to deal with the Standing Orders that exist. That is the way we do it and I would ask for the member to get on topic.

• (1705)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** The hon. member, I believe, is making a point on relevance and I think he makes a good point. At third reading, remarks should be limited to the legislation before the House.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised by the intervention by my colleague from Wild Rose, who I know is a democrat and who I know believes in the democratic process. I believe the member for Wild Rose worked just as hard as I did to get here and earn his seat in the House of Commons so that he could vote in a democratic way.

We should all be outraged when two parties conspire to deny the right to vote to the third and the fourth parties in this House.

Everyone here knows that the rule you read, Mr. Speaker, says that by agreement of the government and the opposition whips they may agree to curtail the bells and come and vote. It does not say that the government and the official opposition whips can come together to deny the vote of any other minority party in this House. This really, really bugs me. It is not even that important a vote.

Let me reverse, then, with what little time I have, to talk about why we are opposing Bill C-28, which clearly is the irritant that motivated the government and the Liberals to conspire against democracy today and deny me my privilege, my right to vote in the House of Commons. That is because we oppose Bill C-28. We oppose the fall 2007 economic update for a number of very good reasons.

First of all, it simply takes Canada further in the wrong direction in terms of economic policy for this country. It is not a balanced approach. It is weighted heavily on the side of this ideological vision of the Conservatives that all of our social ills, all of our economic ills and all of our problems with the manufacturing sector can be solved by deeper and deeper corporate tax cuts. That ideology has been disproved any number of times.

*Government Orders*

I point out that we are the victims of a kind of game of chicken, a race between the Conservatives and the Liberals as to who can cut corporate taxes faster. The Minister of Finance, when he was first crafting this economic update, was saying that he would reduce corporate taxes from 22% to 19.5% to 18%.

The Liberals then said they would do it even faster and deeper if they were in power, so the Minister of Finance said that if the Liberals wanted it deeper, here was deeper. Then he decided to move it to 16.5% in 2011 and to just 15% in 2012. This is literally a reckless, irresponsible game of chicken, which results in the squandering of the fiscal capacity of this government and future governments to meet the social deficit and all the other necessary spending that we promised Canadians.

Fair taxation policy is an economic instrument for the redistribution of wealth. It is a way that we can all benefit in the bounty of this great nation by investing in public services so that people from all income strata can benefit. Those guys over there are completely and 110° in the wrong direction.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we proceed to questions and comments, 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 Yukon, Aboriginal Affairs; and the hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East, Justice.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Western Arctic.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I recognize that my hon. colleague did not really have his four and a half minutes to speak. I want to go back to some of the other provisions within the act which we see the Liberals now supporting, in particular, the reduction of the GST by 1%.

Originally the Liberals said this was not a good idea. They stood up and said over and over again that this did not work in the economy. It is a decrease of about \$5 billion a year in the country's revenue.

Basically, then, we should take these 100 members—or 95 members, as the Liberal caucus keeps reducing—and divide that number. The Liberal Party's fear of an election has reduced the government's ability to govern by about \$50 million a member over on that side. The Liberals' fear of the electorate has driven them to this incredible point in parliamentary democracy.

I will ask my hon. colleague if he can understand the rationale of the Liberal members. How can anyone stand here representing and speaking for Canadians from the point of view that has carried them through elections, but then turn around and do this to the citizens of Canada? How does that strike my hon. colleague?

• (1710)

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Western Arctic for his thoughtful analysis of the economic update that we are dealing with today.

Clearly, with regard to the budget surpluses that keep getting sprung on us, the huge budget surpluses every year for 10 years in a row, we get surprised by them, as these phantom surpluses seem to show up out of nowhere. The government's choice to squander half

of that surplus on the 1% cut to the GST is simply not benefiting the people who most need assistance in today's economy.

It shows how out of touch the Liberals and the Conservatives are, because when the people in my riding, the low income riding of Winnipeg Centre, heard that the Conservatives were going to cut the GST, the people I represent thought they were going to cut their GST cheques. When people are poor, cutting the GST means cutting their regular GST refunds. They wondered what the Conservatives were doing cutting their GST. They asked what they heck they were up to.

The Liberals and the Conservatives are just so out of touch. The fact is that the really poor low income people are not going to benefit from the 1% GST cut because they get GST rebates anyway. Those guys simply do not understand.

We know who will benefit: somebody buying a brand new car. I suppose he or she will enjoy a couple hundred bucks of benefit. Somebody buying a brand new house would, I suppose, get a \$2,000 or \$3,000 benefit. That is all well and good, but this is a \$5 billion price tag. I ask my colleagues to think of what we could do with that \$5 billion that would make a meaningful impact.

**An hon. member:** A national child care program.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** My colleague from Halifax suggests a national child care program. The entire Kelowna accord was \$5 billion. There were meaningful things that we could have done with this \$5 billion, things that would have made a difference. We would not have this squandering. The irresponsible spending of the Conservative Party is astounding.

**Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Winnipeg Centre, who has spoken many times in this House about homelessness and poverty in his riding. We are seeing much more of that across the country.

In the statement I made this afternoon in the House, I said that we had just had a study done in British Columbia which showed that we have 10,500 homeless in the province of British Columbia. That was a study done in over 60 cities, not just downtown Vancouver, and it was not done in downtown Toronto, Ontario. Just in 60 communities in British Columbia, there are over 10,000 homeless people. That is a shame.

However, at the same time, we see the government giving huge tax breaks to large corporations. Some of those corporations are doing business in the tar sands of Alberta. Those companies are building pipelines to take the raw bitumen to cities in the U.S.A. to be processed. That could be a potential loss of tens of thousands of jobs.

I want to know why these large corporations, which are cross-border shopping for our oil and our natural resources, taking jobs out of this country, and making billions of dollars in profits, are being given such huge tax breaks while at the same time they are increasing their carbon emissions. They are making Canada's greenhouse gases go up at the expense of all these people in our communities who are living on the streets and in their cars. There are people who are in dire need of some assistance. They could have had that from the government instead of seeing it give all that money to huge corporations.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Island North for pointing out another good reason why we oppose the fall 2007 economic update. It simply rewards, with wheelbarrows full of money, these businesses that do not need the support. It is a reward worth billions of dollars.

We usually use our tax strategy and tax policy to encourage good behaviour by some businesses and discourage bad behaviour by others, or to encourage growth in sectors that otherwise would not grow and need the support.

In other words, we do not need to support growth in the oil sector right now. That sector is doing just fine without yet another wheelbarrow full of dough delivered dutifully to them by the Conservative government.

I believe the Conservatives have squandered yet another multi-billion dollar surplus by misdirecting it. Instead of choosing the priorities of ordinary Canadians, they are choosing the priorities of the sectors they choose to pamper. I should point out that we might not be facing this difficulty if they would only implement the part of the Federal Accountability Act that would create a parliamentary budget officer. That is so we do not get blindsided by these multi-billion dollar surpluses that the Conservatives deny and deny, right up until the date they announce them, and then shovel them to their friends.

If we had more transparency in the budgetary process so that Canadians knew, or at least had some fighting chance to know, what the budgetary surplus really was, I think we would see Canadians mobilizing and demanding spending on the priorities they care about and not having the government squander it by blowing it all on its friends.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to give us his views on an issue that affects many of us: the situation of our seniors. This situation is very disturbing, because we know that thousands of seniors are living well below the poverty line. Earlier, the member made comments about democracy. He just made other comments about the surplus.

I would like to know whether he believes, as many of us do, that the government should be focusing on rectifying the lack of action, the fundamental lack of concern about increasing the guaranteed income supplement and making decent retroactive payments to those people who were shortchanged. Bill C-28 does not address this issue.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question regarding the guaranteed income supplement for senior Canadians. Those who qualify for the guaranteed income supplement are the poorest of the poor. People are not eligible until they are at a very, very low level of income.

When we learned that the government was aware of some 300,000 people who qualified for the GIS but were not receiving it, we leaped into action. With the cooperation of colleagues from the Bloc, we

forced the Liberal government of the day to remedy that situation by at least making more seniors aware of the eligibility for the GIS.

However, then there was the retroactivity. Some of them were not collecting the benefit for which they were eligible for 10 or 11 years, but the retroactivity was only 11 months. My colleague is correct. With such a huge budgetary surplus, why not change the lives of these low income seniors in a dramatic way by giving them the money they were eligible for all along?

Here is my question on a lot of poverty issues, whether it is first nations poverty or the child poverty that we experience in our own ridings. If not now, when? If not now, when there is a \$10 billion budgetary surplus to elevate the social conditions of low income Canadians, then when? Let us imagine the unrealized potential of a child who grows up without the basics needed to flourish. Let us imagine the lost opportunity of these kids who do not have adequate housing or basic nutrition and who have basic needs.

For heaven's sake, 10 record surplus budgets in a row and it is still not time to address basic social needs, but it is time to give even further tax cuts to the biggest and most profitable corporations in the country? There is something fundamentally wrong with the way the Conservatives think. They are missing it.

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I would like to add my own thoughts about what just happened in the vote.

I am an independent member and there are a number of independent members here. We were not given any advance notice about the vote. I was in the lobby and I remember the clock showing that there were 11 minutes and 40 seconds left before the vote. However, when I walked into the chamber the vote was under way.

All I can say is that there are tools that we can use and one of the tools is unanimous consent. If that is the way the game is to be played, that is the way we will play it too. We are a part of this. We were elected and we are entitled to vote. It was just a rotten piece of business the way the vote was conducted.

I want to add my remarks to Bill C-28, the budget implementation bill, and I want to focus on an issue that is very important to Atlantic Canada, and that is the Atlantic accord. Bill C-28 does impact the Atlantic accord, which is a very important part of it.

First I want to say that the Atlantic accords originally were a number of agreements that were not all called Atlantic accords but are assumed now to be called Atlantic accords. Everybody has adopted the term "Atlantic accords" for a number of agreements that took place over a period of time.

Basically, the accords guaranteed that Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador would receive 100% of the revenue from their offshore oil resources. The last agreement was signed on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2005, with Nova Scotia and negotiated and signed by Dr. John Hamm and the former prime minister of Canada. That agreement was very specific that the Atlantic accord arrangement and the Atlantic accord payment would be based on the equalization formula that existed at the time that the calculation was made.

*Government Orders*

It is ironic that the original agreement that I just mentioned, signed on February 14, is two pages long and nine paragraphs long and yet there are 24 pages of amendments in Bill C-28 to amend that two page document.

It is not as simple as that, I understand, but that is what has happened with the Atlantic accord issue. It has gone from a very simple, straightforward agreement, to a very complicated, convoluted agreement that is now subject to interpretation and manipulation.

The government said that the Atlantic accords have been honoured and respected. Now it is saying that it has made them whole with the agreement in Bill C-28. With all due respect, that is not true. The government broke the Atlantic accords and everybody in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland knows it. They have been broken. They are not respected. They are not honoured and they have not been made whole. The only way they can make whole is if this little agreement, this nine paragraph agreement, is honoured.

None of the other alternatives that the government has come up, its different interpretations or manipulations, will satisfy the people in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

There is a lot of confusion surrounding this and I want to go through some of the confusing issues, because it has been confusing for everybody involved with this arrangement, and why the deal was broken.

The province of Nova Scotia put out a brochure telling every Nova Scotian that:

That budget [in March 2007] effectively ripped up our Offshore Accord and all of the opportunities it is expected to bring to Nova Scotians.

The province of Nova Scotia even started an online petition demanding that Ottawa honour the offshore accord and all agreements it signs with any province or territory.

To me, that is a simple concept, a simple principle that all governments should honour. They should honour signed contracts with the province or territory with which they are made or with an individual, a company or another country.

It is unbelievable that the Government of Canada would break a signed contract. I refer again to the Atlantic accord, which is two pages long. It was signed by a minister of the federal government and a minister of the provincial government. It was a signed contract and the government just decided to disregard that contract, to rip it up in the March 19 budget.

• (1720)

A few things are confusing. It is confusing that a lot of the people who came to the House from Alberta and the western provinces were very upset about the national energy program that was foisted on Alberta in the eighties. It redirected revenue from the gas and oil business in Alberta to the federal government and they were very upset about that. It almost caused a revolution in western Canada. However, those same people turned around and did the same thing to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. They imposed changes on the gas and oil regime to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland that took away our share of the revenue or reduced our share in the same way that the NEP took away from Alberta.

I do not understand why they can be so upset about the Alberta experience but then turn around and not hesitate to do it to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

I find it confusing that the government has representatives in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland but none of them were asked for advice, given any consultation or given an opportunity to represent their constituents through this whole exercise of bringing forth these amendments to the Atlantic accord.

Even more amazing, the government has ministers in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and neither one of them were informed. They were blind-sided as much as everyone else.

When the budget came down on March 19, everyone was surprised. No politician east of Ontario was consulted on these changes even though they severely impacted Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and I do not understand that.

I do not understand why the government would not consult with the provincial people, the province of Nova Scotia and the province of Newfoundland, if it were going to make profound changes to this signed contract, but again it did not.

I refer to a statement that Premier Danny Williams made today. He said, "Essentially, we are being railroaded into an untenable situation whereby we are forced to choose the O'Brien formula" and the traditional formula.

The province is being railroaded. That is not the way to run a government and have intergovernmental relations if it wants to succeed.

I do not understand this one. The Prime Minister said that the government essentially broke the accords because it wanted to have one equalization formula in the country and it thought that by doing this that would do it.

However, in the summary of Bill C-28, part 11 states:

Part 11 amends the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to provide for an additional fiscal equalization payment that may be paid to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Therefore, two provinces now have one equalization formula and the other eight provinces have a different one. It is good for Nova Scotia and for Newfoundland and Labrador but it is contrary to what the Prime Minister said. He said that he wanted to have one equalization formula but right here it says that additional fiscal equalization payments will be paid to two provinces but not the others. That does not make sense to me.

Another thing that does not make sense to me, again in the same light that the Prime Minister said that he wanted to have one equalization formula, is that now two provinces under Bill C-28 have the opportunity to calculate an equalization formula, use that formula and take advantage of it, which has a 3.5% escalator clause for every year until 2020. Two provinces have it and eight do not. Again, we have a different equalization program.

*Private Members' Business*

The ironic thing is that when we had the Atlantic accord and equalization, we did have a uniform equalization program across the country, plus the Atlantic accord. However, now the government has actually enshrined two different equalization programs in the country, which seems to go against everything the Prime Minister said that he wanted to do and every justification he had for breaking the accords in the first place.

Another issue that confuses me is what the Minister of Finance wrote in the *Halifax Herald* on June 9. He said, "There will be no side deals on this equalization business".

This is the ultimate side deal. Every year the province of Nova Scotia and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, if they choose to take it, will be able to calculate a parallel equalization formula and then at the end of the year, if that parallel calculation is more than the O'Brien formula, the Government of Canada writes a cheque to the province of Nova Scotia. If that is not a side deal that is renewed every year, I do not know what is.

Another thing is, if I understand this correctly, and I think I do, the O'Brien formula goes to 2013. Eight provinces have a commitment on equalization to 2013. Bill C-28 makes a commitment to 2020 for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland that they would get the old amended formula of equalization. Essentially, there is one deal for two provinces to go to 2020 and one deal for the other eight provinces that goes to 2013.

• (1725)

Again, the whole basis for breaking the accords in the first place, based on the government's statement, was to have one principle based equalization formula.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley but the time has arrived for a deferred recorded division. He has 10 minutes left in his 20-minute speech when the House returns to this matter.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*English*]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

The House resumed from December 5 consideration of the motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 296.

Call in the members.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 27*)

### YEAS

#### Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Alghabra
Allen	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	André
Angus	Arthur
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Barbot
Barnes	Batters
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaikie
Blais	Blaney
Bonin	Bonsant
Bouchard	Boucher
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Brisson	Brown (Oakville)
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooog	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannis
Cannon (Pontiac)	Cardin
Carrie	Carrier
Casey	Casson
Chan	Charlton
Chong	Chow
Christopherson	Clement
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cummins
Cuzner	Davidson
Davies	Day
Del Mastro	Demers
Deschamps	Devolin
Dewar	Dhaliwal
Dhalla	Doyle
Dryden	Duceppe
Dykstra	Easter
Emerson	Epp
Eyking	Faillie
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Fletcher
Freeman	Gagnon
Galipeau	Gallant
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Gravel
Grewal	Guay
Guergis	Guimond
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Holland
Hubbard	Ignatieff
Jaffer	Jean
Kadis	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Keeper
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Komarnicki
Kotto	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laforest	Laframboise
Lake	Lauzon
Lavallée	Layton
Lebel	Lee
Lemieux	Lessard
Lévesque	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
Lussier	MacAulay
MacKenzie	Malhi
Malo	Maloney
Manning	Marleau
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Mathysen
Matthews	Mayes



*Private Members' Business*

McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Menzies	Merrifield
Mills	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Mulcair	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau	Nash
Neville	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Ouellet	Pacetti
Pallister	Paquette
Paradis	Patry
Pearson	Perron
Petit	Picard
Plamondon	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Priddy	Proulx
Rajotte	Ratansi
Redman	Regan
Reid	Richardson
Ritz	Rodriguez
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schellenberger	Scott
Sgro	Shipleigh
Siksay	Simard
Simms	Skelton
Smith	Solberg
Sorenson	St-Cyr
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Stanton
Steckle	Stoffer
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Szabo
Telegdi	Temelkovski
Thi Lac	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Turner
Tweed	Valley
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Vincent	Wallace
Wappel	Warawa
Warkentin	Wasylycia-Leis
Watson	Wilfert
Williams	Wrzesnewskyj
Yelich	Zed— 262

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

**SPECIAL IMPORT MEASURES ACT**

The House resumed from December 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-411, An Act to amend the Special Import Measures Act (domestic prices), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading of Bill C-411, under private members' business.

● (1805)

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

*(Division No. 28)***YEAS**

## Members

André  
Asselin  
Bachand  
Bell (Vancouver Island North)  
Bevington  
Blais  
Bouchard  
Cardin  
Charlton  
Christopherson  
Crowder  
Demers  
Dewar  
Faille  
Gagnon  
Godin  
Guay  
Kotto  
Lafraimboise  
Layton  
Lévesque  
Malo  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
McDonough  
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)  
Nadeau  
Ouellet  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Roy  
Siksay  
St-Hilaire  
Thi Lac  
Basques)  
Vincent

Angus  
Atamanenko  
Barbot  
Bellavance  
Blaikie  
Bonsant  
Bourgeois  
Carrier  
Chow  
Crête  
Davies  
Deschamps  
Duceppe  
Freeman  
Gaudet  
Gravel  
Guimond  
Laforest  
Lavallée  
Lessard  
Lussier  
Marston  
Mathysen  
Ménard (Hochelaga)  
Mulcair  
Nash  
Paquette  
Picard  
Priddy  
Savoie  
St-Cyr  
Stoffer  
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les

Wasylycia-Leis— 68

**NAYS**

## Members

Abbott  
Albrecht  
Allen  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Bagnell  
Barnes  
Beaumier  
Bell (North Vancouver)  
Benoit  
Bezan  
Blaney  
Boucher  
Brison  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Bruinooge  
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)  
Cannon (Pontiac)  
Casey  
Chan  
Clement  
Cullen (Ettobicoke North)  
Cuzner  
Day  
Devolin  
Dhalla  
Dryden  
Easter  
Epp  
Fast  
Fitzpatrick  
Galipeau

Ablonczy  
Alghabra  
Allison  
Anders  
Arthur  
Bains  
Batters  
Bélanger  
Bennett  
Bevilacqua  
Blackburn  
Bonin  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Oakville)  
Brown (Barrie)  
Calkins  
Cannis  
Carrie  
Casson  
Chong  
Comuzzi  
Cummins  
Davidson  
Del Mastro  
Dhaliwal  
Doyle  
Dykstra  
Emerson  
Eyking  
Finley  
Fletcher  
Gallant

*Private Members' Business*

Godfrey	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Hanger
Harris	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Holland	Hubbard
Ignatieff	Jaffer
Jean	Kadis
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Lee	Lemieux
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKenzie
Malhi	Maloney
Manning	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Matthews	Mayes
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Pacetti	Pallister
Paradis	Patry
Pearson	Petit
Poillievre	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Ratansi	Regan
Reid	Richardson
Ritz	Rodriguez
Russell	Savage
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Scott	Shiple
Simard	Simms
Skelton	Smith
Solberg	Sorenson
St. Amand	St. Denis
Stanton	Steckle
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Szabo
Telegdi	Temelkovski
Thibault (West Nova)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Tweed
Valley	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Wappel	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Wilfert	Williams
Wrzesnewskyj	Yelich — 184

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

\* \* \*

*[English]*

## FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

The House resumed from December 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-251, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning labels regarding the consumption of alcohol), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-251 under private members' business.

● (1815)

*Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:*

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Centre appears to have voted twice, once in favour and once against. I would appreciate clarification from him on which way he really intended to vote in this matter.

**Mr. Lee Richardson:** Mr. Speaker, I inadvertently stood on the first round. My intention was to oppose the motion.

**The Speaker:** I assume the hon. member is voting no. We will hear the result accordingly.

*[Translation]*

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

*(Division No. 29)*

## YEAS

## Members

Alghabra	Atamanenko
Bagnell	Bains
Batters	Beaumur
Bélanger	Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bell (North Vancouver)	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bonin
Brison	Brown (Oakville)
Cannis	Chan
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Cotler
Crowder	Cummins
Davies	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Doyle	Dryden
Eyking	Godfrey
Godin	Goldring
Holland	Hubbard
Ignatieff	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keeper	Layton
Lee	MacAulay
Malhi	Maloney
Marleau	Marston
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mathysen	Matthews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McGuire
McTeague	Minna
Mulcair	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nash	Neville
Pacetti	Patry
Pearson	Priddy
Proulx	Ratansi
Redman	Regan
Rodriguez	Russell
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Sgro	Siksay
Simard	St. Amand
St. Denis	Steckle
Stoffer	Szabo
Telegdi	Temelkovski
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Trost
Turner	Valley
Vellacott	Wappel
Wasylycia-Leis	Williams
Wrzesnewskyj — 91	

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
André	Arthur

*Private Members' Business*

Asselin	Bachand
Barbot	Bellavance
Benoit	Bezan
Blackburn	Blais
Blaney	Bonsant
Bouchard	Boucher
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Cardin	Carrie
Carrier	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clement	Comuzzi
Crête	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	Davidson
Day	Del Mastro
Demers	Deschamps
Devolin	Duceppe
Dykstra	Easter
Emerson	Epp
Faille	Fast
Finley	Fitzpatrick
Fletcher	Freeman
Gagnon	Galipeau
Gallant	Gaudet
Goodyear	Gourde
Gravel	Grewal
Guay	Guergis
Guimond	Hanger
Harris	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Jaffer	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Komarnicki
Kotto	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laforest	Laframboise
Lake	Lauzon
Lavallée	Lebel
Lemieux	Lessard
Lévesque	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
Lussier	MacKenzie
Malo	Manning
Mayes	Ménard (Hochelega)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Mills	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nadeau
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Ouellet
Pallister	Paquette
Paradis	Perron
Petit	Picard
Plamondon	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Richardson	Ritz
Roy	Savage
Scheer	Schellenberger
Scott	Shipley
Simms	Skelton
Smith	Solberg
St-Cyr	St-Hilaire
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Thi Lac	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Tweed	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Verner
Vincent	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Yelich
Zed — 163	

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

[English]

It being 6:19 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

\* \* \*

● (1820)

### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP)** moved that Bill C-394, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (sponsorship of relative), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-394, which I call the once in a lifetime bill. I call it that because it would amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that would allow a Canadian resident or permanent citizen to sponsor once in their lifetime a family member from outside the family classes currently defined under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Currently, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act defines family as: a spouse, a common law or conjugal partner who is at least 16 years of age; a dependent child under the age of 22; a child who is a full time student or is dependent upon a parent for financial support; a child who is disabled; a parent or grandparent; a child to be adopted under the age of 18; and a brother, sister, niece, nephew or grandchild who has been orphaned, is under the age of 18 and is not a spouse or common law partner.

What would my bill do? It proposes to add additional members to the sponsorship definition. It will cover, in addition, a son or daughter over the age of 22 who is not dependent on his or her parents. It will cover an aunt or uncle, a brother or sister, a niece or nephew or a first cousin. It will expand the definition of family so the sponsor could add additional people to the definition of those from whom they could choose to sponsor.

Why is this bill necessary? In short, as Statistics Canada recently reported, one in five Canadians is now born outside of Canada. It is an increase of 13.6% from 2001, with the vast majority of newcomers settling in my province of Ontario. We have found that 6.2 million people in Canada were born outside of the country and the foreign born population of our country is now at its highest proportion in 75 years.

In the past five years 1.1 million immigrants have come to Canada and have made it their home, most of them settling in Ontario, which is 52.3% of newcomers. In addition, 17% settled in Quebec and 16% settled in British Columbia.

Why is it important to have a broader definition of family for the purpose of sponsorship? There are three main reasons and I will elaborate on each of them. The first is to reunite families. The second is to help new Canadians who come to Canada succeed. The third is for the economic and social benefit of all Canadians.

*Private Members' Business*

First, reuniting families is a very important goal in and of itself. The current act recognizes the important role that family members play in the life of a new Canadian, but the current family class rules are simply too restrictive and it means that many close relatives are simply not eligible.

Many people have a close relative, such as a brother or sister, who they would desperately like to have join them in Canada. A brother can be as close to someone as a parent, or an aunt and uncle can be as close as a grandmother or grandfather, but the current rules do not allow for this. Therefore, families are kept apart.

I want to provide three examples of people of whom I know, but there are many people who find themselves in these kinds of situations.

I have a woman in my riding who is a 62-year-old an English teacher from Ukraine. The age requirement has prevented her from sponsoring her 31-year-old daughter and 15-year-old grandson to join her in Canada. She said:

It's hard. I'm getting to that age when I could need some help. And I want to care for my grandson as well. We don't want to be separated, but there's so little we can do.

She lives in Toronto with her older son. She said about her daughter, "We talk on the phone every day, but it's simply not the same".

• (1825)

I know of another case, a refugee who came to Canada over 25 years ago from Vietnam. He is now in his forties and is very successful. He has a very elderly mother who lives with him. His only relative left in Vietnam is his sister, who just misses qualifying under the point system. He desperately wants to reunite his family. His mother is too old and does not want to travel to Vietnam. He wants to bring his sister to Canada.

I know of another person whose parents died when he was very young. He was the elder of three siblings and, in essence, raised his brother and sister. He has only one sibling left in his country of origin. He was like the parent to that sibling, but because they are now adults, they do not qualify under the current rules. Therefore, the bill would make all the difference to someone in that situation.

There are many examples that I could offer of people who are simply denied the ability to reunite their families under the current definition. Reuniting families should be a major aim of our immigration policy and the bill would help a great deal to do this.

The second reason for the bill is to help new Canadians succeed. Canada is a country of newcomers. Helping new Canadians adjust and thrive in their new country is one of the primary goals of our immigration policy. The bill would significantly help with that.

Many immigrants to Canada bring their children with them or have children soon after they arrive. This adds to our child care crisis. New Canadians are barely on their feet financially with almost no social network. They have to find enough revenue for the ever rising cost of child care because our country has failed parents. It has not introduced a national child care program to meet the needs of children with early learning and care, so parents, for the most part,

are left on their own to cope and find child care. It is difficult to find and it is expensive.

This search on the part of new Canadians becomes especially difficult when parents are forced to upgrade their qualifications in order to work in their fields of expertise while in Canada. Costly and time consuming studies place an extra burden on their child care needs.

If brothers and sisters, or aunts and uncles were allowed to be sponsored under Bill C-394, they could play an important role in helping fulfill the family's child care needs. This would also help newcomers to get the work and the skills they need to succeed because they would be assured and would have the peace of mind that their children were cared for by a family member.

The families of many new Canadians include older parents or grandparents. Caring for an aging family member can place a great strain on anyone. However, for newcomers, with new social networks, lack of financial stability, an urgent need to acquire new skills and oftentimes with children to look after, the task becomes truly arduous and limits their capacity to adjust and succeed in Canada. Allowing the sponsorship of siblings, older children or nieces and nephews in Canada makes the family unit much stronger and capable of caring for its aging members.

Adjusting to a new life in Canada while finding work can be challenging. As I mentioned, many immigrants find themselves unable to get work in the fields of their expertise and specialization without upgrading their qualifications. The financial, emotional and social support that family members provide for each other makes it much more likely for a newcomer to succeed in finding work and the time and resources to upgrade their skills. The once in a lifetime bill would help reunite families and make them stronger.

The third reason I believe this definition should be expanded, as I have outlined in my bill, is it has economic and social benefits for all Canadians. Allowing new Canadians to reunite with important family members is critical to their success upon arrival in Canada. The success of immigrants to Canada is a net benefit to all Canadians.

• (1830)

As a member of the industry committee, I know there is a labour shortage in Canada. Allowing family members to come through a sponsorship program is a relatively risk free way of bringing in new Canadians who can be part of the economic strength of our country. The sooner and more efficiently new Canadians can adjust and enter the workforce, the better for our economy.

Lack of family reunification leads to a greater sense of isolation, fewer social supports, fewer resources and therefore a much more difficult time integrating into the Canadian economy and supporting oneself. Such circumstances are a greater strain on the country's social infrastructure and do not allow new Canadians to get ahead. It robs the national economy of valuable contributions.

The restrictive definition of family class in the current legislation does not allow for the sponsor of relatives who can greatly help new Canadians play an important role in our growing economy.

*Private Members' Business*

It is well known, after many years of budget cuts, that there are problems with the application processing within Citizenship and Immigration, but this should not impact the right of families to be reunited. The problem of the backlog lies with the funding and resourcing of the department and not with the families that submit applications.

What effect will the bill have on our current immigration targets? In a word, none. The bill would in no way modify immigration targets or quotas, but it would positively affect the lives of Canadians who have family living abroad.

Bill C-394 has no impact on the current standards, regulations and rules stipulated for immigration to Canada. Additional family members sponsored under this new legislation would remain subject to all current immigration selection criteria.

In summary, Canada is a country of newcomers. We have based our success, our history, our economy on the efforts of generation, after generation of newcomers. We know newcomers do best when they have the benefit of strong family supports, just like all of us. However, newcomers face additional challenges. In fitting in the economy, they may face language barriers and the challenge of learning about their new society. It would make their lives much easier to have family members with them.

We know the current law is too restrictive and leaves many families separated and in distress. There are many examples, whether families are here from immigration or they came as a refugee. Families are separated and they desperately want to reunite with their family members, especially if they are isolated, alone, in the country of origin. They want to get that family members back to Canada.

The change I am proposing does not solve all the problems with immigration or even with the sponsorship program. However, it would solve a particular problem that today has no solution for so many families and creates such a crisis for so many landed immigrants and Canadians here.

Sponsorship is such a low risk form of immigration for Canada. The families bear the cost and the responsibility. We know that when people come to Canada through the sponsorship program, they have a greater chance of fitting in, of finding success and of settling in their new country because of the sponsorship program.

I want to add that many newcomer organizations strongly support this once in a lifetime bill. They are very excited about it. Many people have watched this debate closely and want to see its success.

I thank my colleagues in advance for their generous support.

● (1835)

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, close to a million people from around the world are on a waiting list to come to Canada. Grandparents and parents right now have a waiting time of about three to four years, depending on where they come from, and sometimes the waiting time is even closer to six years.

I am not sure if the member is aware that we also allow an individual in Canada, if he or she has absolutely no other family, to sponsor a member of his or her family or a close relative.

This idea is something that was thought about and discussed. One thing that must happen is that the provinces sign on. Some provinces may not want to sign on because it will put a strain on them.

I am saying to the member that although this is a good idea, everyone who has immigrated to Canada would want to sponsor someone, once in his or her lifetime. There are close to seven million people who were not born in Canada and all of them would want to sponsor someone.

I am just wondering if the member has thought about the numbers when she says that this will have absolutely no strain on the immigration process. People who are getting sponsored, people who are waiting, people who are in line, the number of which is now close to 250,000 people, how many people are we going to allow under this category, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000? If so, if everyone wants to sponsor someone, that would be close to seven million.

How long is it going to take them to come to Canada? I am just wondering if the member has really crunched the numbers. Has she thought it out?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member was listening closely to my comments earlier. As I said before, the amendment being proposed in Bill C-394 does not change the limits on the overall numbers of people who would be allowed into Canada through the sponsorship program.

The difference between people who are now on the list and who may be waiting for some period of time is that the people who today do not qualify because the bill is not in place can never get on the list.

Yes, today some people have to wait a few years, but there are people today who have waited a lifetime and can never get on the list. That is what the bill is intended to address.

In terms of the member's statement that everyone will want to sponsor someone, I challenge that. A sponsorship application is very serious. It means a long term responsibility and a very serious financial commitment. I can tell the hon. member that not everyone wants to take that on. One has to be very serious about the responsibility under the sponsorship requirements.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Parkdale—High Park for tabling the bill.

There are others of us in the House who have tabled similar legislation in the past. The member for Vancouver East, the member for Winnipeg North and I have all tabled similar legislation, because we in the NDP caucus believe that the definition of family that is in the current immigration act does not apply to all families. We know that in many families the relationships that are formed between a brother and a sister are stronger than that between parents and that the definition discriminates against those families and those relationships.

*Private Members' Business*

It is something that we know is very important. We also know that it is very important to strengthen the whole family reunification aspect of our immigration law. That has been a keystone of immigration policy in Canada. It is one of the strongest aspects of our immigration policy, because people who arrive with family members already in Canada tend to be happier. They settle faster. They integrate into the communities faster because they have that family network to help them to settle successfully here in Canada.

This will also make Canada much more competitive with our main competitors for immigration, such as the United States, because we will be seen as a country that encourages the maintenance of family relationships when immigration happens.

I think that makes this a very pro-family piece of legislation. I would like the member to comment on how pro-family this piece of legislation is.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Burnaby—Douglas for his work in presenting this kind of legislation in the past. While I am at it, I would like to also thank my colleague from Vancouver East and my colleague from Winnipeg North, who also in the past tabled similar legislation. They—

• (1840)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I am sorry, but the time for questions and comments has expired.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-394, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (sponsorship of relative).

This private member's bill would grant every Canadian citizen or permanent resident the opportunity to sponsor once in his or her lifetime one foreign national who is a relative but not a member of the existing family class. The existing family class is a spouse, a common law or conjugal partner, a child under 22, a parent, or a grandparent. In that sense, there is an opportunity to sponsor family.

All of us appreciate the importance of strengthening families. Family reunification has been a cornerstone of Canadian immigration for decades, and this government is committed to ensuring that families represent a vibrant component of our immigration program in the years ahead. Indeed, that is what Canadians expect. Canadians expect a government that is firmly committed to families and to strengthening the ways that families can be reunited with their loved ones from overseas should they choose to make Canada their new home.

The issue raised by Bill C-394 is not new. There is a considerable history to it. The bill was previously introduced on two occasions and was defeated by significant margins at second reading. Bill C-272 was previously defeated on March 23, 2005 by a margin of 167 to 76. Bill C-436 was defeated on April 18, 2004 by a margin of 149 to 40. It is worth noting that both our party and the then Liberal government were clearly opposed to the previous incarnations of this bill.

The bill defines a relative as a brother or a sister of the sponsor, an aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, first cousin, or a child who is under 22 and not dependent on the sponsor.

The management and implementation of a provision for once in a lifetime sponsorship of a family member is problematic for a number of reasons, all of which apply to the private member's bill before the House today. Such a wide open expansion of the family class category would place an unsupportable burden on existing resources.

It is interesting that the member did not answer the question about the uptake, or how many people this might bring into the system. If, as she said, the targets were not going to be changed, where would those numbers come from, where would they be taken away from?

There is no doubt that it would increase inventories exponentially and likely result in substantial delays for processing other applications, including those from immediate family members or applicants from other family class categories. This clearly is not in the best interests of Canadians.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park knows there are extensive family reunification provisions in the current Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the regulations and guidelines thereunder. These regulations, passed in 2002, significantly enhance the family reunification program and more closely reflect today's social and cultural realities.

It is easier today for Canadians and permanent residents to sponsor their loved ones from abroad in a well-managed and sustainable way.

These changes, for example, provide for equal treatment under the law for common law and conjugal partners. They expand the definition of dependent child to better reflect the new realities of children being reliant on their parents for longer periods of time. They lower the age at which Canadian citizens or permanent residents are eligible to sponsor from 19 years of age to 18 years of age.

Under the immigration and refugee protection regulations, Canadians and permanent residents can also sponsor any other relative, regardless of age or relationship, if the sponsor does not have a more immediate living family member.

These enhancements to the family class facilitate family reunification while ensuring an appropriate balance between economic and non-economic immigrants. In the absence of a significant increase in admissions and resources, the adoption of this bill would have significant impacts on the balance and on the overall inventory and processing.

While the previous Liberal government allowed the backlog to balloon to over 800,000, the ever-increasing number of applicants wishing to make Canada their home continues to put additional pressures on the immigration system which many say is already too cumbersome and slow. These pressures would be compounded exponentially by the implementation of Bill C-394.

Simply put, implementing this legislation would impede CIC's ability to ensure the program is balanced and responsive to government priorities, including the ability to meet labour market demands.

• (1845)

The proposed amendments would also have potential impacts on matters of provincial and territorial concern. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has consulted with other levels of government, partners and stakeholders to find a way to work on immigration issues in a more coordinated and cooperative way.

For example, under provincial and territorial immigration agreements, the government has removed the limit on the number of immigrants provinces can nominate each year, allowing the provinces a better opportunity to meet their unique economic, social and labour market needs.

We have also committed to find ways to help temporary foreign workers and students settle in the provinces. In recent years most have gone to Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver because large, established ethnic communities in those cities have made them attractive to newcomers. This has been a major challenge for the immigration system. Therefore, we have aligned our system to make it more responsive to labour market and regional needs.

As all members know, part of the government's plan for the coming year involves introducing a new avenue to immigration, a new economic class that will help attract and retain certain skilled temporary workers and international students with Canadian degrees and work experience.

We must ensure that the immigration program continues to meet the needs of all Canadians in the future. It is how the government will move forward in the future.

We agree with the concept of making it easier for families to reunite with their loved ones. We agree with the idea of strengthening families in general. But, the government has also a duty to properly manage the immigration program and ensure the principles of integrity and balance are upheld.

It is worth noting that the previous Liberal government was vehemently opposed to this legislation when it was introduced in previous sessions. On November 3, 2003, a former parliamentary secretary to the minister of citizenship and immigration said:

Such a wide open approach would significantly increase processing delays and the size of existing backlogs for every immigrant category. It would place an unworkable burden on existing resources, and it would help to undermine the integrity of the entire immigration program by increasing the opportunities for fraud.

This position was echoed by another former Liberal parliamentary secretary to the minister of citizenship and immigration, the current member for Vancouver Centre, who, on February 12, 2004 said that the actual effect of the legislation would be:

—anyone could sponsor nearly anyone else as a member of the undefined relative class without any thought to fiscal support or employability. The new person could then repeat the exercise, as could their sponsored applicant, and so on, creating a multiplier effect. The result would be an almost limitless chain of family class immigration based simply on loose associations.

If this proposal is adopted, not only will we need significant resources to deal with a larger number of cases, but we will also need proportionally more resources to deal

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with the family class applications, simply to maintain the existing ratio between family and economic class immigration.

Moreover, this could result in new frauds and it could undermine the integrity of the economic class immigration, since a significant number of economic class immigrants have distant relatives in Canada who could sponsor them.

The changes proposed...runs counter...to the principles of fairness, balance and consultation, and so we cannot support it.

That is what that member said. Those are not our words.

Implementing Bill C-394 would have far-reaching negative implications on the integrity of the current immigration system. Its specific proposals to expand the family class are both unsustainable and unmanageable. We therefore cannot support Bill C-394 and urge all hon. members to do the same.

**Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we witnessed today in question period, indeed, immigration is an important issue, an issue that requires vision, and an issue that speaks to the future of our country. When we look at the years 2011 to 2015, approximately 100% of the net labour force growth will come from immigration alone.

We take these private members' bills very seriously. We analyze them. We see how, in a holistic manner, they can address key concerns related to immigration. There is nobody in the House who does not care about reuniting families or helping new Canadians or understanding the economic and social benefits of immigration.

We do this as a modern society that has seen this country transform itself, and this bill is debated at a time when the census report, the 2006 statistics report, was actually released. What do we see? We see that the 2006 census enumerated 6,186,950 foreign born in Canada, representing one in five, that is 19.8% of total foreign born population, the highest proportion in 75 years.

Between 2001 and 2006, the foreign born population increased by 13.6%, four times higher than 3.3% growth of the Canadian born population, 19.8%. It is higher than the U.S. at 12.5%, and lower than Australia at 22.2%.

The census also estimates that 1,000,110 recent immigrants arrived in Canada between January 1, 2001 and May 16, 2006. These newcomers make up 17.9% of the total foreign born population and 3.6% of Canada's population of 31.2 million.

I say this to paint a picture of the new Canada that is emerging and the resources that will be required by this government and future governments to address the key issue of immigration and immigrant settlements. However, as I reviewed Bill C-394 it was déjà vu, because the material in Bill C-394 is not exactly new. Bill C-272 resembled it very much and so does Bill C-436.

This bill would allow Canadian citizens and permanent residents to sponsor once in a lifetime a relative who is not a member of the family class. It defines a relative as a brother or sister, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew, first cousin or child who is 22 years of age or older and is not dependent on sponsors.

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It mirrors some of the provisions which already exist in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act regulations to process relatives who do not normally fall under the family class.

The bill essentially could create an exponential influx of immigration applications that could result in delays in processing priority members of the family class that are spouses, partners and dependent children. That could happen. It would also further increase processing times for other members of family class, such as parents and grandparents.

Good intentions also have to be followed with proper analysis of numbers and resources that are available. After today's question period, it was pretty clear that the present government does not have enough resources to address the present issues that our immigration system faces. It simply does not make sense at this point in time, unless we are willing to engage in a broader review of the immigration system in Canada with brand new goals and of course greater resources, to look at this particular bill.

We already have a backlog of 800,000 applications. That is stretching the present resources of the government.

● (1850)

I am one of those who has said, as I asked today in question period, that in fact the proper resources need to be made available so that we can reduce the backlog to have an effective and efficient immigration system. A system where we are going to require, as a nation that is an aging society, to really tap for the future not only the obvious social and cultural benefits drawn from immigration. I believe that immigration is an economic imperative as we look at the competition that exists for skilled workers and labour force of the future.

The hon. member will have to answer many questions related to whether or not she has actually crunched the numbers, as we say, in relationship to her bill. My sense is that she actually has not and that in fact this would inflate the demand for applications abroad as well.

This, of course, would result in larger processing inventories for family cases when demand in family class has already exceeded government resources. This would hamper, also, the efforts to process priority family members, such as spouses, common-law partners, conjugal partners and dependent children, as quickly as possible. It would also add pressure to the processing of other family class applicants.

So, these bills cannot be just introduced ad hoc. The immigration system is a bit more complicated than perhaps the hon. member would believe. We need to look at it and balance the various needs.

It is clear, and it has been pointed out already by the parliamentary secretary, that in fact there are provisions that allow people obviously to come to Canada, that is how they get here, and this bill essentially would stress the already stressed resources of the immigration department at home as well as abroad.

Finally, I want to say to the hon. member that I have really not heard anything new from her that was not heard during the debates and presentations of Bill C-272 and Bill C-436. This is kind of déjà vu all over again.

It is a question that, once it has failed, we need to, as members of Parliament presenting private members' bill, present new evidence that in fact things can work better. With a government that is not willing to provide greater resources to immigration, that is going to be difficult.

However, I am one of those individuals who think that, given the challenges that we face as a country, as I said earlier, an aging population, skills shortages and reunification of families, we need to look at immigration in a broader scope. We need to redefine exactly what our targets are and redefine what it is that the government is willing to invest in immigration. Is the present government willing to make it a priority?

Because, quite frankly, what I have seen to date in the short time that I have been immigration critic is a government that has not made immigration a priority, although every indicator, social, cultural and economic, points to the fact that the future of our country largely depends on our ability to attract immigrants.

Whether we are talking about the 800,000 application backlog or whether we are talking about the \$100 million shortfall with the Province of Ontario to help it deal with immigration issues, as well as the failure of the accreditation of foreign credentials, there is a lot of work to do in this portfolio.

I hope that the Prime Minister, as well as cabinet, begins to really realize that immigration in this country should not be an after-thought. Immigration is a key issue. It speaks to the future of our country and it should be taken more seriously by the Conservative government.

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-394. This enactment would allow a Canadian citizen or permanent resident to sponsor, once in their lifetime, a relative who is not a member of the family class.

I would like to thank the member for Parkdale—High Park for raising this issue in response to repeated requests that we receive as members of Parliament when we meet citizens who wish to be reunited with family members. Their frustration on discovering that they cannot be reunited is evident. Moreover, those who already have a case in process tell us that they, too, experience frustration and exasperation when they find out how long they will have to wait before the government processes their case.

The Bloc Québécois believes that family is of vital importance. That is why we have always supported policies that help families. That applies to immigration too. This issue deserves a close look. I am very glad that one of our colleagues has opened the debate on this issue in the House. I think that the questions that will be raised and the discussion they will lead to will prove useful.

Canada has a moral obligation to do whatever it can to reunite families. We will therefore support the principles underlying this bill.



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We would like this bill to go through a preliminary consultation process during meetings of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. We want to be sure that we understand the consequences of this bill on the immigration program.

The government will probably want to maintain the 60:40 balance between economic class immigration—business people, independent workers and skilled workers—and family class and refugee immigration.

I represent the riding of Vaudreuil-Soulanges in Quebec. The number of immigrants in my riding is growing. Lots of people come to my office to ask me to help them sponsor a relative. I am sure that other ridings in Quebec are experiencing the same thing.

We would like to hear about what happened from 1988 to 1993, when the Conservatives in power at the time changed the sponsorship rules by expanding the family class. I think it found itself in a situation in which it did not have the ability to process all the files of everyone who took advantage of this legislative change. We should remember the backlog that existed at a number of immigration offices abroad. At that time, different programs in the public service were experiencing major budget cuts and immigration was no exception.

Now, maybe the federal government has the means, but that is not the case for all the provinces. It is true that there are big challenges to integrating immigrants, but that does not prevent this bill from moving forward and at least continuing somewhat, so that it can be considered in committee.

Although the list of people who can be sponsored under the family class was expanded a few years ago, Canada's regulations concerning immigration and refugees are still quite limited in their definition of family members. Unfortunately, efforts in recent years have not solved the problem of wait times.

It may be time to expand the family class. I believe that an in-depth review in committee will allow us to better assess the mechanisms and resources that will be needed if Parliament passes this bill.

Canada certainly has to be able to control its immigration and set some limits. The limit here is allowing someone, once in their lifetime, to sponsor a relative. I think the hon. member was trying to limit massive immigration of relatives, but I wonder if she is taking the right approach.

There are so many problems to resolve in our immigration system. Certain mechanisms and principles distort the real objectives of immigration. Insufficient resources are a major problem across the board in immigration.

The consideration of a bill like this will at least force a debate and keep the pressure on the government for adequate funding to provide proper settlement services for those we take in, while not ignoring our humanitarian duty and compassion.

We need to bring meaning back to the expression “human compassion”, far too often rendered meaningless by acts that are not consistent with the family reunification programs.

● (1900)

The social costs of prolonged periods of separation must not be forgotten in our decision.

Although we are in favour of the principle of this bill, we believe it poses some problems in terms of its application. Is the hon. member proposing an increase in the number of immigrants or more changes to the 60/40 ratio between economic class immigrants and family class immigrants? Will immigration targets vary within the current limits on the admissible number of immigrants or is the hon. member suggesting the limits be increased? If we maintain the current numbers and the current limits, what impact will this have on the already lengthy wait times? If we increase the number of files to process, is the department capable of absorbing the new workload? Considering the existing backlog in processing files, will this bill not make matters worse?

For now it would be important to look at whether this will have a significant impact on the ability of Quebec and Canada to integrate the people sponsored through this bill. There are other questions that need to be asked and these could be discussed in greater length during the next debate on this bill.

Not only is the protection of families a fundamental principle entrenched in international law, but the principle also appears in section 3 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. That section outlines the goals of the act and specifies that one of the goals is to ensure that families are reunited. We must not lose sight of that objective. It is from that perspective, I think, that the member introduced this bill. We must at least consider this bill, allow it to move forward and be studied in committee. We could then at least debate, once and for all, the shortcomings of the immigration system. We could identify its shortcomings and the opportunities presented.

In accordance with international human rights texts, the protection of families is a responsibility of the state. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights specifies that family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state. In other words, the state, which is Canada, must do everything it can to support family reunification. This is in the legislation and, as parliamentarians, we must examine the matter and not completely dismiss the possibility of debating such an important issue.

The Bloc Québécois believes that some of the existing mechanisms facilitating family reunification need to be remedied. As many people already know, among other things, I am extremely involved in refugee files. When a family reunification file takes eight or nine years to resolve, that is completely unacceptable. That is an example of how the family reunification policy must be improved. We must examine and assess the possibility of expanding the category immediately, as I was saying earlier. We must work from that perspective and with an objective that is as open as possible to other family members, as set out in this bill.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1905)

[English]

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to speak on this fine legislation submitted by my colleague from Parkdale—High Park.

My colleague follows a long line of New Democrats who have proposed this idea to the House and who will keep proposing this idea to the House until it becomes a reality. Why? Because it is a good idea, it makes sense, and it will contribute enormously to the future of this country.

Those members who have tried to persuade Parliament to go down this path deserve acknowledgement and congratulations. My colleagues from Burnaby—Douglas, Vancouver East and of course Parkdale—High Park all deserve congratulations for their persistence and perseverance in bringing this forward to the House of Commons.

Because one day the bill will pass. One day the NDP will persuade a critical mass in the chamber that it is worth pursuing, because we are not talking about some outrageous, outlandish proposal that is going to bring this country to its knees. No, we are talking about a proposal that will fact build this country and create enormous potential for ensuring an economically prosperous future for every one of our citizens.

It is ludicrous for anyone to suggest, as has been suggested many times in this debate, that this proposal will cause the floodgates to open and thousands of immigrants will be knocking at our doors and pounding at the immigration system's door and demanding to get in. That is not going to be the case. We are talking about a proposal that would simply expand the definition of family to bring it into the 21st century, a definition of family which recognizes that sometimes it takes a whole group of extended family members to raise children and provide nurturing care because they have to or because they want to.

All the NDP is saying to members today is to get their heads out of their little boxes and think creatively. I want them to think about what it would mean to have aunts and uncles, cousins or other relatives coming to join them if they were alone and isolated in a foreign land. I ask them to think about what it would do for that family unit.

I ask them to think about what it would do to strengthen our communities. I ask them to think about what it would do in terms of providing services and supports that otherwise are required to be provided by the government and would cost the taxpayers money.

As we see this, it is a cost saving that we are talking about, not an added burden on our economy or to the taxpayers of this country. We are talking about strengthening society. That can only be good for us in all senses of the word.

I come from what I would consider probably the most diverse constituency in this country. I am sure my colleague from Vancouver East or others might take umbrage at that, but in fact Winnipeg North has such a great diversity of people that one could say we have the world in one constituency.

Many decades ago, immigrants built our community, whether they were of Ukrainian, Polish or German origin. Now there are waves of

new immigrants who are continuing with that pioneering tradition and building the community, including Filipinos, Punjabis and many more. These are people who have contributed a great deal to the province of Manitoba and in fact to this entire country.

I want to say for the Conservative members here, and especially for the parliamentary secretary, that they should go back to a few years ago, six years, when this idea was presented to the immigration committee as those of us on that committee were dealing with Bill C-11, the supposed framework piece of legislation to revamp our immigration legislation and bring it into the modern century.

• (1910)

At that time, the NDP proposed an amendment to that bill to in fact expand the definition of family. That proposal was taken very seriously by the Conservatives, to such a point that they actually voted for the amendment. They joined with New Democrats to send a message to the Liberals to get their heads out the sand and start thinking about what it really means to build community, to give families support, and to create a country that is truly respectful of everyone's differences.

A motion was presented in 2001 during that debate on the bill and it was only narrowly defeated, by one vote, in a vote of seven to six at the immigration committee. Conservative members joined with New Democrats in supporting this idea because it truly is worthwhile to pursue.

Let us remember that we are not talking about a wide open, permanent solution. In effect, we are talking about a pilot project, a test run. We are talking about an idea that actually came from the minister of immigration at the time, Elinor Caplan, in discussions with my colleague from Vancouver East. The minister said that perhaps they could try, on a pilot project basis, this idea of once in a lifetime: that a family here, either citizens or permanent residents, could in fact sponsor a relative who was outside the traditional definition of family.

That was a very important suggestion. Unfortunately, her colleagues in the Liberal Party never pursued it and in fact have vetoed it and stopped it every step of the way.

I want to remind members that it was a Liberal cabinet minister who ran against me in the 2004 election and was defeated at the polls largely because he refused to accept this notion that family has a broad definition, and that if we are truly serious about an open door policy we would encourage this kind of sponsorship, knowing full well that it does not open the floodgates.

It is not going to produce all kinds of illegal immigrants because in fact these sponsorships have to go through the same rigorous rules that now apply to anyone who is sponsored, whether we are talking about a husband, a wife, a mother, a father, a grandparent or a child under the age of 22. We are just saying to open the definition, to try it and see what happens.

Let me say that I am disappointed in the Conservatives. I am not surprised given their record, which is like that of the Liberals, with respect to other proposals dealing with sensible family policies in the area of immigration. This is a government that claims to represent family but turns down a family because one child in that family has a disability.

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I have now half a dozen cases on my plate of families that were accepted under the Manitoba provincial nominee program, because their skills were needed in our province and in this country, and they were turned down by the federal government because one child in that family of four, five or six has a disability.

I want to say shame on the Conservatives for that kind of discriminatory anti-human rights policy. If they are serious about building families, they will fix this matter of immigrants who come here with disabilities and stop enforcing this rigorous definition of economic and social demand on our society. We are talking about children with disabilities who are not going to cost our system one penny because they have families and relatives who will support them and help them every step of the way.

I want to say that if the government is serious about family, it will also deal with the backlogs that my colleagues in the House have mentioned today. They will deal with the fact that so many people cannot complete their sponsorships, whether we are talking about mothers, fathers, grandparents or children under the age of 22. They have to wait years because this government, like the previous Liberal government, refuses to bolster the numbers in the immigration department to ensure that all of our offices are properly resourced to provide for decent, humane treatment in our immigration system.

I call upon the government and all members in this House to support this bill. It is the least they can do if they are serious about an open door policy, about attracting skilled immigrants to this country, which we need so desperately, and about ensuring that the family is the bedrock of our society. If we cannot do that, we cannot guarantee a future for our citizens in this country. I would suggest that every member in this House should give this a chance and let it get to committee.

- (1915)

We are not saying that the whole thing must be supported right now. We are saying that for once in the history of this Parliament, after four private members' bills have been initiated in this chamber, allow one of those bills to go to committee for input, discussion and consideration. If we were to do that, we would truly know whether there are serious obstacles to this constructive proposal or whether the government and the Liberal members are simply being destructive and counterproductive in terms of building a strong country that is built on an open door policy and that is founded on the principles of humanitarian and compassionate actions.

I suggest that there is only one way for this Parliament to go and that is to give this bill a try and send it to committee. Let us ensure that we have an immigration policy that we can all be proud of.

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

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007 and to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on October 30, 2007, be read the third time and passed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** When we were last debating Bill C-28, the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley still had 10 minutes and he now has the floor.

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, when I finished my first 10 minutes I was going through the contradictions in the ongoing discussions about the Atlantic accords and the different things that came up that confused Nova Scotians and Newfoundlanders about the approach that the government has about the Atlantic accords and the fact that it just took them away.

In case there is any question about the accords being taken away, I would like to read from the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, an independent think tank, that said:

The new program also reverses a pre-election commitment to exclude natural resource revenues, and includes 50% of these revenues.

It goes on to say:

The protection provided by the Accords is undermined.... In the authors' view, this violates both the letter and the spirit of the Accord.

Just today the Premier of Newfoundland said:

Essentially, we are being railroaded into an untenable situation whereby we are forced to choose the O'Brien formula....

In the mail-out that he sent around to every Nova Scotian, Premier MacDonald said:

That budget effectively ripped up our Offshore Accord and all of the opportunities it is expected to bring to Nova Scotians.

Also in the mail-out, Premier MacDonald called on all Nova Scotians to join him and sign a petition "demanding that Ottawa honour the Offshore Accord and all agreements it signs with any province or territory".

We would not think we would need to have a petition to get the Government of Canada to honour a signed agreement with anyone, whether it is a province, another country, a business person or a single person. However, the Premier of the Province of Nova Scotia felt compelled to call on Canadians, and Nova Scotians in particular, to sign a petition demanding that the government honour signed agreements.

We now have an agreement with Nova Scotia but it is not the Atlantic accord as requested in the petition that the Premier of Nova Scotia asked for.

I want to go on to another bit of confusion. I want to point out that when the Prime Minister came to Nova Scotia in 2005 he was very supportive of the Atlantic accords. I want to read a couple of things he said. In the *Halifax Sunday Herald* of February 6, he said:

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...it was Mr. Hamm's leadership that brought home the agreement, which he described as the best opportunity Nova Scotia had in 138 years.

Why would he say that and then take it away? That is confusing to a lot of people.

The Prime Minister went on to say that the accords were "courageous and visionary". I do not understand how he could say that and now the government refers to the accords as double-dipping, cherry-picking and double-stacking.

I do not know how one goes from courageous and visionary to double-dipping, double-stacking and cherry-picking, but somehow the exact same agreements, which were at one time, in the Prime Minister's view, courageous and visionary, are now double-dipping, double-stacking and cherry-picking.

It is confusing for the people of Nova Scotia to wonder how the Prime Minister and the government could zig and zag on this very issue.

When the government decided to break the Atlantic accord, it gave two reasons. One was that it wanted to have a single, principled base equalization formula for the whole country. It has done exactly the opposite with Bill C-28.

In Bill C-28, the government established an equalization formula for two provinces and a different one for eight provinces. Two provinces have a 3.5% escalator clause until 2020. Eight do not have that escalator clause. Two provinces have an agreement that goes to 2020. Eight provinces have an agreement that goes to 2013. The government has created exactly what the Prime Minister said he would not do.

I want to again read part 11 in Bill C-28, which states:

Part 11 amends the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to provide for an additional fiscal equalization payment that may be paid to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Previously the Atlantic accord was not an equalization payment. It was an offset payment, but now the government has established a different equalization formula, which seems to me to totally contradict the goal of the Prime Minister in establishing one equalization formula because now we do have two formulas. The ironic thing is that when we had the Atlantic accord and the O'Brien formula we had one equalization formula, which is exactly what he said he wanted.

● (1920)

The other goal was to eliminate any side deals. I do not know how we would describe the side deals in Bill C-28, but it is full of side deals as far as the accord goes. One is that two provinces would get the 3.5% escalator until 2020 and the other one is that at the end of each year the federal government may pay Nova Scotia an amount of money each year if the parallel calculation is more than the O'Brien formula. Each one of those is a side deal for each year.

That is the reason I will be voting against Bill C-28. I voted against it before and I will be voting against it again.

I am not arguing that the province of Nova Scotia has negotiated a new deal, and it may be a good deal, but we do not know because we have never seen the projections. Senators, members of Parliament and the media have asked for the projections to confirm what the

government says when it says that the new deal is good for Nova Scotia.

We had the provincial projections but we have never had the federal projections. If any of the Conservative members do stand up I hope they will table the projections so we will know whether it is a good deal for Nova Scotia, not based on the federal government.

Officials have told us that they have done their projections. They have done the best case scenario and the worst case scenario, but as yet we have not been able to get them to share those projections with us so we can share their enthusiasm for this program if it is accurate. However, we do not know because we do not have the projections.

I will close my remarks with that but I will say that the Atlantic accord is still in effect. It is a two-page agreement and it is still there. It is just that the government has chosen not to honour or respect it and it has chosen to take a different route. It is a shame. It is a two-page agreement, nine paragraphs long and the Conservatives have decided to break the deal and not honour it. They have tried to come up three alternatives now, none of which are the Atlantic accord. That is why I will be voting against Bill C-28.

● (1925)

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to comment very briefly and then ask the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley a question on Bill C-28.

I want to commend him not only on his consistent principled position in standing up for the Atlantic accord, but also for him making it very clear that standing up for the Atlantic accord requires voting against Bill C-28. I commend him for taking that position.

My colleague gave an excellent summation of the spectacular betrayal and flip-flop and double-crossing that goes on whenever we deal with this issue. Nothing could be clearer than what the then leader of the official opposition said on the campaign trail in Halifax, the city I am privileged to represent. He then did a complete and total reversal after he found himself in power.

In that sense, it is starting to look a lot like the more familiar pattern of Liberals who run on a progressive platform and then when in government, govern on the right. They are meanspirited and are quite prepared to throw Atlantic Canada overboard, which they have consistently done. When the Liberals were government, they threw Atlantic Canada overboard in the period between 1993 and 1997. That resulted in the 11 sitting Liberals in Nova Scotia being defeated. They were unceremoniously thrown out of office, which brings me to my two brief questions.

My first concerns the position of the premier. A very accurate summation was given of the premier's initial outrage at the fact that the Atlantic accord had been trashed. He pleaded with every Nova Scotian at considerable public expense. He put out what we would call a householder to every Nova Scotian, asking for them to petition the government to reinstate the Atlantic accord. So far so good.

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More recent, the premier sent out a second householder in which he made a number of claims that turned out to be simply untrue. He made a number of claims about how Bill C-28 would fix the problem and that it justified his decision to abandon the fight for the Atlantic accord. The benefits that were promised are not delivered in Bill C-28. As far as he is concerned, he is off the hook. Many of the claims he has made in that document are simply not accurate. They are not substantiated.

What does the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley make of the premier's betrayal of his own commitment to fight to ensure the full reinstatement of the Atlantic accord?

What does he make of the Liberals from Atlantic Canada, who are cozying up to him when it comes to the full vote on Bill C-28, and then he is completely abandoned, thrown overboard, by every other member of that party with no intentions of supporting Bill C-28 changes, which would reinstate the Atlantic accord?

• (1930)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** I remind the hon. member for Halifax that some people probably do not measure time, but I do. The comment came to me that we were under resuming debate and not under questions and comments.

If the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley takes as much time to respond, he will have burned the whole clock.

**Mr. Bill Casey:** I would not burn the clock, Mr. Speaker, but I will answer the second question first about the Liberals cozying up to me. My caucus is not that big and I welcome the company.

As far as the Premier of Nova Scotia goes, I tripped on his presentation. The Premier of Nova Scotia came to the Senate and made a presentation. I read it the other day. He was told, in all fairness, by the Minister of Finance of the Government of Canada that “not one comma of the accord has been changed, and that it remains in its original, pristine form”.

I contend, the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council contends and all Nova Scotians contend that this line is not right. I contend that the premier of the province was misled, the same way I was. I recognize those words “not a comma changed”. I was told exactly the same thing.

In all fairness to the Premier of Nova Scotia, he was given wrong information in the beginning, but in the end he did call on Nova Scotians to sign a petition to demand the Government of Canada honour all its agreements.

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have done before, I want to commend my colleague. We had the spectacle in the spring of the Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the regional minister for Nova Scotia, saying in the House in answer to a question from the member for West Nova, that no member of the government would be kicked out of caucus for voting his or her principles. That was before he realized one person over there had principles and he backtracked on that pretty quickly. That spectacle is known to Nova Scotian.

I want to ask my colleague from Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley a simple question. The accord can be complex. Equalization is not easy to understand. It is my sense that Nova Scotians understood what the Atlantic accord stood for and they know it has been broken.

Is it the belief of my colleague and friend that the people of Nova Scotia actually understand the Atlantic accord and know what they have lost?

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, the first part of question was about the Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. I did not know he had said that until minutes before my vote, but it did not affect my vote.

As far as the people of Nova Scotia go, I believe all Nova Scotians know something went wrong. They do not necessarily understand the accords because they can be complicated. There are several accords, several accord agreements, several equalization formulas, but they know the Government of Canada broke the contract.

The contract is only two pages long, with nine paragraphs. It is very simple. The government decided, for whatever, reason to not honour it. It is still there. It is still an obligation of the Government of Canada. Even today, it chooses not to honour the accord.

• (1935)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be here this evening to present our position on this budget. I say “budget”, because, clearly, Canada's extraordinary surplus gives us a golden opportunity. We are living in a country that has been presented with an incredible opportunity. However, the budget and the so-called mini-budget are devoid of any measures that take advantage of the opportunities we have. With such an extraordinary surplus, we could make investments that would meet the goals of average Canadians, our communities and our society, based on our shared values.

We really have two visions in front of us. One is the vision of the Conservatives, supported by the Liberals. It is a vision that would reduce taxes, give much more to the wealthy in our society, give more to the largest companies, especially the ones making big profits, like the banks, the big oil companies, the companies that are the biggest polluters. They will benefit the most from this approach chosen by the Conservatives and their friends of the moment, the Liberals.

We are here this evening because we witnessed an extraordinary event in the House of Commons a few hours ago. We saw the two whips walk down the aisle together, before the usual time, in order to hold a vote to consummate that union properly in front of everyone. The budget is the product of that union. It is too bad, because the vision behind it runs counter to the hopes of our constituents.

*Government Orders*

I am proud of our team, the NDP, because it is a party with principles. We are prepared to stand up because we have principles and values to defend. As we have said many times in this House during this debate, this budget is not at all balanced. It is continuing to take Canada in the wrong direction. It is not a balanced approach. There was an unprecedented opportunity to invest, but the government and its friends missed it. It was a perfect opportunity to give tax relief to the people who need it most, but the government missed it. It was an opportunity to reduce the imbalance and the growing prosperity gap in our society, but the government ruled out any possibility of taking action.

For these reasons, we will oppose the bill. It is the wrong direction for Canada.

[*English*]

It was a rather bizarre moment to watch as parliamentary rules were stretched to the limit, and I would say beyond reasonable limit, to the point of actually abusing the privileges of members to be present during a vote, to see the respective whips of the Conservatives and the Liberals walking down the aisle together, not quite hand in hand but metaphorically at least as much. The consequence of course is that democracy in this chamber was pushed aside. Why? In favour of massive corporate tax reductions for those who are already doing incredibly well in our society.

I have canvassed my constituents, as have our members of Parliament. We have yet to find one person, and I would challenge people to be in touch with us if I am wrong, who was calling for reductions in taxes for the big banks shortly after they posted record profits. It may be that there is someone there who was calling for it and could demonstrate that this is somehow for the good of Canada, but I have yet to hear that voice. The fact is that it is the wrong direction for the country. It is absolutely the wrong direction for the country.

I have yet to hear anybody tell me that the largest oil and gas companies in Canada needed a break. What I do hear is that people need a break from the big oil and gas companies in the way people get gouged every time they go to the pump.

When it comes to people trying to get access to their own money at the bank, they need a break from the banks and the bank presidents who stick out their hands metaphorically and grab some of that money back. That is unacceptable.

The fact is that the government took a very narrow-minded view of where we could go at this unprecedented moment in our history. I believe that our party has a very good idea about where we need to go, a sense of the vision shared by a great many Canadians. In fact, this debate has put these two visions before Canadians.

It is unfortunate that the debate is being cut short by those who share one particular point of view, the Liberals and the Conservatives, because frankly, we should have more discussion. We are talking here about billions of dollars that, over subsequent years, are going to be unavailable to invest in what we need. What kind of things do we need in our country today?

We need investments that are right for our families. This budget is wrong for families. We need investments that are right for our communities, our municipalities, our cities. This budget is wrong for

all of those people and their communities. We need an approach that represents some sense of balance and common sense. This budget certainly does not do that at all. We do need some targeted tax help for those who are most in need. We do not see that here. In fact, what we see is a budget that would widen the prosperity gap that already is widening rapidly in our society.

That is why, if we talk to the average person today, the middle class, the working families, however we want to describe them, we are going to find people who are finding it harder and harder just to get by. It is not that they are complainers. In fact, Canadians are as far from complainers as we are going to find. The fact is that they are working harder.

Independent studies have shown that the average Canadian family is working 200 hours more every single year. That is the equivalent to five full time working weeks. They were already working hard. How is this happening? They are taking second jobs. They are taking third jobs. They are trying to get by. They are trying to cover the rent. They are trying to pay the mortgage. They are trying to put food on the table. They are trying to educate the young people in their family so that their hopes and their dreams can be accomplished. They are finding that tougher.

The students end up with more debt than they have ever had. Somehow we regard it as sensible as a society to load them up with more. I do not know any other species that would do that to their young. But we seem to think that throwing as many millstones around their necks at the very time they are supposed to take off and succeed and build our future, that dragging them down and pulling on the handbrake is the way we ought to treat young people.

● (1940)

Are we doing any better when it comes to seniors, the people who actually built this country?

It was an opportunity in this budget to correct a wrong with regard to seniors. The government has admitted that in its indexing of the payments to seniors, their pensions, something to keep them out of poverty, something they deserve after building our country and raising their families, it made a mistake in the inflation increase seniors were supposed to be getting. Their food costs are going up. Their rents are going up. Their transit costs are going up. The price of everything they do in their modest way in their lives as seniors in our communities is going up, but the government has failed to keep up with inflation, and the government admits it.

I will bet people have noticed how quickly the government is prepared to come after them, and I will say seniors here too, because I know a lot of seniors are frightened by this, if they have made a little mistake on their taxes. By golly, a \$10 mistake, a \$50 mistake and the government is writing letters telling people they must do this and they must do that, and the government charges interest, too, at rates that are not far from the usurious rates of the banks, I might say.

The government is very happy to reach out into seniors' lives and pull something back if they have made a little mistake on their taxes, but what happens if the government makes a mistake on seniors' taxes? It simply says that it is too bad and there is nothing it will do about it.

*Government Orders*

This could involve \$1 billion or even more that should be in the hands of seniors. Here we have a surplus. We could have done something about that in this budget bill. It absolutely could have been corrected, and should have been corrected. Our seniors deserve it.

The fact is a lot of Canadians are one or two paycheques away from living in poverty. A great number of other Canadians already live in poverty, many of them seniors, single mothers, first nations, Inuit and Métis people. There are people who are living in abject poverty. Even the world organizations have come forward and pointed out how Canada is mistreating its own in so many ways.

This would have been an opportunity to do something about affordable housing in first nations communities. This would have been an opportunity to do something about affordable housing in cities so that we do not have the growing crisis of homelessness, where more and more people are dying on our streets. This winter could turn out to be the worst ever.

All we get from the government is the recycled announcements of funds that were put aside when we debated a previous budget two years ago. That is when the NDP insisted that corporate taxes should be cancelled and money should be put into affordable housing, including for aboriginal people, post-secondary education for our young people, the environment, public transit, foreign aid, the priorities of Canadians.

Now the government is making these announcements again, but the fact is, it has gone right back to the old practice.

The Conservatives already had a corporate tax cut planned. We know that. They made that clear. However, along came the Liberals and the leader of the Liberal Party who said that there should be an even deeper cut to corporate taxes. This was only a few weeks before he said that his biggest priority was dealing with poverty. Guess whose poverty he was apparently concerned about. It was the poverty of the struggling multinational corporations, the profitable companies. It was their definition of poverty that most concerned him.

That is why we saw the Liberals sit down on the job. When it came time for them to stand up for Canadians, they stood up for the privileged. That is what happened. It cannot be denied, because we all saw it, and we have seen it time and time again.

Now we see the marriage is being brought together in an even more intimate way. There may even be votes of support. We might even see a vote of support this evening. Who knows what will happen with the so-called official opposition, an official opposition that could not even muster the numbers of an official party in the House the other night on a vote, if I may make that comment.

We are here as representatives, 30 members of Parliament across the country raising these issues. We are raising them in the context of a very important moment in the life of any Parliament. That is when we decide how our taxation laws are going to work and how we are going to raise the funds from one another to put them forward in a common project to build the country of our dreams.

●(1945)

What we have chosen here to do, apparently, is to begin to deconstruct, to take apart the country of our dreams. In case there are any doubts, people should talk to municipal mayors about what is happening in their communities. I am here with the member for Outremont, who once represented in another place a community known as Laval, where a bridge collapsed and tragedy happened.

Right across this country there is over \$100 billion of infrastructure deficit. Instead of investing in infrastructure the way we should, the government is saying it is not going to respond to the needs of municipalities, except for the occasional megaproject financed by one of its corporate friends, most likely in one of these triple so-called public-private partnerships for some sort of mega-enterprise that it can put its signature on. Clearly, the government has lost track of the need to make sure that communities have fresh drinking water when they need it, or that the infrastructure, the roads and bridges are sound, and the recreation centres for our young people are able to stay open in our communities.

A grave mistake is being made, a very grave mistake. We are not alone in believing this. Many across the country have said that it is time to invest. We have the opportunity in front of us to do that, just as families would do if they suddenly found themselves with the opportunity of having funds to invest. They would not sit around the table and make the kind of decision that has been made here. They would say, "Let us invest in our young people. Let us invest in our homes to make them more sound. Let us invest in our future. Let us make sure that we are leading in the investments that are needed and responding to the needs of Canadians".

It is a question of being balanced. It is a question of representing working families, seniors, young people, people from coast to coast to coast who are counting on us to respond to their concerns.

I know a lot of members of Parliament will return to their constituencies over the weeks to come and they will talk about, for example, the few pennies that might go back into people's pockets by virtue of some of these tax cuts. What they will not talk about is how we have missed the opportunity to build. I think Canadians are builders. I do not think they represent the kind of self definition that seems to underlie the point of view here. They want to build something in common. They want to build a collective enterprise. They want society to work for every Canadian, not just for a few or just for themselves.

When we boil it down, there are two visions in front of us.

●(1950)

[*Translation*]

We have a choice to make. We have a golden opportunity, and we in the NDP will be here and will stand up to defend our principles, because they represent the values of the vast majority of Canadians.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the NDP for his speech. I have to say that the Bloc Québécois considered the issue of poverty and took action a long time ago. As the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, certainly one of the hardest hit ridings in terms of industrial obsolescence, I tabled a bill known as the anti-poverty bill on four occasions, and am about to do so again.

*Government Orders*

My bill contains four measures that I certainly hope will have the support of my NDP colleagues. My bill would add “social condition” to the prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. My colleague for Outremont, who was a member of the National Assembly of Quebec, will remember that eight legislatures, eight provinces, added social condition to the prohibited grounds of discrimination in their human rights codes. It is unacceptable that the federal government has not. Had it done so, we could have successfully challenged certain measures. For example, Lloyd Axworthy's employment insurance contained restrictive measures for new applicants and that was unacceptable.

My bill also provides for a new contravention, by financial institutions, of the Canadian Human Rights Act. I am referring to the refusal by banks to provide credit to disadvantaged communities. I have studied what happened in the United States where, since 1977, the Community Reinvestment Act has provided access to credit for the most disadvantaged communities. I am thinking of black and Hispanic populations.

If adopted, my bill would require Parliament to hold a mandatory debate on poverty, on a regular basis. It would institute the requirement that the Canadian Human Rights Commission assess every bill and its effects on the impoverishment of citizens.

I know that the member and his political party are concerned by these matters. However—the member knows that I am very sensitive—I was somewhat hurt to discover that in Paul Martin's last budget, my NDP colleagues, whom I affectionately refer to—

• (1955)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member for Hochelaga. He is a very experienced parliamentarian. He knows that when referring to another member, he must use the name of the member's riding and not his or her name. In any case, the question was long enough and I now give the floor to the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, regarding your intervention, I would like to say that I did not use the name of any colleague or any riding.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Hochelaga mentioned the name of the right hon. member for LaSalle—Émard.

The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Hon. Jack Layton:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard is not generally in this House. Thus, we can forgive such a mistake from time to time.

I thank my hon. colleague from Hochelaga for his comments and his question. However, I must wonder about something. Why did the Bloc Québécois help the government move this bill along so quickly in committee and why did he vote today to limit the debate on such crucial questions?

Further debate would have allowed for the mistakes in this budget, in this bill, to be pointed out. The bill does not take into account the situation in the manufacturing sector and the forestry crisis. There are no references in this bill to the needs of businesses in those sectors.

Instead, we have tax cuts across the board for all big businesses that are already profitable. The most profitable stand to benefit the most, that is, the banks and oil and gas companies. The Bloc, by supporting an accelerated debate and a limit to democracy, is preventing the opposition parties from opposing this collusion between the Conservatives and the Liberals. I invite the Bloc to make an effort to join our efforts in order to reach a new level of accountability here in the House of Commons.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Hochelaga on a point of order.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** I think that our colleague, the leader of the NDP, should not mislead the House and should clearly say that the Bloc Québécois is opposed to Bill C-28. If he wants to find—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Hochelaga should know that that was not a point of order, but rather a comment related to the debate.

We shall continue with questions and comments. The hon. member for Victoria.

[*English*]

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, like my leader, I believe the federal government can be a source of positive change in our country by providing leadership with strong social policy that helps us all move forward. The government can provide stewardship of a vibrant, equitable and sustainable economy. It can also specifically provide a creative vision for our economy and our environment, rather than opposing them as the government does.

I am wondering if our leader would be able to develop a little bit our proposals around creating green jobs and sustaining our economy.

**Hon. Jack Layton:** Mr. Speaker, it is true that we have an opportunity in front of us with the surpluses we have, with the capacities of Canadians, to launch upon a very ambitious project for the 21st century economy. We call it the new energy economy.

We believe, and to pick one example, that it is possible to create what we have been calling green collar jobs all across the country in the energy sector. Not everyone has to go to Fort McMurray to be involved in energy.

What people can do instead is help Mrs. Smith and Madam Courmoyer down the block to renovate their homes, so that they use less energy. It will mean a little less money for the big oil and gas companies, so I can see why the government members do not like the idea.

They will use less energy and thus reduce their daily cost of living. They will reduce the emissions that Canada is putting into the atmosphere at a rate much more ferociously high than virtually any other developed country in the world, and at the same time create work in neighbourhoods for people who are looking for work.

These are opportunities for young people and chances for older workers who have skills but are being laid off. They will be able to put their skills to work right there in their communities.



*Government Orders*

If we add that to an ambitious renewable energy program right across the country, a green grid right across the country, and all other kinds of other initiatives, we really could be on the right track. Unfortunately, this budget takes us down the wrong track.

• (2000)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Outremont has the floor for a question or comment. As a friendly reminder, I would like to say that he has one minute and a half left, which includes the question and answer.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my leader to kindly explain to the House the adverse consequences of the Liberal and Bloc members supporting this bill. They have helped things progress today by voting with the Conservatives on these middle-class budget issues.

**Hon. Jack Layton:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear what is going on in this House, and it is too bad. Obviously, the Liberals do not want to be forced to stay seated during a vote in January or February. This is why they have gone along with forcing a vote before the bell stops ringing, which is completely unacceptable according to the parliamentary traditions of this House. And this tactic was supported by the Bloc Québécois as well.

Where was the commitment to democracy, to which we aspire in this House? Decisions are being dictated by political and partisan interests instead of the values of our constituents. The NDP will—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

**Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to make a few comments about Bill C-28. As usual, my comments will focus on how this affects the people of my riding.

Practical items that concern me the most for the people in my region have to do with the lack of serious speeches and measures from the Conservative government on Bill C-28.

I am thinking about an economic sector that is vital in my region, in particular, but also in a number of regions in Quebec and Canada, and that is the forestry sector. This sector is going through a crisis and its workers are affected by it more so than workers in other sectors. Unfortunately, there is a crisis in many other manufacturing sectors as well.

We all know that circumstantial factors contributed to making an already difficult situation even worse. In light of these circumstances and this crisis, we expected the government, which has the means to provide informed and dynamic governance, to help the people. After all, the role of government is to redistribute wealth and to be fair to all its citizens, whom it is meant to serve.

While we expected measures to help these sectors, both businesses and workers, we have seen in official documents just a small sentence, as though this were not as important—the Leader of the New Democratic Party was just talking about this a few minutes ago—as the oil sectors, the banks and high finance. Nonetheless, when it comes to sectors that are vital to the people in our regions, there are

just a few words that leave a whole lot to be desired in the economic statement.

I am not speaking only about workers and what could be very legitimate expectations regarding employment insurance. I am speaking of course for workers who have been laid off, in particular. I am thinking of employability measures that will keep our forestry workers on the job, as well as our businesses.

We all know that in our various communities, our towns, municipalities and regions, thousands of jobs are being lost. We now know that, in many cases, there have been temporary closures in the forestry sector, but we also know that, quite often, they will unfortunately not be temporary. Some closures could be permanent. Given the lack of timely support and vision, municipalities and towns are being put at risk of devitalization, for which the people will pay the price.

While firm action was needed to allow these businesses in the forestry sector, among others, to reposition themselves, modernize, diversify and become more competitive, absolutely nothing has been done. This is unacceptable for everyone involved, since the possibilities were and are significant.

What is the government doing? As I said earlier, with one short sentence, it thinks it will console someone or that perhaps no one will even see it. The Conservative government—and this has already been clearly and eloquently stated—is nevertheless offering considerable tax cuts for businesses that are already thriving.

• (2005)

Clearly, in the provinces and sectors affected by this measure—let us be honest, there are more of them in the west than in the east—businesses and employees will benefit from it.

This is an easy solution. It is certainly not a sign of a government possessed of the vision and the will to use the means available to it to provide enlightened governance by demonstrating that it is concerned about all sectors of the economy, does not play favourites, is not in league with anyone and is fair to everyone. What I find striking, as I just said, is the degree to which these tax cuts will benefit companies that are doing well and making a profit, including, above all, oil companies.

To switch gears, I would like to talk about something I care deeply about, as do many of my colleagues, I am sure. The government failed to take the opportunity to help thousands of people who make up an entire demographic: our seniors. Unfortunately, I am talking about poor seniors. I am talking about seniors who are on fixed incomes because for various reasons, they were unable to put any money aside for retirement even though they worked hard. These people live on their old age pension and their guaranteed income supplement. They receive about \$1,100 a month, which places them well below the poverty line.

*Government Orders*

Here is one example from my riding. Given the cost of living and the poverty line in the Rimouski region, our seniors' annual income is about \$4,000 or \$5,000 below the poverty line. To add insult to injury, they found out too late, because they were not informed, that they were entitled to receive the guaranteed income supplement. To top it off, the previous government, the party that is now the official opposition, granted them just 11 months of retroactivity.

The new government—the adjective “new” has been used for some time by the other side of the House—had the chance to do something, to make an important decision for our seniors everywhere in Canada. There is nothing partisan or sovereigntist about it—I am bringing this forward on behalf of everyone. This government had the opportunity to do something. However, once again, absolutely nothing was done.

In February, I will have the opportunity to table a motion in this House. I hope that this will spur a large number of my colleagues to reflect on the appalling situation of our mothers, grandmothers, fathers, grandfathers, in short, our seniors. They are the ones who built this society and who are largely responsible for who we are and what we have today. At the very least, out of respect for them, we could provide an income that is above the poverty line.

I see that some colleagues have such an interest in this matter that they have been overcome by laughter.

Before I conclude, I would like to suggest to my colleagues in this House that they read a few pages from a very revealing book. It may prove to be a way of learning French but it is also a way to broaden almost everyone's horizons. This book was written by the well known author, Riccardo Petrella. He has just written a new book, *Pour une nouvelle narration du monde*. Just before these holidays, I believe that the members of the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the other parties, as well as the three independents, would benefit from broadening their horizons and realizing that we can look at our world from a different perspective. We can believe in solidarity and sharing, and not just in globalization, competition and in market forces that are completely out of control.

● (2010)

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important speech. The federal government has billions of dollars in surpluses and is giving a tax reduction to large companies that are turning a profit. Ordinarily, a company that does not make a profit does not pay any tax. But when we look at what is happening, we see that the big oil companies in Alberta are getting tax breaks and reductions.

But some large companies were losing money and some large companies have closed. For example, UPM in Miramichi, the Smurfit-Stone paper mill in Bathurst and plants in New Richmond and Dalhousie have just closed. Fils Fins d'Atlantique and textile companies in Quebec have also closed their doors. These companies have not received any help, and the workers have lost their jobs.

Does the member agree with me that instead of giving money to companies that are making a profit, the big banks and all those people, the government could have used it to help create employment for people who have lost their jobs? Once again, the Liberals have helped the Conservatives by voting with them or not voting at all, as they tend to do. They are not here to represent ordinary

Canadians who have lost their jobs and are in terrible straits, families living in poverty and need and children who are hungry.

There are currently 1.4 million children in Canada who are hungry. This was the case under a Liberal government in the past, and it is now the case under a Conservative government.

Is it not shameful to see a government that stands up for big companies? I hope that the Canadian workers who are watching us this evening and seeing what is happening will realize that these are not the sorts of political parties they should vote for, because these parties do not stand up for them.

I would like to hear what my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques has to say about this.

● (2015)

**Ms. Louise Thibault:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst who, like many members of his party, cares deeply about the well-being of his communities. That has been clear to me since I came here, and I knew it even before I was elected.

I agree with him that the government's inaction is nothing short of scandalous in light of what is going on. I agree with what he said and I would add that I, like many others, no doubt, was dumbfounded when I discovered that the government planned to help those who were already able to help themselves. Those who are in a position to benefit from a tax cut or from a 1% GST cut are those who have money to spend.

Consumer spending is all well and good, but we should also be talking about productivity. We have to put people to work and keep them working as long as possible. However, when people are unable to work, there should be measures in place not only to improve their employability but to support them during hard times.

It is clear that given the current surpluses, especially those that were announced before we came back to the House—the \$10 billion, \$11 billion or \$12 billion being used to pay down the debt, which is not actually a problem for Canada—we could put some of that money to work to help people who need help. That is called redistribution of wealth. That is what the government should be doing, but the Conservative government seems to have forgotten all about that particular responsibility.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**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 yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** On the advice of both whips, the vote is postponed until tomorrow at 1 p.m.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak during the adjournment proceedings regarding my question related to residential schools. I was there on the day that this great historic agreement was made on residential schools by a great prime minister from LaSalle—Émard and a great grand chief, Phil Fontaine.

I remember that evening, the tears that were shed. The grand chief, prime minister and the Liberal government had worked so hard. Many first nations people had waited so long and it was certainly a moving moment.

Subsequent to that time, unfortunately, the government was defeated and then there came a series of very sad delays. I heard rumours that the government in cabinet had a debate and members could have one or the other, the historic residential school agreement or the equally historic Kelowna accord.

For whatever reason, after significant delays cabinet agreed to go ahead with the residential school agreement, but unfortunately a number of elders who had gone through some horrible experiences in their youth never lived to see the results.

Even though the agreement has been signed and sealed, there are still delays in the payments. I want to read from the November 29 deliberations of the aboriginal affairs committee. A Bloc member, who was asking about these late payments, said the following:

I have a question. I do not know whether it is because of you, Mr. Minister, but why were we not ready? Why is it taking so long for these people to receive the cheque to which they are entitled? What is holding things up? What is going on? Why does it take such a long time for them to receive the money to which they are entitled?

Another member on the aboriginal affairs committee said:

You made a commitment on September 19 to the 80,000 survivors who were eligible to apply for compensation that the payments would be made within 35 days. We have all heard the stories, we've all seen the press reports, and we've heard that many survivors have not received their compensation. I appreciate your remarks that the money is there, that it is committed, and that it will be honoured. What I want to know is when this money will be out to them. The 35 days is long past. How do you account for the failure in getting those moneys out?

I will give one example that I received:

I am writing to support your opposition to the current government's delay in the processing of the Indian Residential School Common Experience Payments. I submitted my completed application to Service Canada on September 20, 2007. I was told to expect payment within 35 days. On October 26, I contacted Service Canada to enquire about my file. They informed me that my file was received on October 18 and that the 35-day window would begin there. This was contrary to what I read on the information they gave to me!

Unfortunately, I believed them. I was counting upon and expecting a prompt payment. I hoped to relocate to the Vancouver area to be nearer my daughters. We rarely see each other because we cannot afford to. But now the delay has bankrupted me and thrown my plans into chaos. My electricity will be disconnected on November 14! I have no food or money. I am unemployed.

The government thinks everything is fine. With residential schools there were two resolutions passed either today or yesterday at the Assembly of First Nations. One of them is talking about documentation and I do not have time to read the whole thing, so I will do it in my other minute.

• (2020)

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand to respond to some of the assertions made by the member for Yukon.

First, he claims this process has been delayed by our government. I find this a really remarkable assertion by him. We first sat in the House of Commons as a newly elected government on April 7, 2006. By May 1, we had passed this historic legislation. As a new government, a government that was finding its feet, we pushed this forward within one month. That shows our commitment to this issue.

In response to his comments about the payments, we have received over 80,000 applications. This is a court ordered process. The court demands that we only pay those who were actually at the schools. As such, through this very rigorous court process, we have to ensure that only actual residential school claimants receive the money. We have processed 34,000 claims of those 80,000 who have applied, and nearly \$600 million has been sent to Services Canada for distribution.

I will leave it there and see where the hon. member for Yukon goes with his next question.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, I want to alert the government to two resolutions from the AFN.

Resolution 12 was moved by Chief Tom Bressette and seconded by Chief Donovan Fontaine. It talks about residential school survivors not being adequately documented in Canada. It states:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

The Chiefs-in-Assembly mandate the National Chief and the AFN Executive to seek resources to develop a background paper on Children of Residential School Survivors.

Resolution 37 states in part:

The CEP have started to flow to the survivors and a growing number of persons are receiving payments that fall short of the years they attended residential schools, thus not getting the full entitlement to their claim.

Therefore Be It Resolved that:

Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the National Chief to seek to establish sufficient capacity at the Assembly of First Nations to support those survivors in cases of underpayment of CEP and to work closely with Service Canada and IRSRC.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I hope the government will take these concerns under advisement and work to better the payment system.

• (2025)

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Mr. Speaker, on this front, a number of questions have been brought forward not only by the member's party, but other parties, in relation to individuals who have received the common experience payment in less than the amount they expected.

Occasionally, there are situations where there is no proof of the actual tenure at a school. However, should these individuals feel that their payment is short of what they expected, there is a process, mandated by the courts, to review these payments and appeal said payments. We will continue to abide by this court order.

We are very pleased that the new Conservative government has delivered on this shameful record that has been left by our predecessors.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a. m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:27 p.m.)

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