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Friday, February 8, 2008

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 8, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)
[English]

PREBUDGET CONSULTATIONS

The House resumed from February 7 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: When this matter was last before the House, the hon. member for Don Valley East had the floor. There remain 17 minutes in the time allotted to her for her remarks. I therefore call upon the hon. member for Don Valley East.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a small correction. I have seven minutes left as I am splitting my time with the member for Saint Boniface.

To continue from where I left off, I was talking about budget 2006 and how the Conservative government saw fit to make cuts despite the fact that it had a \$17 billion surplus. One has to pose the question: why cuts, especially social spending cuts?

What does the government have against the vulnerable, the poor and women, people who are really in need of assistance? The only logic there is that the government has a neo-conservative agenda. Those members are not thinking about the people of Canada. They are thinking about those who match their mindset of every person for themselves.

A statement released by the Treasury Board on September 25, 2006 said, "We have found savings in...Programs that weren't providing good value for money for Canadians". Which Canadians is the government talking about?

Could the government be referring to people who suffer from the lack of basic literacy skills? Could it be talking about students looking for a summer job so they can afford to pay tuition? Could it be referring to our first nations and Inuit people?

Perhaps it is referring to our troubled forestry sector and single industry communities that benefit from regional economic development funding. Or what about ordinary Canadians who face discrimination on a daily basis yet lack the necessary resources to launch a challenge in the courts?

Maybe it is referring to the thousands of women over the age of 65 in this country who live below the poverty line. What does the government have against these seniors who have contributed to Canada and its well-being?

It does not make sense for the Conservative government to go after the most vulnerable in our society.

Let us look at budget 2007, with its rather strange heading, "Aspire", which won the finance minister a place in Canadian history for the highest spending budget ever. Gone was the Conservative mantra of less government and lower taxes. In 2007, the Conservatives "aspired" to blow as much of the surplus as they possibly could in the shortest possible time.

What did they get out of it? Zero. The money went down the drain without any investment in the Canadian economy and without boosting the Canadian economy. That leads us to the Prime Minister's current dilemma. Now that the United States has entered a recession, the Conservatives are faced with the stark possibility of running a deficit when the economic fallout hits Canada. The Conservative solution, of course, is to force an election before the storm hits here.

Although the Prime Minister is renowned for keeping secrets well within the dark confines of the PMO, I will let members into his current strategy: first, play politics with our troops currently serving in Afghanistan and then try to blame the government's indecision on opposition parties; and second, create an artificial crisis in the Senate, which is currently examining far-reaching justice bills that cover everything from conditional sentencing to the age of sexual consent, and then draw a line in the sand because the bill is being given second sober thought in the Senate.

Or else what? Will the Prime Minister call an election? Does the Prime Minister think Canadians are foolish? They know that procedures are in place in Parliament which allow the government to get over the logjam. The government does not have to go into an election.

However, the Prime Minister, in his deceitful manner, is trying to fudge issues and convince Canadians that somehow his desire for an election can be blamed on the opposition. Or could it be that the budget is on the horizon in the next three weeks?

Canadians do not see a pressing reason for an election. The Prime Minister knows that he will face the wrath of Canadians if he is perceived to be engineering his own government's defeat.

Government Orders

What would be in the next budget? We can only guess, because the Conservatives have utilized all the surplus. They cannot give out any more goodies. What are they planning to do? They will make empty promises with no intention of delivering them, because the cupboard is bare. The cupboard is bare because of our finance minister, who was the architect of the deficit in Ontario and is bringing those very skills here to the federal Parliament.

The fiscal incompetency of the government has come home to roost. The cupboard is depleted. The government cannot show anything, zip, zero, for all the money it wasted. The previous budget was an inflationary budget. It has done nothing for Canadians.

Let us look at history. Who was responsible for the largest federal deficit in history? Brian Mulroney was. Of course there also was Mike Harris in Ontario. The current Minister of Finance was his finance minister.

In 1993 the federal Liberals inherited a bankrupt country. It took intelligence, commitment and vision to get the country back on track. The IMF once called Canada a economic basket case, but by 1997, thanks to the discipline and the leadership of the Liberals, we saw balanced budgets and Canada was back on track. Now Canada is the envy of the G-7 countries.

If history is repeating itself, where the Liberals come back to clean up a Conservative mess, we are probably right when we say that the government is way out of its depth, without vision, morally bankrupt and intellectually dishonest.

• (1010)

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there were an awful lot of items in that speech that I would love to correct, but unfortunately I am not going to get to all of them.

Of course the member probably is aware that the current Minister of Finance never ran a deficit when he was finance minister of Ontario. In fact, he took Bob Rae's economy, which was the worst economy in Canada, and turned the Ontario economy into the hottest economy in the G-8. I thought she might like to know that.

He is doing that for Canada as well. The finance minister of Canada is creating more jobs and Canadians are making more money. Record numbers of Canadians are working. I think that is tremendous.

Let us check the Conservative record. I would love to hear what she has to say about it. We cut the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%, saving her riding millions and millions of dollars. It is money that her constituents can spend on their priorities.

This government has reduced the lowest personal income tax rate. We have created the working income tax benefit. That helps low income Canadians. I know that she cares about low income Canadians, but she is not being fulsome in her speech.

This government has created the \$2,000 child tax credit to help families. We have increased the amount that all Canadians can earn without paying federal income tax. In fact, tax freedom day comes about two weeks earlier now, and I feel free.

We have eliminated taxes on students. There has been record spending on health care and post-secondary education. That member

should get up and rejoice. We have tax freedom. Canadians are better off. The government is doing a great job. I would love to hear the member stand up and congratulate the government.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I am saddened by the economic incompetence of that member. We have seen \$15 billion go down the drain. This is typical of what happened in the United States. A government starts on a spending spree and has nothing to show for it. If that is the way economic incompetence goes, Canadians have to be careful. Canadians know that it was Brian Mulroney who put them into deficit.

Of course, that member is either asleep at the wheel or totally deceitful, because it was the Mike Harris regime, and the minister was a member of that regime, that left Ontario with a \$5.6 billion deficit. History does repeat itself. If the Conservatives are going to have their blinkers on, then Canadians need to boot them out for their moral bankruptcy, because they keep on fibbing, they are incompetent and they have no vision.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague on a remarkable speech. It was very well thought out. She clearly articulated some legitimate concerns around the current government's fiscal management and its inability to manage its affairs, specifically when it comes to delivering sound policy for Canadians, policy that creates jobs, wealth and opportunities.

Could the member again highlight for us and comment on the situation inherited by the Liberals in the 1990s and what they did? Could she then comment on the situation today with this government as to what it has done with the surplus and the current state of the fiscal framework in terms of the government's ability to help Canadians through these difficult and challenging times, specifically in the manufacturing and forestry sectors?

• (1015)

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, that is a very valuable question. When the Liberals inherited the government, there was a \$43 billion deficit and a debt of \$500 billion. It took the Liberals four years, until 1997, to clean up the incompetent government of the previous Conservatives. Those Conservatives had no idea. They kept on running up deficits because they were on a drunken spending spree. Once we cleaned up the mess, the IMF claimed that we were the best run G-8 country. We had balanced budgets. In 1997, we gave Canadians tax cuts of \$100 million. They were largest tax cuts in history.

Those members cannot cover up history. The Conservatives have proved time and time again that they are incompetent. By cutting the GST they have not invested anything in research and development or in productivity. They are totally without vision. The manufacturing sector needs investment. Research and development needs investment. We need a vision. We do not need a government that is totally clueless.

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to speak to the prebudget consultations.

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It looks like we may be headed for some fairly tough economic times. We have seen what is happening in the U.S. with the sub-prime mortgage situation, coupled with the large accumulated debt, and there is a real possibility that there is a recession on the horizon.

I could not help but notice that over the last couple of weeks the spin by the Conservatives has been to call the Liberals spendthrifts or bad fiscal managers. I can understand that, but it must be embarrassing for Conservative members to have to do this. It cannot be easy to spin this when Conservatives the world over are running up debts and Liberals are having to come in and clean up their messes.

George W. Bush, a close friend and mentor to the Conservative government, is a case in point. The U.S. debt load is unbearable and is having a huge impact on the U.S. economy, and Canada is starting to feel the repercussions.

The reality is that the Conservatives have no choice but to try to spin this because their fiscal record over the years is so dismal. I know I have mentioned this in the House before but it bears repeating. It is a bit of trivia. When was the last time a Conservative government produced a surplus prior to inheriting the surpluses of the Liberal government in 2006?

Members might think it was under Joe Clark or under Mulroney. We know where that surplus has gone. Was it under Diefenbaker? No. It was under Sir Robert Borden in 1912. Was there electricity back then? That is a long time ago. Those people are actually terrible fiscal managers. They create uncertainty in the marketplace and this is one of the major reasons.

Liberals cleaned up the \$42 billion yearly deficit from the previous Conservative government when they came into power in 1993 and produced eight consecutive surpluses. They passed this incredible legacy onto the Conservative government and, in two short years, it has taken the best fiscal position in the G-7 and an economy that was the envy of the world and brought it to the brink of deficit.

There is an old saying that continues to be true today, "Tory times are tough times". I do not think this is necessarily a coincidence. If it were, we would have to assume that Conservative governments get into power and suddenly the economy faces a downturn or goes into a recession. What are the odds of that happening every time? I believe the Conservatives create the conditions for tough times.

An example of this is the current Conservative Prime Minister's choice for Minister of Finance. We would all agree that this is a position of importance in any government and that this person must have the confidence of the people. Who does the PM reach out to fill this position? It is the same person who, as provincial finance minister, ran for a government that had promised balanced budgets but left behind a \$5.8 billion deficit in Ontario.

The same minister is now applying those same skills at the federal level. He produced the highest spending budget in Canadian history with direct federal spending increasing by 8.6%. He broke a promise on income trusts that cost the Canadian economy, and mostly seniors, some \$25 billion. He brought in measures on interest deductibility that hurt Canadian companies' competitiveness and accelerated the sale of Canadian companies to foreigners.

He introduced tax measures that were totally ineffective and seen more as gimmicks. The example I would use for that is the textbook tax credits for post-secondary students. The maximum students can get is approximately \$80 a year but most of them do not qualify because they need to have revenue to take advantage of the tax break.

Besides those flagrant errors, the Conservatives also have created conditions that have put Canada in a very precarious position should we face this anticipated slowdown in the economy. They got rid of the \$3 billion prudence or cushion that the Liberals would build into every budget. They decreased personal and corporate taxes, which is a very good move on its own, but coupled with the GST cuts, it puts the government very close to a deficit position.

This also means that it is not in a very strong position to help Canadians who may lose their jobs in the next little while in sectors such as manufacturing and forestry. These people are living through extremely difficult times. We were told that we could expect between 300,000 and 400,000 job losses in the next few years in the manufacturing industry alone.

I believe Canadians prefer a balanced approach to resolving issues, not the radical positions taken on most issues by the government. I believe Canadians want us to pay down the debt but not put the whole surplus against the debt. A more balanced approach would be what has been done in the past: a third on the debt, a third on tax relief, because tax relief is good for Canadians, and a third on programs, especially when we have crises like SARS or when certain industries are in crises situations.

The government has also indicated clearly that it does not believe in partnerships with Canadians. When the manufacturing industry is down, when the forestry industry is down and when the agricultural industry is down, the government is nowhere to be found.

The Liberal Party believes that governments have a responsibility to partner with industry and to help Canadians get through tough times. It is a different philosophy and I accept that. We cannot all be the same. We do have different philosophies on either side of this House.

• (1020)

It seems to me that the government should consider helping industries, like the pork industry, which have come to us lately looking for temporary support through low interest repayable loans. That does not seem unreasonable to me. We should be there for them. Once we lose the industry, we do not get it back. I am not sure my colleagues on the other side of the House appreciate that or even understand that.

If I were asked what I would like to see for the people of Saint Boniface in the next budget, I would like to see a budget that puts people first, that shows that we can be practical on the fiscal side and still provide our social programs of which Canadians are so proud.

Government Orders

I would like to see the court challenges program restored to show that we respect our multicultural, official languages, minority and disabled communities.

I would like to see the word “equality” restored to the mandate of Status of Women Canada and restore funding to women's groups to an adequate level.

I would like to see funds for a comprehensive early learning and child care program as proposed by our government. This program was applauded right across the country.

[*Translation*]

In the budget I would also like to see a renewal and improvement of the action plan for official languages. Official language minority communities set their priorities at the 2007 Summit of la Francophonie in Ottawa. The time for consultations is over. It is time for the government to make a serious commitment.

[*English*]

I would like to see funding restored for Canada's aboriginal community so that first nations people can take their proper place in our society and be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

I would like to see our government provide income support or tax relief for our seniors as well as low and middle income Canadians.

I would also like to see a serious effort to curb greenhouse gases to reduce global warming. The carbon budget we are proposing seems to have been well received by experts who are knowledgeable in the field. It is something that should be considered.

I would like the government to tell Canadians the truth on infrastructure funding, which is that the bulk of the \$33 billion it announced is not new money but funds that were committed by the previous government through gas tax transfers and the GST rebate for municipalities. The new funds are closer to \$7 billion or \$8 billion over seven years. Let us be truthful with Canadians.

I would like to see the funding for the second phase of the Red River floodway come from the strategic infrastructure fund and not from Manitoba's infrastructure fund that is proposed by the member for Provencher. Manitoba would lose \$170 million with the minister's plan and Manitoba Liberal MPs worked too hard to secure this in the first place for the first phase of the project.

Finally, I would like to see a serious commitment to clean up Lake Winnipeg, the 10th largest freshwater lake in the world and the pride of Manitobans. We should all be embarrassed for having allowed this lake to deteriorate to the level we see today.

That is my wish list. It seems reasonable and measured, and I look forward to seeing this in budget 2008. I know Canadians will look forward to seeing this as well.

• (1025)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague, who I respect a great deal, talk about his wish list for budget 2008, but I cannot really believe that he understands that many of the problems he has been talking about were caused under the previous Liberal administration.

The collapse of the manufacturing sector, losing 200 jobs a day, started under the Liberals and continued under the Conservatives who have done absolutely nothing to stop that.

This obsession the Conservatives have with massive corporate tax cuts for the banks and big oil and gas was started by the Liberal Party.

All the problems we are seeing are problems that started under the Liberals and have continued under the Conservatives.

Is the member willing to apologize on behalf of the former Liberal governments for the type of economic policies they put into place: their obsession with corporate tax cuts and the collapse of our manufacturing and softwood industries? Is he willing to apologize for all of that and say to the Conservatives, “We screwed up. You are screwing up. Let us both as parties agree that we have not done what is right for the economy and let us take the approach of the NDP”?

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the member respects me.

If an apology is required, it should be from the NDP. It is because of the New Democratic Party that we no longer have child care and respect for the aboriginal community that we had planned in our past budgets. That is very clear.

I can tell the member that at the industry committee we are not hearing what the member is saying with regard to the manufacturing sector. The problems in the manufacturing sector are being created, to some extent, by what is happening in the United States, but that sector is very concerned about not getting any assistance from the government. When we were government, we were always there to provide support to industries in trouble.

I mentioned the pork industry. In Prince Edward Island alone, 50% of the industry has gone already. I would like to say that if the NDP—

Mr. Peter Julian: Softwood, beef cattle, agriculture. It is a long list.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Would the member let me speak, please? I allowed him to ask the question. If it were not for the NDP, we would have child care, the Kelowna accord and all the things that those members talk about but vote against.

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened patiently to my friend's comments and only one thing is clear to Canadians. Today, Canadians have a Conservative government that cares for families, that wants to reduce taxes, that wants to pay down the national mortgage and that wants to control spending.

We have heard the tremendous spin from the Liberals but this is what we have done. In the last two years, our Conservative government has reduced taxes by close to \$200 billion. What is even more remarkable, most of those tax cuts go to individuals and families. We have also paid down the national debt by \$37 billion. We do not want to leave this hanging around the necks of future generations of Canadians.

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We have started to control spending and yet every time we hear the Liberals speak in the House they talk about increasing spending and increasing taxes. What else are they doing? They are talking about increasing the debt or going into deficit to try to afford some of these programs.

A few minutes ago we heard the member for Don Valley East speak. Here is what she said about the child care benefit that we have paid to the parents of every child. She said that it was an insult to Canadians. She said that it was billions of dollars going down the drain.

The Liberals do not trust parents. The Conservatives do.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating that those members can stand and say that they are controlling spending when what we are hearing is that they are having to go into every department right now and find every contingency fund so as not to go into deficit. That is the reality.

That is what Conservative governments do. We have seen it in the United States on numerous occasions where it creates instability, which is not good for an economy. The Conservatives are doing the same thing here. There are all kinds of instability.

The Conservatives say that they are cutting costs and controlling expenses. The reality is on the record and the facts are that this is the biggest spending budget in the history of Canada. Those are the facts. We cannot invent that.

I would challenge Canadians to go and see those people who are saying that they are controlling costs but who actually have put in place the highest spending budget in the history of Canada.

• (1030)

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for St. Catharines, who, for the record, worked tirelessly on this report. I believe that he travelled across the country attending each of the finance committee's prebudget consultations. Indeed, it was a great pleasure to work with all of my colleagues on the finance committee in order to come up with the report that was tabled in the House on Thursday.

I want to take a few moments to thank the House of Commons committee staff as well for their hard work on this report. Too often we forget the number of hours of recording and summarizing of the consultations and discussions that go into a report of this stature, especially since the discussions often contained conflicting views. It will not surprise the House to learn that there are even sources of disagreement across party lines and at times among party members. Therefore, focusing on the positives to come up with a report that all committee members are comfortable with is certainly no small feat.

I also want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the work they contributed to what I think is a very good report. It is truly unfortunate that legislative duties in the House on behalf of the Minister of Finance kept me from a couple of the meetings across Canada that I would like to have attended. I want to thank hon. members who are not full time members of the House Standing Committee on Finance but who graciously agreed to fill in from time to time at these important meetings that allow Canadians to have input on the budget.

I had hoped by moving forward the government could build on the positive momentum from this report to work cooperatively for all Canadians. We heard from a very broad spectrum of Canadians on what they personally, or the association that they represented, thought should be included in our report as advice to this government.

Having said that, I must say that I was disappointed when some members of the opposition then wanted to add into the report some of their own partisan pet projects that no witness had raised before the finance committee. Then, adding to my disappointment, I read some of the stories this week which made their way across the news wires a few hours after the meeting took place between the Minister of Finance and all opposition finance critics.

The critics' chairs were not even warm when one would have thought that they mistook the finance minister for Santa Claus. There were asks in the tens of billions of dollars with no long term strategic thinking or any kind of accurate accounting, led off, of course, by the Liberal finance critic asking us to go backward in time to re-release the Kelowna press release. After all of the things that this government has accomplished in two short years for first nations, why would we go back to the old Liberal way of years of promises ending in a deathbed conversion, admitting that the Liberals had failed first nations? Then there was the greatest ask of all, that if we can, to please try not to go into deficit. That was what we heard, after the list of asks. I am paraphrasing to keep my remarks short.

I shake my head at the opposition on this for playing politics with people's lives. We have taken the approach as the government of this vast and diverse land to enact policies that will provide Canada with the strongest economic fundamentals. We do this so that Canadians will have the fewest possible roadblocks in their way along the path to prosperity, a path Canadians have shown they are more than capable of following, especially given that this government under the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have provided a clearly marked road map.

We need to acknowledge that there are certain sectors which, for various reasons, are facing very real challenges right now. Based on a myriad of factors, some Canadians are hurting and we cannot ignore that. However, the answer is not to pit Ontario manufacturers against Alberta's oil and gas sector, or Quebec forestry against Saskatchewan's potash industry.

• (1035)

The Bloc and the NDP have a few things in common on that file. They ratchet up their dangerous and harmful rhetoric for ideological reasons. The Bloc believes Quebec would be better off on its own, separate from Canada. The NDP believes that corporations should not be allowed to prosper, but in the same breath demands that they employ more workers. It is time that the NDP joined the real world and realized that it is these same corporations, large or small, that help fuel the strong economy that we all enjoy.

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Both ideas are misguided and ones with which we cannot agree, but at least they actually believe in these things. Because they believe these things and because at the end of the day based on our system of government, the Canadian people have the last word, their beliefs mean that they also share the bleak political future of never having the Governor General ask them to form Her Majesty's government. Thank goodness.

The Liberals, on the other hand, try to fuel the fires of regionalism and nationalism because of a much more sinister motivation. They simply want to divide and conquer, pit the English versus the French, the rich versus the poor, Ontario versus Alberta, or Quebec versus Saskatchewan. It makes no difference to them to have Canadian versus Canadian and to govern for the sake of governing. Not on this side of the House; we will not have that.

My home province of Alberta is doing quite well and I will not apologize for that. We are proud of that, but I do recall times that were not nearly as prosperous, that in fact, were quite troubling. Now is not the time to say, as the opposition would have us do, that we have \$14 billion in surplus, do not pay down the debt, give it to the forestry industry, to the auto sector or any one of the provinces. That is not what this government is about to do.

The sad truth is that despite the excellent stewardship of the economy by the Prime Minister and the steady hand of the finance minister, Canada still owes in excess of \$465 billion. And the Liberals say we should not address that? It is a debt burden that we risk passing along to future generations of Canadians who would be saddled with that through no fault of their own. In the absence of fiscally prudent, responsible and careful spending based on a long term plan and strategic approach, Canada is in very real danger of slipping back into a deficit situation. That is clear.

Now is the time to lower taxes and make sure government spending is under control and to continue to pay down our debt. The opposition would have us increase taxes, spend like drunken sailors and ignore the debt, sending Canada into deficit. Canadians have been very clear in all of our consultations with them throughout this process. They realize what is happening in the United States. They realize that we are not planning on going down that road and that we do not want to go there. They are proud of the leadership this government has shown and the capability that it is showing of staying out of deficit.

We promised Canadians that we will do that. We will continue to do that, but along with that, we will make sure that the debt is reduced for our children and grandchildren.

• (1040)

Hon. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary talked about the sad truth. The sad truth is that the economy is stalling, if it has not stalled already. Based on the speech the member for Peterborough gave, one might call him a good car salesman. We hear from the other side of the House that the Conservatives have increased spending in the last two budgets by about 10%, the biggest budgets that we have had in Canadian history. We see that the manufacturing sector is in difficulty. We see that the farm groups, the pork and beef producers are in trouble and we have seen little response from the party opposite.

We need an election in this country to get rid of that group over there and to bring back true fiscal balance, to bring back a government that represents the people of Canada, that is willing to see Canada as a progressive state. We need a government that is responsible, that works for its people, that offers good programs to those in need, that supports the Kelowna accord, that supports university students, that brings in a child care program, not two days of child care a month for the people of this country, the working mothers, but a good child care program that will be for the benefit of all Canadians.

I would like the hon. parliamentary secretary to admit that on balance this country is going down the tubes, that in fact the revenues of the government have decreased for the last several months and that they are worried about the economy. The Conservatives talk about an election. We need an election to get a real government, a real party in charge of this country.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Mr. Speaker, I guess the truth is out. It is the Liberals who really want an election. I am shocked because this morning on television I heard the opposition House leader say, "It is not us who want an election". Perhaps the member for Miramichi should consult with his House leader before he makes public statements in here. There seems to be a bit of a contrast, but no surprise in that contrast.

The doomsday comments the hon. member put forward are nonsense. If they do not scare me, they scare Canadians. That is not the message we need to put forward to Canadians.

The member talked about a big budget, which by the way, the Liberals voted against. Of course it was a big budget, because it provided massive infrastructure funding. Of course it was a big budget because \$33 billion was set aside for infrastructure.

It provided money for the environment, the first real environmental plan that this country has ever seen. It provided money to reduce patient wait times. Funny we should put that in a budget, what a novel idea. money to combat cancer. We have never done that before in this country, what a wonderful idea and it was very well received. It provided money for post-secondary education. The hon. member for Miramichi must not have read the budget and that point about post-secondary education. It provided a working income tax benefit, which was applauded across this country. It provided pension income splitting for seniors. If the hon. member has been reading the media as of late, seniors are just starting to pick up on this fact as they fill out their tax returns. There is a tremendous benefit through income splitting that seniors have been asking for, for years and years. It took this Conservative government to listen to seniors and help them.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on and I am sure that you wish that I would, but I would like to give an opportunity to some other members of the House to ask questions.

The Speaker: I think the two hon. members who spoke have gone enough to use up all the time that was available for questions and comments on that speech, so we are going to have to move on to the next speech.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for St. Catharines.

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Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you in the House on a Friday morning. It seems like everyone is in a festive mood. It must be Friday, when we have a chance to get back to our ridings and talk about the budget.

The budget will be coming up soon. Some excellent work has been done by a number of my colleagues on the finance committee, from all parties. They have come together to put together a prebudget submission, with some 36 recommendations, for the finance minister's consideration. If the finance minister, the finance department and our government see action items that should be implemented in the next budget, they will be in there. Those that are not will be considered in the future.

I have been honoured to participate in two prebudget consultation processes over the past two years and have travelled across Canada to hear from hard-working Canadians. Last year we heard from over 400 groups and we made 52 recommendations to the Minister of Finance. Some people say that good work does not come out of committee. In fact, good work does come out of committee. Seventeen of those 52 recommendations were in the 2007 budget. These consultations do matter.

This year we heard from 166 groups and individuals. The report prepared by the committee contains 36 recommendations. We flew from Vancouver all the way across the country to Halifax. We listened to the concerns of people from all walks of life.

In 2006 there may have been a bit of a hangover from a long and tired government. We faced a number of presentations from people who were upset and who felt that they had not been heard over the past number of years. These people had made their presentations to the finance committee. They put the work and effort into their presentations. Time after time and year after year they felt no one had listened to them.

These people were not there to complain. In the process we went through of 166 presentations. Not everyone was there to say exactly the same thing or to say that they would not like to be included in the budget. It was a very positive experience from Victoria to Calgary, back to Ottawa, to Halifax and then back to Montreal. The outlook from the people and organizations on the future of their communities and our country was nothing less than stellar and positive.

I mentioned the locations where we went. I thought I would highlight a couple of the presentations that were made because they left an impression on me in the approaches they took and about what they spoke.

The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce commended the fiscal update and its benefits to Canadians. The organization asked all members of Parliament to continue to be responsible and to ensure that we provided opportunities for small businesses, individuals and entrepreneurs, hard-working families and Canadians so they too would have an opportunity to continue to grow their small businesses.

The Canadian Sport Centre in Calgary reminded all of us of the importance of physical fitness and Canada's stature in the world. It was interesting because representatives from the centre explained the 2010 Olympics. This week we celebrated the two year countdown to those Olympics. Athletes from across the country, including the great

riding of St. Catharines, are in Calgary now training and getting ready for those Olympics. The slogan is "Own the Podium". We are using that slogan to ensure we will be at the top of the podium in 2010.

One of the comments made was Canadians were changing a little. A number of years ago that slogan may have been "share the podium". We have come a long way. We no longer think of ourselves as not rightfully having a spot on any podium, whether it is the environment, sports or finance. We can own the podium.

● (1045)

Halifax was the only available opening for a representative from Assembly of First Nations to make a presentation to us. It touched me that he had travelled all the way from my home riding of St. Catharines to Halifax to make that presentation. He put forward a plan and a vision for young aboriginal people in our country. He told us that there was a positive road for them as well.

In Montreal we heard from a company that recommended a tax incentive for employers that developed their own pandemic preparedness plan.

The 2006 budget included \$1 billion over five years to fight future pandemics. People have said that we made the right investment in 2006. They have asked that it be extended to allow small and medium sized businesses to set a plan in place for their companies, their employees and their families.

It is not only government that should be responsible for these types of issues. All of us need to be responsible. When Canadians see it in the budget, they come back with ideas and concepts that take it past bureaucracies and government having to pay for or be responsible for this. There is another way to deliver health care on behalf of Canadians.

There are a number of recommendations that I want to briefly highlight.

We have suggested that the Income Tax Act be amended to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for a five year period for manufacturing and processing, machinery and equipment. This is one of the most positive components of the 2007 budget. Whether in Abbotsford, British Columbia or in Peterborough, Ontario, companies are investing in their shops. They are buying equipment that they could not afford before this. They can purchase it now because they can write the depreciation off over a two year period.

There was not a stop that we did not make. Companies and organizations said that this was one of the most positive things they had seen in a budget in years. They did not ask us to reinvent it. They did not ask us to come up with a different way of delivering it. All they simply asked for was an extension.

My community of St. Catharines has been hit hard with manufacturing closures, as have other communities. We have worked hard to assist this sector through policies in the 2007 budget. This week we voted on providing \$1 billion to the provinces and territories so they could assist companies in their communities, which really need help.

Government Orders

We also recommended amending the Excise Tax Act to permit people arriving in Canada to make duty free purchases at Canadian airports. Members may not think this is a big deal. This would not take any money out of the ministries at the federal level. It would simply be an opportunity to create and support jobs in Canada.

We also recommended amending the Income Tax Act to give enhanced incentives for charitable giving. We heard from many not for profit organizations. They wanted the opportunity to increase the donations from Canadians. We can compete with anyone in the world in this regard. We own the podium when it comes to charitable donations. The potential to add to this is something we hope will find its way into the budget.

• (1050)

We heard many times about the child fitness tax credit and what a great benefit it was to many Canadians. We heard from the new Olympic committee on the summer Olympics. It talked about preparing our summer athletes to own the podium. More than that, it is about preparing our children to become physically fit, to learn about working in a team atmosphere and having the positive influence of coaches and leaders.

I am proud to be a member of the finance committee. I am proud we have put forward an opportunity and a report for the finance minister. I am sure some of it will see its way into the budget.

Again, it was good to hear the valuable input and presentations across the country. This is a valuable report that will do good work for Canadians.

• (1055)

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments of my colleague. I was pleased to hear his reference to the standing committee's visit in Victoria. He quoted the Victoria Chamber of Commerce. However, its comments were not only praise for the Conservative government's tax cuts. It stated:

—the Government of Canada needs to take a far more aggressive lead in solving the problems of chronic homelessness across our country...By comparison, the U. S. government invests 3.6 times per capita what the Canadian government does on results-oriented homelessness initiatives.

It went on to say:

In this time of record government surplus, it is absolutely necessary for the federal government to apply a focused effort to reducing homelessness across Canada, and in doing so improve the business environment for thousands of Canadian companies.

Therefore, this is not an issue to address for humanitarian reasons. It has become an economic one and our tax system works at cross purposes with the efforts of cities.

Will his government commit to dealing with homelessness and housing affordability issues in Canada?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, the member for Victoria's presence at the hearings in Victoria was appreciated. It is good to know when we travel across the country, that members have the opportunity, such as was provided to her, to sit in, encourage, listen and advise on the state of their communities.

With respect to homelessness, there is not a government that has paid more attention to homelessness and dealing with this issue. As my colleague, the member for Peterborough, stated, we have done more in the last two years than in the previous twenty years to ensure

we are committed to addressing the issue of homelessness. For example, in the 2006 budget \$800 million in a third party trust account for the provinces and territories.

I know the member would like to take credit for having that in the budget, and she can. However, the fact is the Conservative government put it in the 2006 budget to commit the \$800 million for the provinces and territories. It was not only a commitment, but we put the money in a third party trust account. Some provinces still have not accessed those funds to deliver on homelessness. We again acknowledged it as an issue to be dealt with in the 2007, budget by allocating \$1.4 billion to address affordable housing and to address homelessness in the country.

We are not only prepared to talk the talk, we are prepared to walk the walk.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am shocked the member would admit that the government put money into a third party trust. The fact is the Prime Minister when he was in opposition said that he would never put money into trusts because it was unaccountable financing and not transparent.

When money goes into a trust, it is dumped out into a province or whatever with no guidelines attached to it, never targeted to meet the needs that it is supposed to accomplish.

Will the member admit that his leader in the last election and prior to it said that he would never put money into third party trusts, which is being now used to squander federal monies?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, this is the same member who stands up every day in question period and demands money for farmers. Now, when we put money in for farmers, when we commit to the provinces, and when we commit to the territories, he stands in his place and tells all of us not to give anybody any money because we do not know what they are going to do with it.

The provincial treasurer in Prince Edward Island thinks we are spending money just fine and making the needed investments. Treasurer Wes Sheridan of the new Liberal government had nothing but praise for the Conservative finance minister's mini budget. He said:

It's very exciting. It's tremendous news for Islanders. This is money in our back pockets and that means money to be spent on Island businesses—

• (1100)

The Speaker: I am sorry, but the time allotted for questions and comments has expired, tempting as it is to have the member continue his quotations.

We will now move to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

LOYALIST LANDING

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 4, 1783, the first of tens of thousands of United Empire Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution stepped ashore in Port Roseway, now Shelburne, Nova Scotia. This year marks the 225th anniversary of that landing which, at the time, established Shelburne as one of the largest towns in eastern Canada.

Nearby, the United Empire Black Loyalists settled Birchtown, one of the most historically important Black communities in Canada.

This anniversary is being recognized and commemorated with a year-long celebration of historical, multicultural, contemporary and participatory events aptly called "A Celebration to Remember".

The Loyalist Landing Society, made up of local volunteers, has been working for nearly two years to make this signature event in Nova Scotia truly a celebration to remember. All Canadians should take this opportunity to be among the many thousands of visitors to Shelburne this summer.

We wish to congratulate all the organizers and volunteers. This will truly be a celebration to remember.

* * *

URBAN AFFAIRS

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past two years, the government has dramatically failed Canada's cities.

Canadians, from St. John's to Vancouver and from Saskatoon to Toronto, are fed up with how the Prime Minister and his cabinet have stuck their collective heads in the sand on key issues such as handguns, poverty and infrastructure funding.

Given that metropolitan areas are home to almost 70% of Canadians and 90% of our country's population growth, the government must start paying heed to the wishes of Canada's mayors and the citizens they represent.

I call on the Prime Minister to stop ignoring the two-thirds of Canadians who live in metropolitan areas and to make the challenges facing Canadian cities a top priority.

* * *

[Translation]

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we recently learned that Human Resources and Social Development Canada, the Treasury Board and the Canada Public Service Agency discriminated against medical adjudicators at the Canada Pension Plan.

The medical adjudicators—nurses, 95% of whom are female—earn from \$50,000 to \$60,000. Medical advisers—doctors, 80% of whom are male—earn twice as much as medical adjudicators. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has stated that both groups do the

Statements by Members

same job, which is to assess medical fitness to determine eligibility for CPP disability benefits.

It is shameful to see the federal government treat its own employees this way and to claim that there is equality among men and women, when it does not even apply pay equity. The government must set an example and introduce proactive legislation on pay equity, like the legislation in Quebec.

* * *

[English]

MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is time to resolve the real fiscal imbalance in Canada that falls on the shoulders of cities.

If the finance minister thinks that cities have only potholes to worry about, he should come in from the burbs for a day.

He might find it challenging to repair antiquated storm sewers, meet increasing transit demand, create new affordable housing units, tackle addiction and mental health issues, keep libraries and community centres open, and retrofit civic buildings to fight climate change, all on eight cents of every tax dollar collected in Canada.

He might find it unfair that our property taxes are going up while corporate taxes for big banks and big oil are going down.

City residents deserve healthy and sustainable communities and it is time that Ottawa did its share.

* * *

● (1105)

FRANK HAMILTON

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is easy, as time passes, to forget people who have given their time and energy to our communities. Those of us who are younger can easily forget what and who went before us. Last weekend, I was reminded of that when I heard that Frank Hamilton had died.

Frank was a farmer from Mazonod. He was an airman in World War II who served with distinction. Throughout his life, he was a community-minded person.

He was also the Progressive Conservative member of Parliament for our area from 1972 to 1984, serving again with distinction in agriculture, defence, transportation and veterans affairs.

I did not know Frank, but when I asked about him, I found out some things. He was highly respected by those who knew him. He was a good MP who always worked hard for his constituents. He was a salt of the earth, unassuming man who did not need the limelight to know that he had done well. He and his wife, Wanda, made a great team.

Statements by Members

We thank Frank for his many years of service to southwest Saskatchewan.

* * *

POND HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Hon. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last weekend the Rotary Club of Newcastle held its fourth annual pond hockey tournament at French Fort Cove Nature Park. Ninety-seven teams, both men and women, participated on 12 rinks.

The Miramichi welcomed five former NHL players and teams from Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Massachusetts and Illinois.

Base Gagetown was represented by its base commander, Colonel Ken Chadder, and three teams of service personnel.

Everyone enjoyed an exciting and entertaining weekend with thousands of visitors. Rotarians, partnering groups, sponsors and the many volunteers are to be commended.

Plans are now under way for another event next winter. It is a highlight of Miramichi's winter activities and a major fundraiser that supports youth activities and community projects.

People who enjoy hockey and outdoor fun, they should set their sights on February 2009.

* * *

MISSION HARBOUR AUTHORITY

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of the Mission Harbour Authority which operates two small craft harbours at Mission and Whonnock on the Lower Fraser River.

This past year, due to high snow pack levels, there was a very significant flood threat on the Fraser. The Mission Harbour Authority rose to the challenge of not just safeguarding its own harbours but assisting other harbours and the community in general.

For these extraordinary efforts, it was presented with the Special Pacific Achievement Award at the Harbour Authority Association of B.C.'s recent annual conference.

Harbour managers David Barratt and Bick Benedict played a critical role in the Fraser River small craft harbour flood response. They were supported in their efforts by the Harbour Authority Board, made up of Alec Finson, Shelley Clarkson, Rick LeBlanc, Gerry Chabot, Vic Carrao, Greg Mooney, Rob Chadwick, Bob McKamey and Ernie Catherwood.

I would like to ask all members of the House to join me in thanking these men and women for their outstanding service.

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[*Translation*]

LA FACE CACHÉE DE LA POMME

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of my Bloc Québécois colleagues, it is my pleasure to congratulate La Face Cachée de la Pomme, a cidery in Hemmingford in the riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry, which

received many gold medals in 2007 for its products, including Neige ice cider.

The cidery has already won more awards in 2008. Spain's Asturian cider foundation recognized La Face Cachée de la Pomme with an award for its contribution to the development of ice cider production and for having led the way in marketing the product in Quebec and around the world.

I would like to congratulate François Pouliot, Stéphanie Beaudouin and their team who have created such good cider from the Quebec terroir for us. Bottled and branded right here at home, their many varieties of cider help promote Quebec culture throughout the world.

I am proud of this pioneering Quebec producer's success, which puts Quebec in the spotlight on the world stage.

* * *

QUEBEC WINTER CARNIVAL

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind the members that Quebec City's Carnaval kicked off last week and that the party continues this weekend.

This weekend, the Calgary Stampede is paying a visit to its sister city in Quebec. Tomorrow morning, in finest Stampede tradition, there will be a pancake breakfast. The Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and many of our western colleagues will be there to flip some of their famous flapjacks.

Tomorrow evening, a huge barbecue organized by the folks from the Stampede will be held in Charlesbourg.

The people of Quebec City are in the mood for a party, and the Quebec region Conservative caucus invites one and all to come celebrate Carnaval, the Stampede, the 400th anniversary, and our national superstar, Bonhomme Carnaval.

* * *

● (1110)

[*English*]

ADOLPH LASERICH

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a giant among pilots in the north, Adolph William Laserich, passed away last November at the age of 75.

Born in Germany in 1932, Willy moved all alone to Canada at the age of 19 in a Norwegian sealing boat.

While getting his pilot licence in Edmonton in 1957, he met Margaret Rose Bruce whom he married the following year.

Statements by Members

The day after, the happy couple moved north and the legend of “Willy and the bandits” began. As Mike Bryant said, “Branded an outlaw by the government, adored by the communities he served, there was no pilot quite like Willy Laserich”.

Willy's company, Adlair Aviation, based in Cambridge Bay, is famous for successful medevacs, which is our equivalent of 911.

There are many families whose lives have been enriched by the daring efforts of a man determined to help those around him, including six babies born in the air. Still, in 50 years of flying, Willy maintained a perfect safety record.

Willy is survived by his wife Margaret, two sons, two daughters and four grandchildren.

Nunavut thanks the family for sharing him with us. He was a legend, a hero and a friend, and will be greatly missed.

* * *

TACKLING VIOLENT CRIME ACT

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the government put a motion on notice which will ask the Senate to pass the tackling violent crime act by March 1, 2008. The bill has been in the Senate for 72 days, which is almost twice as long as it took to pass through the House of Commons. The senators passed their last pay raise in nine days, so we know they can act quickly.

They have once again demonstrated that they are quick to defend their own interests and, I submit, they should be quick to defend the interests of Canada. Canadians want the tackling violent crime act to become law. Canadians want their democratic will respected.

I urge the leader of the official opposition to show leadership in the Senate, where his senators have a majority. While he is over there, I urge him to demand that his senators give up their unaccountable ways and embrace Senate reform.

This government and this Prime Minister have shown strong leadership. We are making Canadians safer and we are fighting for more democracy in the Senate. The official opposition and its senators are not getting the job done.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are at least two things wrong with the \$120,000 untendered contract that the Minister of Finance handed over to his buddy from Queen's Park.

The first and most obvious problem is that it is a gross violation of Treasury Board guidelines to give such a contract away without a fair tendering process.

Second, what kind of finance minister, what kind of guardian of the public purse, would squander \$120,000 on a single speech? That is two years' salary for the average family of four. It is an obscene, offensive, cavalier waste of money. It is a wildly irresponsible abuse of the taxpayers' money and an abuse of the public trust.

When a Liberal defence minister gave an untendered contract of one-third the size to a former girlfriend, he was dropped from the cabinet and banished to the Senate.

Those guys over there are now gorging themselves on the public purse and running roughshod over all the rules and regulations that we put in place to protect us from the Liberals. The government loses all credibility. If the Minister of Finance is not hauled up on the carpet and disciplined sternly—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Mississauga—Brampton South.

* * *

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a cloud looming over this country, one which this government, led by the Prime Minister, has precipitated.

The state of the economy, in the hands of the minister of fiscal mismanagement, is now akin to the Enron ride of broken dreams.

We need only look at the income trust debacle for proof of the Conservative government's inability to understand the consequences of its actions. Or perhaps the well-being of millions of Canadian retirees does not matter to the Conservative government.

Our internationally renowned health care system is now more than ever in danger of wasting away because of the Conservative government's wilful inaction and disregard for the values espoused by Lester B. Pearson.

Ever since the Conservative government came to power, it claimed accountability, integrity and honesty in government, yet when confronted by truth, it fires, forces out and silences anyone who does not toe this dangerously partisan line.

Has the Prime Minister fooled himself into believing the Canadian public cannot see the truth through the Conservative smog?

* * *

● (1115)

[*Translation*]

MONTREAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the flair for innovation that typifies the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. On February 20, 2008, the orchestra is performing a special concert to pay homage to the legends of the Montreal Canadiens.

Pieces by Strauss and Satie will be featured, but more importantly, the MSO has commissioned an original piece, produced by composer François Dompierre in collaboration with writer Georges-Hébert Germain. The participation of certain of our favourite players, past and present, will give an added dimension to this special event, taking spectators back to some great moments in the history of the Habs.

Oral Questions

This daring juxtaposition, which transcends an invisible barrier, serves two purposes. First, it serves to renew interest in classical music among the general public and second, it casts a new light on a sport that is very much a part of our collective psyche. On the eve of the Montreal team's 100th anniversary, this MSO initiative is even more meaningful.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise here today to commemorate Black History Month, which serves to celebrate and honour the rights of black Canadians.

There is much to celebrate in terms of the achievements and contributions of black Canadians, who have left their mark on the culture and identity of our country.

Black History Month gives us the opportunity to learn more about their experiences and the vital role they have played in Canada's history. It also allows us to recognize their involvement in the political, economic and cultural fabric of our society.

Black History Month provides an opportunity to honour and celebrate the achievements of black Canadians, including artists, athletes, scientists, politicians and local celebrities, past and present.

We should all be proud of Canada's black community and I ask my fellow colleagues in the House to join me in recognizing the important contributions that this community has made and continues to make to Canadian society.

* * *

[English]

TACKLING VIOLENT CRIME ACT

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have had enough of the Liberal leader's hear nothing, say nothing and do nothing approach to tackling crime, while the members of his party sit back and watch the Liberal-controlled Senate delay and obstruct the passage of the tackling violent crime act.

I have sat with families of crime victims in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga, who have shared how their lives have been changed forever by violent criminal acts. I would like to remind the Liberal leader that the Liberal premier of Ontario and several other stakeholder groups are also urging the Senate to act now.

Margaret Miller, National President of MADD Canada, stated, "Bill C-2 will save lives and reduce impaired driving incidents on our roads". She continued, saying, "We plead with the Senators in the Committee and in the Chamber, don't delay passing Bill C-2".

I join these groups in their call to action. The safety of Canadians is a priority for this government. When will the Liberal leader finally stand up and take action?

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Parliament Hill is a strange place these days because Canadians are being treated to the amazing spectacle of a government trying to defeat itself.

The reason is simple. The government is drifting. Its legislative cupboard is bare. The news keeps getting worse: nuclear safety, detainees, and forestry shutdown.

The government is desperate for an election before it is found out, so why does the government not just come clean and admit that it has given up on itself and is engineering its own defeat?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is doing what it said it would do. We are trying to do so in the face of continuous obstruction tactics from the Liberals.

Let us take, for example, the cornerstone of our throne speech, the tackling violent crime act, a confidence bill passed by this House after a delay of a year and a half for those bills, passed previously to that in 41 days by this House. The Liberals get the bill over there with their friends in the Liberal dominated Senate, the Liberal grinding, delay and obstruction machine gets back to work, and they do not pass the bill. They delay and obstruct it.

Why? Very simply, the Liberals do not want to get tough on crime. They do not want to pass the tackling violent crime bill. That is why we are insisting they do it—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government does seem desperate for an election, so let us look at its record: firing public servants who protect Canadians' safety, bungling detainee transfers in Afghanistan, subverting the Elections Act, breaking Treasury Board rules, and washing its hands as the forestry industry suffers.

Some record, some platform: how can the government possibly face an election with a record like that?

● (1120)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been providing strong leadership to Canadians, not dithering and indecisiveness. We have been delivering accomplishments.

We have reduced the tax burden on Canadian families, reducing the GST from 7% to 5% ahead of target, while those members voted against it every step of the way except for that time they did not even bother to get up, do their jobs and vote.

We have reduced personal income taxes. We have delivered a bill on restoring the fiscal balance. We have delivered by providing a tackling violent crime act. We have announced a national anti-drug strategy. We have contributed \$500 million to the Middle East peace process. I could go on and on. We are doing what we said what we would do and we are going to get results.

* * *

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government claims to be taking a non-partisan approach to the future of the mission in Afghanistan. However, this morning, the minister launched a partisan and absurd attack on our party, as usual.

We cannot have an honest debate about our future role in Afghanistan if the government continues to make these ridiculous attacks.

I will ask a clear and simple question: is the government ready to seek a compromise on Afghanistan? Yes or no?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have searched for a roadmap with respect to our future role in Afghanistan as well as a consensus with the other party.

The Prime Minister met with the Leader of the Liberal Party to discuss this matter. He is looking for suggestions but the Leader of the Liberal Party has none.

[English]

It is not a surprise that the Liberal Party leader complains that he only had a couple of days to lay out his position on Afghanistan. After all, he has been spending more than a year trying to figure out what it is and he still has not decided.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Federal Court Justice Anne Mactavish outlined a number of serious concerns regarding the transfer of detainees in Afghanistan. There is no political agenda and no partisanship in her ruling, just troubling concerns about this government and torture. This ruling finally proves that the government's transfer agreement, despite its claims, did nothing to prevent torture and abuse.

Will the government assure that under no circumstances will it resume the transfer of prisoners in Afghanistan without informing this House publicly?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): First, Mr. Speaker, let us tell Canadians honestly what the court did. The court recognized that all necessary steps have been taken to comply fully with our legal obligation toward Taliban prisoners. Our policy is clear and we continue to practise it.

What we will not do is what the agent for the Taliban intelligence agency wants us to do over there, which is to release to them information on detailed operations in the field. We will let the Canadian army decide when it is comfortable doing that.

Oral Questions

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, attacking somebody's patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels.

When it comes to Afghan detainees, the government cannot be trusted. Justice Mactavish herself has proven that the answers given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on this issue were simply false.

The minister and the government cannot keep standing behind their agreement, an agreement that Justice Mactavish blasted for failing to protect prisoners from torture and abuse.

Canadians are sick of false answers, spin and misdirection by the government. They want to know what steps, what real steps, the government will take to ensure no future torture or abuse occurs.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that guy is spinning so fast he must be dizzy. He does not even bother to tell Canadians that the court decision was for Canada to uphold its position on Taliban prisoners. The Canadian government actually won that case. He did not bother to tell Canadians that, but I am not surprised because the Liberals do not like to tell Canadians where they stand on anything.

On the Afghan mission, what do we hear? They cannot decide. They do not want to decide so quickly. They are in favour of our troops being there but they want them out.

It is time for leadership and time to decide. Do they support our mission in Afghan or do they not? They should make up their minds and tell Canadians now.

* * *

● (1125)

[Translation]

MANUFACTURING AND FORESTRY INDUSTRIES

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since activity resumed in the House, the Conservatives have been desperately trying to divert our attention. There were many examples this week. They are trying to divert attention away from their disastrous performance with respect to the crisis presently rocking the manufacturing and forestry industries.

Instead of engaging in these diversionary tactics or hiding its head in the sand, will the government put aside its laissez-faire and do-nothing ideology and move immediately to improve the aid package for the manufacturing and forestry industries, as urged by everyone in Quebec?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am certain that my hon. colleague has not reviewed the Statistics Canada data with regard to job creation, for Canada in particular, but also for Quebec. It should be noted that Quebec's unemployment rate of 6.8% is the lowest it has been in 33 years. That proves that we are doing something about real issues.

Oral Questions

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, speaking of figures, in the past five years, 145,000 jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector in Quebec. Most of these jobs have been lost under the Conservatives. Last year, 45,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in Quebec. That is how the Conservatives have performed.

Will the Prime Minister take advantage of his meeting with Jean Charest in Quebec City this weekend to do as he did with Mario Dumont in Rivière-du-Loup and announce this time that he will immediately improve the aid package for the manufacturing and forestry industries in Quebec, which are suffering? You need to open your eyes.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, for two years now, our eyes have been wide open. We are delivering what Quebecers want. Last week, this House was able to deliver \$1 billion to help communities, including \$216 million for Quebec. That is action.

We put in place tax measures to help businesses and Quebecers and reduced the GST. But they voted against that, as we know.

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, Jean Charest and Dalton McGuinty called on the Conservative government to improve aid to the manufacturing and forestry industries. On Tuesday, the CSN joined in the call; on Wednesday, the FTQ; and yesterday, the Forest Products Association of Canada.

In the face of such a consensus, will the government finally stop doing nothing and take action immediately to improve aid to the manufacturing and forestry industries?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to remind my hon. friend that the Premier of Ontario responded by congratulating the federal government. The premier in particular clearly stated that he was pleased with the work that had been done.

If our friends in the Bloc Québécois are saying that something else needs to be done, then why did they vote for the measure that gives Quebecers \$216 million immediately?

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the prebudget report of the Standing Committee on Finance, we find a recommendation that is identical to one the House voted on this past Monday, calling on the federal government to introduce tax measures to help the manufacturing and forestry industries.

What is the government waiting for to respect the wishes repeatedly expressed by a majority of this House, calling on it to immediately implement assistance measures using some of the projected \$10.6 billion surplus for this fiscal year?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as usual, we have to be accurate. Facts are facts. The Bloc Québécois voted against the measures in the economic statement. These measures immediately provide Quebec over the next five years with \$12 billion to help companies, \$12 billion to help workers, and \$12 billion to help cut taxes.

We are delivering the goods and they are walking around empty-handed.

•(1130)

[English]

BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to sticking up for consumers, the Conservatives cannot be trusted. We saw it on ATM fees, on cellphone charges and on credit card rates.

Now we learn that at CRTC hearings, for two years the government failed to take action to protect consumers from cable company overcharge. We are talking about more than \$1.2 billion owed to Canadians.

Would the government tell us why ordinary Canadians are overpaying for cable services and why the government has done diddly-squat to stop it?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has set forth a competition panel that will be looking at all the competition issues. It is an arm's length organization. We will be looking at all the different rates being charged across Canada.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian television fund was not meant to be a hidden tax to consumers. We all remember last year's fiasco when Shaw and Vidéotron refused to live up to their obligations. In fact, they were forced to reverse themselves, despite the lack of leadership from the heritage minister.

Cable companies must live up to their obligations and they cannot do so by ripping off Canadians.

Why is the government letting cable companies pass the buck to consumers? Why is the government refusing to take action to protect Canadians from these cable company fee grabs? Why is the government not taking action?

Hon. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the actions by our government and our minister on the issue of the cable funds.

We referred the issues to which she is referring to the CRTC, which is an arm's length organization and, as such, we are looking forward to its report when it is finalized.

The CRTC is going through hearings at this particular point and we are looking forward to the results of those hearings.

CHALK RIVER NUCLEAR FACILITIES

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, MDS Nordion testified at committee yesterday that it warned senior officials at the Department of Natural Resources about the isotope shortage on November 22. AECL emailed the department about the looming crisis on November 22.

The former chairman of AECL also said that he and the Minister of Natural Resources were advised that the reactor would not return to service as expected on November 22 and yet the minister insists that he only found out on December 3.

When will those two ministerial “isodopes” come clean and tell Canadians the truth?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding his cute attempts at quips, in reality the timelines they were given yesterday were the same as the minister gave.

Actually, what Canadians should be shaking their head at is the lack of leadership from the opposition side. The opposition cannot continue to have it both ways.

One week members of the opposition say that we should have acted sooner and then the next week they say that we should not have acted at all. Canadians are tired of that. They are glad that we moved when we did. They are glad that Parliament supported that.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a rope-a-dope answer from an “isodope” member.

[Translation]

MDS Nordion warned the Department of Natural Resources about the isotope shortage on November 22. The former chairman of AECL also said that he and the minister were warned on November 22.

The nuclear medicine industry were put in the picture on November 27. It is simply unbelievable that the Minister of Natural Resources did not know anything before December 3 and that the Minister of Health was not informed until December 5.

When will the Bobbsey Twins admit that they have been found out?

[English]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is the same information that the minister gave. MDS Nordion pointed out, as the minister had, that right up until the end of November everyone expected that the reactor would start in early December. When we found out that was not the case, this government acted and it acted quickly, and it acted with the support of all of Parliament.

I would like to quote Mr. Malkoske from MDS Nordion when he said, “I think the government was doing what they could, frankly”.

*Oral Questions***MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS**

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on December 10, OPP superintendent, Dave Truax, announced that he would be forwarding the O'Brien investigation to the RCMP after its eight month probe revealed that O'Brien had allegedly negotiated with someone at the federal level to get Terry Kilrea a federal appointment.

Strangely, the very next day the OPP changed its mind.

Would the Prime Minister tell us whether the environment minister's chief of staff called the OPP the next day on December 11? A yes or a no answer, please.

• (1135)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am puzzled by this question. I thought this was settled a long time ago but I guess there is nothing left for the Liberals in their barrel of questions.

It is clear that nothing was ever offered by anyone in this government. No post was ever provided and no patronage appointment was made. I know that upsets Liberals, who like to see those patronage appointments made, but none ever occurred. Then, God forbid, the police actually cleared the minister and confirmed that was the case, which really upsets them.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some accountability. I am afraid that Mr. Kilrea was the one who turned down the bribe.

The OPP has evidence that suggests that the minister and O'Brien met during this period, that this bribe was on the table and that they discussed it at that meeting.

Let us try again to get a straight answer. Did the minister's chief of staff or others in his office make calls to the OPP after it was announced that it was handing over the case to the RCMP? A clear answer, if it is not yes, is it no, but give us a straight answer.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the police made a pretty clear decision. Charges were laid but none were laid against anybody in this federal government. In fact, the OPP declared that there was nothing improper done by anybody in this government.

I do not know why they cannot accept that. It may not be good news to them but it is the truth and Canadians are proud of their government for behaving that way.

* * *

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Justice Mactavish took the government to task for failing to put safeguards in place to ensure that detainees transferred to Afghan authorities would not be tortured. Despite the claims of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, an agreement without concrete measures to ensure there is no torture is not worth a hill of beans.

Oral Questions

Do Justice Mactavish's comments not prove that the government did not fulfill its responsibilities to ensure that once the detainees are transferred, they are not tortured?

[*English*]

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will reiterate the answers that we gave before. The judge did make it clear that the government had met all obligations to allow transfers to take place.

The arrangement that we put in place last May is still in place. The policy has not changed. It is still a good policy and it is still a good arrangement.

The decision will still be made on the ground by members of the Canadian Forces and other Canadian officials working in the area. They are the right ones to make it. We trust their judgment. The system is working. Why can they not accept that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelega, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know that the detainees are being kept somewhere, but the minister does not want to tell us any more than that.

Since we know there is no Canadian prison to accommodate the detainees and, according to the minister, there are no transfers, can someone tell us what happens to them? What happens to the detainees? That is what we want to know.

[*English*]

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is not in the business of building prisons in Afghanistan or in any other foreign country. We have a very good arrangement with the Afghan government and we are meeting all international obligations. The judge in Vancouver confirmed that and we accept her judgment.

We are going to get on with implementing the policy. That has never changed. The actual implementation will be up to the Canadians on the ground in Afghanistan. They are doing a great job. We respect them. We appreciate their great work and we wish the other parties would do the same.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MEDICAL ISOTOPES

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that MDS Nordion informed the Department of National Resources about the medical isotope crisis on November 22, 2007. If we are to believe the minister, before he found out about the emergency, MDS Nordion knew, the hospitals knew, the doctors knew. Everyone knew except him.

In a situation where, according to the minister, each day that passes further jeopardizes the lives of people in need of isotopes, how can he explain that he ignored the seriousness of the situation for more than 10 days?

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Liberal member, at least that opposition

member was at the committee, so she would know full well that the timelines the minister gave and the ones that MDS Nordion gave were identical.

The reality is the opposition members cannot have it both ways. They cannot say to us one week that we should not have acted and then come back the next week and say that we did not act soon enough. It just makes no sense.

Canadians are thankful that this government showed leadership and acted and they are thankful that Parliament supported us in that decision.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the minister is trying to put the blame on everyone but himself. With the Conservatives, it is always someone else's fault.

Will the minister admit that his vendetta with the president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission was an attempt to sideline anyone who does not see eye to eye with him on nuclear energy?

● (1140)

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now the member is beginning to focus on the real issue here. The real issue was why the regulator was not willing to work with everyone else to protect the health of Canadians. One of the witnesses yesterday said:

There never was, and there does not exist, a substantive nuclear safety risk at the NRU reactor at Chalk River... Parliament's swift actions averted imminent harm to patients and the well-being of Canadians. I remain proud of the way that was handled by Parliament.

I too am proud of the way that issue was handled by this Parliament.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Hon. Garth Turner (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first we learned that the finance minister broke the rules with an untendered speech writing contract to a Conservative buddy for \$22 a word. Worse, now we find out the department is pushing the limits, awarding 72 contracts since the last election at just under that \$25,000 limit, ducking the tendering process. Were these also to Conservative cronies?

The dishonest government is desperate to have an election before it is found out. Well, bring it on.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am always confused by the enthusiasm of the member for Halton for an election. He said that if members cross the floor, they should be subject to a byelection. He crossed the floor, and would not put himself through a byelection. Now he is calling for an election, bring it on.

Guess what? Byelections are happening on March 17. If the member steps down today, we can fit him in.

Oral Questions

Hon. Garth Turner (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said in this House before, I am happy to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. We have to be able to hear the question from the hon. member for Halton or the government House leader will be at a loss for an answer.

The member for Halton has the floor to ask a question and we will have some order, please.

Hon. Garth Turner: Mr. Speaker, the government wrapped itself in a flag of accountability during the last election. If the parliamentary secretary for the minister will not answer this question, let me put it to the President of the Treasury Board.

When are we going to start looking after Canadians' money? Will he remember whose money it is? It is not the money of the Minister of Finance, but of the people of Canada who are watching this. Will the minister be held to account?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, accountability is about doing what one said one would do. We are doing what we said we would do. That gentlemen does not seem interested in doing what he said he would do, but of course he is the one who said to a parliamentary committee, "No one cares what I campaigned on". Those are his words, not mine.

Let me say what we have as a result of that budget that those individuals worked on. We have a labour market that is performing strongly. Over the past 12 months, nearly 337,000 jobs have been created. Unemployment is at a 33 year low. The share of adult population with a job is at a record high. It is a great economic record. That is why he is not talking about it.

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ELECTION EXPENSES

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the elections commissioner says that Conservatives and only Conservatives ran an election financing scam to violate spending limits. But that is no surprise. The Prime Minister went to court back in the 1990s to fight spending limits, in that famous case of Harper v Canada. Back then he said:

Is it the Mulroney version of responsibility: "to heck with the facts, I will wait until the next election"?

Flouting the law, flouting the truth, hoping an election will wash away the dirt; why has the Prime Minister become the Brian Mulroney he once despised?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question of election financing is a serious matter, one that should be treating all parties equally. What has taken place is the hijacking in the procedure and House affairs committee by the other parties for partisan purposes, one that has been commented on very unfavourably, where they are saying, "Don't look at us. We may do the exact same things. There may be affidavit evidence saying that our election spending practices are exactly the same, but we don't want to be studied. Only look at those guys".

We believe all our practices are legal. We have always believed that. If they believe they are legal, open up their books. Open up everybody's books and treat everybody equally.

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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Next, Mr. Speaker, they will be firing the elections commissioner.

It is a dishonest government begging for an election before it gets caught. The Conservatives want to stifle investigations into their ethical failures: safety regulators fired to hide Conservative incompetence; untendered contracts to cronies and friends; Conservative interference in civic elections; and their election financing scam to violate national spending limits by a million bucks, and swipe an extra \$700,000 in tax paid subsidies.

Why will the government not come clean about Conservative corruption?

● (1145)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the most sweeping federal accountability act ever in Canadian history was delayed by that party for a year as the Liberals sought to chip it away and eliminate its provisions, especially those on, guess what, election financing, because they did not want them to apply to them. It took the NDP to get those in place.

Reducing the GST from 7% to 6% to 5% was opposed by the Liberals, except for when they do not even bother to do their jobs and vote. On lower income taxes, they voted against it. On business stimulus, they voted against it. On more money for post-secondary education, they voted against it. That is their record.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, global economic uncertainty has Canadians concerned, but our Conservative government has taken prudent, proactive action to cut taxes, reduce debt and make strategic investments to ensure our economy remains strong, the strongest in the G-8 as a matter of fact.

But what do the doom and gloom tax and spend Liberals want to do? They want to engage in excessive, unfocused spending to send Canada back into deficit and raise taxes on hard-working Canadians. I cannot understand it. What Canadians do not want is reckless Liberal spending and they do not want higher taxes.

Today, Statistics Canada released evidence of how our government's proactive approach is getting results. Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his passionate question.

We did take proactive action to stimulate the economy. The Liberals disagreed with that. They would rather spend us into deficit and raise taxes. That is the wrong course of action.

The action we have taken has stimulated the economy to bring unemployment to a 33 year low. In January alone, over 46,000 new, good, high paying jobs were created, full time employment.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the ink was not even dry on the Federal Accountability Act and the finance minister was running roughshod over Treasury Board guidelines, giving away huge untendered contracts to his Queen's Park buddy and also abusing the under \$25,000 rule.

When the Liberal minister pulled the same stunt, we did not even get to ask questions in question period because it hit the newspapers on a Friday and by Saturday that minister was turfed out of cabinet.

There have to be consequences for breaking faith with the Canadian people. Will the Minister of Finance fall on his sword and resign, and if he will not, why does the Prime Minister not do it for him?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear and very consistent on this. I will repeat that there was good value for money that was provided. Unfortunately, administrative functions were not followed, but that will be changed in further contracts.

But let me talk about the budget that we are actually talking about in this contract. There was money that was provided to Canadians, tax reductions to Canadians, pension income splitting for seniors, something they have been asking for for years.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, value for money? Do not make me laugh; I have chapped lips. That \$122,000 is two years' salary for the average family of four. Besides, the minister is missing the point. This is not about value for money. It is about ignoring and running roughshod over Treasury Board guidelines.

Any finance minister who would squander that kind of money on a single speech is not fit to be the guardian of the public purse. Political interference in government contracts has been at the heart of every scandal in recent years. There have to be consequences. The minister should be relieved of his duties.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about consequences since we took power in 2006. We have provided \$140 billion in tax reductions to Canadians, individually and corporately. We have reduced personal income tax down to 15%. We have provided a tax back guarantee of \$2.5 billion by 2012-13. We are increasing the basic personal amount to \$9,600, something the Liberals never even thought about.

● (1150)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Paul Zed (Saint John, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's big city mayors are meeting in Ottawa today to discuss how they can avert the looming crisis in municipal infrastructure.

The government has done nothing to help Canada's communities with the \$123 billion infrastructure deficit that they face.

In December, this House passed a motion calling for action by the government to make the gas tax permanent.

The government should stop insulting our mayors. When will it act and give cities the funding they previously received from Liberal governments?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have closely consulted with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. We were able to craft, build and design a new building Canada program, \$33 billion, to help municipalities and to work with the provinces in terms of developing new programs and fixing projects. We have framework agreements in place, and we are getting the job done.

Mr. Paul Zed (Saint John, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's \$33 billion plan really should be named the failing Canada plan.

Members should check out this deception: over \$18 billion from previous Liberal programs, over \$6 billion that cities cannot even apply for.

Cities feel like our children after two years of Conservative child care, or our aboriginals after the betrayal on Kelowna, or New Brunswickers after the deception on equalization, all abandoned by the Conservative government. When will the government provide real funding for our cities?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am always astonished by the Liberal Party. The Liberals refused to recognize that there was a fiscal imbalance in this country, and here they are, talking about what is not happening or what is not going right.

We are providing \$33 billion and \$1 billion committed to urban transit. We are getting the issues settled, issues that the Liberals were not able to settle. Even in that member's riding we are settling the problems in the harbour.

*Oral Questions***COAST GUARD**

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 31 a boat sank off Newfoundland, taking the lives of Larry Parsons and Christopher Wade Oram. Our sympathies go out to their loved ones.

Since 2004, eight lives have been lost off the northeast coast of Newfoundland in three separate disasters. Questions have been raised about response times. For example, there are 41 lifeboats across this country in the Coast Guard. How many are located on the east coast of Labrador or northeast Newfoundland? None.

Canadians deserve better, and better means more boats and more resources. Will the government make sure that these resources will be in the next budget?

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we sympathize with the families of those who have lost their lives as many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have done over the years.

Let me correct the hon. gentleman. He said there are no boats stationed around the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. First of all, we have 15 major Coast Guard boats stationed, but we have 450 Coast Guard auxiliary boats captained and manned by the most experienced seagoing people in the world, Newfoundland and Labrador fishermen.

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the wake of the *Check-Mate III* sinking, people are wondering if this tragedy could have been avoided.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans took the axe to the Coast Guard presence in Labrador that would have increased marine security. This, despite the lip service he paid to such issues while in opposition.

Referring to the *Melina & Keith II* disaster in 2005, the now minister said, "...the time it took to respond cost lives. It should never ever happen again", and yet, sadly, it has. Why?

• (1155)

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again let me set the hon. member straight for the record.

Since we came to government, we have added \$750 million in two years to put 12 new Coast Guard boats in service. When the Liberals were in power, the Coast Guard boats that were tied up in St. John's did not have fuel. They did not have enough money to go to sea. Those members should not talk to me about search and rescue. They should look at their record.

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[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Revenue Agency has closed 27 payroll service centres across Canada. On October 12, 28 jobs in Shawinigan were cut, supposedly to save money and improve services.

How can the minister responsible for the agency claim to have improved services by closing these centres, firing workers and centralizing activity in Ottawa and Winnipeg? How?

[English]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, CRA continues to improve efficiency in the service. Through a very thorough study, it found that centralizing this service in two locations would deliver better service. I should also note that CRA continues to expand numbers. Employment overall in CRA continues to increase.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the organization works very well. A number of casual employees working for the Canada Revenue Agency, including those in Jonquière and Shawinigan, have trouble getting paid. They sometimes wait up to 12 weeks before receiving their cheques. When they lose their jobs, they wait up to six weeks for their records of employment.

Can the minister guarantee that these casual employees working for the agency will receive their pay and their records of employment without delay?

[English]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, some new employees did not receive their salary cheques on time. CRA has taken vigorous action to correct this. If the member opposite is aware of any specific individuals who have not received their cheques, I would appreciate his advising me and we will take action.

* * *

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec has consistently shown his ineffectiveness and powerlessness. In the Magog area, more than 3,000 jobs have been lost in the past five years. In the Centre-du-Québec region, the mayors of Sainte-Eulalie and Saint-Léonard-d'Aston are still waiting for concrete action.

Will the minister ever understand that empty rhetoric, with no new funding, means nothing? Why is he never there when Quebec needs him?

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear this first question from my colleague from Montreal concerning the economic development of the regions.

My minister has taken the trouble to call the mayor of Sainte-Eulalie on two occasions. Two telephone calls from a minister are worth more than one acknowledgement of receipt from a charming receptionist.

Oral Questions

[English]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government will not waver in its support for our brave men and women in Afghanistan. The Bloc and the NDP want the government to withdraw the troops. They seem to have no idea what this would mean.

As part of the Afghan compact, Canada is committed to helping with the development until 2011. The Manley report clearly states, “fostering development and improving governance cannot proceed without security”.

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence tell the House what the disastrous consequences of a complete withdrawal would mean to the development in Afghanistan?

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as one of the eminent Canadians of the Manley panel put it:

—our men and women are there willingly, and enthusiastically, and they take pride not only in their military operations, but also in the faces of the young girls —once shrouded—who now proudly sit in school and write their names with pencils provided by our aid dollars.

If the Liberals, Bloc and NDP succeed in their efforts and withdraw from Afghanistan, they will have changed the face of Afghanistan development forever.

It is the faces of the young children learning for the first time. I looked into some of those young faces last Christmas in Afghanistan and we simply cannot do that.

* * *

● (1200)

TRADE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, sellouts and broken promises, that is the Conservative's hallmark on trade. The government is selling out Canada's health and safety, our energy, sovereignty plus everything else in the SPP and it refuses to bring any of the discussions here to Parliament.

It is the same thing with the EFTA sellout where Liechtenstein outmanoeuvred, outnegotiated and outclassed this inept and incompetent government. Goodbye shipbuilding industry.

When will the government do what it said it would do, stop the secrecy, bring the SPP here for full scrutiny and the EFTA agreement to Parliament for a vote?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since late 2005, officials have held roughly 12 consultation meetings with various shipbuilding industry representatives.

This FTA addresses domestic shipbuilding concerns in a number of very important ways. In response to concerns expressed by the shipbuilding industry, the draft agreement includes a 15-year tariff phase-out on the most sensitive shipbuilding products.

The phase-out period includes a bridge period of three years, during which time tariffs will be maintained at their current levels

under the FTA. These provisions provide Canadian shipbuilders with considerable time to adjust to duty-free environment. It is the longest phase-out period for Canadian tariffs in any of our free trade agreements.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it kills the shipbuilding industry and that is no surprise.

The process that the Conservatives have adopted is littered with bruised, broken, battered and bleeding industries. They have been sold out by this government, including our softwood communities, our shipbuilding industry, our auto industry, and our manufacturing sector. Now it wants to sell out Canadian values on human rights by pushing a Canada-Colombia trade agreement, with Liberal support.

The U.S. Congress is saying no to this deal because it will worsen the human rights situation there. When the human rights community is saying no, why is the government trying to sell out Canadian values on—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the pursuit of trade liberalization, and the promotion and protection of human rights are complementary and mutually reinforcing objectives. Economic development can strengthen the social foundations of countries and contribute to a domestic environment where individual rights and the rule of law are respected.

Our FTAs are complemented by provisions on labour and environment cooperation, which commit all parties to respect key labour and environmental management principles.

The Minister of Labour recently announced a \$1 million contribution to fund labour related technical assistance in Colombia.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the chairperson of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Does the chairperson plan an early meeting of the committee to consider how the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages misled the committee this week during her appearance regarding equality?

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the minister was before the committee on Tuesday, she incorrectly testified that she had put equality back into the women's program. What the minister should have told the committee is that she put the word “equality” back on the home page of the program, but not into the funding guidelines where it actually counts for women's organizations.

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, my hon. colleague, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, who is doing an excellent job, announced that Canada and Quebec had signed agreements to support rail infrastructure restoration projects in a number of regions of Quebec.

The projects are designed to restore the infrastructure of nine shortline railways in Quebec that are essential to the manufacturing industry and sustainable development. A budget envelope of \$75 million was announced.

Can my hon. colleague explain how these projects will help the regions of Quebec develop?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. It gives me an opportunity to talk about this partnership between the Government of Canada, the Government of Quebec and, in this case, the private sector as well.

It is a partnership that once again reflects our policy of open federalism. The merchandise shipped over these regional railroads is mainly wood, paper, pulp and particle board, and the projects will support Quebec businesses—

• (1205)

The Speaker: We will now proceed to the daily routine of business.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to table the national child benefit progress report for 2004. The reports show we are making progress in reducing child poverty in Canada. They demonstrate the need for the federal, provincial and territorial governments to continue to work together in advancing this goal. We want to make it easier for families to become self-sufficient.

The national child benefit has three goals: to help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty, to promote attachment to the labour market by ensuring families are better off through working, and to harmonize program objectives and benefits through simplified administration.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. In his response to a question, the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière made a very disparaging remark about receptionists.

Points of Order

I think the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière should realize that receptionists are much more than “charming”. They are skilled, efficient and diligent people, not just “charming”.

I would like the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière to apologize to all secretaries and receptionists.

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, we have an example of members of the opposition entirely distorting what a member said. I think the member was speaking about the positive aspects of actually having a minister respond rather than having to always be stopped at the line of a receptionist, whether that receptionist is pleasant or not.

Obviously, we value them. I have wonderful receptionists with whom I have worked with in my life and I think everybody here feels that way. I am sure that the member, now that he is here, will agree in the same fashion.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I do not think this is a point of order or a question of privilege.

The parliamentary secretary's response was not an insult directed any one person. Nonetheless, I will take another look at the response, since the hon. member for Lavalhas raised a question of privilege. And if it seems necessary, I will come back to the House to address this.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS DIRECTED TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising from question periods this week. This week, on two occasions, questions were directed by members of the opposition to committee chairs in the House, which as you know is perfectly permissible under our rules of order.

Today, a question was directed to a committee chair who happens to be a member of the opposition and you appropriately recognized that committee chair to respond to the question that was directed toward her.

Yesterday, however, a question was directed toward a committee chair who happened to be a member of the government. The member was present at the time and he was able to answer the question. He scurried out of the House after the government House leader started to answer the question.

However, the point is this, if the question is directed to the committee chair, then it is the committee chair who must respond to that question and not just a general member of the government.

The point is, when a question is directed to a minister or to a parliamentary secretary, it is perfectly permissible for any member of the government to respond on behalf of the government.

Points of Order

However, when the question is directed to a committee chair, it does not have to do with the administrative responsibility of the government. It has to do with the agenda of the committee and only the committee chair or in his or her absence, the vice-chair of the committee, has actually the knowledge and the capacity to answer that question.

Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, you would be implying, by allowing a member of the government to answer, that in fact the government controls the agenda of committees. That is not the case.

Committees are masters of their own house. The government does not control the agenda of the committee and therefore, when a question is directed to a committee chair, only the chair or the vice-chair has the capacity to answer.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure this situation has arisen inadvertently, although the government was obviously trying to stifle that particular answer yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to look at this question seriously and give us some guidance in future as to when a question is directed to a committee chair, is it permissible for a member of the government to answer, that is a minister or parliamentary secretary, or does it in fact have to be the committee chair himself or herself? We believe it is in fact the latter.

• (1210)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Liberal House leader got himself into quite a lather on that role there. The fact that he started with was wrong. I know we are discouraged from commenting on the presence or absence of members in the House of Commons, but the chair of that committee was not present in the House at that time.

The fact is simple. He and I had discussed, in advance, should there be any questions of that committee chair, whether he would respond to them. I advised him clearly that he would respond to them. He understood that. That was what he wished to do, and had he been here, I would have permitted him to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I think you were quite correct in the circumstances in how you handled the matter. If it should have been the vice-chair, then perhaps the opposition House leader has a point. My understanding was that chairs were permitted to answer questions in the House, not vice-chairs.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the question of privilege raised by my colleague from Laval requesting an apology from the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

The Speaker: I have indicated that I am going to consider the remarks and look at what he said. If necessary, I will come back to the House to address this. That is the end of the question. I do not believe there are any other points to raise. I have to look at what he said. I will do so and, if necessary, I will come back to it.

I would now like to come back to the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Wascana.

[*English*]

Yesterday, when this happened, no one rose except the government House leader to answer the question concerning the business of this committee, so I recognized the government House leader. I did not see the chair of the committee. I do not know whether he left the House or not. In any event, he did not rise to answer the question, and I do not believe he was in his seat. I do not know who the deputy chair of the committee is off the top of my head, but no other member rose to answer, so I recognized the government House leader.

I do not think the question is whether anyone else is allowed to answer or not. The question for the Speaker of the House is to take a look at those who are standing to answer and choose who is going to answer.

The chair, as I say, did not rise. The House leader did. No one else did so I recognized the House leader to answer the question. I assumed the member would prefer to get an answer from the House leader than none whatsoever, and on we went.

If the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs wishes to make recommendations on how the Speaker should deal with those questions in future, I am more than happy to receive recommendations from it. Of course the House leaders and whips can have a little meeting and tell me what they think. I am happy to hear on this, but in my view, when no one else rises, it is reasonable to expect an answer to a question, even if it comes from on high. Yesterday that is exactly what we got.

Therefore, I do not think it was an error in that sense if the chair was not here and the deputy chair did not rise.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, on this point, would you reflect on one particular matter.

If a member of the government, that is a minister or a parliamentary secretary, is permitted to answer questions on behalf of committee chairs and those questions to committee chairs can only deal with the agenda of the committee, is it not the implication of this situation, then, that the government, and not the committee, controls the agenda of the committee?

I think this is a very important distinction that should be reflected upon.

The Speaker: I do not think it is for the Speaker to involve himself or herself in the affairs of committees to the extent that he says who sets the agenda in the committees. That is for the committee to decide. There may be consultations between the chair of the committees and even the government House leader, if that is imaginable, or possibly with an opposition House leader if the chair of the committee comes from the opposition, or even if they are on opposite sides they can consult and get information.

It may be that some consultations had taken place which resulted in the government House leader rising. I have no idea. However, this is something, as I say, that can be explored by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs at its leisure. If it feels a report or a restriction on who is allowed to answer in the case of questions being asked is applicable or responsible, it can suggest that to the House. If the House adopts it, of course I will not recognize anybody else. However, in the circumstances no one else rose. The member who posed the question clearly wanted an answer and got one, or at least got a response.

I will bear what the hon. member has said in mind.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

●(1215)

[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 five petitions.

* * *

PETITIONS

AUTISM

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from a number of Fraser Valley residents, eight of whom are from my riding of Langley.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to amend the Canada Health Act to include ABA therapy for children with autism as a medically necessary treatment, that it require all provinces to provide or fund essential treatment for autism and that it contribute to the creation of academic chairs at a university in each province to teach ABA treatment at the undergraduate or doctorate levels, so Canadian professionals will no longer be forced to leave the country to receive academic training.

EQUALIZATION

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House. The first is the second half of a petition that I first presented in the spring.

The petitioners call upon the government to remove non-renewable resources, without the imposition of a cap, as part of the equalization formula. This was a promise by the current Prime Minister. Many people in Newfoundland and Labrador feel that the promise was broken.

This petition was presented to me by Mr. Steven Saunders.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also have the second half of a petition from Johanna Ryan Gui, which calls on the Department of National

Routine Proceedings

Defence to review regulations and to increase the resources, so the squadrons across the country have a two hour window during off hours to respond to an emergency. She would like that policy changed.

She calls upon the Government of Canada to provide the necessary funding to boost the readiness of search and rescue squadrons across the country.

SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to present two groups of petitions signed by hundreds of residents of British Columbia, the Kootenay region and the Lower Mainland.

The petitioners are very concerned about the government and the former Liberal government's agenda on the so-called security and prosperity partnership.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to halt any further negotiations on the SPP. They ask for a complete, transparent and accountable public debate on the SPP process, including meaningful public consultations with civil society. They also ask for a full legislative review, including the work recommendation reports of all SPP working groups and a full debate and a vote in Parliament.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition which calls upon the government to respect not only international law and international treaties to which it is a signatory, but also the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and democratic questions of the people of Canada by immediately making provision for U.S. war objectors to have sanctuary in our country and halting all deportation proceedings against U.S. war objectors.

On January 26, I attended a rally at Bloor Street United Church in Toronto in support of the war resisters. I am proud to say that former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and the Liberal Party opposed our involvement in the Iraq war.

Former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau once said that Canada should be a haven from militarism and allowed thousands of Vietnam war resisters to stay in Canada.

I encourage the government to allow all those brave soldiers, who have said no to this illegal war, to stay in Canada.

●(1220)

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition that I would like to bring to the attention of the House. The petitioners call upon the government to remove Canadian soldiers from Afghanistan immediately.

Government Orders

INCOME TRUSTS

Hon. Garth Turner (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present this income trust broken promise petition on behalf of a constituent in Mississauga, Ontario. He remembers very well the Prime Minister boasting about his apparent commitment to accountability when he said, “The greatest fraud is a promise not kept”.

The petitioners would like to remind the Prime Minister that he promised never to tax income trusts. Then he recklessly broke that promise by imposing a 31.5% punitive tax, which permanently wiped out over \$25 billion of hard-earned retirement savings of 2 million Canadians, particularly seniors.

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

* * *

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. 64 and 160 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Question No. 64—**Mr. John Cummins:**

With regard to the fishing organizations or groups of fishing licence holders who, excluding fees for commercial fishing licenses as set under the regulation, provide monies, fish quotas or allocations to fund Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) activities on an annual basis for the years 2005, 2006 and 2007: (a) in each year, what fishing organizations or groups of license holders have paid for science, DFO administration, enforcement or other departmental activities by an allocation of quota from their fishery; (b) in each year, what fishing organizations or groups of license holders paid for science, DFO administration, enforcement or other departmental activities by way of a cash contribution to the department or its contractor; (c) in each year, what is the total value by fishing organization or groups of license holders of the cash contributions or quota allocations aforementioned; (d) what science, administration, enforcement or other departmental activities carried out in 2005 and 2006 and not paid directly from the department's 'A' base budget will be undertaken and paid for by an allocation from the department's 'A' base budget for 2007; (e) how much did each fishing organization or groups of license holders pay DFO, by way of an allocation of quota or cash contribution, for activities such as science, administration, enforcement or other departmental activities for 2005 and 2006; (f) which fishing organizations or groups of license holders has the department agreed to reimburse wholly or in part for their cash contribution or quota allocations to cover the department's science administration, enforcement costs or other activities from previous years, indicate how much or what portion of what was collected by year will be returned to the fishing organization or groups of licence holders; (g) did the department indicate that it would need to curtail fishing opportunities unless fishermen agreed to contribute money or fishing quota to fund departmental activities and, if so, what are the nature of the fishing opportunities at issue and the fishermen or fishing organization involved; (h) were the amounts raised from fishermen and their organizations reported and accounted for in the department's spending estimates submitted to Parliament in each of these years, if so, indicate where and in what manner and form, and, if not, why; and (i) has the Auditor General ever reported on or advised the department on its method of collecting funds from fishermen or their organizations or with respect to the use of fish quotas or allocations to fund departmental activities, if so, when and what actions were taken to implement the Auditor General's advice?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 160—**Mr. Tony Martin:**

With respect to Old Age Security, what are the government's policies and procedures concerning the case of a person born in Canada with no government records available to support the birth, in terms of recognizing that birth to approve pension payments and the recognition of residency for a person who was born in Canada and has lived in Canada their entire life but there are no records available?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

PREBUDGET CONSULTATIONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Beauharnois-Salaberry.

I am happy to have the chance to take part in the debate on the prebudget consultations by the Standing Committee on Finance, especially since the Bloc Québécois held its own prebudget consultations in Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and elsewhere in Quebec, to find out what Quebecers' concerns are.

The Bloc Québécois supports the general thrust of the report. We issued a supplementary opinion indicating the initiatives the Bloc supports. The Bloc Québécois outlined its six budget conditions, which are only partially reflected in the Standing Committee on Finance report on the prebudget consultations.

I would like to use my time to talk about a number of concerns that were raised by organizations in my riding but ignored in the Standing Committee on Finance report and to describe the six conditions that must be met for the Bloc Québécois to support budget 2008.

In December, representatives of students, social and community groups, unions, self-employed workers and tourism associations met with my colleague, the finance critic and member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, to share the expectations of people in Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and my riding, Chicoutimi-Le Fjord. One after another, the participants expressed their concerns and talked about what they wanted to see in the next federal budget.

Government Orders

The Bloc Québécois has conducted this exercise every year, organizing a tour of Quebec to consult with various groups and individuals with an interest in the budget. Participants indicate the measures they would like to see in the budget to improve the distribution of wealth and address Quebecers' priorities.

The Standing Committee on Finance did not agree to recommend improvements to the employment insurance system in its report. At the meeting, participants raised problems with employment insurance several times. Many feel that the lack of improvements in the employment insurance program is completely unacceptable. The most pressing problems raised were the “black hole” or “spring gap” between the end of benefits and the start of work, the lack of assistance for small and medium-sized businesses and self-employed workers' eligibility for employment insurance.

The committee report ignores another issue raised at the meeting: post-secondary education. Representatives of the student associations at the Collège de Chicoutimi and the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi called for massive reinvestment in education. They condemn the underfunding of post-secondary institutions and suggest that the government invest a portion of the surplus in education.

My party deplores the fact that the committee rejected the Bloc Québécois' request to reinstate transfers to 1994–95 levels, indexed to inflation. The Bloc Québécois is calling for \$3.5 billion for all of Canada to reinstate education funding levels. Unfortunately, the committee brushed this recommendation aside.

Another issue that came up during the consultation in Chicoutimi was the state of social programs. People talked about the rigidity of the federal bureaucracy, the short life of programs to subsidize organizations, and their precarious financial situation. Organizations deplored the fact that they are constantly involved in the search for funding, which prevents them from providing services on the ground to their clients.

The Bloc Québécois deplores the fact that the Standing Committee on Finance refused to recommend that the government increase the guaranteed income supplement benefits so that people over 65 who receive GIS benefits in addition to old age security pensions do not have to live below the poverty line.

• (1225)

During the meeting, representatives of the cultural sector decried the situation facing people who are self-employed. They also want the federal government to give more money to the Canada Council for the Arts and to help the arts, culture and museum sectors.

The Bloc Québécois deplores that no funding for culture was included in the report on pre-budget consultations. The federal government is disturbingly indifferent about this matter. The many cuts to the museums assistance program; the elimination of the public diplomacy program, which funded international cultural tours; and insufficient funding for film and television bring home this point. The Bloc Québécois urges the Conservative government to change course and reinstate programs for arts, culture and museum programs, as well as film and television production, for a total of \$398 million.

Finally, representatives of the manufacturing and forestry sectors talked about what they wanted to see in the federal budget. The forestry sector wants more help from Ottawa. The government could do much more with its huge surplus. People raised the issue of redistribution of wealth and said that part of the surplus should be reinvested to help programs and small businesses.

Everyone agrees that more assistance is needed from Ottawa to revive the forestry industry. The Bloc Québécois suggests \$1 billion for the forestry industry alone, and a fair share of the money for Quebec. It wants the money to be allocated based on Quebec's industrial weight in Canada, and not on population.

We must realize that close to 21,000 jobs have been lost in the forestry sector in Quebec since April 1, 2005, including nearly 4,000 jobs in my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. We know that in Quebec, the forestry industry is the primary employer in 230 communities and that in 130 of those, it represents 100% of the jobs. So it is important to ensure the viability of this industry.

I took a few minutes today to talk about the situation in my region. I mentioned some concerns raised by stakeholders during prebudget consultations held by the Bloc Québécois in Saguenay on December 11. The report of the Standing Committee on Finance is one step that we need to improve on. The Bloc Québécois came up with several recommendations after the consultations, but they were left out of the report by the Standing Committee on Finance.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the House of our six conditions for approving the 2008 budget. These conditions have to do with the forestry industry, the guaranteed income supplement, post-secondary education, social housing and the reinstatement of various programs involving the status of women, volunteering, the environment and culture.

We will support the Conservative government's 2008 budget provided that it meets these six conditions.

• (1230)

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord for his excellent presentation. The Bloc Québécois member is very active in his region. It is unfortunate that there are not more Bloc Québécois members in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region.

There have been former Liberal and Conservative members, including Mr. Harvey, who toed the party line and did little for their region. A new member was just elected in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region to replace former MP Michel Gauthier. There is also the member for Jonquière—Alma, who is responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec. They represent Quebec in this region.

In view of the \$11 billion to \$12 billion surplus and another surplus forecast for next year, the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord is unfortunately quite right when he says that the guaranteed income supplement for seniors is money that belongs to them.

Government Orders

In the matter of employment insurance reform, even though some workers—seasonal workers; those employed in the forestry, tourism, and fishing industries; all those who work in unstable, temporary, and on-call jobs such as replacing workers on vacation; as well as students who hold down jobs—are not eligible for benefits, the federal government makes them pay premiums pursuant to the Employment Insurance Act.

The employment insurance fund has a surplus. A POWA, or older worker adjustment program, should be established with the employment insurance fund surplus in order to help all workers over 50 who have lost their jobs, particularly in the manufacturing and forestry sectors.

My question is for the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord. The government does not have to wait for the next budget. In view of the budget surplus, and if there is the will to return the money belonging to Quebec, could it not take concrete action immediately and demonstrate its good faith?

• (1235)

Mr. Robert Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. Indeed, when we have a surplus as large as that in the last budget, we can invest in various programs like the guaranteed income supplement and POWA.

In his speech, he mentioned two members from my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean: the hon. member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, the forestry critic, and the hon. member for Jonquière—Alma.

What surprises me about those two members is their statement to the public. They said that when one is a member of a federal party like the Conservative Party, one must often go against the needs of one's region and take more of a Canada-wide approach. There is a problem with this.

In my opinion, when the citizens of Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean and Jonquière—Alma elected those two Conservative representatives, they lost their voices here in the House.

Furthermore, they clearly have representatives that are forced to go home and explain the decisions made in Ottawa. They have to go to their ridings to explain their decisions, rather than the other way around. There is a problem when Conservative members come to a region like mine to fight against the region's needs.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this debate, especially as it affects my riding, Beauharnois—Salaberry, in particular. Since 2005, some 2,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost. We are talking about almost 1,000 jobs at Goodyear Valleyfield.

What is more, recently, the last steer slaughterhouse in Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague—in fact, the only one of its kind in Quebec—went bankrupt. That means 220 specialized, skilled workers are now unemployed. This is a loss for the town of Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, its workers and also for all of Quebec, which now has to send its steers to the United States and Ontario to be slaughtered.

Yesterday we learned that the Montupet plant, in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges riding, announced that it is laying off 110 workers. I mention this because that riding is next to mine and the majority of

people who work at that plant—which, by the way, is one the biggest employers in the Soulanges area—come from Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, a major industrial city in my riding.

Michael Brisson, the plant manager, told us yesterday that the stronger Canadian dollar has unfortunately made Chrysler decide to end its contract and award it to a U.S. company instead. In the same breath, GM announced it will not be renewing its contract beyond 2010 for the same reason. So now we have an efficient plant with good skilled workers who are facing hard times. The employees who are still working at the plant are very worried about the plant's future.

When people talk about the numbers, they say everything is going well in Canada, that the unemployment rate is at an all time low. We must not hide behind those numbers. There are some harsh realities in some ridings in Quebec, Ontario and elsewhere. When we hide behind employment statistics, this prevents us from seeing the real distress some workers are feeling and the repercussions these closures and the manufacturing crisis can have on the communities.

Consider, for example, Huntingdon, a one-industry town in the textile sector that has lost more than 800 jobs since 2005. When a small municipality loses 800 jobs, that disrupts the entire community, especially since the town is located in a rural setting. Nevertheless, they managed to attract 12 new businesses and create 350 jobs. This took considerable effort and mobilization, after presenting sensible projects and often struggling against the machinery of government to achieve greater flexibility.

However, as we speak, more than half the workers are currently looking for work. Among them are older workers who are, on average, 55 years old. One such worker called me yesterday in fact and asked, “Do you think that with the \$1 billion the Conservatives just announced, they will finally keep their promises and we will finally see a real program to help older workers?” I told him that was out of the question, since the matter has not even been debated in the House. I also told him that the Bloc Québécois was making a point of demanding just that, and that we are the only party that is expressing the demands of workers and their need for respect and dignity. It is rather distressing to have to respond to such questions, since the Conservative Party likes to boast that it is keeping its promises, but, in this case, that is not really the reality. Some of these workers are even having to sell their homes.

Often, when people lose their jobs, they go through a stressful time. They might go through a divorce or have to sell their house. Many human tragedies are hidden behind these job losses. Perhaps I am insisting on this point because, since the debate on the prebudget consultations and the finance committee report began, we have been focusing on numbers and statistics.

• (1240)

I would rather we talk about the human beings caught up in these events, who are expressing their needs through their MPs.

Government Orders

Today, I feel very comfortable stating that the Bloc Québécois' priorities truly reflect those of voters, those living in the riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry and all the ridings represented by the Bloc Québécois. In addition, there is a consensus about these priorities in the National Assembly and among major unions such as the CSN and FTQ.

I would like to point out that the Bloc Québécois supported the general thrust of the report prepared by the Standing Committee on Finance. Conversely, the committee supported the conditions that are important to the Bloc Québécois. Our viewers would probably appreciate a summary of these conditions.

The Bloc has stated that it is in favour of the following measures: \$1 billion for the hard-hit forestry sector; \$1.5 billion for the manufacturing sector in reimbursable contributions for the purchase of production equipment; increase to 5¢ per litre, effective 2008-09, the portion of the excise tax on gas transferred to municipalities and make it permanent; establish an independent employment insurance fund and set up an income support program for older workers; grant full retroactivity of the guaranteed income supplement to seniors who were shortchanged; and fund \$1 billion in social housing through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

I would like to remind the members that these are the conditions set by the Bloc Québécois that received the support of the Standing Committee on Finance. However, the full report does not shed light on all concerns of the Bloc Québécois, which had proposed solutions to resolve various crises and help all citizens. Nevertheless, the Bloc wanted to establish six important priorities that will be linked to passage of the budget.

And so it is clear, I would like to mention these conditions: a real assistance plan to help workers and businesses affected by the forestry and manufacturing crisis; measures to restore dignity to seniors, meaning full retroactivity and an increase to the guaranteed income supplement; the return of the education and social programs transfer to 1994-95 indexed levels; increased funding for social housing and a reversal of the Conservative government's ideological cuts; increased funding for culture; and a 180-degree turn on the environment.

We are far from pleased with the report, which the Bloc Québécois believes has some unacceptable weaknesses. All of the members in this House should know that the Bloc also made a series of proposals, some of which were included in the 22 recommendations of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. I think it would be important to show people that we propose viable, realistic solutions that we believe could foster economic development and offset the crisis.

In closing, I would like to thank one of my constituents, Gérald Côté, who recently wrote in to a weekly paper to say that elected members should pay more attention to people and their living conditions, and that they should listen to what people have to say. I think he is right.

Sometimes we hide—especially the Conservative government—behind numbers that completely ignore the distress and living conditions of workers who are facing job losses and unemployment.

In conclusion, I repeat that the Bloc Québécois stands firm and will support the budget if the Conservative government respects these six very important priorities.

• (1245)

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, a member I hope you will get to know better, a very active member here in Ottawa. She is our natural resources critic. She is very devoted to working for her party here in Ottawa, and to working for her fellow citizens in her riding. She is concerned about all kinds of issues, such as natural resources and agriculture. She is doing a great job here in the House of Commons, representing the people who live in the huge riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry.

During the prebudget consultations, the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry contributed her thoughts about all of the concerns related to the areas in her critic portfolio. She talked about the concerns of each and every one of her fellow citizens, as well as the organizations in her community. The Bloc Québécois' six recommendations were drafted following broad consultations held all across Quebec.

Since the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry ended her speech by talking about employment insurance, let us discuss that further. We must not forget that the federal government does not contribute a penny; it simply administers the fund. Money paid out from the employment insurance fund to those who lose their jobs or are laid off comes from employees and employers, from contributions made by those who, unfortunately, have lost their jobs. Six out of ten people who contribute are not entitled to employment insurance. Unfortunately, most of those who are not eligible are young people and women.

The employment insurance fund generates a surplus of \$3 billion to \$4 billion per year. The government takes that money, adds it to the budget surplus, and comes out looking like a fantastic administrator because it has a yearly surplus of \$11 billion. However, \$3 billion or \$4 billion of that money is from the employment insurance fund. This means that the funds collected at the expense of seasonal workers are simply a hidden tax.

My question is for the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry. Does she agree that the government does not need a special law and that all we need is a government that governs in good faith, that fulfills its commitments and keeps its election promises right away? Would she agree that a government like that does not need a budget to change the employment insurance regime and give back the money that people contributed as “unemployment insurance” in case they ever lose their jobs?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. He is absolutely right. As I said, I represent a manufacturing region. There is also a lot of market gardening in my region, and many of the seasonal workers in that industry are penalized because they do not qualify for benefits even though they pay into employment insurance.

Government Orders

I would like to draw to your attention one of the Bloc Québécois' recommendations retained by the committee: increasing government funding for broadband connectivity in rural and remote regions so that people can have easier access to high-speed Internet. People who live in urban regions take high-speed Internet for granted, but take a place like Elgin, for example. Elgin, population 400, is one of Quebec's smallest municipalities, and the people there are asking their mayor, Jean-Pierre Proulx, for high-speed Internet because they need it to promote economic development.

It looks as if I have some time left, so I would like to close with what the Elgin municipal council has said about this. According to council members, high-speed Internet is nothing less than an essential tool for the social and economic development of the regions. Mr. Proulx believes that if people have access to the network, they will also benefit from new technologies, such as VoIP.

This is why we are encouraging the government to accept the committee's recommendations and boost its funding for broadband connectivity.

• (1250)

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity today to rise on behalf of the people of Nipissing-Timiskaming and participate in the ongoing debate on what should be included in the upcoming federal budget.

I have been listening very carefully to the comments that my colleagues from all parties have been making throughout this debate, which highlight the priorities that they would like to see dealt with in the next federal budget.

[*English*]

Like most Canadians, I am hopeful that the current government, including the Prime Minister and the finance minister, will take each of these priorities into account while crafting the budget. Although recent history would suggest that the current Conservative government is rarely open to input from hard-working Canadians, I am cautiously optimistic that our voices will be heard and incorporated this time around.

With that in mind, there are several key priorities that I would like to see addressed in the upcoming budget, including health care, research and development, and education. I also want to see a firm commitment to infrastructure programs for our cities and communities, as well as regional development programs such as FedNor.

My Liberal colleagues and I are also calling on the Conservative government to take greater action on climate change, to take steps necessary to ensure that the Canadian combat mission in Kandahar will end in February 2009, to fight poverty in Canada, and to bring forth proposals that will build a stronger economy.

It has been said before, and in this case it is certainly worth repeating, that when the Conservatives took office in January 2006 they acquired the strongest economy in Canadian history and campaigned on a platform of fiscal discipline. Since that day, the Conservative government has raised federal spending by over \$25 billion and yet the average Canadian has yet to see any benefit from any of those expenditures.

[*Translation*]

And while Canada faces the impact of instability in international markets, Conservative fiscal policies have done little to stimulate the Canadian economy, notably our ailing manufacturing, forestry, livestock and tourism sectors.

[*English*]

The manufacturing industry has been facing significant challenges in recent years as a result of the rapid, unexpected rise of the Canadian dollar, increased competition from emerging economies, and higher energy prices. Over 130,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in the last year. In the month of December alone, over 33,000 manufacturing workers lost their jobs, just in time for the holidays.

For months now, my Liberal colleagues and I have been calling on the government to do something about the challenges facing our economy, particularly in the forestry and manufacturing sectors. Earlier this week, the Prime Minister finally reversed his plan to tie community development trust aid money for ailing sectors of the Canadian economy to the budget.

Sadly, however, this money was merely a drop in the bucket compared to the crisis we are facing and helps Canadians only after they lose their jobs. The workers themselves have expressed the point that focusing aid programs on retraining is useless for many single industry towns.

Retraining workers in a town where there is no work available does not really solve the problem. What we are doing is retraining people but retraining them for something they cannot find. There is nothing there for them once they have retrained.

This aid package is another slap in the face to an industry already straining under the terms of the Conservative government's flawed softwood lumber agreement. The Conservatives are offering less money to Canadian forestry workers than they left on the table for the American forestry industry.

Granted, the Prime Minister's fund will provide some help for those who have lost their jobs, but it will not reopen a single mill or manufacturing plant or prevent others from closing in an economic downturn. Instead, the focus should be on helping our industries become viable again.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

The upcoming budget should include measures like those contained in the 2005 Liberal \$1.5 billion forestry strategy that was killed by the Conservative government two years ago, which would have helped the industry make the transition to competitive strength and sustainability and was widely lauded by both industry and workers alike.

The aid should also be geared towards providing long-term solutions to industries affected by the rapid value increase of the Canadian dollar. Otherwise, taxpayer dollars will only amount to an artificial respirator for businesses that are no longer able to compete on world markets.

*Government Orders**[English]*

At a time when the economy is facing serious challenges and needs government support, the Prime Minister and finance minister have told Canadians that they can expect very little from the federal government. What they said was that Canadians need to buckle up, that it is going to be a bumpy ride. Thanks very much, Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. Finance Minister, but that is not what we need to hear. We need help.

In response to this, my Liberal colleagues and I are calling on the Conservative government to introduce specific measures that will benefit the Canadian economy, especially in sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture, and that will lessen the impact of the government's mistakes on income trusts and interest deductibility.

Another way of ensuring that our economy remains strong and that Canadians have a prosperous future is to invest in infrastructure for our cities and our communities.

By simply rebranding existing infrastructure programs, the government has failed to invest additional resources needed to meet the challenges facing Canadian cities and communities. Clearly, the budget surpluses of recent years demonstrate that the government has the resources to provide tax relief to Canadians and invest in our cities and communities, yet the government has chosen to forgo this opportunity.

Constituents in my riding and throughout northern Ontario are looking for substantial investment in infrastructure and are urging the government to finally do the right thing and reinvest in Canada's cities and communities.

The Conservative government would like us to believe that the \$33 billion infrastructure investment announcement in 2007 is the largest infrastructure program in Canadian history. In fact, the Conservative government actually cut infrastructure programs, and cities are far worse off under the present government than they were before.

As a former municipal councillor, I understand what crumbling infrastructure is all about. We have it in most of our communities. The average age of our infrastructure is anywhere between 85 and 100 years, maybe even more, right across the country.

Without help for our cities and communities, we will see more and more of this happening, to the point where the basic building blocks for our communities will be destroyed and we will have to live with what we have. That is no way to have building blocks toward a strong country when our cities and communities are not strong at all. This is something that we have to look at.

In November, municipal leaders met with the finance minister. The response that came from the finance minister turned my stomach. Basically, it was "stop whining". That is no way to treat our cities' mayors in this country. It reminds me of 1793, when there was a revolt going on. The people were about to overthrow the monarchy and Marie Antoinette said to let them eat cake. To say "stop whining" is not the way we should treat Canadians.

● (1300)

[Translation]

Not only has the Conservative government cut \$7.5 billion from infrastructure programs launched by the previous Liberal government to address the growing infrastructure deficit, but cities will now have to compete against each other and against large-scale highway projects for funding under the Building Canada Fund.

Furthermore, if large-scale projects are approved under the Conservative funding plan, huge amounts of funding for Canada's smaller municipalities will be wiped out. This is not an acceptable outcome by any means, and I am therefore calling upon the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to make substantive infrastructure investment in the upcoming budget.

[English]

Unfortunately, the Conservative government has jeopardized the Canadian economy by cutting the wrong taxes and spending more money than any government in Canadian history. My Liberal colleagues and I understand that for the Canadian economy to succeed we must continue the tradition of balanced budgets, debt reduction and competitive taxation.

A closer look at the Conservative government's decision to forge ahead with an additional cut to the GST reveals that the Conservatives' tax plan is largely benefiting higher income families over those who need it most: low income and middle income families.

The GST cut was made despite the fact that every serious economist in the country agrees that it is poor public policy and a misuse of about \$4.5 billion in federal fiscal flexibility every year. To improve disposable income and help build greater productivity, the first target for tax reduction should be income taxes, not consumption taxes, but the Prime Minister has chosen instead to raise taxes for low income and middle income Canadians to help pay for his regressive and expensive GST cut.

Tax cuts like these set the stage for more pressure for spending cuts. The obvious concern for most Canadians is that the Conservative government will continue to make cuts to programs that have been proven to be effective and necessary tools in helping individuals and communities.

Simply put, the Conservative government cannot be trusted to implement substantial and long-lasting solutions to critical problems. Its "politics first and policy second" approach to governance is evidence in many ways.

[Translation]

Take the issue of child care for instance; during the last election the Conservatives pledged to make up for the shortfall through a plan to use tax incentives to create 125,000 new child care spaces. Last fall, the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development admitted that the Conservatives cannot deliver on this commitment.

Government Orders

Since coming to power, the Conservative government has made the biggest child care cut in Canadian history, slashing \$1 billion in funding for child care services in 2007. The Conservative government's policy of handing over small amounts of money to individual parents instead of investing in a child care system is simply not delivering the support that young Canadian families need.

[*English*]

This piecemeal approach to government has been a trademark of the current Conservative government. Canadians simply cannot trust the Prime Minister to produce comprehensive and effective solutions to priority issues. Further evidence of this exists with the Conservative environmental plan.

The Conservatives have an obligation to reduce their weak approach to combating the climate change crisis with real action. Canada will not meet Kyoto targets because the Prime Minister scrapped all climate change programs upon coming into office and then implemented weak substitutes that ignore our obligations.

The Conservatives have admitted that their so-called plan will result in absolutely no reductions in Canada's total greenhouse gas pollution during the first phase of Kyoto and will not even be in place until 2010. Under two consecutive Conservative environment ministers, there has been no attempt to move forward seriously, and I emphasize seriously, and not even an honest and full effort to curb greenhouse gas pollution.

In fact, one of the Prime Minister's first acts in office was to scrap a fully funded plan to meet Canada's Kyoto obligations and to then do nothing. This is simply unacceptable to Canadians who are looking for action and leadership in the fight against climate change, but are being presented instead with a Prime Minister and a government that would much rather deny climate change even exists. The time has come to invest in Canada's environmental future.

The Conservative government also owes it to Canadians to end nearly two years of inaction in the fight against poverty in Canada by building on the good work of the Liberal government in funding such initiatives as the child tax benefit, affordable housing, literacy, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, SCPI, and the working income tax benefit.

In the upcoming budget, the Conservative government can take meaningful action to reduce poverty by improving the Canada child tax benefit and by supporting working families in making the non-refundable child tax credit into a refundable credit so that even people with the lowest incomes will receive a benefit.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister can do his part to help lift vulnerable seniors out of poverty by increasing the guaranteed income supplement payments for the lowest income seniors, thus ensuring that the loss of a partner does not drive the surviving spouse below the income threshold, and encouraging and rewarding those seniors who choose to participate in the workforce.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

In addition to these supports, the Conservative government should commit to working with all levels of government to provide better

access to services that are essential in the fight against poverty such as affordable housing, universal child care and public transit.

In today's speech I have listed just some of the main priorities that Canadians from coast to coast believe should figure prominently in the upcoming budget. Now the responsibility lies with the Conservative government to take on the challenge of addressing these concerns, and providing effective long-term solutions to problems that have been all but ignored since they first took office two years ago.

On behalf of the people of Nipissing-Timiskaming I will be working very hard to ensure that the gaps in the Conservative agenda are replaced by policies that have a positive and long-lasting effect on Canadians. Furthermore, my Liberal colleagues and I will remain committed to building a richer, fairer, greener Canada together.

[*English*]

Hon. Garth Turner (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are many issues in relation to the budget to deal with and off the top I would say that as a member of the House of Commons finance committee it was my honour to talk with many Canadians who appeared before the committee and submitted written briefs. Their voices are being heard, if not by the government, certainly by the Liberal Party of Canada and the Liberal members on the committee.

I listened to some of my committee members earlier today speaking about how they interpreted what Canadians had said to the committee and their conclusions based on that as reflected in recommendations of the report tabled by the House of Commons finance committee. I would like to make it clear to the House and to Canadians watching this that we went through the prebudget consultative process. The hard-working, conscientious staff of the committee wrote a report. We went through it and tried to find those areas where all of us as committee members agreed. There were a number of recommendations that actually we came to consensus on.

However, there were many areas of the report and of budget performance so far by this government that we could not agree upon and that is why the Liberal members on the committee issued a minority report.

In the minority report, we made a couple of fundamental points that the government truly needs to be reminded of these.

First, we believe the government erred seriously by increasing government spending by double the rate of inflation, actually 8.6% over the past couple of years. That is almost without precedent in the history of the federal government, that federal spending would increase at double the rate of inflation. That compares with spending under Liberal governments over the past decade or so which was less than 3% per year.

It is ironic that the government, which preaches prudent restraint and the credo of smaller government, actually has created the largest government purse in Canadian history. There have been consequences of governments that spend a great deal of money.

Government Orders

Government spending accounts for roughly 13% of the Canadian economy. It is a very significant amount. When government spending increases by double the rate of inflation, it puts inflationary pressures on the entire country, on the budget and on the monetary supply. It affects a lot of things right down to the Bank of Canada's own fiscal and monetary policy. It also does something else. It sends a signal out to the world that the Government of Canada is profligate, that it is spending a lot of money, and that, in turn, tends to attract currency traders to put more value on the Canadian dollar, which is one reason that we have seen the value of the Canadian dollar rise over the past couple of years, particularly in the past 12 months when the dollar rose in value by 28% in a single year.

What are the consequences? We have manufacturers going out of business. We have people in the resource sector who cannot compete any longer. Our tourist operators are no longer able to see a steady and predictable flow of customers coming to this country. We are priced right out of the global marketplace by our own currency. What is worse is that the Minister of Finance, during this period of time of rapid appreciation of the Canadian dollar, did not say anything that would stem that or halt it. I do not even think he understood the guaranteed results of a higher Canadian dollar.

The Minister of Finance stood time and again in the House and talked about the strong Canadian dollar, which, in turn, sent a signal to the currency traders around the world that the government wanted a strong currency. Given that, more money came in and our dollar rose above par, actually up to a \$1.10 U.S.

The Minister of Finance also made it clear that he would not even support our own Canadian retailing sector. It was not enough to destroy manufacturing, to hurt people in the resource sector and to destroy the tourist industry, he had to go after the service sector which today accounts for 70% of the jobs in our entire economy.

• (1310)

The Minister of Finance actually held a press conference in the foyer of that big white building down there on O'Connor Street, which houses the Department of Finance. He held the press conference after meeting with all of the retailers, the Retail Council of Canada and others who appeared before our finance committee and who afterward were appalled at what the minister had to say. The minister held up a Harry Potter book in one hand, which he bought in Washington, and in the other hand he held up another Harry Potter book that he had bought in Ottawa and asked Canadians why they were paying more for the book in Ottawa than the one he had bought in Washington.

What a ridiculous thing for a Canadian Minister of Finance to say. The American market is 10 times bigger than our market, the distances to ship goods are proportionately far less and the value of manufacturing any item, per unit, is less than it is in this market. Yet the Canadian Minister of Finance was telling Canadian retailers that they were ripping off Canadian citizens.

This shows, to me, an absolute lack of fundamental understanding on the part of the Minister of Finance of the consequences of his actions. Those consequences started with high spending by the Canadian government, equalling inflationary pressures, equalling a higher currency and, finally, equalling job loss on the part of Canadian workers, many of them in my riding. I represent an area in

southern Ontario that has a high degree of industry that is related to the automotive sector and the automotive sector has been hit pretty hard by the American economy.

The second major factor that the minority report of the Liberal members came to the conclusion on is the fact that the Minister of Finance has absolutely no idea how severe the American economic downturn is at the moment, nor did he prepare our country adequately to deal with it.

Let us remember what he did in the last economic statement in November. He spent the cupboard bare. He accelerated the GST cut that the Conservatives had promised by three full years. That means a \$60 billion hit to federal revenues. How does that help us withstand any kind of downturn in the American economy?

I have auto workers in my riding who are out of work because their pickup trucks are not being bought by American contractors because the American housing market has been destroyed by the bad economic policies of Washington, policies which, I might say, in large part, have been aped here in Canada.

The Minister of Finance failed in that regard.

We made a third point in our minority report and we hope the government listens but, sadly, I do not think it will. The third point has to do with the impact that the government's decision of October 31, 2006, had upon senior investors in this country.

On that fateful day, that Halloween massacre day, the Minister of Finance decided that he would tax income trusts. By doing so, he imposed, in essence, a \$25 billion penalty on roughly two million seniors in this country. Not only did he destroy the hopes and dreams of many people who, because of their age—and this is tragic—do not have time to recover and make those funds back.

They are not like the Minister of Finance who, because of being a politician in two levels of government, has a couple of government pensions rolling in. They are just helpless Canadians who worked their whole lives trying to get a bit of money together and who invested in the economy.

I, who stood a few feet behind him as a Conservative candidate during the last election, and everyone else believed the Prime Minister of Canada, when he was a candidate for the job, when he stood during the campaign and promised people in my area that he would never ever tax the income trusts. Ten months later, he broke that promise and \$25 billion were lost.

The Prime Minister, of course, not only destroyed the hopes and dreams of a lot of individual Canadians but he also destroyed an entire income trust sector, and that has had very severe consequences.

My friends across the way say that they have done some other things to help seniors, and that is true. I will give them credit. They have done some things. One of the best things is pension splitting. Pension splitting is a good idea and I am really glad I brought it to the Conservative caucus when I was a member over there. I am very pleased that I did that.

Government Orders

●(1315)

When I was part of the Conservative caucus, I clearly remember the Minister of Finance arguing with me that he was not sure pension splitting was a good idea at all. In fact, the Minister of Finance was quite irritated with me when I sat over there because I kept pestering him by saying that we needed pension splitting. The only time he actually admitted that we needed it was when he was looking for something to sugar-coat a tremendously bitter and destructive pill called income trust taxation. It was not brought in with the spirit they are trying to portray right now.

We have some very serious concerns about where the budget is heading right now. As we go into the next few months of a continued deterioration of the American economy, we need to be very mindful of the ability and the desire of the government to protect my constituents and other people across Canada from the dangers that lie ahead, which could be severe.

We have seen a housing meltdown in the United States of monumental consequences. If that comes here, we truly will have a disaster because Canadians today have 90% of their family net worth sitting in one asset, on one street and in one town, and that is their home. I am very concerned that we will see a potential deterioration of the environment in which Canadians today invest in homes.

Canadians do not have the family income to participate in an ever-spiralling real estate market. It is in my neck of the woods, outside Toronto where the cost of living is extremely high, where I think we will see a lot of problems down the road.

There is another thing the government has failed to do, which has had an impact on the family finances of people in my area. In fact, 10 days from now I have three town hall meetings in my riding dealing with the issue of child care. This is a big financial issue with people in my area.

For a family to look after one child through institutional child care, it costs, in general, \$11,000 to \$13,000 a year in after tax income. That is massive. What has the government done to help those families? It is doing something. It is sending \$100 a month per child, per household. Of course, those \$100 cheques are taxable. At the end of the year it amounts to \$1,100 in an instance that costs \$11,000 to \$13,000.

Those are bread and butter issues that are bothering my constituents a great deal.

The issue is coming down to two things now, jobs and economic opportunity. Employment numbers go up and they go down and every 30 days we get new ones. The ones that came out today were not too bad, and I hope the trend will keep things going up, but the numbers last month were disastrous.

What really bothers me are the manufacturing jobs in the heartland of Canada, which is in the industrial heartland of Ontario. When plants close and when the equipment is unbolted, the jobs are gone forever.

I wandered around an aeronautical manufacturing facility in my riding three weeks ago where I saw a number of concrete pads that were empty. I asked why there were empty spaces in that facility. I was told that there had been equipment in the facility but that the

plant had lost manufacturing contracts because it was no longer competitive due to the high value of the Canadian dollar. This company used to manufacture rotor assemblies for American military helicopters and it has now lost the advantage it had because of the Canadian dollar being at parity. The work is now going to factories in the United States.

When I asked the company what happened to those pads and why they were empty in the plant, I was told that the equipment had been unbolted, taken up and sold. I asked where it was sold and I was told that it was sold to China. China has bought all this manufacturing equipment, very sophisticated CAD/CAM equipment, that is being shipped across to China and set up.

●(1320)

Those same machines, worked by Chinese workers, then compete with our people and sadly put them out of work, unless we come up with a strategy. I have not heard one at all. I know we have one and I know it is going to work. We need to have an industrial strategy in this country to protect jobs and make sure those machines are not unbolted and not sent out of this country.

Until the government understands that a currency needs to be stable and predictable, that we need to have an interest-created environment homeowners can depend upon, we need to have some economic prospects, we need to have government spending under control, we need to stop our own government from causing inflationary pressures, until all of those fundamentals are in place, my constituents will continue to do what they do every day and ask me to stand at every opportunity, the earliest opportunity, and vote for the defeat of this government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat surprised while listening to the interminable speech by my honourable colleague. I heard him get lost in his foggy macroeconomic analyses and apocalyptic forecasts. Yet, I can reassure him because, on this side of the House, we have confidence in the Canadian economy and in the ability of Canadians to take up challenges.

I have a simple question for my colleague. He ended his speech by stating that he was prepared to stand up for his fellow citizens. I would like him to explain why he remained seated when we announced measures totalling \$80 billion for families, seniors, and manufacturers? Why did he remain seated when it was time to act and to help our companies? And why is he rising now that it is time to talk?

●(1325)

[*English*]

Hon. Garth Turner: Mr. Speaker, there comes a time when the government should be defeated and when it should not. Certainly, we felt that last fall was not the particular moment when the government should be defeated.

I do not think that at that particular time we felt that the conditions were right. The economy was starting to deteriorate. I said the same thing actually in January of this year when asked, after our Liberal winter caucus, whether this was the time to defeat the government.

I said we should get back into the House of Commons, roll our sleeves up and try to work with other members, try to find if there is some way that we can come up with a package that is actually going to help Canadians, help workers, and help keep these factories open.

We come back and we are here two days, and we start screaming at each other with partisan slogans. I stand up to ask a question and am told to resign, and everyone at home goes, "We have heard that 18 times".

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Garth Turner: That is exactly my point. Those members know what I am talking about. This does not get us anywhere at all.

Mr. Joe Preston: It was the 18th time that put you over the edge.

Hon. Garth Turner: Nobody watching this is going to think we are anything but a bunch of buffoons with the kinds of insults and rhetoric we throw at each other.

Mr. Dave Batters: They have thought that about you for a long time. Keep your word and resign.

Hon. Garth Turner: It is meaningless. It is pointless. Get over it. People expect more from us and more from this place, and until you guys learn that, we are going to continue to be held in the disdain you particular so richly deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Halton is an experienced privy councillor in this House and he knows that the best way to depersonalize debate is not to use the second person but rather the third.

The hon. member for Malpeque is rising to ask a question.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was indeed a pleasure to listen to the member for Halton giving an accurate analysis of the financial disaster and the poor fiscal management by the current government and the current Minister of Finance.

We should not be surprised though. It is the same minister who, when he was minister of finance provincially, drove his province into a huge deficit.

I am worried about Canada's future. I am worried about where this country is going to be for our children and our grandchildren. The previous government balanced the books, drove down the deficit and invested in R and D for the future, and put this country on a sound financial footing so our country could move ahead for future generations. There was prudent fiscal management there which allowed a cushion, so future governments could partner with industry in times of trouble.

I would like to ask the member for Halton for his comments about the need for governments to have a cushion, to have a strong central government to be there for the country as a whole in times of need, as we were on SARS and BSE.

Hon. Garth Turner: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Malpeque strikes an important cord in this whole debate and that is that government should be prepared. It should be prepared for economies that go up or down, for all kinds of eventualities.

The reality is when the last government left office, there was an annual surplus of around \$12 billion a year. That has continued for a

Private Members' Business

while, but now under the current government's spending plans and its estimates going forward, that surplus will actually fall to zero.

A couple of very prominent economists have said that in a scenario of a moderately weakening Canadian economy, that remaining surplus will actually become a deficit of \$600 million within the next year. That is not where we need to go.

If the government goes from a surplus to a balanced budget to a deficit, Canadians can kiss goodbye any tax measures for the next 10 years because they are not going to happen. An opportunity is being squandered.

I never thought that the Conservative government that believes in less government being more effective, being more a government which is its credo, would ever do this to the treasury of Canada.

• (1330)

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-428, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (methamphetamine), as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations between the parties of the House and I believe that if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the report stage motion on the Notice Paper for Bill C-428, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (methamphetamine) be deemed adopted and the report stage of Bill C-428 be deemed concurred in with a further amendment.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chris Warkentin moved that Bill C-428, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (methamphetamine), as amended, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate being recognized this afternoon and allowed to speak on my private member's bill.

My private member's bill seeks to help take care of the growing problem of methamphetamine or crystal meth in our communities.

Private Members' Business

The devastation that this drug inflicts on our families and communities across this nation is horrific. The war is on and, quite frankly, we are losing the battle. Too many of our young, healthy citizens are losing years of their life to the devastation of this drug and some are even dying in the grips of its horror.

From coast to coast, Canadians are horrified by the devastation that drugs inflict on our communities, our schools and our families. Meth is one of the greatest threats to many of our communities. Unfortunately, its popularity is increasing.

Meth has a hold on too many of our young citizens and we as parliamentarians have a responsibility to do something about it.

My private member's bill seeks to limit the opportunities for criminal organizations and criminally minded people to wilfully and knowingly assist in the accumulation of precursors and the equipment for the purpose of manufacturing or to sell to someone who will manufacture this life devastating drug.

This is a vital change to the current legislation and it is my prayer and my hope that this will turn the tide on this horrific drug.

Let us not forget what is at the core of this issue. What is truly at the core of this issue is that this issue is about the lives of people.

As I have advanced this bill through the House and as it worked through committee, I have heard heart-wrenching stories from people across this country who have come forward to tell me stories about how their friends, their students, their siblings, and even in one case how their parents have had their lives devastated and destroyed by this drug.

It only takes one use of this drug and many people are addicted for life. The addictive qualities of methamphetamine make it a dangerous drug for any person to experiment with. To quote a person that I met with just last week in my office, she actually is a recovering addict and she said, "I was at the lowest point in my life and the pain was so great. Someone convinced me that the pain would just go away if I'd take the drug".

She said that was the beginning of a five year horror as she fought the addiction from that day forward. She said if the drug had not been available to her that day, she never would have been hooked.

Meth is a highly addictive drug. With a long-lasting high, and a sense of overwhelming euphoria, it produces effects that many people feel are unmanageable without the drug.

The use and abuse of crystal meth is on the rise throughout Canada. Its prevalence is growing as dealers find new ways to target potential users and sell the drug. It is in our communities, our schools, our families, and it is in our workplaces.

This drug can affect anyone, the rich, the poor, the old and the young. It does not matter if the person is a man or a woman. It seems to affect all these people equally.

It is, however, growing among some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Usage among young people and people that are already at high risk seem to be the people that are falling into the trap of this drug most frequently.

The menace of crystal meth on each of our communities from coast to coast is real and acute. As a nation we must fight back.

Unlike other drugs, methamphetamine does not need to be imported or grown. It can be produced relatively easily right here in our communities in undercover labs that are hard to detect.

Methamphetamine is not legal anywhere in Canada. I think all of us know that. However, the drug can be produced virtually anywhere, in small sheds, basements and even in mobile labs such as the back of cars or in trailers. These makeshift laboratories are extremely dangerous due to the presence of highly flammable liquids and corrosive chemicals, usually mixed together by people who have no expertise or experience in dealing with these types of products.

However, the majority of meth that is sold on our streets today is produced in undercover super labs which can produce up to 10 pounds at a time, or it is also being produced in what is called mid-level labs which produce just under nine pounds at a time. These labs are often referred to by police as clandestine labs.

While there are larger numbers of small scale labs, they produce only 5% of the meth available on the streets today. The small scale or home based labs often are operated by meth users themselves and produce only one ounce at a time, just enough for the user and sometimes to cover the cost of that person's addiction.

• (1335)

The issue here is really about the super labs. These are dangerous labs that require a huge amount of precursor material to produce the quantity of meth that they do. By giving the authorities the tools that are included in the bill, I believe there will be additional opportunities to stop the production in Canada.

Like I have said before, unlike other drugs, meth need not be imported or grown in Canada. That is a very important point for us to recognize. It can be synthesized using components that are readily available. This drug can be ready for distribution in a shockingly short period of time as all the legal precursors are available quite easily in Canada. The ability to purchase these commonly available ingredients, coupled with the ability to produce crystal meth virtually anywhere, makes this a very dangerous combination.

With my bill, the possession of these precursors and equipment, along with the proven criminal intent to produce crystal meth or methamphetamines, would allow the police to seize and lay charges relating to the methamphetamine production. The ability to get this material off our street will enhance public safety.

The RCMP testified before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and said that this year marked a dramatic shift in Canada as far as methamphetamine was concerned. We have now gone from a methamphetamine importing nation to a methamphetamine exporting nation. Under the current legislation, it requires that police investigate and maintain an investigation until methamphetamines are at their final stages of chemical synthesis.

The RCMP also stated at the standing committee that this legislation would move the yardstick forward and give it another tool to fight for our communities against this destructive drug.

I will share with the House some other testimony that was provided to the committee. On December 13, 2007, the experts said that if there were a truckload of ephedrine going to a proven crystal meth lab, police officers did not currently have the tools at their disposal to arrest the perpetrators under the current legislation.

Sergeant Doug Culver from the RCMP said explicitly:

So in your scenario of the truckload of chemical A going somewhere, there would be no offence in the current legislation. With the legislation we've seen in front of us today, if we could prove in a court of law beyond a reasonable doubt that the driver of that vehicle knew he was taking that chemical to a lab [run by criminals] or to someone else with the intent of using it to make methamphetamine, then we would have grounds to stop that vehicle, arrest that person, and seize that quantity of chemicals.

The current legislation measures in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act do not go far enough and are not robust enough to tackle this problem. The full weight of legislation must be enabled so people who willingly produce and traffic its precursors will face the consequences that the legislation would bring.

By making the possession of precursors and equipment with the intent to produce or traffic a criminal offence, it will strengthen our laws and provide for a more forceful consequence for people who willingly and wilfully possess materials that are used in the production of methamphetamine.

The bill would also increase the maximum penalty to 10 years from the current 3 years for possession of precursors with the intent to produce crystal meth or methamphetamine.

If I can quote Ms. Bouchard, director of the Office of Controlled substances from the Department of Health from her testimony, on December 13, 2007, before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, when she said:

If we were to find a person in possession of those substances, and that person were not authorized to possess them, meaning they did not have a licence allowing their possession of those substances, it would not be an offence at the level of the act or statute but a violation of a regulation requiring that the person be in possession of a licence. However, the penalties associated with those offences are not very high. They're related to section 46 of the CDSA act and are for a maximum of up to two years. So they are very low penalties...

This bill would change that.

● (1340)

The impact on our communities is great. Relative to other drugs, crystal meth is cheap to buy, making it more accessible to children and youth. Meth is not always the drug of choice for youth addicted to drugs, but if it is available, it is proven that they will often choose it. Meth is referred to as the "poor man's cocaine".

Private Members' Business

Individuals who become meth users are addicted more quickly and experience worse effects from prolonged use than other drugs. The negative impacts kick in quickly and the results are devastating.

Another account of a user reads:

Meth addiction is cunning and baffling. It starts out as a harmless and fun thing to do, and then, before you know it, your whole life becomes centred on it and it gets to the point where you can't imagine your life without it. But you're unable to live with it.

We must ask, who really is using crystal meth? This drug is particularly alarming because it is highly addictive, easily accessible, cheap to buy, and for these factors it is, unfortunately, very popular among young people.

Most meth users tend to use other drugs. In addition to meth, they also may use ecstasy, marijuana or other drugs at the same time. In these cases, the burden of mental and physical illness associated with drugs that are used in combination rises and the possibility for devastating effects increase.

Unfortunately, meth users tend to be between the ages of 10 and 25. If we do not do something, we will increasingly see crystal meth or methamphetamine climb its way into our schools and playgrounds.

One frightening fact is that some children, youth and young adults who are exposed to meth may not even know that they have been exposed. More and more drug producers are adding meth to other drugs because it is inexpensive and it gives other drugs increased addictive qualities. Some police reports estimate that 70% to 75% of the ecstasy sold on streets contains methamphetamine.

The expansion of more clandestine large scale production labs has the potential to increase availability and lower prices, which could ultimately result in a larger number of users. Meth affects not only individual lives, relationships and families, but it also has a direct impact on the communities in which it is produced and used.

Meth has followed a somewhat fractured path in invading communities. Some communities in my province have yet to witness the impact on their streets and in their schools, while other communities have been hit hard by meth, forcing them to join together to fight back.

It is my hope that the bill will be an important part of the overall strategy to combat methamphetamine. I am proud to support our government's national anti-drug strategy that focuses on prevention, treatment and enforcement. Two-thirds of the funding of that program are dedicated to the strategy that is focused on the prevention and treatment portions. I believe wholeheartedly that is very much a necessity, but I also believe the best form of harm reduction is to ensure it does not fall in children's hands.

We must work hard and target people who produce crystal meth. We must do what is in the best interest of young people from coast to coast. Not only do I have the support of members of Parliament in the House, but I have had special talks with the Assembly of First Nations and found it to be supportive. I have also had the opportunity to get the endorsement of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for this private member's bill.

Private Members' Business

In fact, the federal-provincial-territorial ministers responsible for justice reported in their report of July 2007, that the contents of the bill would be very helpful in fighting this type of drug production.

• (1345)

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my Conservative colleague for his willingness and courage to bring forward a bill that would take us one step closer to ridding our communities of drugs.

He comes from the community of Grande Prairie. He is also familiar with my community of Abbotsford, which is a beautiful community, a community of families. It is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada. It attracts many new residents.

However, there is also a seedy underside, even in my community, and that is the whole issue of drugs, gangs and drug related violence. It is not uncommon in my city now to see drive-by shootings because of drugs. We have seen drug related murders in my community. Crystal meth operations and marijuana grow ops are busted on a regular basis.

That saddens me because Canada is better than that. Abbotsford and Grande Prairie are better than that.

Could the member perhaps share something about the impact crystal meth has had in his community? Has he been able to consult with police officers in his community and do they support his bill, as I do?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Abbotsford for his support and his work combatting crime not only in his community but throughout Canada as well.

I have to concur that drugs are at the root of many of the social problems that seem to crop up in communities like mine. The city of Grande Prairie is known as a strong family community. It is one where people come to work and raise their families. They have believed for many years that this is a safe place to be.

I have consulted with my RCMP officers. Their concern about drugs coming into the community has become the number one issue in the relationship between the drugs coming in and the problems in the community spilling out.

One reason I brought the bill forward was I had met with a number of realtors in my community. These people go into homes throughout the city. What they saw was alarming. The banks were foreclosing on the houses of families that had become involved in addictive behaviours, including crystal meth. They shared with me the fact that we were not talking about the average Joe Blow. They were talking about families that traditionally had high paying jobs, beautiful homes and they were losing them as a result of the addictions in which members of those families had become involved.

Therefore, I feel the bill will go some distance in addressing this, but it is only part of a larger program. We all have to be part of combatting drugs and the harm they bring to our communities.

• (1350)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a neighbour to the west of Abbotsford and we also have similar issues. In my previous

life I was a loss prevention officer with the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia.

Has my colleague had an opportunity to question insurance companies? An addiction to crystal meth is one of the major drivers for auto theft.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that auto theft is on an increase because of drugs like crystal meth. I have had the opportunity in anecdotal conversations with insurance agents and insurance groups to talk about the importance of reducing this type of social behaviour so we are all better protected as a result of it.

In speaking to RCMP officers in my community, they believe a significant number of the auto thefts and home invasions can directly be tied back to drug activity.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Peace River for the bill. It is very important. Obviously we want to keep children away from taking crystal meth.

Does the member have any statistics on how many children were living in homes that became labs and the danger they were in by being in that environment?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can provide them to the member.

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-428, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (methamphetamine). Simply put, the bill is designed, if passed, "to prohibit the production, possession and sale of any substance or any equipment or other material that is intended for the use in the production of or trafficking in methamphetamine".

It sounds simple and straightforward. Perhaps at one level it is. However, there is much more to the story.

The bill aims to assist in efforts to stem a new and insidious tide of human misery fuelled by a drug that is being seen in ever increasing quantities across the world. A brief history of media coverage across the planet tells the story of crystal meth.

In New Zealand, \$1 million of crystal meth was seized by customs authorities. In the United Kingdom, a 32 year old man was convicted and imprisoned for crashing his car into a crowd of shoppers in London, causing a mother and her daughter to have their legs amputated. He was driving at a high rate of speed under the influence of crystal meth.

Here in Canada, Ontario Provincial Police officials have warned Children's Aid workers of the danger to their health and safety when in search of children if they have to enter homes where crystal meth is manufactured or used.

The manufacture and distribution of crystal meth is a machine that produces human misery, destroys lives and knows no bounds in its quest to rob so many promising young people of their future.

The very nature of addiction is tragic and tremendously sad to witness. The lives of those addicted are of course impacted, with tragic consequences. However, so are the lives of those who love them, live with them and share a community with them.

In my city of Toronto, which is not unlike other major cities and communities across the world, the price of drug addiction is a scourge across our collective human landscape, a scourge that leaves footprints across our lives. Indeed, there are few of us in the House who do not know someone or some family that has wrestled through their tears with the terrible and relentless impact of addiction.

The depths to which those who would profit from such misery can sink know no limits. Recently it was reported that in the case of crystal meth there is a new and even more despicable twist to the manufacture of this illegal drug.

We now hear of the production of so-called strawberry meth, which has flavouring added to it to make it more attractive to potential young addicts. It is beyond the comprehension of most of us here how any person could stoop to such depths as to pull our young people into a world of crystal meth addiction with such reprehensible methods, yet this is in fact what is occurring.

Those who peddle such human misery are unfamiliar with even the most basic concepts of human decency. There is a world fuelled by greed and shrouded in the darkness of the human suffering they create but care little, if anything, about.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us as citizens of our country to challenge and to hold to account those who would ravage a generation of young people for no other reason than their desire to feed their greed. It is especially the responsibility of us as legislators to provide our police, our social workers and our justice system with the tools they need to fight the war against this tide. It is a battle we must win if we are to protect our young people, and indeed Canadians, against this terrible reality.

The bill aims to address a very significant aspect of the battle. Stemming the supply of the drug is a major part of dealing with the overall problem of crystal meth.

The reality is that crystal meth is easy to produce in relatively small labs, which take root in regular houses and even hotel rooms. The materials required to manufacture the drug are not overly difficult to obtain.

The profits for those involved in this process can be significant. I understand that an investment of merely \$150 can result in up to \$10,000 worth of crystal meth.

● (1355)

Those who produce this drug create danger not only for those who become crystal meth users and addicts but also for the community at large. The risks in the manufacturing of this drug include explosions in these labs, the dumping of toxic byproducts in our municipal sewer system, and the contamination of houses, which can prevent occupation for months following the closing of a lab.

The production of crystal meth is a crime that affects the users of the drug and society as a whole.

Private Members' Business

We should note that the previous Liberal government did take decisive action with respect to crystal meth. In the summer of 2005, penalties for the possession, trafficking, production and importation of crystal meth were increased and it was added to schedule I of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, which regulates the most dangerous of drugs. These were significant and important actions.

We must continue to take whatever steps we can to confront and address this threat.

Crystal meth robs the user of his or her future. It takes from our society the potential contributions of our young people, who deserve so much more, and it brings to society all the accompanying misery of the criminal activity associated with its manufacture and sale.

If we are to win this battle for our children, we must meet the challenge at every opportunity. The legislation we are debating today helps in the fight against crystal meth.

We must also ensure that there is adequate treatment for those who are addicts. We must work to assist families confronting this challenge. We must provide those on the front lines of this battle with the tools they need to deal effectively with this scourge on society.

It is for these reasons that I intend to vote in favour of this bill. I encourage my colleagues to do the same. We owe it to our children and to future generations.

● (1400)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my hon. friend, the member for Peace River, for drawing the attention of the House, through this private member's bill, to the complex difficulties created by methamphetamine.

I am fully aware of his deep concern for the problems that methamphetamine inflicts on Canadians. His concern is clearly shared by all members of the House and we intend to support the bill.

Methamphetamine presents a threat to law enforcement authorities. They must simultaneously combat both small toxic labs and superlabs, which are primarily controlled by drug trafficking organizations.

The small labs produce relatively small amounts of methamphetamine and are generally not affiliated with major trafficking organizations. A number of factors have served as catalysts for the spread of small labs, too many of which have located in southwestern Ontario.

In particular, widespread use of the Internet has facilitated the dissemination of recipes setting out the ingredients that are required, the technology to be used and the steps to follow to manufacture methamphetamine in small labs.

Aside from marijuana, methamphetamine is the only widely used illegal drug that is capable of easily being produced by the abuser. Given the unsophisticated nature of the production process, it is easy to see why use of this highly addictive drug is spreading.

Private Members' Business

Another factor which contributes to the increase in the number of small labs is the ready access to ingredients needed to produce methamphetamine. Some ingredients are available in many of the over the counter cold medications and common household products found at retail stores, including such items as rock salt, battery acid, red phosphorus road flares, pool acid and iodine crystals, which can be used as sources of the necessary chemicals.

Moreover, the only other items needed to manufacture meth are relatively common items such as mason jars, coffee filters, hot plates, pressure cookers, pillowcases, plastic tubing, gas cans and the like.

This drug can cause serious health problems. Meth both changes and damages the brain, and it is powerfully addictive to those who use it. Meth abuse can result in serious behavioural problems, psychotic problems and dangerous medical complications such as cardiovascular problems, strokes and even death. Meth addiction is a chronic relapsing condition that is notoriously tough to treat.

The spread of methamphetamine is due to the simple manufacturing process and the availability of its required precursors.

I believe that international cooperation is an important element in combating methamphetamine. Some of the most significant and successful international efforts to combat methamphetamine have involved a series of joint law enforcement initiatives between Canada and the United States from the late 1990s until 2003.

Also, a resolution entitled "Strengthening Systems for the Control of Precursor Chemicals used in the Manufacture of Synthetic Drugs" was adopted in Vienna in 2006.

The hon. member has proposed a bill which extends the operation of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. During second reading debate, concerns were expressed about whether the bill would criminalize those who are innocently using common household products. I am pleased that the standing committee adopted an amendment to the bill, supported by the sponsoring member, to

ensure that a person would have to know that the equipment or substance was to be used to manufacture meth.

Another improvement made to the bill by the standing committee was to introduce a specific penalty for the new offence. The maximum sentence will be 10 years, which is the same as the maximum penalty currently provided in the CDSA for trafficking in, importing, exporting or producing meth.

Finally, I want to conclude by stating that I commend the initiative of the member for Peace River, and I am pleased to support the bill as amended by the standing committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I recognize the hon. member for Peace River for his concluding remarks on his right of reply.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members in the House who have supported me through this process of advancing the bill through the House and now here at third reading.

As this will be my last opportunity to speak to my private member's bill in the House, I want to reach out my hand in thanks not only to my Conservative colleagues, but to my colleagues from the Liberal Party, the Bloc and the NDP as well.

• (1405)

[Translation]

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.

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

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 2:06 p.m., this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:06 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

MR. MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

MR. JAMES MOORE

MR. JOE PRESTON

HON. KAREN REDMAN

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Second Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	York—Simcoe.....	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.....	Saskatchewan	CPC
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent.....	Québec	CPC
Vincent, Robert.....	Shefford	Québec	BQ
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest.....	Ontario	Lib.
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River.....	Alberta	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	NDP
Watson, Jeff	Essex.....	Ontario	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon.....	Richmond Hill	Ontario	Lib.
Williams, John.....	Edmonton—St. Albert.....	Alberta	CPC
Wilson, Blair	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country....	British Columbia	Ind.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre.....	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.....	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Zed, Paul.....	Saint John	New Brunswick.....	Lib.
VACANCY	Desnethé—Missinippi— Churchill River.....	Saskatchewan	
VACANCY	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	
VACANCY	Toronto Centre	Ontario	
VACANCY	Willowdale	Ontario	
VACANCY	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	

N.B.: Under Political Affiliation: Lib. - Liberal; CPC - Conservative; BQ - Bloc Quebecois; NDP - New Democratic Party; Ind. - Independent

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Second Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Vancouver Kingsway	CPC
Fast, Ed.	Abbotsford	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	Lib.
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Priddy, Penny	Surrey North	NDP
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	NDP
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	CPC
Wilson, Blair	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	Ind.
VACANCY	Vancouver Quadra	
MANITOBA (14)		
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill, The Deputy Speaker	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary for Health	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Keeper, Tina	Churchill	Lib.
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Pallister, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of International Cooperation	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Simard, Hon. Raymond	Saint Boniface	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Mervin	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	NDP

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of the Environment	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Barnes, Hon. Sue	London West	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West	Lib.
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Oshawa	CPC
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda	Guelph	Lib.
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	CPC
Cullen, Hon. Roy	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Lib.
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick	St. Catharines	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Godfrey, Hon. John	Don Valley West	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	CPC
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Lib.
Guergis, Hon. Helena, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport)	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Lib.
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Khan, Wajid	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Lib.
Maloney, John	Welland	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathyssen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Lib.
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of National Revenue	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	CPC
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	Lib.
Poillievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Lib.
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shipley, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Lib.
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Lib.
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Lib.
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform.....	York—Simcoe.....	CPC
Volpe, Hon. Joseph.....	Eglinton—Lawrence.....	Lib.
Wallace, Mike.....	Burlington.....	CPC
Wappel, Tom.....	Scarborough Southwest.....	Lib.
Watson, Jeff.....	Essex.....	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon.....	Richmond Hill.....	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys.....	Etobicoke Centre.....	Lib.
VACANCY.....	Toronto Centre.....	
VACANCY.....	Willowdale.....	

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Easter, Hon. Wayne.....	Malpeque.....	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence.....	Cardigan.....	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe.....	Egmont.....	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn.....	Charlottetown.....	Lib.

QUÉBEC (74)

André, Guy.....	Berthier—Maskinongé.....	BQ
Arthur, André.....	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.....	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard.....	Manicouagan.....	BQ
Bachand, Claude.....	Saint-Jean.....	BQ
Barbot, Vivian.....	Papineau.....	BQ
Bellavance, André.....	Richmond—Arthabaska.....	BQ
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Foreign Affairs.....	Beauce.....	CPC
Bigras, Bernard.....	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.....	BQ
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec.....	Jonquière—Alma.....	CPC
Blais, Raynald.....	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.....	BQ
Blaney, Steven.....	Lévis—Bellechasse.....	CPC
Bonsant, France.....	Compton—Stanstead.....	BQ
Bouchard, Robert.....	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.....	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Status of Women.....	Beauport—Limoilou.....	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane.....	Terrebonne—Blainville.....	BQ
Brunelle, Paule.....	Trois-Rivières.....	BQ
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities....	Pontiac.....	CPC
Cardin, Serge.....	Sherbrooke.....	BQ
Carrier, Robert.....	Alfred-Pellan.....	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis.....	Bourassa.....	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin.....	Mount Royal.....	Lib.
Crête, Paul.....	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska— Rivière-du-Loup.....	BQ
DeBellefeuille, Claude.....	Beauharnois—Salaberry.....	BQ
Demers, Nicole.....	Laval.....	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne.....	Laurentides—Labelle.....	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition.....	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.....	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles.....	Laurier—Sainte-Marie.....	BQ
Faille, Meili.....	Vaudreuil—Soulanges.....	BQ
Folco, Raymonde.....	Laval—Les Îles.....	Lib.

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Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	BQ
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Gravel, Raymond	Repentigny	BQ
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	BQ
Harvey, Luc	Louis-Hébert	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Kotto, Maka	Saint-Lambert	BQ
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	BQ
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	BQ
Lebel, Denis	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	BQ
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	BQ
Lussier, Marcel	Brossard—La Prairie	BQ
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	BQ
Martin, Right Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	BQ
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	NDP
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	BQ
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Secretary of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Petit, Daniel	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	CPC
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	BQ
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	BQ
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Ind.
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
VACANCY	Westmount—Ville-Marie	
SASKATCHEWAN (13)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Batters, Dave.....	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana.....	Wascana	Lib.
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre.....	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.....	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Skelton, Hon. Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar.....	CPC
Trost, Bradley.....	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.....	CPC
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Blackstrap	CPC
VACANCY	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River .	
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon.....	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of February 8, 2008 — 2nd Session, 39th Parliament)

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

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Mr. Tom Lukiwski	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform

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Mr. Warkentin.....	2852
(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed).....	2852

APPENDIX

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