



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, March 11, 2008**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

## PETITIONS

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*Prayers*

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INCOME TRUSTS

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)  
[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)(b) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 26 petitions.

\* \* \*

### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-524, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (exception to inadmissibility).

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to present the bill to the House and to recommend its serious consideration.

The intent of the bill is to right a wrong under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, which is the broad permission it gives to exclude people living with disabilities from immigrating to Canada. It adds candidates who qualify for provincial nominee programs to those family class immigrants and refugees who are exempt from being turned away due to the excessive demand provisions of section 38 of the immigration act.

It is an attempt to end the hypocrisy of signing a UN declaration around the rights of persons with disabilities while maintaining an immigration system that does anything but offer that respect by falling back on stereotypes and assumptions. It is a beginning, a specific way of eliminating discrimination and one that points to the need for a more comprehensive system and public discussion about how to end discriminatory practices in the system, practices that deny Canada immigrants with many abilities by focusing on a particular disability. This is one way of making Canada a more welcoming country.

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

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted today to present yet another income trust broken promise petition from a large number of residents in Kingston, Ontario, who remember the Prime Minister boasting about his apparent commitment to accountability when he said that the greatest fraud is “a promise not kept”.

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

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

NATIONAL PARKS

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to present a petition with over 6,000 names of residents in the South Okanagan and Similkameen and other communities in British Columbia who want to create a national park reserve. They feel that there are more species at risk in the south Okanagan and Similkameen valleys than in any other part of British Columbia. This area also contains the antelope brush ecosystem, also known as Canada's “pocket desert”, which is one of the most endangered habitats in the country.

*Business of Supply*

The petitioners call upon our government to uphold the standard of protection afforded by the National Parks Act and to protect at least 100,000 hectares of land in total, including significant tracts of currently unprotected crown lands and the grasslands and forests of the region. This includes a \$50 million park acquisition fund to purchase private lands for protection, to buy out grazing leases on crown lands, and to provide conservation financing for local first nations. It also encompasses the existing provincial parks and protected areas in the region, including in the highly ecologically important Vaseux and White Lake protected areas.

## PASSPORT OFFICE

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present to the House today in which the petitioners are requesting that the Minister of Foreign Affairs establish a full service passport office in the riding of Simcoe—Grey to meet the growing needs in Simcoe—Grey, York—Simcoe, Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Simcoe North, Parry Sound—Muskoka, Dufferin—Caledon, and Barrie.

• (1010)

## AIRPORT CUSTOMS SERVICES

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition to present to the House today. The petitioners indicate that a new terminal at the Collingwood airport should include an office designated to process transborder and international clients and note that clients are currently rerouted to Kitchener for clearance before continuing on to Collingwood.

The petitioners call upon the Minister of Public Safety to review and award port of entry status to the Collingwood airport.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Lee Richardson:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might ask for consent to revert to presenting reports from committees.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to revert to presenting reports from committees?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled "A Study of the Canada-Korea Free Trade Negotiations". The committee requests a government response.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

## BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

## OPPOSITION MOTION—SECURITIES REGULATION

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ)** moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately abandon the idea of creating a common securities regulator, since securities regulations fall under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and because this initiative is unanimously condemned in Quebec.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is rather distressing that the Bloc Québécois has to put forward this morning the kind of motion you just read.

The fact of the matter is that the Conservative government, and the current Minister of Finance in particular, seem to be obsessed with taking away from Quebec important rights with respect to financial administration and centralizing everything for all of Canada in Toronto. However, the securities commission, and anything relating to it, is a constitutional responsibility of the Government of Quebec.

We rise in this House because the Bloc Québécois is the torch-bearer of the consensus on this issue in Quebec and, in the budget brought down on February 26, the Minister of Finance clearly indicated that he will be continuing with his steamroller approach to establishing a Canada-wide securities regulator, even though that is unanimously condemned in Quebec.

That is why the Bloc Québécois is bringing this matter to the attention of the House today. A clear message must be sent to the government that it would be unacceptable.

Why pay special attention to that issue? Because the whole area of securities represents an important sector of economic activity. For one thing, securities are fungible, negotiable and transferable instruments that can be listed on the stock exchange. The two main classes of securities are stocks and bonds, but there are others, such as certificates of investment and warrants.

Securities trading is currently regulated by Quebec and the provinces. In Quebec, the Autorité des marchés financiers is the agency responsible for regulating securities. For example, a company looking to issue a first series of shares on the Quebec stock market has to abide by the rules set out by the Autorité des marchés financiers. We share a passport system for securities regulation with the securities commissions of the other provinces, except Ontario. That province has taken the approach of the current Minister of Finance. This shows that his attitude is really to move toward giving to Ontario a responsibility that is currently that of the provinces and which, in Quebec, has always been carried out seriously.

It is important that the public know that the Bloc's position is also the unanimous position of the National Assembly of Quebec. It is not a position taken solely by the representatives of sovereigntists. On this issue, we represent the entire National Assembly of Quebec in this House.

*Business of Supply*

I will read the motion adopted unanimously by the National Assembly on October 16, 2007.

THAT the National Assembly ask the federal government to abandon its Canada-wide securities commission project.

The wording could not be clearer. The motion indicates that the three parties in the National Assembly of Quebec want the federal government to stop the offensive that the Liberals began and the Conservatives have continued, because what the government is doing is not what we want.

Even after this motion was adopted in October 2007, the Minister of Finance decided on February 26 to go ahead. He heard from Quebec's finance minister, who, on this issue, shares our views and speaks for the Government of Quebec.

I want to read the letter that Monique Jérôme-Forget, Quebec's finance minister, sent Mr. Flaherty on February 28, two days after he brought down the budget.

Dear colleague,

I have noted the appointment of your expert panel charged with making suggestions and recommendations concerning securities regulation in Canada.

And here, every word is important. The minister goes on:

First of all, I reiterate that the existing regulatory system in Canada works well and satisfies both the needs of pan-Canadian participants and the interests of the various regions. Accordingly, I will continue to oppose the implementation of any model leading to the concentration of market oversight responsibilities in the hands of a common or single regulator, regardless of how you call it.

Quebec's finance minister is clearly saying that she does not want anything to do with the model that the federal Minister of Finance wants to put in place and that he talked about in his budget. She goes on:

The passport system that the participating provinces and territories are setting up is a significant and unprecedented initiative to further simplify matters for pan-Canadian participants. It is a cooperative approach by the provinces and territories that enables them to continue to monitor their local interests. The systematic refusal to acknowledge the advantages of such a system leads me to wonder whether all this effort is truly aimed at improving protection for the investing public.

• (1015)

Quebec's finance minister is wondering whether the current federal Minister of Finance effort is truly aimed at improving protection for the investing public and we might ask ourselves the same question. Indeed, as far as the issue of securities is concerned, the model developed in Quebec and Canada has been recognized by the International Monetary Fund as an excellent model for providing satisfactory services using a decentralized approach.

In the past, on a number of occasions, some original initiatives have been taken in Quebec and other provinces. Just look at the stock savings plan implemented by Jacques Parizeau. This was followed by action focusing on how to ensure compliance with the law. Recently there was the Norbourg case where a person was sentenced to 12 years, which is something we have never seen the federal government do. And, the RCMP did not get involved in this case even though it could have.

The current model in Canada has the flexibility that we wanted to see in the Constitution. Quebec, for whom we represent the consensus here, would like that model to be upheld.

I will continue to read the letter from Quebec's finance minister.

I must say that the federal government could apply its energies much more productively if, in its fields of jurisdiction, it worked to more effectively crack down on economic crime rather than trying to impose itself in a field of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

This is nothing new. The federal government, which has never been able to stick to its own jurisdictions, is always tempted to meddle in other areas of jurisdiction. Securities are the Minister of Finance's current obsession.

I am going back to the minister's letter.

Given the mixed, to the say the least, results it has achieved in combating economic crime, in spite of the money spent, it seems to me that the federal government is not doing enough to assume its responsibilities, in particular regarding criminal law.

I think the Quebec finance minister's opinion is quite accurate—harsh, but accurate—and that indeed the federal government would do much better to take care of its own responsibilities than to try to meddle in those of others.

I will finish reading the letter from Quebec's finance minister.

As for the expert panel—which the minister appointed—I note that you have ignored the proposals made to you by the Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers of Securities Regulation. In so doing, I believe you have missed a good opportunity to obtain information that would have helped you better understand the point of view of the provinces and territories. Unfortunately, I fail to see that yet another panel, whose conclusions seem predictable to us, can bring anything new to this debate.

Believe me when I say that I am sorry to see you invest your effort and good will, which I in no way doubt, in such an ill-advised initiative when your energies could be applied much more productively.

A copy of this letter was sent to all the ministers responsible for securities and to the members of the panel.

Quebec's finance minister is clearly disapproving, taking the same line as the unanimous motion by Quebec's National Assembly. The minister has also harshly criticized the Minister of Finance's manipulative use of the panel. We should remember that initially, this panel was created to evaluate the existing system and the other possibilities. But the Minister of Finance decided to use it as a tool to help put forward his proposal. The budget clearly mentions a "common securities act" that the minister wants to develop by the end of 2008 for all of Canada. The Bloc Québécois is against this, as is all of Quebec. Quebec cannot allow such an important tool out of its control.

Let us remember that there is an international securities association, and that within that association Quebec speaks for Quebec. We will recall the entire process we went through over the idea of the Quebec nation, the motion that was adopted here. So what we have here is a double standard. A motion about the nation is adopted, and on the other hand the federal government's action would aim to deprive Quebec of one of the rare areas where it can speak directly to the international community, through the international securities association. Essentially, this amounts to the federal government looking for information so it can go and speak on the international scene about a matter it does not control. Quebec is at the controls in this area, and wants to stay there. That is what our motion is intended to do today.

*Business of Supply*

We are innovators in this area. We have developed a passport system with the securities commissions in the other provinces. The passport system facilitates interprovincial transactions. This means that a business in Quebec that intends to issue shares or do something involving securities will be able to use that system to do it based on its recognition in Quebec and to do it in the other provinces.

• (1020)

This is a screening system comparable to what in fact exists through contacts between education ministers in the various provinces. This is where Quebec wants investments to be made. The system has to be as permeable as possible to enable companies to do business in all of the provinces, in a way that is completely consistent with the jurisdiction exercised by Quebec and the provinces in this area. As well, the federal government would have to abandon its attempt to bulldoze the province's responsibilities into its own yard.

In Quebec, the *Autorité des marchés financiers* is the body that enforces the rules of the game in terms of regulating the processes by which a business issues shares and bonds. The *Autorité des marchés financiers* can apply sanctions to businesses or individuals who fail to comply with the Securities Act. The *Autorité des marchés financiers* can initiate prosecutions in the Court of Québec leading to fines and imprisonment for individuals who are convicted. However, those prosecutions are not under the Criminal Code, as in the case of Vincent Lacroix. Although he was convicted under the Act respecting the *Autorité des marchés financiers*, which is legislation under Quebec's jurisdiction, other charges might be laid under the Criminal Code by the RCMP, which is under federal jurisdiction.

The passport model developed in Quebec and the other provinces corresponds exactly to the model that currently exists in Europe, between sovereign countries that apply the same system. Please do not tell us that the current model in Quebec is outmoded. The European Economic Community is a very modern body that is expanding and that decided to go ahead and do this. We would hope that the federal government will exhibit the same openness so that the system can be modernized to allow for greater transfer permeability, while not interfering in matters under Quebec's jurisdiction.

The mission of the *Autorité des marchés financiers* is to enforce the legislation regulating the financial sector, including insurance, securities, deposit institutions—except banks, which are under federal jurisdiction—and the distribution of financial products and services. More specifically, the *Autorité des marchés financiers* must provide assistance to consumers of financial products and services and ensure that the financial institutions and other regulated entities of the financial sector comply with the solvency standards applicable to them as well as the obligations imposed on them by law.

There are all kinds of issues, in this regard, subject to the Civil Code. We have two different systems in Canada: the Civil Code in Quebec and common law in the rest of the country. We have different ways of doing things when it comes to how securities are handled, and that is one of the reasons why we want Quebec to retain full responsibility for this sector.

The *Autorité des marchés financiers* also supervises the activities connected with the distribution of financial products and services; supervises stock market and clearing house activities and monitors the securities market; sees to the implementation of protection and compensation programs for consumers of financial products and services; and administers the compensation funds set up by law.

The different system we have developed in Quebec reflects our social values, which have rubbed off to some extent on how securities are handled. If there were just one Canada-wide system, all the particularities of the Quebec system would immediately be lost, and that is another reason why we want to continue with our own system.

Take, for example, the federal restrictions on insurance retailing by banks. In Quebec, we decided a long time ago to allow the Desjardins Group to operate in this market to facilitate its interaction with consumers and provide them with more choice. The initiative shown by a man like Jacques Parizeau, who often proved very innovative in the use of financial tools to help Quebec develop, was instrumental in the emergence of a system unique to Quebec. We could not have developed these tools under a federal, Canada-wide securities regulator, and most importantly, we would no longer be able to in the future.

Under all its responsibilities for securities, the *Autorité des marchés financiers* oversees the proper operations of securities markets and ensures the protection of investors. To do this, it analyzes disclosure documents regarding securities distributions or public offerings. The entire language issue also arises in this regard. Under a Canada-wide system, things would be done quite differently.

The *Autorité des marchés financiers* makes sure that reporting issuers, i.e. all organizations that have issued public offerings, provide securities holders, the shareholders, and the other market participants with the financial statements, MD&As and other documents required by law and regulations.

• (1025)

It ensures that securities issuers and other financial sector participants adhere to their obligations, for example, by filing insider reports within the specified time periods. It also oversees the establishment and implementation of orientations and regulations pertaining to capital markets.

It is very clear, therefore, that this an entire sector of the economy that is very important and growing ever more so because of all the things being taken over by the private sector. There are also all the international activities with the globalization of capital.

The fact that each province has its own regulators means we can have different, more flexible approaches. We want this social value maintained. We do not want it all changed, either for the Canadian economy as a whole or for Quebec, which has developed its own approaches and wants to continue implementing them.

*Business of Supply*

Unfortunately, the 2008 budget confirmed the Conservative government's intention to establish a single commission. To do that, the minister mandated an expert panel to prepare a bill that would create a single securities commission. That means the House will be asked to deal with a bill that flies in the face of the constitutional responsibilities of Quebec and the provinces on this matter. I do not know how the bill will be drafted. Will they be forced to use a notwithstanding clause? Do they want to open the whole constitutional question? Will they try to slyly get around it using regulatory amendments or special approaches? Is the Minister of Finance trying to come up with a negotiating tool that will encourage Quebec to give in? Quebec will not give in on this issue because it is unanimous and wants to retain its authority in financial markets. That is one of the strengths of our economic action and we want to be able to retain it. Let us remember that the expert panel's report will be presented in late 2008.

In our opinion, this is an unacceptable situation. The minister stubbornly persists with a bill that goes against the unanimous vote of the National Assembly, which is a flagrant violation of Quebec's constitutional jurisdiction. We will continue to defend Quebec against the centralizing tendencies of the federal government.

It was a waste of time changing the government. We are always faced with the same situation. Those who were elected—or at least those elected members who talk about decentralization during election campaigns and, more specifically, the current Prime Minister—wanted to give Quebec its rightful place. The day after the election, we were already starting to feel this. As time goes by, the government, whether Liberal, Conservative or other, has been calling for a centralizing approach that is not appropriate and, in addition, does not correspond to fields of jurisdiction. The Bloc Québécois is now the best tool for defending Quebec on the floor of the House of Commons.

This seems to us once again a very flagrant example of the fact that the only solution is for Quebec to become sovereign. Once Quebec is a country, it will have authority in terms of financial markets. We will no longer be forced to deal with attacks such as the one the Minister of Finance is now leading in an effort to change, indirectly, an existing provincial jurisdiction.

Since 2003, the matter has again moved to the forefront of federal politics. The Liberals established an expert panel when they were in power. In 2005, the Ontario government mandated a group of experts, led by Purdy Crawford, to examine the advantages of a single securities regulatory system. Clearly, that report was written to be able to say that it would be better to have a single regulator. The idea surfaced in the 2006 federal budget, where the government announced that it was committed to working with the provinces and territories in order to establish a common securities regulator.

In my opinion, we can clearly see the federal government's steamroller tactics, regardless of the party in power.

At the same time, we see the unanimous position of Quebeckers. This unanimous position was demonstrated in a Quebec National Assembly motion and is defended by the current Quebec finance minister, a federalist minister who finds the Conservative government's approach unacceptable.

The unanimous position of Quebeckers is defended in this House by the Bloc Québécois, which is calling on the House of Commons here today to force the Conservative government to stop its steamroller tactics. Despite past government initiatives, we would like to be supported on this. One thing that is certain is that all Quebeckers are behind us. We will not give up until the Conservatives decide to abandon this plan that in no way serves Quebec's economic future.

• (1030)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that virtually every Quebec public company that I am aware of trades on the Toronto Stock Exchange and they do it to gain access to national and international capital markets.

If I were to talk to the CEOs of these companies, whether it is BCE, Bombardier or any other company, I am quite sure they would be the first people to say that we have too many regulators in the business. It drives up the cost of public financing and it makes the cost of capital uncompetitive in Canada. I think they would be the first people to step up to the plate and ask to be freed from this over-regulation that we have across the country.

Oil companies in Alberta would probably be in the same boat. They are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange and they must comply with the Ontario Securities Commission's rules and maybe 13 provincial and territorial agencies on this. It drives up the cost of raising capital and gaining access to the markets.

The reality is that Quebec companies are trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange today. Does the Bloc Québécois not understand that reality?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, that is not the view of just the Bloc Québécois; the current Government of Quebec—the Quebec federalist government—and the three parties represented in the National Assembly of Quebec concur with the Bloc Québécois.

In its most recent economic survey, the OECD ranked Canada second for the quality of its securities regulation. That means that the current system in which companies operate is fine. In addition, in a study of global financial systems, the World Bank ranked Canada as a leader in securities trading. At present, all Canadian securities commissions in Canada are represented at the International Organization of Securities Commissions. This system works very well, is recognized within Canada, in Quebec and internationally.

*Business of Supply*

That is why we want the Conservative government to abandon its current tactic, which is not at all a decentralizing approach. There must be respect for jurisdictions. It is unacceptable to say to Quebecers, on the one hand, that they form a nation and, on the other, to attempt to take away from them an important tool for economic intervention. It is unconscionable and for that reason Quebec stands united. The Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois are against it and so are the Liberal Party of Quebec—the governing party—and the Action démocratique du Québec. All of Quebec stands behind the position being defended today by the Bloc Québécois.

• (1035)

[English]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the objective of securities regulators is to ensure capital markets are efficient, fair and transparent, and I think the member will agree with that.

He may also want to comment on whether the consolidation of securities regulation in Canada might be enhanced to deal with discrepancies between the jurisdictions of the provinces in terms of public disclosure, information sharing between companies and investors, the fact that it might create distorted markets if there is not that standardization and maybe even an increased risk for investors. These seem to be desirable objectives in terms of security for all investors throughout Canada. I wonder if the member would care to comment?

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I will refer him to a letter dated February 28 from Ms. Jérôme-Forget addressed to the Minister of Finance of Canada, saying the following:

First of all, I reiterate that the existing regulatory system in Canada works well and satisfies both the needs of pan-Canadian participants and the interests of the various regions. Accordingly, I will continue to oppose the implementation of any model leading to the concentration of market oversight responsibilities in the hands of a common or single regulator, regardless of how you call it.

And she added:

The passport system that the participating provinces and territories are setting up is a significant and unprecedented initiative to further simplify matters for pan-Canadian participants. It is a cooperative approach by the provinces and territories—

In other words, we have two choices today: go for the centralizing approach of the Conservatives who will change all the rules or move toward the cooperative approach sought by Quebec's financier minister. As far as we are concerned, the choice is cut and dry for Quebec; it is the one made by the Government of Quebec, the National Assembly of Quebec, and which the Bloc Québécois stands for in this House.

[English]

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering why the Bloc fears a common securities regulator would give more power to Ontario. First, it will not be an Ontario focused regulator and, second, if I understand the current situation, Ontario is the de facto regulator of securities in Canada, with the OSC currently regulating over 80% of securities.

Would a common securities regulator not in fact actually give more influence to other provinces and less to Ontario?

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many times we will have to repeat this, but we will repeat it as long as people keep asking us questions. Our position this morning is not the Bloc Québécois'; it is Quebec's position, the position of the Government of Quebec, which knows that this is an important tool for the future. In the context of globalization, there is a system that works and that gives powers to Quebec. This system is set out in the existing Constitution. Quebec does not want to turn that power over to a pan-Canadian authority because Quebec has ways of doing things and models that would not have been developed by a pan-Canadian commission.

How paradoxical that the only province that does not want to go ahead with the passport system is Ontario. What is motivating the province? All of the other provinces think that this is the best system, and they want to go forward with it. That is why we find it unacceptable for the Minister of Finance to steamroller ahead with a bill for a common securities regulator. The federal Parliament should not even be allowed to consider such a bill because jurisdiction in this matter is clearly defined: Quebec and the provinces are responsible for securities regulation, and the system is working. We are not talking about a dysfunctional model. Our model is recognized by the International Monetary Fund. The OECD has recognized our model as the second most efficient one in the world.

Yet we have to find other reasons. I think this is an obsession shared by Ontario, Toronto, and the current Minister of Finance. I do not know if there are career goals hidden behind all of this, but it is clear that this is not a choice that will be good for Quebec's future. All of Quebec has said so, Quebec's National Assembly and the Government of Quebec agree on this, and the Bloc Québécois is bringing their position to this House.

• (1040)

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup that my career aspirations are here as Minister of Finance of Canada.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to comment on this important issue dealing with the best way forward in terms of securities regulation in Canada.

This motion brought forward by the Bloc does not meet the real challenge facing Canada today, which is a great challenge with respect to securities regulation in Canada. This issue needs to be addressed to protect our capital markets and to protect Canadian citizens. This issue is all the more urgent, given the turbulence that we have in capital markets globally today.

Our government believes that we must modernize our securities regulatory framework. This is a priority and an important component of strengthening our economic union in Canada.



*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

That is why the government recently announced the creation of an expert panel to provide advice and make suggestions and recommendations concerning securities regulation in Canada.

[English]

This expert panel, chaired by the hon. Tom Hockin, will provide independent advice and recommendations to federal, provincial and territorial ministers on the best way forward to improve securities regulation in Canada. We look forward to a collaborative effort with the provinces and territories to build an even stronger Canadian economic union.

Our government has a good reason for taking action on this front. Canada has a strong financial services sector, one that spans the country from coast to coast providing good, high-paying jobs for Canadians. There is no doubt that Canada has a great story to tell, one of economic success, visionary entrepreneurs, growing competitiveness and unlimited potential, and yet we have a capital markets regulatory system that is out of step with the western world.

We are the only industrialized country that does not have a common securities regulator. Our system of 13 regulators is cumbersome, fragmented and it lacks the proper tools of enforcement. To maximize our potential, the government's goal is to work in collaboration with the provinces and territories to develop a competitive advantage in global capital markets. That includes reforming Canada's securities regulatory system.

This goal flows from our long term economic plan for Canada called Advantage Canada which was published in October 2006. In that plan, we committed to focus on creating five key advantages for Canada. First is a tax advantage, which means reducing taxes for all Canadians and establishing the lowest tax rate on new business investment in the G-7. We have taken significant action on that front, most recently in budget 2008 with the tax free savings account.

Second is the creation of a fiscal advantage. This means eliminating Canada's total government net debt in less than a generation. We are well on our way to meeting that commitment.

Third is the creation of an infrastructure advantage, which means building modern, world-class infrastructure that promotes economic growth, a clean environment and international competitiveness. We are investing \$33 billion over the next seven years, as well as \$500 million in public transit, to ensure that Canada has a modern, high quality infrastructure to take us into the future.

Fourth is creating a knowledge advantage. We need to have the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world. The government has invested significantly in knowledge, science and innovation.

Finally, Advantage Canada commits to creating an entrepreneurial advantage. This means reducing unnecessary regulation, red tape and increasing competition in the Canadian marketplace.

Specifically, we committed to securing a competitive advantage in global capital markets. In budget 2007, we followed through on that commitment with the capital markets plan. To put the plan in context, in 2004 all provinces and territories, with the exception of

Ontario, agreed to a process to create a passport-style system to regulate securities.

Those initiatives narrowed regulatory differences, harmonized and streamlined securities laws, initiatives that are important to achieving a more efficient and effective regulatory system in Canada. Through their actions, the provinces and territories have demonstrated a clear commitment to improving our securities regulatory system.

Those actions, although commendable, do not go far enough or fast enough. With the passport system, Canada still has 13 securities regulators, 13 sets of laws, however harmonized, and 13 sets of fees. Moreover, the passport system lacks national coordination of enforcement activities making it difficult to maximize results in this critical part of the securities system.

Furthermore, the passport system does not address our need to improve policy making. It is still necessary to obtain agreement from 13 regulators to make changes to rules. This is just too cumbersome. In short, the passport system is not where Canada needs to be in today's global economy.

● (1045)

Where do we go from here? The vast majority of capital market participants and observers agree that we could no longer afford to sit back and watch our competitors pass us by. We have great advantages to offer here in Canada: an educated labour force, social benefits and a strong economy. Now is the time for a more efficient capital market system. The benefits of a common securities regulator are well known.

[Translation]

Furthermore, unlike what the Bloc Québécois across the floor would have us believe, the creation of a single securities regulator would allow all regions of Canada to have a say.

[English]

In fact, such a solution would make the regulation of our markets more responsive and accountable by creating a decision making body that would coordinate the views of all jurisdictions promptly and fairly.

I say again, as I have said before, we are not talking about a federal securities regulator. We are talking about a common securities regulator for Canada.

Recent developments in global capital markets underscore the need for a mechanism that will provide Canada with the policy and regulatory capacity we need to react quickly and effectively to address new and emerging issues. Let us look at the advantages of a common securities regulator. There are numerous advantages for Canada.

*Business of Supply*

First, a common securities regulator would improve market efficiency and ensure the best use of money and resources, and make the system more efficient to operate. This, in turn, would lower costs and make it more affordable for all who benefit from it, both those with capital to invest and those with businesses to build.

Another advantage is that a common securities regulator would improve enforcement and better protect investors with a common set of sanctions and remedies, as well as better enforcement across the country. Indeed, by serving as a single point of contact for law enforcement agencies, both at home and abroad, Canada would be better placed to share information and detect market fraud.

Moreover, we would be able to set clear enforcement priorities across the country while making sure investigation and enforcement resources are deployed efficiently. As I mentioned earlier, a common securities regulator would give all regions of Canada a real say.

[*Translation*]

In fact, the creation of a common regulator would better serve our common interest by establishing a structure that would allow all regions of the country to participate in market regulation in a more meaningful and constructive way.

[*English*]

Having such a structure would ensure meaningful participation by all provinces and territories, with a strong presence in all regions and local expertise that would respond to regional needs, for example, the oil and gas industry in the west or the futures market in Montreal.

Canada is a respected voice on the international stage. A common securities regulator would also allow Canada to speak with one voice. Speaking with one voice can only serve to enhance the protection and promotion of the interests of Canadian market investors and businesses. I have been pursuing the concept of free trade and securities with my counterparts in the United States, the G-7 and international partners that share high standards of investor protection.

Under a mutual recognition of each other's regimes, our investors would have better access to global opportunities and businesses listed on our exchanges would have better access to global investors. It is a win-win proposition.

The bottom line is simplicity and effectiveness. A common securities regulator represents an opportunity to move toward simpler, more principles-based regulation. Let us face it, Canada needs a regulatory framework that is world class and this is the way to do it.

● (1050)

[*Translation*]

We need a framework adapted to the make-up of our capital markets, with both Canada-based global corporations and a large number of small and medium-sized businesses. Too many complex rules get in the way of both efficient financing and effective investor protection.

[*English*]

Exerting further leadership and developing a single code for Canada with the right balance of rules and principles would help

establish a clear competitive advantage for Canada in global markets. Clearly, this is an advantage to a common securities regulator.

Our securities regulators are engaged constructively, but our capacity to implement a strategy and secure an agreement for all of Canada would be greatly enhanced with one regulator clearly accountable to negotiate on Canada's behalf.

I have made the case to all ministers responsible in the provinces and territories that we must look beyond the passport system. To that end, as I mentioned at the outset, that is why we have established an expert panel to provide advice on how to best move forward on developing a model common securities act to create a Canadian advantage in global capital markets.

In closing, let me be clear. Establishing a common securities regulator, breaking down interprovincial trade barriers, and strengthening Canada's economic union are all priorities of our government.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Finance for taking part in this opposition day debate. However, I want to remind him about the letter that Quebec's finance minister, Ms. Jérôme-Forget, wrote to him on February 28, 2008, after the budget was introduced. I will read some excerpts, and I would like to get his reaction. Ms. Jérôme-Forget said:

Accordingly, I will continue to oppose the implementation of any model leading to the concentration of market oversight responsibilities in the hands of a common or single regulator, regardless of how you call it.

As regards the panel, she also said:

As for the expert panel, I note that you have ignored the proposals made to you by the Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers of Securities Regulation. In so doing, I believe you have missed a good opportunity to obtain information that would have helped you better understand the point of view of the provinces and territories. Unfortunately, I fail to see that yet another panel, whose conclusions seem predictable to us, can bring anything new to this debate.

Believe me when I say that I am sorry to see you invest your effort and good will, which I in no way doubt, in such an ill-advised initiative when your energies could be applied much more productively.

My question is for the Minister of Finance.

While the OECD says that we rank second among the world's best systems—not because of the government's centralizing changes—and while the World Bank is saying that we are a leader, I see only one answer in the minister's comments, and it is a terrible answer for Quebec, because he said that Canada must “speak with one voice”.

We want to keep what Quebec has obtained in this area, namely to be able to speak directly to the International Organization of Securities Commissions. That is not the position of Quebec's sovereignists, but of all Quebecers. It is based on a motion that was carried unanimously at the Quebec National Assembly, and it is reflected in a letter addressed by Quebec's finance minister to the federal Minister of Finances, following the introduction of the last budget.

*Business of Supply*

How could the Minister of Finance continue to want to move forward with a project that is not in the best interests of Quebec, or of the provinces, and that is being condemned by Quebec and the provinces? This government has recognized the Quebec nation and its right to be present on the international scene, but it tries to deny Quebec at the first opportunity. Is this acceptable? I can assure the minister that he will find the Bloc Québécois, and all of Quebec, in his path if he decides to keep moving forward with this thinking.

•(1055)

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member how it serves the people of the province of Quebec when 80% to 85% of the power of the regulation of securities in Canada is through the Ontario Securities Commission which is a creature of the legislative assembly of the province of Ontario?

How does that serve the people of Quebec, to have the legislative assembly of the province of Ontario determining the rules and regulations of securities regulations in Canada? If this is something desirable for the people of Quebec, that is news to me. But that is in effect what the hon. member is arguing.

It is also in effect what the minister of finance, my colleague in Quebec, is arguing as well, that Quebec does not want to be subservient to the legislative assembly of the province of Ontario because, de facto, that is the reality in Canada today.

I fail to understand how at the same time the hon. member and his party can advocate for a common carbon exchange, a national carbon exchange in Quebec, and at the same time they argue against a national securities regulator in Canada. This is inconsistent to say the least.

At one time they say, on the carbon exchange, “Oh, we want to govern all of Canada in Montreal”, and at the same time they say, “Oh no, but we don't want any part of a common securities regulator for our country”. This is incomprehensible.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find the Minister of Finance's speech interesting. I am not surprised that the government is in favour of a national common securities board.

I do find it interesting, however, that the minister does not underline the fact that the only province that seems to be in favour of it is the province that he has been bashing for the last several weeks and months: the province of Ontario. He has bashed that province to the point where he is actually telling the world, “Don't invest in Ontario”.

This is a minister who, when he was in the provincial government, achieved one of the largest deficits provincially, after having run on a fiscally sound policy. He is now bringing the federal government and Canada to the brink of a deficit again, at a time when our economy is slowing down.

I find it interesting that this is the same minister who is dissing my Liberal colleague for his private member's bill on the RESP, claiming that it is going to bring Canada to the brink of a deficit.

A good fiscal finance minister would have, as elementary as A, B, C, taken the list of all private members' bills and costed out what it

would cost if in fact the bills became law, and would have had budgeted for it in a contingency plan. But this minister, who wants to bring about this common securities regulator, and it is quite interesting, does not have the A, B, C elementary intelligence to establish a contingency fund on the basis that some of the private members' bills, or all of them, may come to fruition. Anyone who manages a household budget takes into account every eventuality that may come to fruition.

So, I would like to—

•(1100)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Jim Flaherty:** Mr. Speaker, I see that the hon. member once again fails to argue from principle. Her point seems to be that if we are going to have a common securities regulator, the headquarters should be in Montreal. That means the member is in favour, I guess, of a common securities regulator. What we are down to now is where will we locate the headquarters.

Mr. Crawford's panel recommended that the board of directors of the new common securities regulator should decide an appropriate place for the location of the securities regulator. The board is composed of 14 members: 10 from the provinces, 3 from the territories and 1 representative from the Government of Canada. But I thank the hon. member for her support in principle of the idea.

I also thank her for her support in principle of the budget which, as we know, passed through this House a week ago Tuesday.

I regret her American-style rider that the Liberals tried to add to the budget the next day, on the Wednesday, this congressional-type tactic, this Homer kind of tactic. It is kind of like arguing that the securities commission headquarters is the most important thing. It is what I have grown to expect from the hon. member, this kind of lack of vision for our country and looking at small items rather than looking at the big picture.

But in the budget there is a big picture; that is, a balanced budget by a Conservative government in Canada. And we will maintain a balanced budget.

The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine may not be interested in a balanced budget. She may want to have deficits. She probably wants to go back to the good old days of March madness where the Liberals just loved that they had surpluses and they blew the money every March all over. They did not give it back to taxpayers. No. They spent it on their pet projects all over the country, many without parliamentary approval.

I know the member is chattering on because she is very concerned about her idea. Maybe she wants to put the headquarters of the common securities regulator in Montreal. Maybe she wants to put it somewhere else. But she does not speak to the principle; that is, the national interest of Canada in global capital markets.

If she listens, maybe she will want to consult a former finance minister, the member for Wascana, who said:

I don't believe that the passport system is an adequate response. It still leaves us with a system that is largely fragmented and certainly less sophisticated than that in virtually every other country in the world.

*Business of Supply*

That was the view of the member for Wascana, the former minister of finance in the Liberal government, and obviously a view not shared in respect to where the headquarters should be by the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine.

[Translation]

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party of Canada recognizes that the creation of a national regulator, with the collaboration of all provinces, regions and territories, would be greatly beneficial for the economy of all regions of the country. The Liberal Party also recognizes that the contribution of provincial regulators is flexible and specific to the needs of their regional markets. In addition, the Liberal Party is not opposed to a national process and is therefore opposed to this motion.

Finally, the Liberal Party still wants to study, together with the provinces, a national securities regulation system which will improve coordination and regulation, while responding to the particular needs of all regions.

[English]

While the Liberal Party of Canada believes that securities regulation remains in the jurisdiction of the provinces, we also recognize that the creation of a national regulator through the cooperation of all provinces and territories would be of tremendous value to the economy in all regions of the country.

As the Minister of Finance has just cited, my colleague, the member for Wascana when he was finance minister was certainly in favour of a national, not necessarily a federal, regulator. He believes, as I believe, that while the passport system perhaps represents progress vis-à-vis the status quo, it is not sufficient to accomplish the full objectives which we have for national securities regulation.

This debate is among the oldest debates in this House. In fact, it goes back to the early 1900s when provinces noticed that the federal government was taking little or no action with regard to securities regulation. I think we could almost say it is a non-partisan issue going back as it did to 1905. As a result of this void the provinces began drafting their own securities regulations, and this is how Canada developed its current patchwork of regulations which we have in this country today.

Many of the countries which were engaged in the development of securities regulation around that time opted for a different route. The United States, for instance, saw several states creating their own separate securities laws as inefficient and chose to create the federal U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in 1934.

The goal of each provincial regulator is essentially the same: regulate securities trades; ensure that appropriate levels of information about publicly traded companies is available to investors; conduct prospectus reviews; and protect investors through enforcement activities.

While this was a reasonably effective way to regulate the securities industry in Canada throughout much of the 20th century, times are changing. In the 20th century, global capital has become so fluid that investment decisions can easily be made based on the fact that securities regulation in one country is too onerous vis-à-vis another country.

The majority of provinces, however, have indicated quite clearly that they are not in favour of a national system. The Quebec National Assembly has indicated it is not interested. When the Alberta finance minister mused that it was time for one, he was sternly rebuked by his premier, who reiterated that his province was not interested.

Ontario is the only province that has consistently been in favour of a single regulator. This, however, has put Ontario at odds with the provinces which are now working toward building a kind of passport system through the Canadian Securities Administrators, or CSA.

The CSA is a forum where the country's 13 individual securities regulators meet to ensure that their regulatory efforts are somewhat coordinated. It is through this body that the majority of Canada's provinces are currently working to implement the passport system.

In just seven days the CSA will officially launch the next phase of that plan. As of next Monday, when a review of a prospectus is approved in one province, it will now automatically be cleared in the provinces and territories that have signed on to the passport model.

The CSA has also announced that the next phase in implementing the passport system will be the creation of a passport that recognizes the registration of securities. Some organizations have lent some tepid support to the passport system, indicating that while not great for Canada, it would be better than the current system. Others, like the Canadian Bankers Association, have indicated that while the sentiment is there, the passport system could actually turn out to be even worse for Canada.

Meanwhile at the federal level, we have had nothing but bungling from Canada's finance minister. The good news is that if markets value consistency, and I guarantee that they do, they can always count on Canada's finance minister to bungle some important file.

The list is so long I would run out of time to try to encapsulate all of these areas, but I would start with income trusts, which is the obvious case of a broken promise that caused some \$25 billion to go up in smoke in a single day and which in fact has caused additional tax leakage rather than resolved the problem of tax leakage.

● (1105)

I would also mention interest deductibility, from which thankfully the minister backed down under pressure from Liberals and the business community, but would have been an absolute disaster for the competitiveness of Canadian companies operating abroad.

I could mention as well the GST. The government invested \$12 billion a year in a GST tax cut, thereby forgoing huge opportunity for meaningful cuts in income tax or meaningful support for post-secondary education, as was reflected in the private member's bill from the Liberal side the other day. The minister's overall record of economic management is a sad story.

*Business of Supply*

I should mention a few words about that also in the context of the private member's bill. As my colleague from Lachine, I believe, pointed out, when we were in government and the member for Wascana was the finance minister, and before him when the member for LaSalle—Émard was the finance minister, we always had at least a \$3 billion contingency reserve that would respond to unforeseen shocks, whether these shocks came from SARS, 9/11, a U.S. recession, an Asian crisis, or an ice storm. The world is an unpredictable place, but parts of the world are predictable, and one of the predictable parts of the world is private members' bills that are in the pipeline.

The private member's bill was in the pipeline two years ago. It was actually introduced two days after the Minister of Finance raised income tax in his budget. It seeks to provide meaningful support to Canadian parents and grandparents and students who wish to undertake the very expensive but very necessary activity of post-secondary education. This, unlike the minister's pathetic savings plan in comparison, would have provided meaningful support for this activity.

Had the minister behaved in a fiscally prudent and responsible manner, he would have been aware that this was coming down the pipeline. Rather than spend in a drunken fashion in his first three years in office when the economy was prosperous, he would have forgone a little bit of that spending during good times so as to have an adequate reserve at this time, when times are difficult, in order to absorb items like the private member's bill on RESPs.

What has he done? He has instead taken us so close to the edge where the projected surplus next year is \$2.3 billion, and the year after it is \$1.3 billion, far lower than any responsible government would take the country, thereby leaving us open to a return to deficits, whatever the nature of the shock may be, whether it is a private member's bill or some other item to hit the economy.

As I have said, the Liberal Party will oppose this motion. We are in favour, not of a federal single regulator, but of a system of national regulation, as has been reflected in the views of our governments in past years.

• (1110)

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I find the remarks that just came from the other side of the House almost astounding. The Liberals are talking about the lack of a fiscal base for the future budgets of this country when both the Liberals and the Conservatives backed the huge corporate tax breaks that were handed out in the October statement. The Liberals backed the Conservative budget recently. I find that quite amazing.

The reality is that takes \$14 billion a year out of the fiscal moneys available. Let us talk about the educational fund that was put forward by the party opposite. The moneys that were given away in corporate tax breaks could have funded the \$1 billion for that education fund.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, while I thank my colleague for his question, I would point out that the basic reality is that the NDP does not understand the first thing about economics, so it is hardly surprising that those members opposed the corporate tax reduction. We said, long before the government introduced this measure, that this would be the cornerstone for a prosperous and competitive Canadian economy going into the 21st century.

I would remind the member that social democratic countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Norway, countries that the NDP tends to admire, have very low corporate tax rates. That is because Sweden does not have a neanderthal left wing party any more. It has a rejuvenated social democratic party that understands the realities of globalization and in fact has a very low corporate tax rate. If we want to have the highest corporate tax rate, we can go to George W. Bush's Washington, with its very high corporate tax rate. I am not sure if that is the party the NDP would choose to associate itself with.

As our leader has said on a number of occasions, the question of a low corporate tax rate is not a left wing versus right wing issue. It is an issue of sensible policy, so as to bring investment, jobs and competitiveness to our country rather than to someone else's country. I think that is a lesson the NDP members should learn, perhaps on a mission to Scandinavia to talk to their own social democratic colleagues in that region of the world.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks of my Liberal colleague and those of the minister just before that and, in both cases, we can still see the same sad centralizing federalist paternalism towards Quebeckers. In the case of the minister, it is a kind of paternalism that borders on contempt, dictating to Quebeckers what is good for them.

Everybody in Quebec is against the minister's initiative. The 125 members of the National Assembly are unanimously opposed to this initiative, as well as every editorial writer, every economic analyst and even every member of Quebec's economic class.

We are being told that all these people are wrong since Ottawa knows best, Ottawa knows what is good for Quebeckers. I should mention that this centralizing attitude from the Liberals is no surprise to us since we had 13 years to grow accustomed to this kind of centralizing vision of Canada where Quebec had increasingly less flexibility and where its place became increasingly smaller.

In the last election campaign, the Conservatives had promised to respect Quebec's jurisdictions and to respect the Quebec nation, which was recognized in this House as a result of a Bloc Québécois initiative. But when it is time to defend the economic interests of Bay Street, those promises are quickly thrown out the window. It is quite interesting to see how, in two years, the Conservative government has developed the same tendencies as the Liberals.

Is my Liberal colleague honoured and flattered that after only two years the Conservative Party has developed the same centralizing tendencies as his party?

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, in no way could the approach I described be called centralizing or domineering. That is not the case at all. What the member does not realize, or what he chooses not to realize, is that our approach is not about federal regulation. If that were true, perhaps he would have a point. But that is not what the Liberal Party is looking for.

We are looking for a national regulation approach in which the provinces would work with the federal government and would have most of the votes. This approach has nothing to do with centralization; it has to do with collaboration between the provinces and the federal government.

I think that, based on experiences in other countries, and the problems posed by our current regulatory system, it is clear that a national approach would be better not only for Ontarians, but also for Quebecers and all Canadians.

[*English*]

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is important for the Canadian economy, investors and businesses to have efficient and competitive capital markets, including securities exchanges. The TSX-MX merger highlighted the importance of that. These are private decisions in the best interests of shareholders, but they have recognized larger issues as well. Globally, exchanges are increasing their size to lower trading costs through mergers.

It has been described as an historic moment. Even Quebec's finance minister, Monique Jérôme-Forget, recognized its importance when she said on December 11 in the *Globe and Mail*, "Politically it's good for Montreal, and if it's good for Montreal it's good for Quebec".

Would the member for Markham—Unionville agree with the Quebec finance minister on that?

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, if on the subject of the merger between the two stock exchanges her view is that it was positive, I have lived in Montreal most of my life and I would certainly think that something that is good for Montreal is a good thing.

As for whether everything that is good for Montreal is necessarily good for all of Quebec, I guess one has to go on a case by case basis, but I would agree with the finance minister of Quebec on this matter.

• (1120)

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I feel I have to respond to the member for Markham—Unionville, who was talking about the NDP and budgets. With Lorne Calvert, we had four terms in office with balanced budgets. With Gary Doer in Manitoba, we have had balanced budgets throughout.

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

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I am a little distracted by the cross-conversation here, but when Tommy Douglas originally took over the government in his province, he had 16 years of balancing the books to sort out the mess that was left behind by the previous government before he introduced medicare. There is a long history of balanced budgets from the NDP, contrary to what the member has said.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP is always confused on this issue, because I always preface my comments about the NDP not understanding economics by talking about the federal NDP. I have a lot of respect for some provincial NDP governments. Many of them could have been Liberal. In my youth, I even worked for Mr. Schreyer when he was premier of Manitoba. He could have been a Liberal. From me, that is a compliment.

When I talk about the NDP members not understanding economics and not living in a neanderthal world where, unlike their Swedish counterparts, they think the best thing for Canada is a high corporate tax rate, I am referring to the federal NDP.

I might also mention with regard to the member for Outremont that I wonder what his position is on national securities. Will he take the position of his former boss, the Premier of Quebec, who opposes a national securities regulator, or will he succumb to the pressures of his new leader, who seems to be in favour?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the best way to get an answer is to ask questions. At least the person who just spoke, and who boasts about being from Quebec but speaks only in English when he rises, will have his answer right away.

The New Democratic Party opposes the creation of this body and supports the Bloc Québécois motion for reasons that I will explain in the language of Shakespeare, for the benefit of my colleague. I am going to read him a brief excerpt from the *Financial Post* last October:

[*English*]

The Council of Ministers of Securities Regulation (representing all provinces and territories, except Ontario)—

I think our finance minister has a little trouble understanding that he is no longer an Ontario minister. He is too busy with his choo-choos. The quote continues:

—wants the public to know the facts regarding Canada's securities regulatory system.

Canada's securities regulatory system has recently been the subject of intense negative rhetoric—

Like that which we have just heard from the Liberals.

The quote continues:

—from those who advocate creating a single securities regulator. Led by [the] federal Finance Minister...critics contend that our current system, with regulatory authority falling to the 13 provinces and territories, is cumbersome, ineffective and costly. After the acquittal of the former vice-chairman of Bre-X, [the minister] criticized Canada's securities regulators and described securities enforcement as "an embarrassment internationally to Canada". He has also suggested that a single regulator is necessary in order to pursue free trade in securities with the United States and other G7 countries. Unfortunately, most of this criticism is based on myths, not facts.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the case.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

Yes indeed, there has to be cooperation and the work has to be done in unison by the provinces, in the same way that the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants is always refining what are considered to be generally accepted accounting principles. There are no problems in that regard. But this is not something that can be imposed from the top down. Everyone has to work together toward that ultimate goal.

What we have before us is an absolutely classic example of federalism as it was practised in the era of the Liberal Party of Canada. So imagine our surprise to see that the Minister of Finance is winning the battle with his Prime Minister, the very Prime Minister who prides himself on being someone who has understood that Quebec, in particular, is a nation within Canada. He is telling us to forget that. His answers are getting increasingly strident and increasingly caustic. He says that the federal government alone should be the one on top when it comes to these things.

I might suggest that we should look at the facts when it comes to the supreme power and jurisdiction of the federal government to regulate white-collar crime. It is indeed true that in Canada, economic crime is given a fair bit of latitude, compared to what happens south of the border.

If we want to see how it works when the rules are properly enforced, we need only look at what happened with the case in which judgment was recently given concerning the Norbourg company and Vincent Lacroix. Vincent Lacroix was sentenced to 12 years in prison by the Quebec courts under the provincial regulations. How many prosecutions came out of the sponsorship scandal and the superb work done by the RCMP? Zero, not one, *nada*. That is the real result of what goes on here in Ottawa.

We saw it again with the ethics committee, regarding the Mulroney-Schreiber affair. We learned that while the Liberals were paying out \$2.1 million of taxpayers' money to Brian Mulroney to settle his action, the investigators had not even interviewed Mr. Schreiber. When that was disclosed for the first time in committee, the RCMP sent a spokesperson to say, "That is not true, we interviewed him." Yes, but they interviewed him after the settlement. That is very clearly the question that was asked.

Open up professor Johnston's report on the Mulroney-Schreiber affair, and what does it say? Contrary to what we were told, the RCMP did interview him. Then there are the marginal notes, which list all of the dates, and once again, it looks like that happened after the settlement. How can it be that Mr. Pellossi, for example, was never interviewed? Why is it that most of the time, the federal government's so-called excellent work on economic crime fails to show results?

If Conrad Black had been tried and had been the subject of an investigation here in Canada, he would be sitting in a nice restaurant in Toronto, smoking a cigar, instead of sitting in the big house. That is the reality of what we have seen up to now.

The provinces definitely do not need a lecture from their big brother, the federal government. What a speech we heard from the Liberals earlier. What an incredibly haughty attitude toward the provinces. Sometimes in this House, the masks come off and we can

see people for who they really are. This afternoon, when we vote on this issue and the Liberal members stand up one after the other to vote with the Conservatives, they will prove that the Gerard Kennedys of this world, those who deny that Quebec is a nation within Canada, hold sway in their caucus. They are trying to justify how Justin Trudeau can still be an official Liberal Party candidate even though he too argues against recognizing Quebec as a nation. This is not complicated: they do not believe it.

They refuse to look at the evidence. They do not care about the facts. Their only goal in life is to prove that Ottawa knows best, even in matters of shared jurisdiction, like the regulation of financial markets and securities.

• (1125)

The Bloc Québécois motion, the opposition motion, states:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately abandon the idea of creating a common securities regulator, since securities regulations fall under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and because this initiative is unanimously condemned in Quebec.

The last phrase—unanimously condemned in Quebec—is absolutely true; but that is not all. Who is Greg Selinger, the author of the quote I read earlier from the *National Post*? He is the chair of the Council of Ministers of Securities Regulation and also the minister of finance for Manitoba, your province, Mr. Speaker. He and the Bloc Québécois are saying exactly the same thing, that there is nothing to prevent us from working together.

I would like to congratulate another colleague from Winnipeg, also a man of vision. He studied this matter knowing that white-collar crime is an everyday concern of Canadians. People see what goes on and wonder why we cannot implement standards and why we are not more successful.

We will not solve anything by having Ottawa pass a single set of regulations that will be made in Toronto. This is another bad sign for Montreal, which has already suffered enough—thank you very much—from the flight of capital, organization and service structures to Toronto. It is wrong to let people think that, henceforth, Ottawa will be in charge. It is as though we were unable to agree on the objectives, which are to have a passport system. Mr. Selinger spoke about this in the article I referred to. For those of you who are interested, you can find the article online in the October 26, 2007 edition of the *National Post*.

There is nothing preventing us from reaching an agreement on the guidelines. They should stop believing that, by pushing for centralization, as the Liberals always did and, to my surprise and disappointment, as the Conservatives are doing today, we will obtain better results. That is the issue. They feel they have to get results. Let us stop messing around about the methods, claiming that, by centralizing and dictating from the top down, the federal government will achieve better results. We have proof that the provinces that put in the necessary resources can obtain results without compromising the initial agreement.

*Business of Supply*

There is a paradox, here, that I want to explore a little. People on that side of the aisle want Quebec to leave Canada. That is not what we want. We believe—and the NDP's Sherbrooke declaration proves—that we can adapt on a case by case basis and by resorting when appropriate to asymmetrical federalism, which takes these different approaches into account. When it comes to the environment, some provinces and especially certain territories have very limited resources in an area of shared jurisdiction. The environment is actually a bit like securities: it is shared between the federal government and the provinces. Some provinces simply want to leave all the investigations up to the federal government because they lack the resources. That suits them, and they sign agreements to that effect. Good for them, it is fine with us. Just as we do not want to be told how to do things, we do not want to tell the other provinces what would be best, what the best practices are and how best to achieve results.

Whether in regard to the environment, the regulation of corporations, or the regulation of securities, we should go out and find the best practices. We should see what our neighbour is doing best. We should reach agreements and set up a passport system that allows for the free flow of services. That is much to be desired in today's world. In the area of professions, for example, we want people's credentials recognized when they come from another country or another jurisdiction. All the better if people who provide services can circulate freely. We do not have a problem with that. The free flow of services is at least as important in a country as the free flow of goods. Bring it on.

There are some conditions though. In Quebec, for example, there has always been a language requirement for professions going back to the 1960s, long before bills 101 and 22, and that could be the case here. We would also want to ensure that services are provided in accordance with ground rules with which everyone is familiar. It is interesting that the federal government has never tried to impose the generally accepted accounting principles on the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

• (1130)

It is the profession that has always done it. Why is it that they can accept decentralized deregulation when it comes to professions? It is because the results are there. When it comes to the provinces, though, they want to go back 30 years. They want to start playing the big brother who tells the others that there are incompetent so he will take over. Incredible. Where does that come from?

A little while ago, I heard a long-serving Liberal member impart the same old lesson we have been hearing for years. The Liberals are incapable of change, incapable of realizing that it was this kind of behaviour that gave rise to the Bloc Québécois in reaction to intransigent federalism. I was astonished. If we are incapable of realizing that the Canada of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be different if it is going to continue to progress and evolve in the interests of its citizens—because that is what this is all about—we really will have a problem.

We are adding our voices to those of our Bloc Québécois colleagues on this specific issue because they are right. Paradoxically, they are the ones who are asking that the fundamental

agreement, the Confederation agreement as it is set out, be respected. It is quite a paradox.

When it suits them, the Conservatives proclaim that the Québécois constitute a nation within Canada. As for the Liberals, they never believed that but they voted in favour of it, on the eve of their convention to select a new leader who, I can guarantee, never believed it. The vision of Gerard Kennedy, of Bob Rae and of the Leader of the Opposition is winning the day. We have an example of that today.

We in the New Democratic Party have studied this question for a long time. One of my colleagues has worked very hard on it. In all of her analysis, she has always assigned a very important place to understanding the need for a system of self-regulation that gives absolute priority to the public interest.

Some people listening to us outside Quebec are perhaps not familiar with the Norbourg affair. This case is still before the courts but I want to talk about some decisions that have already been rendered in the lower court. It is rather fascinating.

We stand up, one after another, members of all the parties—the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the NDP and the Bloc—to talk about the people's interests. In the Norbourg affair, even though I just said with great satisfaction that the person involved was sentenced to 12 years in prison, the investors have still not been compensated. No one has yet found out where or how the money was hidden. As a result, small investors have lost their life savings. Whether it was \$20,000, \$10,000 or \$50,000, they entrusted their money to people in whom they had confidence. The expression “to con” is based on “confidence.” These people were cheated and they lost their savings. The system is now applying the punishment but we must have structured regulations in place to ensure prevention, and not only the cure. That is the desired goal; that is the result.

They cannot make us believe, either in the NDP or the Bloc, that adding more weight to the system with a new federal structure will make it easier to obtain those results. That is false. We do not believe it. It is only the Liberals and Conservatives who believe in those fairy tales. For our part, we believe instead in a way of working together to obtain a result that will be accepted from one place to another. For that, there is no problem.

I was the Quebec minister of the environment for three years. That is an area of shared jurisdiction and issues can be settled effectively if we work with the provinces. We had a structure similar to what Mr. Selinger described in his article. We met together. However, from time to time, someone like the current Leader of the Opposition having delusions of importance came to play the role of the federal big brother. He came to stick his nose in and to tell us how to do things. He wanted to impose a reference framework designed in Ottawa. I worked strenuously against that approach when I was the Quebec minister of the environment.

• (1135)

Now, that I am a member of Parliament and a proud Quebec member of the NDP in this House, I shall expend that same energy to battle those same tendencies, which are cropping up again among the Conservatives over the way.



*Business of Supply*

We do have a problem at the moment with the government and in particular its Minister of Finance, who appears to be sorry not to still be in provincial politics. He is constantly squabbling with the government of the province he represents here in the federal parliament in Ottawa. Not a week goes by without press coverage of that rivalry and wrangling. He is gives even giving lectures on provincial fiscal policy. My point is clear.

The federal Minister of Finance, not content merely with the great centralizing role we already know he plays, is now going so far as to start dictating in full detail the taxation policy the province ought to be using. If I may offer the federal finance minister a piece of friendly advice: let him live out his dream by going back to provincial politics. He is better suited to it and he will enjoy wrangling with the provincial people. The problem is that, at the moment, he is here at the federal level. The views he is trying to impose on everyone here are very small, narrow and limited.

In closing, let me state that the NDP will continue to push for a vision that will ensure protection for Canadians and respect for professionals. That is the result we want. The professional system in Quebec is unique in North America. It involves not just discipline, the curative aspect, but also prevention and inspection.

Any practice, be it lawyers, architects or one of the other forty or so professions that are regulated at the present time, is inspected by an inspection committee mandated by that professional corporation. This is a system that produces excellent results. Rather than wait for the train to go off the tracks, there is a bit of preventive maintenance to stop that derailment from happening.

The other provinces might find something worth learning in this approach that is specific to Quebec. By exchanging views on best practices we will succeed in creating a system that will produce the result everyone wants, so that people with savings, investors and those who have gone without in order to put a little aside to invest for their old age can see those savings protected. Is that not the point of the exercise? The aim is not to impose strong arm tactics preferred by the feds.

For all these reasons, and expecting some questions on this, I wish to state that the New Democratic Party will always work to protect the consumer, but it will do so not by centralizing or imposing, but rather by working collaboratively to ensure that this result is achieved.

• (1140)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for Outremont for his presentation. He made it quite clear that our present system is working, operational and consistent with constitutional rights and that it has been very productive. Western Canada, for example, established the capital pool companies program. Quebec has a stock saving plan for the Fonds des travailleurs du Québec. We must note the considerable contribution Quebec's initiative made to the creation of the International Organization of Securities Commissions, where Quebec can speak on the international stage, as it should since Quebec has been recognized as a nation.

I found my colleague's reference to the paternalism of the current Minister of Finance interesting as well. I would expand on my

colleague's remarks by saying that the Minister of Finance, who feels he can teach Ontario a few lessons, had a lesson to pass on to Quebec this morning. He said that the Quebec finance minister and the National Assembly could not be right, as it was he who was right. All of Quebec thinks differently, but it is he who is right regarding Quebec, just as he said he was right about Ontario. We have the impression this is Pierre Elliott Trudeau's finance minister. That is nothing to be happy about.

The Bloc Québécois and the NDP do not see the future of Quebec and Canada in the same way, but I would like to know if we could not lead a supplementary offensive. My question to my colleague is on this point. Should members from Quebec, be they Conservatives or Liberals, not adopt an attitude similar to our own this morning, namely noting that the system is working well and that the government's approach bears no resemblance to the spirit underlying the original development of Canada? It goes far beyond. The current Conservative government takes the same centralizing approach as the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Should the Conservative and Liberal MPs from Quebec not be encouraged to support our motion today? Would that not be logical? In conclusion, MPs from the other provinces should be encouraged to note the position stated in Manitoba, as the newspaper article reported.

• (1145)

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comment. He is absolutely right. When the Minister of Finance gives lessons in morality, he is basically trashing the extraordinarily competent Monique Jérôme-Forget, my friend and former colleague who is a brilliant finance minister. Unfortunately, this is a stark contrast to what we have here in this House.

My colleague is right. Some members from Quebec will be reminded that one cannot speak from both sides of one's mouth. One cannot pretend to understand that Quebec is a nation, and that applies to both the Liberals and the Conservatives, and then not act accordingly. In English we say:

[English]

“You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?”

[Translation]

Personally, I prefer the Quebec version: “Il faut que les bottines suivent les babines.” I suspect some people will be reminded of that. We will certainly do our best to remind them.

In fact, it is an irony of this exercise. Some Bloc members, tired of seeing this type of behaviour over the last 40 years, have chosen another option. They said, “Hasta la vista, it is over, I am leaving, this cannot go on any longer.”

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I am one of those who continue to fight with all their energy so that Canada remains united. I think we have a lot to gain from a Canada that understands Quebec and from a Quebec that has its place within Canada. However, it has to be more than pure rhetoric. It has to be real. I am eager to see what will come of that.

The next time the Prime Minister sets foot in Quebec, he will have to explain not his own remarks, but those of the man who describes himself as an elf—that is his word, not mine—and those remarks have really got the PM in a lot of trouble.

The same thing goes for the Liberals, except that in their case, it is self-destruction. But this is no surprise. The Liberal Party of Canada has never believed that there is a place for Quebec or the rest of the provinces. It believes that everything has to be handed down from the big brother to the little ones.

The next time the Prime Minister comes to Montreal, we will be ready for him.

[English]

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the finance minister indicate the need for a common securities regulator because it would provide simplicity, effectiveness and be world-class, and it would provide us with a clear, competitive advantage in global markets, improve enforcement and help detect market fraud.

Am I to understand, from hearing the hon. member for Outremont, that the NDP is opposed to a common securities regulator? This would be quite a change from its previous position only a few months ago when the former NDP finance critic, the member for Winnipeg North, supported it and even suggested that she would introduce legislation to that effect. I would suggest that the member publicly admitted that she was convinced of the need for a national securities regulator, rather than a piecemeal provincial approach, when she stated in the *Toronto Star* of May 2007:

Canada does not seem to have the tool box necessary to deal with corporate fraud.

I would ask the member for Outremont whether the NDP is backtracking and, if it is backtracking, why. Was the NDP's former finance critic wrong when she said that there was a need for a common securities regulator to achieve some common goals and to have a central point of contact for a number of reasons: to give us an advantage in a global market and, in particular, for enforcement purposes and preventing fraud that would take place on a commercial basis?

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of my colleague, I will respond in English. I would refer him to an article that appeared in the *Financial Post* of October 26, 2007, which stated:

Recent evaluations by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank Group have consistently ranked Canada's system as one of the best in the world—ahead of those in the United States and the United Kingdom.

That is the one that exists now.

My colleague has always been very clear, as am I today, that what we want is a result. We will continue to ensure that the best practices in the provinces and the passport system that is in place produces the best results.

Does that mean that the federal government cannot play a role? Of course not. That would be like saying that because environment is a shared field there should not be a federal environment minister, although with the one who is there now it probably would not make a difference. However, the provinces have an important role to play in the environment, as does the federal government.

The provinces have the key role to play in securities regulation, which does not stop them from working together and which would not stop the federal government to the extent that it might have a pan-Canadian vision, especially on the investigation and enforcement side, to lend a hand. There is no problem with that.

There is absolutely no contradiction between our position as announced today and what my colleague has constantly worked for, which is a better result for Canadians than protection from white collar crime and fraud.

• (1150)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to take part in this debate. Once again, because of the Bloc Québécois presence in this House, I feel that we can represent the views of Quebec as a nation.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time we have debated this issue. It seems that finance ministers—whether we are talking about the ministers in the former Liberal government or the minister in the current Conservative government—all have the same obsession. They all defend interests that may be those of Canada, because to them, a financial centre controlled exclusively by Toronto may seem worthwhile.

I would remind this House, as I did last Friday, that we are also dealing with a Conservative federal government whose economic development strategy is based exclusively on the development of gas, oil and the oil sands. The actions of this government show quite clearly that all other sectors, especially manufacturing and forestry, are left to their own devices. According to the Conservatives' vision, these sectors are not driving Canada's economic development. According to this logic, Canada would have, on the one hand, an economy where oil would be driving economic development and, on the other hand, a financial centre exclusively in Toronto.

I forgot to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges.

That is the vision that is shared by many people in Canada's business community. But this vision is not shared by Quebec's business community. As I also said, it is not shared by everyone in Ontario's business community. In Ontario, it is very clear that a major manufacturing sector—the automotive industry—needs a different concept of economic development than the current government's concept.

This is the context in which we are debating the Bloc motion, which I would like to reread.

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately abandon the idea of creating a common securities regulator, since securities regulations fall under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and because this initiative is unanimously condemned in Quebec.

In my view, this motion should be naturally supported by those who want the spirit of the 1867 Confederation to prevail. Section 92 (13) of the Constitution Act, 1867 clearly states that the exclusive powers of the provinces include property and civil rights, therefore they include securities. If one wants to abide by the Constitution of Canada, this initiative should not be considered. The Minister of Finance should withdraw it. The government should stop supporting such a whim. Anyway, it will be challenged in court. It will likely go all the way to the Supreme Court. There will be again useless quibbling which will be detrimental to efficiency, since much resources will be spent on this new constitutional wrangle.

The paradox is even greater when we see this government, notwithstanding the interests of the Canadian nation, bring back this bill in spite of the fact that the House of Commons recognized the Quebec nation a little more than a year ago. Even though this is just rhetoric, the Conservative government likes to talk about open federalism. But the contradiction is quite obvious. About the substance of the issue, this proposal reveals a vision of the Canadian economy focused on oil, with a single, very strong financial centre in Toronto. However, this is not in the interest of Canada as a whole, and certainly not in the interest of Quebec.

Let me also remind members that the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously adopted a motion against the creation of a common securities regulator. In Quebec, sovereigntists and federalists alike unanimously say that this bill goes against the interests of Quebec and of the Quebec nation.

• (1155)

For the benefit of those who are listening to us, I would like to point out that this motion was passed on October 16, 2007. It is very simple. It reads as follows:

THAT the National Assembly ask the federal government to abandon its Canada-wide securities commission project.

Indeed, that is not only against the Constitution of 1867, but also against the best interests of the Quebec society, nation and economy.

We have to make it very clear that there are no obvious benefits flowing from the establishment of a Canada-wide securities commission, or even of something similar to that. We want to be very clear in that respect: the Minister of Finance is not fooling anyone with his ploy. He tells us that he will respect the Constitution, since he will not force the provinces to adhere to this commission. It will be a Canada-wide organization, not a federal one. However, it is very clear that this single regulator—which is the minister's objective—will eventually put pressure on reluctant provinces.

If Toronto, Ontario and the federal government move forward with this project, along with a few provinces, they will ultimately try to create conditions such that Quebec and reluctant provinces will have to join this single securities regulator. The Toronto and Bay Street financial community has never made it a secret that the objective behind this is to ensure that Toronto becomes the only place of business.

### *Business of Supply*

I think it is important to point this out, because Quebec needs Montreal to be a major place of business. I will provide one example to illustrate the usefulness and importance of having an organization in Quebec, namely the Autorité des marchés financiers, under the responsibility of Quebec's public authorities.

This example relates to the merging of the Toronto and Montreal stock exchanges. Let us suppose that this merging does take place—and it appears that it is indeed going to be the case—and that there are no longer two securities commissions but, rather, only one in Toronto. What guarantees would Montrealers and Quebecers have that the market rules set by the Autorité des marchés financiers du Québec would continue to exist?

Let me mention one very important such rule. We are told that the new entity created by this merging, which will be called TMX Group, will be subjected to the rule preventing a shareholder from detaining more than 10% of shares. That limit restricts ownership and it cannot currently be changed without the approval of the Autorité des marchés financiers and of the Ontario Securities Commission.

Imagine that the Autorité des marchés financiers no longer existed in Quebec. What guarantees would Quebecers and Montrealers have that this rule would not be changed in a few years to allow centralization and a concentration of power in the hands of a group based essentially in Toronto?

It is very important therefore, even in view of the planned merger of the Montreal and Toronto stock exchanges, for Quebec to keep its Autorité des marchés financiers. The federal government's and *Bay Street's* insistence on a common securities regulator in Canada is counter-productive in view of this concentration and the strengthened stock market as a result of the merger, with Montreal remaining responsible for derivatives.

If there is no Autorité des marchés financiers to ensure that the ground rules are observed when the merger goes through, it is very clear and virtually inevitable that another strategy will be found to ensure that there is only one stock exchange in Toronto and the derivatives market is located there. This is totally contrary to the interests of Quebec, its economy and the Quebec nation.

The finance minister is trying to fool everyone. When the Bloc Québécois asks him and this government for fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets so that a carbon exchange can be established, it is in order to create the regulations that will allow a viable carbon exchange to be established. And why in Montreal? Because Montreal has the expertise in derivatives and therefore Montreal should get it.

• (1200)

This is not a political decision but a business decision and one that would be in keeping with the gist of the merger discussions that have been occurring between the Montreal Exchange and the Toronto Stock Exchange.

We are not asking the federal government to interfere. What we want from it is a regulatory framework conducive to a vital exchange of this kind.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my two Bloc colleagues in the front row for their speeches. I thought they were very long on substance but still kept closely to the subject. That is not always the case on the other side of the House, in any event from what I have heard.

It seems to me that we always hear the same thing from the Bloc Québécois. Everything has to be regulated at the provincial level, even when we are talking about capital and investment.

Does the Bloc agree that demanding that everything be regulated at the provincial level, including, for example, telecommunications, copyright and pharmaceutical patents, is an ideological thing? At what point do we have to try to work with others, including within Canada, to organize our efforts a little and improve effectiveness in our various areas of activity?

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

What we want in this debate is simply respect for the powers set out in the Canadian Constitution. It really is somewhat paradoxical, and unfortunately this happens frequently, that it is the Quebec sovereignists in this House who are calling for the pact that was made at the time of Confederation in 1867 to be honoured.

Second, the argument made by people promoting a Canada-wide securities commission, regardless of what form it takes, is effectiveness. No argument could be less sound. When it comes to effectiveness, the fact that there is a centralized commission in the United States did not prevent the Enron or WorldCom scandals, for example. So from that point of view, the argument does not hold.

As well, we can see the studies that have been done, for example by the OECD. Very recently, the International Monetary Fund said that savers and investors in Canada were very well protected. A 2006 study by the World Bank and Lex Mundi also placed Canada third when it comes to protecting savers. There is therefore no evidence that a centralized body would be more effective than what we currently have with the passports, and I would point out that a passport system is now being implemented. Unfortunately, Toronto is not joining the project, which would genuinely provide for effectiveness.

I will close simply by saying that in terms of the cost of funding it, there is nothing to show that the new system would be less costly for investors than the existing system. Essentially, it is a political project being put forward by the Conservative Party, and unfortunately the Liberal Party seems to be in agreement.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his speech and I would like to ask him a question.

The motion says “the government should immediately abandon the idea of creating a common securities regulator, since securities regulations fall under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and because this initiative is unanimously condemned in Quebec”. There has also been a motion against it passed by the National Assembly of Quebec and a position taken by Quebec's Minister of Finance.

What message should we send to the Liberal members, and especially the Conservative members? They say they contributed to the recognition of the Quebec nation, and yet they are preparing to vote against the unanimous will of Quebec. Is there nothing that can be said to persuade them this evening, when we vote on this motion by the Bloc Québécois, to adopt the consensus in Quebec?

● (1205)

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member, the Bloc Québécois finance critic. He does an excellent job, in fact, and I would like to point that out in this House.

He is entirely correct, and I mentioned that in my speech. There is something paradoxical about all this. In Quebec City, during the election campaign in December 2005, the Prime Minister talked to us about open federalism, and early in his term there may have been a few things done that were more symbolic than real. It is now over two years since the Conservatives came to power and we have seen the veneer peeling off in layers. I think that many of the layers of veneer that have peeled off are a result of this project, which the Minister of Finance has had since the beginning, and has reiterated in all his budgets and in all his economic statements, regardless of what approach his government seemed to be taking. Because we heard more of this discourse of open federalism at the beginning and we are hearing less now, there is a concern that the Conservatives, perhaps with the support, unfortunately, of the Liberals, are going the minister's way. That would be contrary not only to the interests of Quebec, but also to what the Prime Minister said during the campaign.

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for agreeing to debate securities. I am pleased to rise to speak to regulation. This matter, raised in the House by the Bloc Québécois, gives us an opportunity to shed new light on the myths perpetuated by the federal government in an effort to discredit the operation of the existing securities system.

The subject has been much written about these days, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the financial sector is a major employer. According to Quebec's Institut de la statistique, nearly 150,000 people are employed in the financial sector in Quebec together with a multitude of self-employed individuals in related areas. It is a large sector providing quality employment, a flourishing industry now accounting for 6.2% of Quebec's gross domestic product.

Then there is the Montreal Exchange. It has enjoyed exceptional growth, and its impact is felt beyond the borders of Canada. It currently has an agreement to carry out all derivatives trading ending in March 2009. Does this centralizing obsession veil intentions by the Toronto Stock Exchange to interfere with Montreal's place as a stock exchange and its expertise in the derivatives sector? I would hope not and would hope that Montreal will be allowed to develop the enormous potential of the derivatives market in Montreal.

That said, let us look at how things have developed.

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There have been a number of proposals in recent years to restructure the Canadian securities regulatory system. The first, advocated by Ontario and the federal Minister of Finance, involves establishing a single regulatory body. The second is the passport system, that is, a harmonization of the provincial regulatory bodies in order to create an effective Canada-wide system. It involves building on what already works.

The provinces have already done a huge job improving securities regulation in Canada and its efficiency. Information technology has, for example, been improved. Canada wide systems and practices have been put in place. This means the elimination of many jobs previously done locally by the individual securities commissions.

Today, we have the system for electronic document analysis and retrieval, SEDAR; the system for electronic disclosures, SEDI; the national registration system, NRS; the national registration system database, NRSDB; and the mutual reliance review system, MRRS. In addition, 25 national guidelines and 24 national policies have been issued with respect to key matters, such as prospectus requirements, regulation of mutual funds, issue of royalties, regulation of take-over bids, prospectus and registration exemptions, ongoing information requirements, and so on.

Clearly, improvements have been made toward improving the operation of the entire securities system.

Of course, we can do better, and all the provinces have decided to implement a passport system. Ontario, which originally instigated the system, has decided to go off on its own, which is unfortunate. The federal government should encourage it to join the other provinces and territories in implementing the second stage, which is expected to take place by the end of 2008.

A Canada-wide passport system provides every person, issuer or registered broker, with a one-stop option for accessing Canadian markets. This change is not insignificant. It required a lot of effort by individuals and various governments, and the federal government has to recognize that. The passport system allows access to financial markets across Canada by dealing only with the securities authority that has jurisdiction. Any broker or representative that wants to do business across Canada simply has to register with the authority that has primary jurisdiction.

The passport system is based on what works well. It would help eliminate overlapping administrative tasks and be as efficient as a central agency.

• (1210)

In order to show good will, the federal government should encourage Ontario to join the passport system, stop going its own way and follow suit so as not to compromise the implementation of the second phase of the system. The Minister of Finance of Canada should use his influence to encourage Ontario to listen to sage advice.

But the Conservative government insists on promoting its single securities commission. Some people here in this House, the Minister of Foreign Affairs among others, suggested that the government ask the Supreme Court to rule on the federal government's constitutional jurisdictions with respect to securities. It would be wise for the

federal government to consult the provinces on this and not to embark on an operation that could leave a bitter taste.

We can look at the results and the criticisms of the current system. I can simply cite the Premier of Alberta. He made the following statement in a speech to the Empire Club of Canada in Toronto:

[*English*]

—I want to make my position...very clear. The passport system is a model provinces can quickly implement to create a national system—so let's accept the passport and move on to other matters.

[*Translation*]

On this, the Alberta position is fairly clear, as is Quebec's moreover, according to the statements by minister Jérôme-Forget. The present system compares favourably with that of other territorial jurisdictions. In 2006, a study by the World Bank and Lex Mundi ranked Canada third in the world out of 155 countries as far as investor protection was concerned, while the U.S. ranked seventh and the U.K. ninth. The 2006 OECD report placed Canada second out of 29 countries for the quality of its securities regulations, ahead of the U.S. in fourth position, the U.K. in fifth and Australia in seventh.

It is surprising, in the light of such results, that the federal government continues to denigrate the Canadian regulatory system, both here and elsewhere.

My colleagues have also spoken of the federal government's myths about the competitive nature of the Canadian market. The principal arguments are, first, that our regulatory system is more unwieldy and more costly, which is totally wrong. Second, that our regulatory system supposedly involves additional financing costs to business. Third, that the single commission would cut transaction costs on the secondary market.

As far as the first myth about the supposed higher cost of our regulatory system, I cannot understand that the government is making this as a serious claim. The direct costs of regulation per million of capitalization in 2002 were \$145.80 in Canada, compared to \$141.90 for the federal regulatory bodies in the United States. That is not much of a difference.

As for the second myth, once again the facts contradict the arguments in favour of a single regulatory commission as far as costs are concerned. For one thing, the factors determining financing costs are three-fold. First, there are fees to brokers, costs relating to legal fees, honorariums for prospectus preparation, and share cost evaluations. Studies show that the total average direct cost of small Canadian business issues is less than the American.

As for the third myth, reduced transaction costs on the secondary market, the solution in my opinion still lies in the competitive nature of Canadian capital markets. The real problem lies in the low level of market competition. That would not in any way be remedied by the creation of a single body.

*Business of Supply*

The federal government ought to deal with some of the elements that do fall under its jurisdiction, including beefing up the means of sanctioning offences against securities legislation, in order to deal properly with white collar crime.

• (1215)

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, and in particular for the quality of the examples she used, about the relevance of the passport system.

I think that it has been clearly demonstrated that the present system in Canada, with the jurisdiction within each province, works very well. The OECD ranks the Canadian system second in the world, and the World Bank also recognizes Canada as a world leader in this field.

Right now, we simply apply the constitutional powers as they exist. Thus, when the Government of Quebec clearly expresses its position through a motion adopted unanimously by the National Assembly and when its Minister of Finance writes to the federal Minister of Finance because she wants him to stop making plans to use the federal steamroller and to establish a single commission for Canada, it is quite convincing, given all this information, that the present system is adequate.

Can my colleague tell me if, in her view, it is understandable that the Conservative Minister of Finance, after recognizing the Quebec nation following the initiative from the Bloc Québécois, has this centralist attitude as if he were finance minister in a Pierre Trudeau Cabinet? Is this acceptable? How is it possible to explain this type of situation but by the fact that the federal machinery itself drives him to that conclusion?

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

In fact, nothing could possibly justify the federal government's obsession with interfering in areas of provincial jurisdiction. The provinces should have been consulted more, for the direction taken by this government goes against what the provinces want. And this is true not only for the Government of Quebec, but also for the Government of Alberta.

I have some quotations from other individuals, including the president of the British Columbia Securities Commission, who said:

[*English*]

Canadians do not feel that the authorities treat investment fraud as seriously as other crimes. They think that people who defraud others "generally get away with it."

[*Translation*]

A number of other people feel that the federal government should focus on its own areas of jurisdiction, such as the Criminal Code, for instance, specifically in order to address economic fraud.

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak. I am pleased to rise in the House here today as a member from Quebec, to speak to the motion brought forward by our colleagues across the floor.

Before I begin, I would like to indicate that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Burlington, with whom I have been meeting for the promotion of the Canadian shipbuilding industry. He came to Lévis last summer and visited the Ultramar

facilities where the transshipment of liquids takes place. He also saw the Corporation of Lower St. Lawrence Pilots' Centre de simulation et d'expertise maritime.

My colleague and I have businesses in our respective sectors. Where I am from, for instance, Prévost Car inc., IPL inc., Rotobec, and Etchemins would all like to have access to capital in order to compete with large corporations from around the world. This is why I am pleased to speak to this motion here today.

As we all know, there has been a lot of talk about the Norbourg scandal in Quebec. There has been a lot of talk about the little girls, for instance, whose grandfather had invested some money for them, which was misappropriated in the end. That was the only money, the only financial inheritance, left for those children. And it was misappropriated.

I am pleased to speak about this today. All the members in this House want to find ways to avoid having this happen again, and to ensure that our financial system is reliable and efficient, and that it allows our businesses to raise large amounts of money quickly, without encountering administrative barriers or red tape. We know that is one of the irritants. I owned a business, and I know how many forms there are to fill out.

However, my opposition colleagues did not fully understand what our government wants. We are not talking about a federal regulator, but a common regulator, created in collaboration with the provinces.

Currently, nearly 80% of regulation in the securities sector comes from Ontario. It is important for the regulation to be distributed throughout the country, particularly in Quebec, so that Quebec can have a greater say in decisions that affect it and in the management of national affairs—all, of course, in the context of open federalism.

There are currently 13 statutes, 13 unharmonized responsibilities. There are a lot of barriers to overcome. Sure, the passport system is a step in the right direction, but it does not solve everything. That is why I would like to speak about the initiatives our government wants to take to ensure that the financial system is a tool that helps businesses in Bellechasse, Les Etchemins, Chaudière-Appalaches and Quebec City move forward.

We are facing international competition, and we need to standardize. Take, for example, the Europeans, who are exchanging information through the European Union, enabling them to break down administrative barriers and to standardize. That is exactly what we want to do, in collaboration with the provinces.

It makes sense that it would be easier to do business within a country than it would be with a foreign country. We must also think about demographic weight. Trading is done on the market. We are competing with the Chinese market, the Asian market—these markets have billions of people.

Canada is a major economic force, but we have to put that in perspective. Even though we have access to the entire European and U.S. markets, we have to double our share in those markets to rival, in absolute numbers, what China and India alone are doing. We have to look at the big picture and that is what we are proposing.

Our financial sector is one of the most advanced and most developed in the world. The International Monetary Fund has said so. In fact, it said so just recently when it evaluated the financial sector. The International Monetary Fund said that Canada has what it takes, but there is just one thing missing. It said that our financial system is solid because of its banks and, of course, its cooperative movements.

• (1220)

As a matter of fact, Lévis is the home of the largest financial cooperative movement in Canada, the Desjardins group, which, again this year, has declared record surpluses and dividends that will go into its members' pockets. These Quebec and Canadian financial institutions are in good shape and are well funded. Nonetheless, according to the International Monetary Fund, the system must and can be improved.

When talented people and capital cross borders, market competition becomes fierce. We must improve the system if we want our Quebec and Canadian companies to perform well on the global market. What does the International Monetary Fund say? It says that even though the banking system is in good shape, we are faced with challenges in the midst of the global financial crisis that has been observed since the middle of 2007.

The IMF has recommended adopting a common securities regulation system in order to improve the Canadian system. An international agency has given its advice. It did not say a federal system, but a common system; one that is established with the provinces and allows Quebec to play its full role within Canadian financial markets.

Our government acknowledges that this financial market must indeed be improved if the economy is to become more solid and more prosperous. We want our economy to perform and our manufacturing companies to develop. Among those companies there is one in my riding by the name of Jambette, which manufactures playground equipment. Some of their products are found in early childhood centres, where children go to play. They make quality products but they need investors. In order for these businesses to have access to a capital market, favourable conditions have to be created, and that is why Advantage Canada was created, as a long term economic plan. We also want to ensure that the financial institutions funding the companies in need are innovative and competitive and have a flexible regulatory framework based on recognized principles. Canada wants to ensure that these financial enterprises continue to respond to the need for growth in an increasingly stringent competitive context. This is the reason behind the plan introduced in the 2007 budget for "Creating a Canadian Advantage in Global Capital Markets", which I invite my colleagues to read. Perhaps even if they read it thoroughly they will decide not to change the contents of their motion today.

This plan for capital markets is designed to achieve increased protection and income for investors, better jobs, more investment and prosperity. There are four elements to it.

The first is to modernize the regulatory system in order to make it easier for a company in Burlington or Bellechasse to knock on one door and be able to expand into the entire Canadian market, with the cooperation of the provinces. It therefore takes into consideration the

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particular composition of capital markets in Canada, which are comprised of both international companies and small and medium issuers, that is, small businesses. This is why creating a common regulatory body is so advantageous. It facilitates the passage of proportional and principle-based regulations.

The second reason we think our 2007 budget contained an excellent initiative is that we want to protect Canadians' investments. We kept in mind what had happened with Norbourg and the investors who had been left high and dry. These people had trusted the financial institutions and entrusted them with their life's savings. Overnight they found themselves penniless because of those investments. We must make sure our legislation is strictly adhered to and we must attack white-collar crime.

The third component is to increase investment opportunities. I could go on for some time about all the initiatives we are undertaking to ensure that our financial system is indeed highly competitive. This is why we struck a third-party expert panel on securities regulation to provide us with advice. We already have examples of the progress we have made in the past year.

I would point out in closing that we are the only G-7 country that does not have a common regulatory agency. If the economy of Quebec and the manufacturers of Quebec are to have access to capital and to expansion opportunities, it is important for them to have the right tools. That is what we are doing on this side of the House.

• (1230)

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at what my colleague opposite said. He referred to what Quebec wants in relation to this bill. This is not a bill or a Bloc motion, but a unanimous outcry from Quebec against this bill. How can this member from Quebec stand up in this House and speak against Quebec's intentions? Why does he prefer to get in bed with Ontario and the rest of Canada rather than defend Quebec's interests?

Quebec's finance minister wrote this to her federal colleague:

First of all, I reiterate that the existing regulatory system in Canada works well and satisfies both the needs of pan-Canadian participants and the interests of the various regions. Accordingly, I will continue to oppose the implementation of any model leading to the concentration of market oversight responsibilities in the hands of a common or single regulator—

In closing, I also want to remind my colleague that on October 16, 2007, the three political parties in Quebec unanimously adopted a motion that opposed this position.

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour for his comments. I am pleased to answer that as a Quebecker in this House, I have a duty to the people of Lévis, Bellechasse and Les Etchemins to make sure the financial companies and manufacturers in my riding have easy access to capital so that they can expand into all 13 jurisdictions. At present, they have to overcome a lot of barriers, pay extra and put up with delays.

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I would also like to read my colleague an excerpt from an OECD document:

Securities regulation is currently a provincial responsibility, but the presence of multiple regulators has resulted in inadequate enforcement and inconsistent investor protection and adds to the cost of raising funds.

We have seen examples of this. The OECD talks about additional cost, reduced security and inadequate enforcement.

The document goes on:

It also makes it harder for the country [Canada] to respond to changes in the global market place or to rapidly innovate.

The key to growth is the ability to react rapidly, and that is what we want to enable our companies to do.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a rather technical question. Earlier, he compared the European system to the Canadian one. I would like him to tell us more about that.

Is the existing European model similar to the Canadian passport system, or is it more centralized? Can the two be compared given that Europe is made up of many large countries, while Canada is made up of small provinces, like Prince Edward Island?

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. Basically, I want to emphasize that we are moving toward more open markets and also toward globalization. We have to take scale into account and understand that Canada, which has about 33 million people, has to compete with much larger markets.

The independent group of experts will study the various models and look at how we can improve the Canadian system and intervene. It does not make sense for interprovincial trade within our own country to be more complicated than that within other economic unions. I should point out that those economic unions are huge. That is why, as Quebeckers, we have to take our rightful place within our national institutions.

• (1235)

[English]

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to stand in response to the opposition motion that is before us on the idea of creating a common securities regulator.

I want to thank my colleague from Lévis—Bellechasse for sharing his time. My brief experience with him over the last couple of years has demonstrated that he has been very conscientious and doing a fabulous job for his constituents.

While the issue of improving Canada's securities regulatory framework may seem a distant concern for most Canadians, the issue impacts more people than most would likely imagine.

Whether we realize it or not, Canada is a country of investors. From RRSPs to mutual funds, to registered retirement plans or the new proposed tax-free savings accounts, Canadians have been increasingly turning to the markets to build their nest eggs for their financial future and are counting on it to do so.

Largely because of that, the importance of ensuring Canada has the best possible securities regulatory framework has never been

more important. Furthermore, this is a concern that is breaking across the stereotypical socio-economic groups one would associate with it.

As a major national labour organization, the National Union of Public and General Employees recently pointed out:

Workers have a huge stake in the integrity of the country's financial system for one basic reason. They have untold billions invested in pension funds, and billions more in RRSPs. Their retirement depends on keeping the system honest.

However, it is clear that Canada does not have the best possible securities regulatory framework and that there exists room for significant improvement.

Unlike most developed countries, Canada lacks a federal securities regulatory body. Rather, it is administered individually in each of the 13 provinces and territories, each with their own separate laws, agencies and commissions.

The current framework of 13 different sets of laws administered by 13 different agencies or commissions has naturally evoked criticism throughout the years.

In an increasingly globalized and competitive world, Canada's system is clearly out of step internationally. This fact is not lost on Canadian business leaders. In June 2007 the *Financial Post* polled 80% who overwhelmingly indicated our system of multiple provincial securities regulators is harming the economy and that the situation needed urgent remedy.

A representative of that viewpoint is Ian Russell, president of the Investment Industry Association of Canada. He has noted that Canada's current fragmented framework with multiple securities administrators and commissions is clearly not favourable to attracting investment. He said, "Foreigners just find the construct a deterrent. A negative. And there's very much an awareness of that".

Little wonder that the all-party House of Commons finance committee made its first recommendation in its 2008 pre-budget consultation report for the federal government to take priority action to encourage provinces and territories to reach an agreement about a common securities regulator. As a member of the finance committee, I can clearly indicate that it was a priority for the committee.

I note that the bipartisan cooperation witnessed at the finance committee on this matter was not an isolated incident. Time after time the major relevant political parties in Canada have agreed on the need for an improved securities regulatory framework.



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For instance, the previous Liberal finance minister, the current member for Wascana, also understood the urgent need for improvement and reform. During his short-lived tenure as finance minister, he strongly advocated that Canada “take a very serious look at the proposal for a single securities regulatory”, because the issue “just cannot be left to wither away. It is far too important. We need to substantially improve our system in Canada”.

● (1240)

Similarly, the former NDP finance critic, the member for Winnipeg North, openly admitted that she was convinced of the need for a national securities regulator as opposed to a piecemeal provincial approach. She noted at the time, “Canada does not seem to have the tool box necessary to deal with corporate fraud”.

Accordingly, international voices have repeatedly argued that Canada's system at home must be improved. For instance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, in its 2006 survey of Canada stated, “Securities regulation is currently a provincial responsibility, but the presence of multiple regulators has resulted in inadequate enforcement and inconsistent investor protection and adds to the cost of raising funds”.

More recently, Canada became the first G-7 country to undertake the financial sector assessment program update, which provides International Monetary Fund member countries with comprehensive reviews of the stability of their national financial systems. The assessment also arranges the country's implementation of a range of regulatory standards and codes.

While the IMF characterized the Canadian financial sector as among the world's most highly developed and well managed, it noted that in Canada, “the institutions, markets, infrastructure, safety nets and oversight arrangements that comprise the system are sophisticated, and include a full range of financial intermediaries”. However, the report also concludes that there would be an advantage in moving toward a common securities regulator. In particular it would allow policy development to be streamlined to reduce compliance costs and improve enforcement.

The IMF report also notes that although the passport system of securities regulation will further rationalize the regulatory system for its participants, it will not address the inefficiencies related to costs, delayed policy development and fragmented enforcement. The report states that the participants will still be required to pay fees to the regulatory authorities of all the provinces where they raise capital. Policy development will continue to require approval from 13 jurisdictions. The passport system is not designed to address the limited enforcement authority of individual provincial regulators.

Let us examine in detail the policy development under the current system. The report notes, “the process of adoption of national instruments is protracted, since national instruments need to be individually adopted by each province. Depending on the jurisdiction, ministerial approval may also be needed. In addition, while provinces are committed to harmonizing their regulatory framework, they retain full authority to adopt a local standard”.

Let us also examine the detail of the costs imposed by the current system.

The report notes that “a system of multiple regulators entails additional costs for market participants, including additional direct costs, since participants have to pay fees to all the regulatory authorities of the provinces and territories where they want to raise capital and to provide services; there are also compliance costs and opportunity costs caused by longer review procedures. In addition, there appears to be room for efficiency savings at the regulatory level”.

The report adds that a single regulator “appears to be better positioned to address these shortcomings. There are different alternatives for a single regulator, including the ‘common regulator’. A single regulator would probably reduce compliance costs for market participants, since there would be only a single system of fees. It would streamline policy development, since decisions would be taken by a single body, and therefore would allow Canada to react more quickly to local and global developments. A single regulator would have enforcement authority in the whole country, and therefore would be in a better position to eliminate the inefficiencies created by the limited enforcement authority of individual provincial regulators. In addition, the existence of a single regulatory authority responsible for administrative enforcement would help to simplify coordination with other enforcement agencies”.

These are some of the reasons that our government is committed to developing the Canadian advantage in global markets and addressing the issues raised by the IMF.

● (1245)

In my riding of Burlington, there are a number of small and medium size companies. Their opportunity to grow and prosper is limited by their ability to raise capital and by the regulatory framework in this country. Having to register and repeat the work over again in every province and territory hampers their growth and hampers the economic development of this country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech of my colleague from Burlington.

I have much difficulty understanding how he can want to change a system which can surely be improved, but which has been recognized as the second best in the world by the OECD and which earned Canada the status of a world leader according to the World Bank. This system has also allowed the creation of very original financial products. Why should it be replaced when, according to the Constitution, this is a provincial jurisdiction? Would the member be ready to allow his Conservative colleagues from Quebec to vote in favour of the motion submitted by the Bloc Québécois?

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Earlier today, I was listening to the member from Lévis-Bellechasse. His riding is just across the river from the National Assembly of Quebec. If he votes against this motion from the Bloc, he will vote against the National Assembly of Quebec, against the present Government of Quebec, a federalist government. He will vote therefore against the consensus in Quebec. How can he explain that situation? Would he agree that his colleagues from Quebec should support the motion, just as the New Democratic Party will, given that the only justification for the position of the Conservative Government is a desire to centralize?

[English]

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the hon. member from the Bloc. I sit on the finance committee with him and he does an honourable job there.

However, I cannot understand why the hon. member is penalizing the business community in Quebec through this motion. The businesses and companies in my riding want to grow and expand but they are facing tremendous costs in the marketplace today. I just do not understand why the Bloc would bring forward a motion that would add costs to the business community, additional regulatory barriers to their future growth and development not only in Quebec, but all of Canada.

I think the business community would benefit from a single regulatory body for the securities market in this country. It would improve the ability to raise capital for businesses not only in Burlington, but for companies all across this country, including Quebec.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the Conservative member is as follows.

I heard the answer he gave to my colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, namely, that he is speaking on behalf of business people, about what is good for business people, including Quebecers. That is the answer he gave. Has he consulted business people? Does he know their views? Is he telling us that Quebec business people are not well represented by their Quebec National Assembly, which is unanimous in saying that this common regulatory body should not be established? Is that what he is telling us?

[English]

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, I do consult the business community in my riding of Burlington and a number of others.

As chair of the marine caucus and chair of the Conservative Party and the all party group from the steel caucus, on numerous occasions those organizations have told me that the security system under which this country is regulated is inefficient and ineffective and it is a barrier to them.

I have spoken to companies that do business across the country, including in Quebec, and they have clearly told me that we should be working in this direction. That is why I am not supporting the motion that is before us, but supporting the action our government is taking in terms of trying to find a solution to the securities regulatory system in this country.

● (1250)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today in the House about the Bloc Québécois motion. I would like to indicate right away that I will be sharing my time with the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

To ensure that those listening to our debate fully understand every viewpoint expressed here, we should remind them of the nature of the motion. They should realize that there is a major difference between what the Conservatives and the Liberals are arguing for today and what citizens really want, especially those knowledgeable about and directly involved in this debate. The motion states:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately abandon the idea of creating a common securities regulator, since securities regulations fall under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and because this initiative is unanimously condemned in Quebec.

When Conservative members rise in this House claiming to defend the interests of Quebec, they are working against the interests of Quebec as expressed by Quebec leaders and advocates in this regard. I will come back to that a little later.

This debate has gone on for over 40 years, and the Government of Canada makes attempts. The jurisdiction is Quebec's and the provinces' according to the Canadian Constitution of 1867. As I was saying earlier, the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously opposes the creation of a single securities regulator. The creation of such a body would threaten the survival of Montreal's trading activities and would promote the centralization of financial markets in Toronto. This is why opinion leaders in Quebec unanimously oppose the federal government's project. To oppose that is to oppose the interests expressed by Quebec and its leaders.

The World Bank and the OECD also note that the current system works well and is efficient. It is the one provided for by the current Canadian Constitution. It is under the authority of the provinces and Quebec. The passport mechanism makes it possible for one province to benefit from what is done in another and from the expertise and commitments of another province in securities transactions.

A number of speakers have said that the arguments of the Conservatives and Liberals, primarily to ensure we are competitive on international markets, were perhaps myth. As my colleagues pointed out earlier, the system works at the moment. The opposite would throw a wrench in the works. In this regard, centralization, the paternalistic approach of the federal government, would weigh the system down and take away the flexibility by which provincial expertise in different areas is available. We will see this later on.

Quebec's expertise is not just remedial in the matter of securities embezzlement, for example. It is not just a matter of getting the securities system to work, it is also a matter of intervening in the event of embezzlement, as occurred in Quebec. Preventive measures must be in place as well. This expertise belongs to Quebec alone. Other provinces draw on it. It proved effective just recently, as we saw, in the Norbourg affair.

•(1255)

There, as elsewhere, people sometimes manage to get round the system and abuse the power given them through the position they occupy. We saw this with Mr. Lacroix. We saw too that the system, when it operates as intended, is effective. The man is serving a 12 year sentence. I do not want to get into the ins and outs of this business, but members can see that the system works well.

People are trying to find similar examples in Canada, and despite big scandals, there is no sign that the proposed mechanism would address misconduct. The example has been given of centralized authorities, such as in the United States or France. My colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup spoke of the United States. There was Enron, and other cases. Fraud still occurred. In France, a single person, a financial trader managed to misappropriate billions of dollars. The individual will no doubt stand trial. No system is infallible. The centralized system being presented to us as infallible and competitive on the international market is rubbish and will not stand up.

Let us look at what is working. What does work, and has been recognized by major international organizations like the OECD and the World Bank, is an efficient mechanism that performs well. Why change it? That is the whole entire point. Why indeed, if not to centralize in order to dominate in that area as well, limit the freedom to act, innovate and create in the field of financial products, and make sure that a financial centre outside Quebec is responsible for the overall management? The pussyfooting never ends.

When I hear our Conservative colleagues from Quebec make remarks like the one the member for Lévis—Bellechasse made earlier, I think it is shameful. I find it embarrassing. Eleven Conservative members of this House claim to hold the truth and know the way ahead based on the public opinion in Quebec. I remind the House that the Government of Quebec, the National Assembly, the major stakeholders and analysts in Quebec all say that it is not a good thing. Are they looking after the best interest of Quebec? No. I would like to repeat something the member for Jonquière—Alma and Minister of Labour said. He said that, in 1991, he voted a certain way as a member representing Quebec in Ottawa and that, now, he was representing Ottawa in Quebec. That is almost word for word what he said. That is a whole different ball game. It means making different choices and having different values. In addition, it is far from certain that the other provinces would appreciate Toronto controlling the entire management of securities across the country.

I want to recall briefly the AMF's mandate. Quebec's Autorité des marchés financiers favours preventive management.

•(1300)

It has to assist financial institutions, look after them, supervise financial activities and ensure that protection and compensation

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programs are in place. These are all components that ought to be retained and that can only be managed by an organization of proximity whose expertise can be shared. In fact, that is already the case with the passport system, which is working well and allows this power over anything to do with securities and financial commitments to be exercised within each province while being shared.

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague from the Bloc Québécois, who holds the absolute truth of course and knows everything. If he does know everything, he must undoubtedly know that the Montreal Exchange is negotiating with the Toronto Stock Exchange right now for the two organizations to share their expertise and to work together in some domains. He must know also that banks are developing a parallel network, to the Canadian exchange system, precisely to reduce costs and to be more competitive on the international markets.

Does my colleague deem it important to make sure that national bodies remain competitive in order to allow our businesses to get the capital they need to continue operating in an increasingly competitive market? If he cannot answer my question, he can tell me about his record. We are still waiting for it.

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** Mr. Speaker, what I find unpleasant is that this member cannot ask a question without making innuendoes.

Here is my answer—and he better not try to prevent me from speaking like he did the other day. We are sending troops to Afghanistan to bring democracy to that country. If the member is unable to respect democracy in this House, Mr. Speaker, this time you should ask him to let me speak.

So here is my answer to his question. As always, he confuses things because he does not understand them. The Montreal Exchange and the Toronto Stock Exchange, that is one thing. There is a particular reasoning that applies when dealing with interests that are peculiar to the mandate of each one of these entities. We are talking here about the Autorité des marchés financiers, which deals with investments and shares, among other things. It is totally different.

There is a consensus now on the current analysis, even though the former leader of the Conservative Party, Mr. Charest, now Premier of Quebec, did not share that view back then. He used to have the same questions as the Conservatives. Now that he sits at the provincial level, he has come to the realization that true effectiveness can only be achieved through a financial authority managed by each of the provinces, with shared expertise, as I was saying earlier.

The member should know that. If he does not, then he should ask someone who is knowledgeable in this field to explain it to him.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague from the Bloc Québécois.

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[English]

I was a stockbroker for 12 years and a branch manager and I can say that one of the frustrations of the business for retail clients and companies was their inability to deal with provinces without an incredible amount of difficulty.

I just do not buy the argument that this is in the best interests of the people of the province of Quebec because, frankly, it is not. They are investors like anybody else. They own companies like anybody else. They want to deal with the rest of the Canada like anybody else.

I put it to my colleague that, in my view, this is more about protecting turf than it is about actually serving the interests of investors and companies.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is partly right. When he says that this is not in the best interest of the other provinces, he must be speaking of only one province, namely Ontario, because the others all agree with us. It would be in the best interest of Ontario, though, because business will be carried out there.

The hon. member has worked in the field of financial markets. I have been an entrepreneur myself and I liked it better to have my business activities supervised by Quebec than by Canada. Why? Because Quebec uses proximity management and, if and when it has to step in, it does so through a direct guarantor. No need to go through Ottawa or Toronto only to have them tell Quebec what to do.

That is precisely what Ms. Jérôme-Forget emphasized in her letter to the Minister of Finance, when she wrote:

Accordingly, I will continue to oppose the implementation of any model leading to the concentration of market oversight responsibilities in the hands of a common or single regulator, regardless of how you call it.

That is what Ms. Jérôme-Forget wrote in her reply on behalf of Quebec and Premier Charest, who is a former Conservative leader. He has realized that the best interest of the provinces and Quebec is not served, and especially not that of financiers, by a centralized body.

She added:

—the federal government could apply its energies much more productively if, in its fields of jurisdiction, it worked to more effectively crack down on economic crime rather than trying—

• (1305)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his excellent speech. I thank him for sharing his time with me.

I am very pleased to speak on behalf of the Bloc Québécois and to re-read the motion introduced today by my brilliant colleague, our finance critic. The motion states:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately abandon the idea of creating a common securities regulator, since securities regulations fall under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and because this initiative is unanimously condemned in Quebec.

I am all particularly proud that there is only one party that can rise in this House and introduce such a motion because there is only one party that defends the interests of Quebeckers every day. It is not the few members of the other parties. It is not the New Democrat member for Outremont. It is not the Liberal Party members for Bourassa or Saint-Laurent—Cartierville. Even less is it the Conservative members for Lévis—Bellechasse, Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, Jonquière—Alma and Louis-Hébert. Those are not the people who will stand up to defend the interests of Quebeckers. It is the members of the Bloc Québécois. This is even more important because this situation in Quebec has been analyzed and examined. The Quebec National Assembly made a decision to condemn this position.

That is not what I am hearing from the Conservative members. According to them, it is as though Quebec did not know where it was going. I just listened to a Conservative member stand up and tell us that. In their Canadian Constitution, this falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. That is the reality. If there is a problem with the Constitution, they know what they have to do: reopen it and renegotiate it. They will never dare to do that and that is the reality.

Obviously, for more than 40 years, the government has, from time to time, tried to interfere in provincial jurisdictions, especially when it comes to securities. But this has become even more evident since the new Minister of Finance took up his duties. It is no secret that he has his eye on the leadership of the Ontario Conservative Party. That is the hard truth. He can afford to criticize the Premier of Ontario. But he is pushing a plan to centralize securities in Ontario. So all the Conservative members who are saying that there is nothing political about this should look at the political interests of the finance minister. It is in his political interest to transfer all the securities to Ontario, because he dreams of becoming the Premier of Ontario. Quebeckers will not be fooled, or at least not the Quebeckers who are able to stand up for what they believe in—the members of the Bloc Québécois in this House. We can see what the finance minister is trying to do.

Obviously, within the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, no one has been fooled by this attack. We will always be ready to stand up and denounce this position. That is why Quebeckers have elected us, to defend their interests and their values. Speaking of values, financial values are among those that Quebeckers want to see protected. Securities fall under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. In Quebec, the Autorité des marchés financiers or AMF is in charge of regulating financial markets. That works very well.

*Business of Supply*

In a cross-Canada context, we know there is the so-called passport system, which works very well. That is to say that between the provinces, except for Ontario, which has decided to go its own way for political reasons, there is this passport system that allows for a coordinated approach in applying the law. It offers uniform protection for investors. This system enables each securities regulator to develop its own approach and areas of expertise. That makes it possible to have different but complementary approaches to compliance with the regulations by those affected. This different but complementary critical vision, while more onerous, makes it easier to detect and prevent scandals such we have seen in the United States, where these issues are submitted to a centralized authority. It is a benefit for investors. So, the Conservative position is difficult to understand.

• (1310)

Again, Quebec conducted a study and a second assessment, and, on October 16 of last year, the National Assembly decided to condemn this federal government's initiative. All parties, whether sovereigntist or federalist, unanimously passed the following motion:

That the National Assembly ask the federal government to abandon its Canada-wide securities commission project.

That is as clear as could be. Quebec has decided to keep its powers in its own jurisdictions, and also its system, which is considered by the international community to be one of the world's most effective.

The fact that Conservative members were lead in that direction by their finance minister, who wants to run Ontario, is their problem. I find it much harder to understand why the Liberals are letting themselves be swayed in that direction. However, considering how they have been behaving in recent weeks, let us remain polite and say that this is just yet another contradiction. However, Bloc Québécois members will not be fooled, and they are going to defend firmly and strongly the position unanimously adopted by Quebec's National Assembly. That is why we tabled this motion. We hope that members from all parties in this House will clearly realize that, under the Canadian Constitution, securities are a provincial jurisdiction, and that they must respect the Constitution. I think they believe in the Constitution, since they patriated it. At the time, Quebec decided not to participate in that event. I hope they will now act in accordance with the Constitution that they wanted, and that they will respect provincial jurisdictions. The position of Quebec's National Assembly could not be clearer. Its motion, which was carried unanimously, asks the Government of Canada to abandon its way of doing things. I am going to read it once again, to ensure that it is clearly understood:

That the National Assembly ask the federal government to abandon its Canada-wide securities commission project.

That motion was passed on October 16, 2007, not 15 or 20 years ago.

I hope my colleagues understand that the members of the National Assembly and the people who helped draft this motion are very familiar with their responsibilities given that this falls in their area of jurisdiction.

Quebec will always be a leader in Canada, at least until we have a country of our own. Once again, we have blazed the trail. Every time that Canada has wanted to push Quebec back, it has found Quebec in

its path. And every time that the federalist parties in the House want to push Quebec back, they will find the Bloc Québécois in their path. It is the only party that can stop them from pushing us back. That is what the Conservative Party wants, with the help of the Liberals. It wants to push us back in the securities file. They will find us in their path in Quebec.

This is all the more important in view of the fact that Quebec is unanimous about it, for historical reasons but also to protect its interests. The Autorité des marchés financiers is the final barrier to the disappearance of all stock markets from Montreal after the acquisition of the exchange by Toronto. It was not for no reason at all that the National Assembly came to this conclusion. The reason for blocking this pan-Canadian regulator is simply to protect Quebec's interests.

The Autorité des marchés financiers has the regulatory authority to require a stock exchange in Montreal. The AMF oversees the exchange and establishes the rules by which it operates, including the percentage of shares held, etc.

The Quebec National Assembly wanted to protect its authority over securities and that is why a unanimous resolution was passed. That is why the only members who can really defend Quebec's interests rose up today and tabled the motion of our learned colleague, the Bloc financial critic.

Once again we ask the other members to help protect Quebec's financial authority. If they fail to do so, they will pay the price.

• (1315)

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my Bloc Québécois colleague is well aware that we have the equivalent of 13 AMFs in Canada. Members of the Bloc also talked about the passport system.

However, there is a problem: the system works everywhere but in Toronto. We also all know that Toronto represents over 80% of Canada's dollar volume. That means that a company in Quebec that wants access to capital has to apply to the Toronto Stock Exchange.

What is being proposed today is to remove the only way that Quebec entrepreneurs can gain access to capital across the country. I should clarify that the reason Quebec entrepreneurs trade publicly is that they want access to capital. The Bloc Québécois wants to remove the only way for Quebec to gain access to capital in Toronto.

Can my colleague explain why he wants to take away Quebec's ability to participate in this field? I do not understand.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like my colleague to know that according to the OECD's most recent economic outlook, Canada is ranked second for its securities regulation. Moreover, in its report on financial systems around the world, the World Bank ranked Canada as a leader in the area of securities trading.

So much for his theory that Quebec is shooting itself in the foot in terms of investment and availability of capital. Once again, this falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces.

*Business of Supply*

The member for Louis-Hébert should mind his own business. That is the problem. The National Assembly passed a unanimous resolution. I will spare him a reading of the letter from the finance minister, Ms. Jérôme-Forget, to the federal finance minister.

However, he should know that the leader of the ADQ, his mentor, supports this. This seems to be making the Conservative members from Quebec uncomfortable. It is time, people, to wake up and smell the coffee.

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will continue along that path.

It is unacceptable that members who represent the interests of Quebec here in Ottawa and who have been elected as Conservatives will not vote in favour of the motion brought forward by the Bloc Québécois today to protect the integrity of Quebec's financial authorities. It is totally unacceptable.

As my Bloc colleague and transport critic said earlier, it is not only the Bloc Québécois who is calling for that, but also the political players in Quebec: the National Assembly, the ADQ, the Liberals, the Parti Québécois, etc.

How can a member elected by the people of Quebec rise in this House and go against the idea of Quebec keeping its autonomy and maintaining jurisdiction over financial markets and securities?

I was the only candidate from my party to be elected in the immediate vicinity of Quebec City, opposite the north shore, in the area that includes Quebec City and its suburbs, except for my colleague from Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord. In the next election, I will be able to say that those members opposite voted against Quebec's interests.

I would like an explanation on that.

• (1320)

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Québec for her excellent work. What the Conservative members from Quebec do not understand is that the Minister of Finance is trying to win a game in Ontario. That is the essence of the problem. The Minister of Finance wants to become the premier of Ontario and has decided to table a policy on securities to promote the interests of Ontario, while attacking the Premier of Ontario and saying that Ontario is not a good place to invest. Imagine that.

The Conservative members from Quebec, men and women, are taking part in this tug of war game played by the Minister of Finance, who is positioning himself for his next election campaign in Ontario. I am very much concerned about this. On the other hand, I understand that, with their lack of political ability, Conservative members cannot see what is going on.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Charlottetown.

First, I congratulate the Bloc on this motion. This is an important issue, and having chosen the subject, the Bloc has come armed with good arguments. Although I do not agree with the view taken by the Bloc members on this issue, I have to admit they have done their homework. My only reservation about the Bloc's position in this regard is that we are hearing the same refrain. No matter what the

subject is, no matter what the issue, it is always the same refrain. As many powers as possible have to be given back to Quebec. That is obviously the guiding principle of the party.

I think we have to go back to the principle that Canada is a country. We are not a country so that everybody can withdraw to their corner and tend to their own business. We are a country because we share certain values. Whether the Bloc wants to admit it or not, Canadians who live outside Quebec share the same values as Quebecers with the Quebec people, the Quebec nation, as some are fond of repeating. That is why we work together on all kinds of things. We have to go back to that idea. Why are we a country? To share our wealth, and not just our natural resources or our monetary resources through an equalization system. We have to share our ideas and work together, sometimes in the same institution, as the Bloc in fact does. The Bloc works here in this House, shares this place with colleagues from across Canada. We must forge ahead and work together with others in the same system, in the same institution. Because we are hearing the same refrain, we have to ask ourselves a question: does the argument have merit? I am not saying they have not made good arguments and they have not taken the question seriously, but it seems to me that it is always the same refrain.

The same thing can be said of the NDP. In fact it is not entirely the same thing, because it quite often acts contrary to its guiding principles. The NDP is chasing the same votes as the Bloc, so it tries to position itself as the great defender of "decentralization", like the Bloc. But we know that in the past it was always a very centralist party and it still is on some issues. Seeing the NDP switching tracks like this undermines its credibility somewhat. I would tell my colleagues in the NDP not to chase the same votes as the Bloc, because that will get them nowhere.

Listening to the speeches by the NDP members and the speeches by the Bloc members describing federalists, particularly those in the official opposition, as dedicated centralizers, and even colonizers—I do not know whether I have yet heard the word "imperialist", but it may come up at some point—I thought I was back in political science class at university in the 1970s. It is not a matter of being a centralizer. The idea of creating an integrated system to regulate securities in Canada is a matter of effectiveness. Our colleagues in the Liberal caucus and the Conservative caucus have explained this.

• (1325)

I was rather disappointed by the finance minister's speech on this. He should have taken the opportunity to sing the praises of a cross Canada system to regulate securities, but instead he took the opportunity to deliver, once again, his miserable budget. He spoke of his savings plan. I do not think the plan will be very effective. It will not channel much capital towards the investment Canada so badly needs. I understand my Bloc colleagues' fears. How can a government that delivered such a washed out, miserable and thin budget set in motion a national securities system? I understand my Bloc colleagues' concern.

*Business of Supply*

One of the main challenges facing Canada's economy is to attract capital. It has always been a problem. The NDP has recognized this in the past. Obviously it has changed its message, because it is targeting the same votes as the Bloc Québécois in Quebec. The NDP has always recognized that it has always been a challenge for Canadian industry to attract capital. And so, in the past, provincial and federal governments have had to get involved. This is why there are more government corporations in Canada than in the United States. The government has to find a way to channel capital. This is a fact of Canada's economic history. We have to compete with the United States. The biggest capitalist economy in the world is not a decentralized federal system like ours, but a highly integrated and truly centralized one. It is very effective for investors. We have to compete with this country, and Wall Street is only a few hundred kilometres from here. We must become more effective on the stock markets and investment markets, or we will once again have a hard time keeping our capital and attracting new. For this reason, we must proceed with the help of experts who are not politicians.

As I said earlier, I am not totally convinced that we can trust the government and this Minister of Finance to put the proposed system in place. We must turn to the experts, who will tell us how to design an effective system that will compete with our neighbours, the United States, and respect regional interests in Canada. It seems simple and logical to me.

I would like to address as well an argument raised by the member for Outremont. He compared provincial societies that govern the professions, such as medicine, architecture and engineering. That strikes me as fairly obvious, and I am sure that my colleagues recognize the evidence. I do not understand why the NDP has a hard time recognizing it. There are human beings, who are not as mobile as capital. And then there is the national securities—capital—system. Capital travels everywhere fairly easily. This is why greater effectiveness is needed at the national level—to better compete with international capital.

• (1330)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis for his thoughtful speech. First of all, in this case, we are not calling for jurisdiction to be given back. Jurisdiction of this financial matter already belongs to the provinces. It is enshrined in the Constitution.

It is somewhat incomprehensible that the Conservative government finally agreed to recognize Quebec as a nation, as a result of the Bloc Québécois' request and motion. At the same time, it wants to remove one of Quebec's powers in one of the only areas in which it has a voice internationally. Quebec is taking part in debates with the international financial association. It has a voice at the table. The Conservative minister's plan would mean taking away that voice.

I urge my colleague to instead think about how he could make a better decision as a member from Quebec. The Quebec National Assembly is not governed by a sovereigntist party, but rather by a federalist party, the Quebec Liberal Party. All parties represented in the National Assembly—the Liberal Party of Quebec, the Parti Québécois and the Action démocratique du Québec—agree that the Minister of Finance's plan must be stopped.

Thus, is it not his responsibility to go along with the unanimous will of Quebecers, as indicated by the National Assembly and the Government of Quebec?

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his comments. Obviously, I understand the difference between repatriating powers and respecting the powers granted to the provinces by the Constitution. I thought I made that distinction, but perhaps I did not emphasize it enough. It is a matter of law.

I would like to point out, however, that the members of the Wise Persons' Committee, an independent body that reviewed securities regulation in Canada, concluded that the Constitution did in fact give the federal government the power to regulate capital markets, pursuant to section 91.2 concerning the regulation of trade and commerce.

That being said, clearly, one must be very careful when creating a system, for no one wants to wind up before the Supreme Court and have it throw out the system because it does not comply with the Constitution. Accordingly, one must be very careful when creating a system.

Given my role as a member from Quebec, like any member of this House who knows his or her riding well, I believe that, if I were to walk into a Tim Hortons or down the street in my riding and raise this question, a large majority of my fellow citizens would be in favour of this proposal for a national securities system.

• (1335)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** The hon. member for Louis-Hébert for a brief question.

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my question will indeed be brief.

The Bloc Québécois would have us believe that this is a transfer of funds directly to Toronto. I would like to know if my hon. colleague believes instead that this would give Quebec businesses access to funds to which they would not have had access before.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, I thought the period for questions was over, since I had been signaled that I was out of time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Can the member repeat his question very briefly?

**Mr. Luc Harvey:** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to repeat the question.

I wanted to know if, contrary to the Bloc Québécois, which implies that fewer funds will be available for Quebec, my colleague believes that this will give businesses access to many more sources of funds.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Speaker, if I believed that this proposal would deprive Quebec, my native province and the province where the riding I represent is located, of the financial tools needed by the Quebec business community, I would be against it. I think that this will give Quebec corporations better access to equity from elsewhere in Canada.

*Business of Supply*

[English]

**Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion. At the outset, I am totally against it.

It is my premise that Canada needs to advance its productivity and prosperity agenda. Canada needs an efficient, effective economical securities regulator that meets the needs not only of the companies both large and small operating in our great country, but also, and perhaps more important, meets the needs of investors looking to invest in Canadian companies rather than non-Canadian companies. My premise is the only way this can be done is through a national securities regulator.

From a geographical point of view, Canada is a very large country. From the population point of view, it is an extremely small country. We have 34 million people spread out across a vast geographical area. I think we comprise between 1% and 2% of the world's equity markets. Right now we have at least 10 different regulators. We are the only country in the world wherein we would find this type of a system. It cannot work, and I do not think it will work going forward. It is disjointed and duplicitous.

From personal experience, what happens is a lot of the smaller provinces rely on the rulings of the Ontario Securities Commission. I happen to come from a small province. We have approximately 134,000 people, and this is a good example. Are we expected to have our own securities commission, our own securities regulator, our own rules, laws and policy guidelines to deal with any securities issue that comes across our desk?

Again, any person would realize that it is not workable not only in Prince Edward Island, but in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It will not and can not work.

Another issue, which has been written about extensively, is the inability of our securities regulators to adequately enforce the existing rules. We have had a number of scandals over the years where investors have lost a lot of money, and no one seems to ever be convicted.

Perhaps the most grievous example is Bre-X. I believe capitalization in that case reached approximately \$3 billion. There is more gold in my hand than there was in that mine. Investors from one part of Canada to the other part of Canada were fleeced of large amounts of money, and as far as I am aware nobody was convicted. This repeats itself over and over again.

The only way the country will move forward, so we have a very effective and efficient system of capitalization of our companies, is to have a national regulator. That is what I would like to see.

We have seen it. We are into an era of globalization. We have one in Vancouver, one in Alberta and in Montreal. Again, it is consolidation. However, if we do not take steps to have a national securities regulator in place in Canada, what will happen in the long run? If the present trend continues, companies and investors will not look at any of the Canadian provinces. They will bypass the Canadian provinces and look to the New York Stock Exchange.

A lot of resource-based companies in Canada rely on the capital markets. A lot of investors and pension funds rely on opportunities

to invest their money. A lot of people want to invest in Canadian companies. If we have 13 separate regulators with their own 13 separate sets of rules, laws and regulations, that will create a lot of uncertainty. I do not think it can work in the long run.

This is very close to the productivity and prosperity agenda. I believe everything that goes on in the House should be looked at through the lens of whether it would enhance the prosperity and productivity of our country. With a national securities regulator, there is no question that it would.

● (1340)

As an aside, and this is related to other issues that perhaps are not in the motion, we have the whole economic union issue which calls for a national securities regulator, but just as importantly, it also calls for the reduction and hopefully the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers that exist.

In this particular country, we have 13 separate jurisdictions, and as everyone in this House is aware, there are many barriers put up to the trade of goods, the movement of goods and people, and services across interprovincial boundaries. There are many barriers in the interprovincial sense that are causing many problems with our productivity and prosperity.

It is good to see some of the initiatives being taken by the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. They recognize that. They do have an agreement and hopefully other Canadian provinces will emulate those particular agreements that do exist.

Hopefully, if we look back and we are here in 10 years time, many of those interprovincial barriers will disappear. However, if we have 13 different securities regulators, that in and of itself will be a very serious issue that will be looked at.

As I said previously, Canadians are investing more. This is how people, indirectly through their pension funds, fund their retirements, through RRSPs and other instruments that are available. It is natural that Canadians are looking for Canadian opportunities.

We know the land. We know the companies. We know what resources are out there. We know what ought to work and we know that it might not work, but again, if Canadians do not see that there are proper regulations, laws and policies, they will just move on and they will look of course not only to the New York Stock Exchange but the European stock exchanges, Tokyo, and others.

This relates to a larger discussion on what I call the need for a strong central government. We cannot build a country based upon 10 semi-autonomous jurisdictions with a moat or a firewall around each jurisdiction, each one speaking for itself.

Canada needs and cries out for a strong central government, a government with a pan-Canadian vision, a government that speaks for all people wherever they live, whatever sector they are employed in, and this whole issue of a national securities regulator cries out for that.



I realize there are some jurisdictional issues. I know this is an issue that has been worked on by successive governments of different political stripes. We have not been, as of today's date, successful in our quest for this objective, but I do hope that we move toward that.

I know there are always trifle issues as to where this office is going to be located and where that office is going to be located, what this office does and what that office does, but I am hopeful those issues can be resolved through negotiation.

However, if anyone leaves this debate thinking that this country will benefit through the development and expansion of 13 separate security commissions, with their own laws and regulations, then I submit to this House that they are mistaken.

In conclusion, I say to this House that this motion, in my respectful opinion, does not make a lot of sense. It does not advance the prosperity and productivity agenda of this country. The efficiencies and effectiveness that one would like to see in the system will not be present. I urge everyone to vote against this particular motion.

• (1345)

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague. I am a bit surprised to see that he does not seem to know that the existing Canadian model, which is made up of the financial authorities from each province, has been recognized by the OECD as one of the most efficient in the world. The World Bank says the same thing. I do not think that centralizing those decisions would be a gain.

If the legislative assembly of the member's province had adopted unanimously a motion such as the motion adopted by the National Assembly of Quebec, which calls upon the Conservative government to abandon its project, and if afterward, the finance minister of the member's province had forwarded a similar written request, after the budget, would the member have the same attitude? Would he not have respected the will of the people from the province he represents?

In Quebec, the existing model works well. It has allowed the development of original models such as the Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs and the stock savings plan. It has also allowed, in the case of Norbourg, the prosecution and conviction of people who acted illegally.

It is therefore Quebec as a whole, including the government represented by a federalist party, the Minister of Finance and the other parties at the National Assembly, who express their wish and call unanimously upon the federal government to abandon its project to establish a single system in Canada. What kind of attitude would the member have if he was in the same situation? Would he not do as the Bloc members are doing?

[English]

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, I see a lot of change going on in international securities regulations and sale. There is a lot of consolidation and globalization.

### *Business of Supply*

The point that I attempted to make in my brief remarks is that I do not see any way that 13 separate jurisdictional regulators, with their own laws, policies and regulations, will work.

The hon. member talks about my province. It is a very small province of 135,000 people. It does technically have a director of securities or a securities commission, but I know from personal experience that it basically rubber stamps whatever decisions, whatever opinions, come out of the Ontario situation, which in and of itself is not an effective way to go forward.

This country represents a very small number of people. Thirty-four million is an extremely small number of people compared to the world's population. It needs, it cries out for, one national securities regulator. Whether that will ever happen, I do not know. We do not know in this debate, but as we leave the debate, that should be the goal of everyone here.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague if he is the least bit afraid that this will deprive his province of a single dollar. Does he think that access to the entire Canadian securities market will deprive his province or the companies in his riding or province of the funds needed to help companies progress and expand their markets?

• (1350)

[English]

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes, it would. It would depend how it is implemented.

Right now, the way it works is that if a prospectus is approved in each Canadian jurisdiction, there is a fee levied by each province. It depends a lot on the fees implemented by the individual provinces, and that is another issue.

Those fees and taxes would have to be built into any type of a national program and those fees would have to be spread out among the provinces. It would have to be revenue neutral. I think every province would want that. To answer the question, yes, that would have to be built into the system.

Going back to the smaller provinces, it is my understanding that they basically adopt whatever opinions, decisions and directives that come out of the Ontario system. It probably makes a lot more sense in the long run if we would just formalize what is going on in the street at any particular time.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

There is a good reason why the Bloc Québécois tabled a motion today calling on the government to desist immediately from trying to create a common securities regulator. This is a Quebec and provincial jurisdiction. In addition, this initiative has been universally criticized in Quebec.

*Statements by Members*

When I say that there is a good reason, I mean that this is a fundamental issue for us, directly related to the status of the Quebec nation. The Autorité des marchés financiers is currently responsible for regulating securities in Quebec, and the system is working very well, thanks in particular to the passport system shared with the Canadian provinces except Ontario. This is a fundamental issue for us, therefore, because it is directly related to Quebec's status as a nation, as recognized by all the parties in the House.

It is hard to imagine how the government could recognize a territory and a group of people and give them a certain status only to insist then on taking away a power they already had, especially as we are talking here about a key power that is vital for managing financial products and services within Quebec.

The Autorité des marchés financiers, which is responsible for managing securities in Quebec, has quite a diverse mission. It provides assistance to consumers of financial products and services and ensures that the financial institutions and other regulated entities of the financial sector comply with the solvency standards applicable to them as well as with the obligations imposed on them by law. It also supervises the activities connected with the distribution of financial products and services, supervises stock market and clearing house activities and monitors the securities market. Finally, it sees to the implementation of protection and compensation programs for consumers of financial products and services, and administers the compensation funds set up by law.

It is not immediately apparent, therefore, how the creation of a common securities market would improve a system that is already working very well. There are no doubts at all on the international level about the competence of the AMF or how well the system is working. As a matter of fact, the OECD's most recent economic outlook puts Canada in second place when it comes to the regulation of securities.

Earlier, I heard the member for Charlottetown say that duplication does not work, to explain in part his disagreement with the Bloc Québécois' position. He said that duplication does not work and never will. I would point out to him that this is precisely why the Bloc Québécois is fighting for sovereignty in Quebec: duplication will indeed never work.

I would add that, in a report on global financial markets, the World Bank considered Canada as a leader in securities trading. This means that, at present, the securities commissions from every province and Quebec are allowed to make themselves heard at the International Organization of Securities Commissions. Given that the Canadian Constitution states that securities fall under the jurisdiction of the provinces, individual jurisdictions can legitimately represent themselves at the IOSCO without going through an intermediary. Quebec has to continue to enjoy this voice it currently has on the world stage.

In February, the government announced that an expert panel would be appointed to draft model legislation to establish a single securities commission.

• (1355)

The Conservative government's intention to create a single Canada-wide securities commission has been confirmed. The Conservatives are prepared to overstep Quebec's jurisdictions and

we think that is unacceptable. What is more, how can we accept this intention when we know there has been consensus for a long time and there still is consensus in Quebec against this truly centralist idea of the Minister of Finance.

Following a motion tabled by Pauline Marois, leader of the Parti Québécois in the National Assembly of Quebec, the National Assembly unanimously passed a motion asking the federal government to abandon its Canada-wide securities commission project.

On October 2, 2007, Monique Jérôme-Forget, Quebec's finance minister, said that the Minister of Finance's proposal would drive up costs since this plan adds another layer of bureaucracy. We have enough bureaucracy, but they want to add more.

The Quebec federation of chambers of commerce supports the position of Quebec's finance minister and that of the Bloc Québécois. On February 28, 2008, Monique Jérôme-Forget sent a letter to the Minister of Finance on the creation of this expert panel. In my opinion, this letter sums up quite well the position of Quebecers and the consensus in Quebec I was talking about earlier.

Ms. Jérôme-Forget said the following to the Minister of Finance:

I have noted the appointment of your expert panel charged with making suggestions and recommendations—

First of all, I reiterate that the existing regulatory system in Canada works well and satisfies both the needs of pan-Canadian participants and the interests of the various regions. Accordingly, I will continue to oppose the implementation of any model leading to the concentration of market oversight responsibilities in the hands of a common or single regulator, regardless of how you call it.

She also said that the passport system works quite well. In closing, she also said the following about the expert panel mentioned and included in the budget bill:

—I note that you have ignored the proposals made to you by the Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers of Securities Regulation.

I will close by saying that, indeed, it does not make sense to go down this path.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** The hon. member will have two minutes left to finish his speech after question period. We will now move on to statements by members. The hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADIAN BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to offer congratulations to Mr. Gladwyn Scott of Carberry, Manitoba, who has been officially named as one of this year's inductees into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame.

*Statements by Members*

Gladwyn, now best known in Manitoba as one of our provinces hardest working, grassroots volunteers, is also being honoured for his hard work on the national stage. He has served as the vice-president of Baseball Canada and scouted for the Blues Jays and Braves.

If one were to ask, many would say that Gladwyn's most notable accomplishment was his time as a coach with the first ever national baseball team competing in the 1967 Pan Am Games, including an upset win over Cuba. He has also served as general manager of Canada's youth team, winning bronze in 1987.

Gladwyn Scott continues to serve his community and province, chairing the Manitoba Senior Baseball Council and working with the host committee for this year's triple A nationals being held in Brandon.

Gladwyn Scott will be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame on June 28 and, on behalf of myself, the constituents of Brandon—Souris and, indeed, all Canadians, I offer him our thanks and congratulations.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

[Translation]

**MAGLOIRE DIONNE**

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to congratulate Mr. Magloire Dionne on his 100th birthday, which he celebrated on March 2, 2008. Mr. Dionne is a remarkable person who put a lot of time and energy into his family. He currently lives in Saint-Quentin, near his family.

I had the great pleasure of attending the party organized for Mr. Dionne at Manoir Mgr Melanson, along with his relatives and friends and staff of the residence. Like many other people, I was inspired by Mr. Dionne's remarkable courage and energy and his warmth.

On this unique and joyous occasion, the people of Madawaska—Restigouche join me in wishing Mr. Dionne a happy 100th birthday. We hope that he will remain in good health and continue charming us with his vitality and dignity for many years to come.

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**ORGANIC HONEY COMPANY**

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to a business in my riding called Miels d'Anicet, in Ferme-Neuve. Owners Anicet Desrochers and Anne-Virginie Schmidt recently won the prestigious Renaud-Cyr award, in the artisan producer category.

Created in 1998, the Renaud-Cyr awards honour the expertise of professionals, producers and processors who work on enhancing Quebec products and cuisine. This award is a great honour in the Quebec restaurant community, and will provide more opportunities for this organic honey company. In fact, the entire Antoine-Labelle region will benefit from the increased visibility of Miels d'Anicet products.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois and myself, I would like to congratulate the producers and thank them for bringing our region's potential to the attention of the rest of Quebec.

\* \* \*

[English]

**DONALD CAMERON MACDONALD**

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Donald Cameron MacDonald, former leader of the Ontario CCF and Ontario NDP, who died on Saturday, March 8, at the age of 94.

Donald was often called the best premier Ontario never had. During his 27 years in the legislature, he established a reputation for a principled pragmatic opposition from the political left that New Democrats remember with gratitude and admiration, and which Canada as a country acknowledged when he received the Order of Canada in 2003.

Donald, who served with the Royal Canadian Navy in World War II, was one of the leaders in that generation who, having went through the dirty thirties and the war, emerged with a terrific determination to build a better world. He helped create the kind of Canada that most Canadians not only value but regard as crucial to our self-understanding. I know I speak for many when I offer thanks for a wonderful life, a happy warrior whose hope for social justice inspired all who knew him, myself included.

I offer my sincere condolences to his wife, Simone, and to all his family, and appreciation for a long life, well lived.

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**WINTERLIGHTS CELEBRATIONS**

**Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, WinterLights Celebrations is a national program encouraging municipalities, large and small, throughout Canada to celebrate light with decorative, cultural and spiritual programs with the objective of creating attractions for tourism from within Canada and abroad.

Launched in 2001 with the support of the Canadian Tourism Commission, WinterLights Celebrations is a winter edition of Communities in Bloom. The program encourages communities to showcase winter activities, festive celebrations and visual decorations that promote Canada's appeal as a winter tourism destination and improve the quality of life in communities across the country.

The results of the 2007-08 edition were announced in Saint John, New Brunswick on Saturday, February 9 during the course of the annual WinterLights Celebrations symposium and awards ceremony.

In recognition of its Christmas fair presentation, my congratulations go out to the city of Armstrong in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap in receiving a five star rating in the 1 to 10,000 population category.

*Statements by Members***FAY BLAND**

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to a resident of my riding, Fay Bland, who recently passed away.

Fay was a committed and compassionate activist for developmentally disabled. For more than 50 years, her efforts enabled scores of developmentally disabled children and young adults to lead fulfilling autonomous lives in their communities.

• (1405)

[Translation]

Her accomplishments are too numerous to mention. One of these projects, AVATIL—Apprentissage à la vie autonome/Towards Independent Living, provides apartments, group services, social development programs and assistance to clients so that they can live independently on the West Island.

[English]

In 2006, Fay Bland was honoured for her efforts with the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award.

Our condolences go to her family and friends and I salute the legacy of this wonderful Canadian woman.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MATHIEU ÉMOND AND ANDRÉ MANSEAU**

**Mr. Denis Lebel (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to two Quebec firefighters who died in the line of duty: Mathieu Émond and André Manseau.

In paying tribute to her husband, Mrs. Émond reminded us of just how dangerous the profession can be. Firefighters do not just simply look after the well-being of citizens; they also give of themselves, something that is rare in other careers. A father and an 18-year-old with his entire life before him, who gave up their own lives while protecting the lives of others are not just ordinary citizens. They are heroes.

My government would like to honour André Manseau and Mathieu Émond, and along with them, all Canadian firefighters. Courage and self-sacrifice are the hallmarks of their calling.

May our prayers accompany them to their eternal rest.

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**ALUMINUM**

**Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, at a time when different parts of the world are looking to sign treaties to maximize spinoff opportunities from major aluminum producers, it would seem essential that the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region have greater assurances with respect to employment and processing. That opinion is shared by a number of elected officials as well as labour leaders in my region.

Take for example the new agreement between Alcoa and the Government of Quebec, which was signed recently. For the very first time, a minimum employment level has been guaranteed in exchange for energy benefits. While not perfect, this new agreement shows

that reasonable conditions can be negotiated with companies with respect to employment and processing.

The Conservative government must understand that a laissez-faire policy vis-à-vis aluminum giants is no longer an option in the regions of Quebec. This government turned a blind eye on the sale of Alcan to Rio Tinto, and the people of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean are not about to forget it.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADIAN SPACE ROBOTICS**

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, early this morning, Canada's most advanced robot was launched into space on-board the space shuttle *Endeavour*. This robot, called Dextre, along with the Canadarm2 and the mobile base, will play an absolutely vital role in the assembly of the International Space Station.

Canada is a world-renowned leader in space robotics. Our robotic ingenuity and innovation is a source of tremendous pride and a true competitive advantage for Canada. Not so long ago, the thought of a robot with the dexterity of a human hand and the capacity to move around an orbiting station seemed like the stuff of science fiction. Today it is a reality.

Canada's expertise in the design and use of advanced robotics has positioned us as an innovative, space-faring nation. The expertise at the heart of Canada's space robots is delivering results to Canadians and providing solutions to health challenges here on Earth.

\* \* \*

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week a gunman entered the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva in Jerusalem and brutally killed eight students and left many injured, including a Canadian.

I extend my deepest condolences to the families and friends who lost loved ones and my support to those who are recovering from their serious injuries.

This shocking and despicable terrorist act must be strongly condemned. We cannot sit idly by and remain silent about the underlying culture of hate and rampant anti-Semitism bred from generation to generation.

I applaud my colleague, the hon. Irwin Cotler, for heading the new International Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism and I look forward to working with him to take action against the increasingly frequent and violent anti-Semitism that is occurring around the world.

**The Speaker:** I would remind the hon. member for Thornhill that referring to members by name is out of order, so she will not want to repeat that blunder.

The hon. member for Oxford.

### TERRORISM

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to alert the House to a letter written by Indian prime minister, Manmohan Singh, to the head of the Sikh temples worldwide. In this letter, Prime Minister Singh expressed concern that groups supporting Sikh militancy were regrouping in Canada, as well as the United Kingdom, Germany and Pakistan.

Canada will not tolerate any kind of action originating from our soil that promotes terrorism in other countries. We must not forget the lessons of the Air India tragedy.

As our Prime Minister said last June at the unveiling of the memorial to the victims of the Air India tragedy:

Flight 182 may have flown under the flag of India, but the murder of its passengers was a singularly Canadian crime and tragedy.

In a world where terrorism knows no boundaries, Canada has a responsibility to be on the lookout for those who want to use terrorism as a political tool. Our police, security and intelligence organizations remain vigilant.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

### THE BUDGET

**Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government has failed hard-working Canadians. I want to share the story of Jennifer McPhee, who lives in my riding.

This young mother has done everything right. She got training and became an LPN. She works in a hospital, has a second part time job and volunteers in her community, and yet she and her family are struggling in so many ways.

She writes:

I am not very politically savvy, but am fully aware of how hard it seems for the average person to get by.

I get called continuously from work at the hospital, begging me to work more... when I have looked into furthering my education so that I can help out with our nursing shortage by becoming an RN, there is no access to funding.

It feels...like this government is trying to make sure the young adults of this world don't ever succeed.

I have relied on my friends to take care of my children...as I am over the allowable threshold for child care subsidy and of course my children were born before the date that would give me access to that extra \$100.00 a month.

If we weren't thrifty and creative...we would have lost our home shortly after we purchased it.

It is families like Jennifer's who were left out of the Conservatives' 2008 budget. The lack of support the government has shown for hundreds of thousands—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Saint Boniface.

\* \* \*

### PIONEER OF FLIGHT AWARD

**Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Aviation Council is honouring a Manitoba father and his six sons for their pioneering role in aviation.

Since 1935, Tom Lamb and his six boys, Greg, Donald, Dennis, Jack, Doug and Connie, flew thousands of rescue missions in

### Statements by Members

northern Manitoba, some under the most extreme and dangerous conditions.

Those of us who have had the opportunity to get to know bush pilots realize how they can be remarkably entrepreneurial and fiercely independent. These qualities would surely apply to the Lamb family.

On behalf of our Manitoba caucus, I want to congratulate the Lamb family for their extraordinary contributions to the north, and in particular Doug Lamb, who saved the life of the member for Churchill when she was a child. During difficult weather conditions, Doug risked his own life to get this young girl, who was suffering from pneumonia, to a hospital. Without proper medical care that night, she would not be alive today.

Tom Lamb is now immortalized in bronze by world renowned Winnipeg sculptor Leo Mol. We should all be proud of the important role the Lamb family played in making Canada what it is today.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### LEONARD COHEN

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, over the years, Quebec has had a number of women and men who, through their art, were able to make humankind a little better, a little more beautiful. Leonard Cohen is one of them. Yesterday, he was inducted into the rock and roll hall of fame, in New York.

Born in Montreal, Leonard Cohen published his first book of poems in 1956, and released his first music album, which included such wonderful songs as *So long Marianne* and *Suzanne*, in 1967.

Through his extensive repertoire, he has influenced generations of musicians, who have integrated poetry with folk and rock music. In Quebec, he stands among our greatest poets and singers. Just a month ago, the daily *La Presse* included the album *Songs of Leonard Cohen* among the top ten Quebec albums of all times.

Congratulations, Mr. Cohen.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**THE PRIME MINISTER****Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker:

I am PM,  
 PM I am,  
 I do not like green eggs and ham;  
 I won't answer questions about Cadman.  
 I will not answer them in this House,  
 On this I'm quiet as a mouse.  
 I will not answer in Yellowknife,  
 I won't answer questions from Bob Fife.  
 I will not answer in Vancouver,  
 Duck and hide, that's my manoeuvre.  
 On that tape you'll hear me say,  
 Things I can't discuss today.  
 I will not answer here or there,  
 I will not answer anywhere.  
 I will not answer, can't you see?  
 Why won't the press just let me be?  
 Please, please do not pester,  
 For the truth holds disaster.  
 I know the rule is not to lie,  
 But when your stam's in a sling, I say let her ride!

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of our Conservative government under the leadership of our Prime Minister.

Since 2006 we have delivered on many of the promises we made. The list of achievements is long.

The GST has been lowered to 5%. We have cut taxes by close to \$200 billion. We have paid down \$37 billion on the national debt.

Our national child care program provides \$100 a month for every child under six.

We got Bill C-2, the tackling violent crime act, passed into law to help keep Canadians safe from dangerous criminals.

We have put an end to 13 years of neglect and foot-dragging by standing up for Canadian farmers.

We are pushing forward on Senate reform, and the Prime Minister appointed the Hon. Bert Brown to the Senate because Albertans elected him as their senator in waiting.

We have passed three balanced budgets.

Our government, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, is getting the job done for Canadians.

I would also like to thank the Liberals for showing their confidence in our government last night and for their support of our environmental initiatives.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

•(1415)

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works.

At the time of the confidence vote in 2005, the parliamentary secretary told journalist Lawrence Martin that Mr. Cadman did not want an election because it could cost Mr. Cadman's family a fortune in benefits. Which benefits?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' story on this file keeps changing.

First the Liberals said there was a meeting on May 17, 2005. They were wrong. The Liberals said Chuck Cadman was not going to run again. They were wrong.

The Liberals said that we offered Chuck Cadman a \$1 million life insurance policy. They were wrong. The Liberals asserted that I was somehow involved in organizing the meetings. They are wrong.

The Liberals claim outrage, but the fact is that they have had this story over a year so any outrage they demonstrate now is entirely synthetic.

[Translation]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I asked the parliamentary secretary a question, but he did not answer. I will ask him again in French.

During his conversation with Lawrence Martin, he not only said that Mr. Cadman was concerned and that he and his family would suffer financial insecurity if there was an election, but also that representatives of the Conservative Party were making offers to Mr. Cadman to deal with his family's financial insecurity in the event of an election.

What offers and what financial insecurity was he talking about? He needs to answer the question and tell the truth.

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I always tell the House the truth. Always. That is my job. Yes, it is true.

Moreover, everyone in this House knows that the offer made on May 19, 2005 was the only offer made to Mr. Cadman. It was the only offer.

As I said last week and repeated yesterday, the comment by Lawrence Martin, who said that I knew what had been discussed at the meeting of May 19, 2005, was not a true statement. Chuck Cadman himself said what he had been offered.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, does the parliamentary secretary admit that this conversation happened, that he said to Mr. Martin that Mr. Cadman had financial insecurity for his family because of an election, and that the party was working on something to solve it?

Did he say so to journalist Lawrence Martin, yes or no? He needs to answer.

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. I did not have any awareness of the specifics of the meeting of May 19. I said that. I said that, in fact, in the very same column that the leader of the Liberal Party is now quoting.

Yesterday in an interview on CTV with Mike Duffy, the deputy leader of the Liberal Party said that “the basic issue here” is: “Was a member of the Canadian Parliament offered a financial inducement to change his vote?” The answer is no.

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish we could believe that answer.

For nine days now, the government has failed to be straight with Canadians about the offer it made to Chuck Cadman. Sandra Buckler and Ryan Sparrow from the Conservatives have refused repeated offers by the media to go on record denying that any kind of financial inducement was ever offered to Mr. Cadman.

So I ask a perfectly simple question: did any Conservative official ever offer a financial inducement of any kind to Mr. Cadman, yes or no?

• (1420)

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** The answer is no, Mr. Speaker.

The answer is no. There was no financial inducement made to Chuck Cadman. We have been clear about that. Chuck Cadman said there was no offer of any kind of financial inducement. Doug Finley and Tom Flanagan have both issued a statement to that effect.

I wish the Liberals would just simply read the statements and take the word of the three people who were themselves at the meeting. It is pretty clear.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to explain what the Prime Minister meant when he referred to financial considerations on the tape.

Ryan Sparrow, a Conservative Party spokesperson, has had six opportunities to tell the media that no financial inducement was ever offered, but he has refused to do so. As for the Prime Minister, he is in hibernation.

The question is simple: did someone in the Conservative Party ever offer Chuck Cadman a financial inducement?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** That is the same question, Mr. Speaker. The answer is no.

*[English]*

I was hoping the deputy leader of the Liberal Party would take the opportunity to correct the record of what he said yesterday in the House of Commons when he declared Chuck Cadman was not going to run again. Chuck Cadman himself said, and I quote from the *Penticton Herald* of May 20, 2005, “Despite his illness, Cadman says he’s planning to run again”.

In the *Edmonton Journal*, “Chuck Cadman...who is being treated for cancer, but has said he will run again. ‘Oh yes. Yes, I’ve already made that commitment, that I will run again...’”, said Chuck Cadman on CTV.... The MP, first elected as a Reformer in 1997, has consistently said he plans to run again”.

Why will the deputy leader of the Liberal Party not apologize, withdraw and admit that he misled this House?

\* \* \*

*[Translation]*

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government’s plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is a real gift to the oil and gas companies. It has, moreover, been roundly criticized by both Quebec and Ontario. With 2006 as its reference year, this plan ignores the efforts by the Quebec manufacturing industry, which cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% between 1990 and 2005. In comparison, emissions resulting from oil and gas extraction in Alberta have increased 300% since 1990.

Will the minister admit that his plan to combat climate change is tailor-made for the oil and gas companies?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, not in the least. We are working very hard to regulate major industries. We have consulted with representatives of Canadian industry. We have inaugurated measures for the forest industry, acknowledging their cogeneration efforts. We have inaugurated additional measures against global warming and greenhouse gas emissions from the oil sands.

We have been working hard and have achieved some real results, something that has not been done since the Bloc got here 18 years ago.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this minister is to the environment what the governor of New York State is to morality. He mentions the carbon exchange, so let us talk about that. This functions according to intensity targets, and the base year is 2006, which favours the oil and gas companies. As for his compensation system, it recognizes only a tiny percentage of the efforts made by industry between 1990 and 2006.

Let us hear a frank admission from the minister that his actions are tailor-made for the oil companies.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our national plan, the first real plan for Canada in this country's history, set as its goal an absolute reduction of 20% in greenhouse gas emissions. This was absolutely essential.

We are taking action. The only thing the Bloc Québécois could do is to hold a national conversation on the environment. It talks; we take action.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative plan penalizes Quebec and parallels the Alberta government's timetable for the oil sands sector. In addition to echoing the oil companies' development calendar, it does not impose real reductions until 2018, 10 years from now.

Does the Minister of the Environment realize that his plan is hypocritical and that not only does it not reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to the oil sands, but, according to the government's own documents, it will allow them to increase by 100% from 2006 to 2020? That is completely hypocritical.

• (1425)

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have a real plan to reduce greenhouse gases by 330 megatonnes. This is the most significant plan in the history of Canada. We are taking more significant action than almost any other country in the world will take over the next 12 years. We are doing something new for this country. We have a real plan to reduce greenhouse gases, something the Bloc Québécois has never been able to do, since it is always in opposition. This team over here is taking action.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, not only will his regulatory framework for greenhouse gases benefit oil companies to the detriment of Quebec and the manufacturing sector, but the Conservatives also announced \$240 million in the recent budget for a carbon capture and storage pilot project. In addition to that gift, oil companies continue to benefit from accelerated capital cost allowance.

Does the Minister of the Environment realize that his approach is one of polluter-paid rather than polluter-pay?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not at all the case. The budget presented here by the Minister of Finance was supported by the Government of Saskatchewan and one of its public companies, SaskPower, for this new technology.

The real problem is that the only thing the Bloc Québécois can do here in Ottawa is ask questions. The exercise of power requires real ideas and real plans for the reduction of greenhouse gases. We are taking action.

\* \* \*

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the mission in Afghanistan is not working; it is a mistake. Quality of life is worse and violence is on the rise. A study by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation shows that peace efforts are disconnected and lack support. Spending on the war in Afghanistan will be \$1 billion over budget.

Why do the Conservatives, with the help of the Liberals, want to extend this out-of-control war?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, from 2001 to December 2007 Canada has invested a considerable amount in our military commitment to Afghanistan, this is true. It is a significant investment that is fundamental to Canadian interests to ensure the success of the Canadian reconstruction mission in Afghanistan.

There is no question that our military commitment comes at a significant cost, but it is one of the commitments we made to the international community, to the people of Afghanistan and to our NATO allies. We make no apologies for giving our troops the equipment they need in the field to protect their lives and succeed in their mission.

I know that the NDP will criticize every aspect, but we want our military to succeed.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there are two paths regarding the future of Afghanistan: a path to war and a path of peace.

The Conservatives are accelerating the process of the path toward war. That is very clear. What they are committing us to today and over the next few days with a vote is to three more years down the wrong path, with the support of the Liberals.

If the Conservatives are such good managers of this war, how is it that the government has allowed the cost of the war in Afghanistan to exceed the budget by \$1 billion this year alone, and what does the future hold?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP may choose to look at the figures and not be concerned about the lives of Canadians and the lives of Afghans, but we will put them first. We will ensure that they have the equipment they need.

The reality is that the mission in Afghanistan has produced considerable success. Much progress and positive change has been made for the people of Afghanistan and the security situation continues to improve.

Last week we had the benefit of a group of women legislators from Afghanistan visiting with us, sharing the importance of the work that Canada has done and asking us to remain committed so that women's rights, their freedoms, their liberties and their progress can be protected. We will do that.



*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

## ETHICS

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary claims that all that the Conservatives offered Chuck Cadman was a chance to rejoin their caucus. His theory has been disproved by none other than Tom Flanagan, in his book *Harper's Team*. Mr. Flanagan writes: "Chuck was gracious when he received us in his Parliamentary office, but he was visibly tired, and I could see that he wasn't up to negotiating a return to caucus".

Could the parliamentary secretary give us an answer with a hint of truth this time?

• (1430)

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Laval—Les Îles did not get the facts straight in her question. There were three parts to our offer to Mr. Cadman: first, to rejoin our caucus; second, to run as a Conservative candidate; and third, to receive our help in order to get re-elected as a Conservative candidate. There were three parts, and not just what the member presented in her question.

[English]

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in his book, Tom Flanagan does not say that the Conservatives were interested in having Chuck Cadman return to their caucus. No, their interest was motivated only by the fact that, and I quote again, "Chuck Cadman was a swing voter who could, at that time, trigger an election and they were prepared to make one last desperate try to win him over".

Whom should we believe, the parliamentary secretary or the man who ran the last Conservative campaign?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not asking my colleague to believe me. It is the nature of question period; I can understand the adversarial nature of it. All we have asked is that the Liberals respect and believe the word of Chuck Cadman, who himself said that the only offer or anything that he had from anybody was the offer of an unopposed nomination. That is what Chuck Cadman himself said.

**Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, why would Mr. Cadman tell his wife that he received an offer of a \$1 million life insurance policy if it was not true? Why would he lie to her? Why would Mr. Cadman tell his daughter and son-in-law the same thing and each of them at a different time? It cannot be explained away as just a bad moment for a very sick man, or a misunderstanding, or a mishearing. Why would he lie to them? Why, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me just take a minute here and say that I agree with the deputy leader of the Liberal Party when he said on *Mike Duffy Live* last night, "The basic issue here" is "was a member of the Canadian Parliament offered a financial inducement to change his vote". The answer to the question is no.

**Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is not an answer. The parliamentary secretary—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for York Centre has the floor.

**Hon. Ken Dryden:** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is a thinking person. He knows that he has to try to answer every day. He must have asked himself these very same questions.

It is not just what the Cadman family said. They described the scene; what Mr. Cadman's reaction to the offer had been; how he was angry and offended; how the family was shocked; how Mrs. Cadman considered it a bribe. All their stories are consistent. There was no misunderstanding or mishearing.

Why would Mr. Cadman lie to his wife and family? Why would they lie to us?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for York Centre is admitting the fact that Dona Cadman last week said that she believes and trusts the Prime Minister of Canada. He can leave that part out all he wants.

If the member for York Centre really believes in his story, if he really believes in all this anger and bravado that he is throwing at this government, I would like to juxtapose that with the fact that we really appreciated his support on the confidence vote last night on the government's environment agenda.

With all the sitting that those members have been doing on that side of the House of Commons, they must have some awful saddle sores.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the government is helping the oil industry in the west, nothing is being done for Quebec. Two years ago, the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec spoke of a sort of Marshall plan to revitalize the regions.

If we look at the evolution of his budget, his plan is more regressive than progressive. The agency's budget was \$439 million in 2005-06, when the Conservatives arrived, and the budget for 2008-09 is \$287 million, or barely half of that.

How can the minister talk about developing the regions of Quebec when he is cutting their funding?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should take a better look at the figures. At Canada Economic Development, we have a roughly \$200 million annual envelope to support the economic development of the 14 regions of Quebec.

In addition to that, we have money allocated to MRIF, the municipal rural infrastructure fund, among others.

For example, for the 400th anniversary of Quebec City, \$46 million has been granted to Canada Economic Development for the festivities and to meet the needs of Quebec City for these festivities.

• (1435)

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what we want is for Quebec to have full power to develop its own regions. And until then, Quebec has the right to have its fair share.

In western Canada, where the economy is booming, the government is planning a \$16 million increase in the economic development budget for 2008-09, while in Quebec, which has been hit by the forestry and manufacturing crisis, the government is cutting \$107 million.

Does the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec think he is still representing the interests of Quebec well when his own government is focusing on the west and its rich oil companies?

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with the \$200 million we have at Canada Economic Development, we have to accomplish our department's mission to help the most vulnerable regions and the regions with shrinking populations.

A large part of the \$200 million budget envelope is injected into a number of regions in Quebec. For example, when we saved the train in the Gaspésie, \$20 million from our envelope went to the Gaspé, and the Bloc Québécois did not even lift a finger. That is what we did to save the train in the Gaspé.

\* \* \*

**MANUFACTURING AND FORESTRY INDUSTRIES**

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the manufacturing and forestry industries are in crisis and the only assistance provided by the government is a \$1 billion plan that gives \$216 million to Quebec over three years. However, when it comes to helping polluting industries in western Canada, the government is exceedingly generous. By way of evidence, I cite the \$240 million pilot project provided in the budget for carbon capture and storage.

My question is a simple one. Will the minister improve his assistance plan by March 31?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are giving money to all the provinces to reduce greenhouse gases. Nothing like this was ever done by the previous government. For Quebec, the amount is \$350 million. It is more than what the Bloc and the Government of Quebec asked for. We are

acting. We are helping our colleagues in Quebec City to reduce greenhouse gases. We have come up with real results for Canada, for the first time in its history.

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government has no problem finding funds in causes dear to it. The fact that there is a cost overrun with the mission in Afghanistan of \$1 billion this fiscal year does not seem to pose a financial problem for the government.

Given the ease with which the government can find an additional \$1 billion for the military sector, why can it not respond to the pressing needs of the manufacturing and forestry sectors from the \$10.2 billion surplus in the current year?

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec is receiving \$217 million of the billion dollars put in trust for community development in Quebec regions. An agreement was duly signed by our two levels of government. Furthermore, the department I head, Canada Economic Development, is helping the manufacturing sector. We are helping business in the sector wishing to expand or start up. Our records show that some 560 projects have been accepted in the manufacturing sector, for a total of 11,000 jobs saved and 4,000 created.

\* \* \*

[English]

**MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the OPP has evidence to suggest the environment minister met with Larry O'Brien to discuss the possibility of bribing Terry Kilrea with a federal appointment. The OPP, on tape, confirmed that it would be forwarding this file to the RCMP to investigate the minister's involvement. The next day it flipped. Why?

In a letter to my office, the minister's chief of staff now admits that he made several phone calls to the OPP in the hours before that reverse decision. Who authorized these calls? Who okayed calls to the police on the eve of a minister being investigated?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we see the tinfoil hats getting a little tight again over there.

On December 14, the commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, one of the most respected senior police officers in the country, Julian Fantino, issued a release saying:

The Ontario Provincial Police's investigation of - and subsequent charges against - an elected Ottawa official was not influenced in any way by federal officials. The OPP does not permit the media or politics to influence how it undertakes investigations. Any suggestion that the OPP was influenced by anyone or anything... of this investigation is nonsense.

That is what the OPP said.

• (1440)

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, does the OPP know about these phone calls? Because the government can distort facts, it can bully, it can push forward and abuse the courts with frivolous lawsuits, but it will not stop us from asking questions and getting the truth.

On December 11, the OPP confirmed several times, on tape, that it was about to forward the file to the RCMP, then suddenly, after the minister's chief of staff made calls, that changed. He claims in his letter to the OPP that he had "no plans to forward this file to the RCMP".

Who is lying, the police or the minister's chief of staff?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the chief of the conspiracy theory brigade opposite is suggesting that the commissioner and the members of the Ontario Provincial Police are not telling the truth. Here is what Commissioner Fantino said:

Any suggestion that the OPP was influenced by anyone or anything except the pursuit of the facts in any part of this investigation is nonsense.

The member owes an apology to Commissioner Fantino and the good men and women of the Ontario Provincial Police for calling into question their integrity.

\* \* \*

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government quietly released an update to its sham of a climate change plan.

It is the minister's 3D plan and it goes like this: for 10 years, deny the existence of climate change, then delay action, and finally, to complete the trilogy, deceive the Canadian people. Deny, delay, deceive.

Yesterday the minister presented nothing, no regulations, no analysis, and no support from any group anywhere. The minister is just not paying attention. When will the Prime Minister give Canada a minister who is focusing on his job, and is not consumed with legal and ethical problems of his own making?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the arguments by the member for Ottawa South are so weak and without merit. He could not even convince a majority of members of his own caucus to join him in opposing our environmental plan.

I read in the *Globe and Mail* on January 25, 2008, an article which stated:

[The Liberal member for Ottawa South] acknowledged that previous Liberal governments also lacked the political will to tackle the rising emissions from Alberta's oil sands—

## Oral Questions

He said, "I don't know if we really had the resolve". That party did not have the resolve to fight global warming. This party does.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** We saw his resolve in Walkerton, Mr. Speaker. That is where we saw his resolve.

[Translation]

A plan to combat climate change was ready when the Conservatives came to power. They ignored it. Now the Conservatives have a plan with no regulations, with objectives beyond reach, criticized by environmentalists and a source of shame for Canada internationally.

When will the government acknowledge its failure and submit an ambitious plan that will give Canadians real results?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals look back and wonder what might have been. After 13 long years, they were finally getting around to addressing this problem.

If they only had a fifth term, they would have been able to take action. The Liberals get an A for their announcements, but a D for follow-through.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the federal Liberal Party whose failures on the environmental file are well documented, yesterday our government followed-through on our tough environmental agenda by requiring oil sands plants to use carbon capture and storage, and essentially banning the construction of new dirty coal power.

Last night this government's environmental agenda and policies were put to a confidence vote in the House of Commons. Can our outstanding Minister of the Environment tell the House about the outcome of that vote?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is one of the best questions I have ever heard from that side of the House.

The reality is the Liberals do not have a right to complain if they do not vote. The reality is the Liberal Party of Canada voted confidence in this party, in this government, on our environmental record.

If the Liberal Party could do anything, perhaps it could call Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and ask him to finally close those dirty coal-fired plants that he promised to close last year and failed to deliver.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the number of leaks that go unpunished is on the rise and the Conservatives cannot be trusted to fix the problem. The Conservatives' NAFTA leak and the Liberals' income trust leak are two recent examples.

### Oral Questions

Breach of trust provisions in the Criminal Code cannot be applied to most leaks and the Security of Information Act was struck down in 2006. Internal investigations and disciplinary measures just will not wash.

When will the Conservatives introduce measures to close the gaps in the law and get tough on leaks?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are certainly prepared to do that. It is true that one of the provisions was struck down by the courts, but we responded in a report to Parliament in July 2007.

I should point out to the hon. member that there are a number of legislative provisions in the CSIS Act and he should not forget that section 122 of the Criminal Code provides for a breach of trust. There are many provisions available.

\* \* \*

### CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the former Conservative minister, Michael Wilson, now the government's Ambassador to the U.S., was aware of the NAFTA leak that interfered in the American democratic process before the story broke.

Mr. Wilson is now hiding behind a so-called private conversation to deny any wrong. That is not good enough.

An internal probe by the Prime Minister's staff will not get to the bottom of this scandal. When will the RCMP be called in to investigate the actions of Ian Brodie, Michael Wilson, and all the other actors in the NAFTA leak?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are taking this matter very seriously. It is why the Clerk of the Privy Council is right now carrying out a full and complete investigation.

I want to express to the hon. member the importance of our free trade agreement with the U.S. We have a good free trade agreement. It has been productive. It has been very good for job creation in our country and also in the U.S. and Mexico. We hope to continue to build on the good relationship that we are having with the U.S. in the near future.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Ian Brodie, leaked sensitive diplomatic conversations to the media. Then, a classified memo was leaked from DFAIT. Now, we learn that the Canadian Ambassador to Washington, Michael Wilson, leaked the same information to a reporter. Coincidence? I think not.

We have three leaks with a desired result to interfere and influence the Democratic primary.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that Ian Brodie and Michael Wilson are under investigation and that they have stepped aside? If not, why not?

[Translation]

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister said last week, this leak is a serious

matter and that is why the Clerk of the Privy Council is currently conducting a full and detailed investigation.

I should point out to the hon. member that trade and diplomatic relations between Canada and the United States are important. These relations will remain good and valuable. NAFTA has been good for all countries involved—Canada, Mexico and the United States—and we will continue to work in harmony with the Americans.

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the government is lacking transparency to such an extent, in its management of confidential and secret information leaks involving our relations with the United States. The government, which promised to be open and transparent, continues to break that promise when we put questions to it regarding this embarrassing leak.

Will Ian Brodie and Michael Wilson leave their jobs during the investigation to determine whether or not they gave away this secret information, yes or no?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Clerk of the Privy Council is investigating the matter. The investigation is going on right now, and I can assure the hon. member that, just as we work in a transparent fashion for Canadians, we are going to do the same in this case. This is a very serious matter, and the Prime Minister has said so. We are investigating.

The Clerk of the Privy Council is currently investigating, and we will definitely get to the bottom of this issue.

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### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Brenda Martin has lost a constitutional challenge to obtain her release from a Mexican prison. She is discouraged and feels completely abandoned by her government.

Brenda Martin has been languishing in prison for two years and the Government of Canada has not provided any assistance.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs take over for his inexperienced colleague and draft an official diplomatic letter to the Government of Mexico protesting this travesty of justice? Will he defend Ms. Martin's life?

● (1450)

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like all members in this House, I am very concerned by Ms. Martin's health and the conditions of her imprisonment. Like all my colleagues, I want a quick and effective resolution of this case.

A number of representations have been made to the highest authorities on behalf of Ms. Martin. Today, I spoke by telephone with my counterpart, Mexico's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and I expressed my concerns to him. I told him that the legal process was too long and that a solution to this case should be found as quickly as possible.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Brenda Martin's legal rights have been trampled. Her rights, guaranteed by international treaties, were ignored and now even her constitutional rights under Mexican law, as we see, have been denied.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs take control of this case and deliver to Mexico, and I appreciate that he has spoken to the minister, in the strongest possible language, a formal, diplomatic note of protest demanding that Mexico correct this total miscarriage of justice and free Brenda right now?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like my hon. colleagues, we are concerned. I am concerned. The government is concerned about this case. We are doing our best to help Ms. Martin.

It is an important case and like I said before, I had a telephone conversation with my counterpart. I expressed to her the concern of our government and that we wanted this case to be resolved as soon as possible. I told her that the legal process is far too long in this case and it must be resolved as soon as possible.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ETHICS**

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday, in response to a question, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services confirmed that no financial offer was made to Chuck Cadman to get him to change his vote. However, on a tape, the Prime Minister contradicted the parliamentary secretary, saying that a financial offer was made, but that he did not know the details.

Will someone tell us who was telling the truth and who was not: the parliamentary secretary or the Prime Minister?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps neither. There was no financial offer.

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives can try to rewrite history, but there is one thing they cannot do, and that is erase the tape. On the tape, the Prime Minister says that the offer made to Chuck was just to replace “financial considerations” that he might lose due to an election.

Can the Prime Minister clarify what “financial considerations” he was talking about?

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there was no financial offer. Chuck Cadman himself said so. The Bloc is accusing the Prime Minister, here in the House, of being involved in a crime, but their facts are wrong, wrong, wrong.

[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Trade told the media that she would intervene on behalf of Brenda Martin because Mrs. Martin was a Canadian. We have all seen how little help that has been.

What about those Canadians who are facing the death penalty? What criteria is the minority Conservative government using to pick and choose which Canadians it will assist and which ones it will abandon?

[Translation]

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to repeat, here in the House, that Ms. Martin's case is of great concern to us all, including the government and the members of the opposition. We are working with the government of Mexico to resolve this case as quickly as possible.

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[English]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am really proud of this government's commitment to Canada's north. After 13 years of Liberal rule, which included a member of the cabinet from the north, northerners got nothing. In fact, the *Yellowknifer* has reported that this government has given a whole lot more than the previous Liberal governments.

While participating in the opening ceremonies of the Arctic Winter Games, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Sport also spoke of a strong northern agenda. Could the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tell the House what else we are doing to get great results for the northerners and their families?

● (1455)

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the *Yellowknifer* newspaper that urges all members of Parliament to support the budget and the government. Why? Because we have increased the northern residence deduction so people can keep more of their own money in their pockets. We are delivering \$300 million in the northern housing trust to improve living conditions and \$720 million for a new state of the art icebreaker. We are protecting sensitive environment areas and expanding parks. We are building an Arctic research station.

This is about promoting the north. It is about believing in the north. It is about protecting our sovereignty. We are getting it done for northerners.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of the Environment introduced his brown plan. He missed another opportunity to act. Since the Conservatives came to power, they have picked up where the Liberals left off. No green legislation has been adopted and no regulations have been announced. The NDP has no confidence in this government, because it refuses to take action against pollution.

Why does the minister think that Canadians should pay, instead of major polluters?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, polluter pays is one of the principles of our plan. The good news is this. While I do not have the confidence of the member from Skeena—Bulkley Valley and the NDP, I do have the full confidence, the full support, the full enthusiasm of the Liberal Party of Canada.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is not easy to miss the mark on pollution regulations, but I guess getting a free pass from the former Liberal environment minister makes life a little more easy. All we got from the Liberals was deny, delay, de-Liberal.

These weak regulations are a license to pollute more. They do not kick in for years. They are reliant upon unproven technologies. However, here is the kicker. Taxpayers have to flip for the bill.

Why does the government not just end the subsidies and make big polluters, not hard-working Canadians, foot the bill for all the pollution they are creating?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have good news for the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

The Conservative government finally has begun to get rid of the tax subsidies given to the oil sands by our friends opposite in the Liberal Party. We are taking real action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an absolute 20%. That will put Canada in a leadership position. We will do more in the next 12 years than virtually any country in the world.

While we may not have the full support and enthusiasm of the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, we have the full support of the Liberal Party of Canada.

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**HEALTH**

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear the provinces and territories have no partner in the Conservative government in health or in health care.

The Minister of Health has failed twice in his meetings with health ministers to help them fulfill his government's campaign promises on wait times. Afraid of another 13 on 1 pile on, he simply cancelled the meeting in December. Now we learn that he must be hiding under a stretcher in a hallway somewhere, while he is cancelling the meeting for June.

Will the minister explain to the House why he refuses to meet with his provincial counterparts?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what the hon. member is talking about. Indeed, the meeting last December was postponed as a result of a request from the provinces, not as a demand from the federal government. In fact, we have agreed to a meeting later on this year.

When it comes to the issue that she mentioned in Alberta, I have been in contact with the Alberta minister of health. He is continuing his investigation of the issue.

All is sweetness and light when it comes to the provincial and federal health ministers.

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**TOURISM INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's tourism industry is a \$67 billion a year economic engine for Canada, employing some 1.6 million Canadians in over 200,000 businesses. It is a great industry. Unlike our Liberal members opposite, we are treating the tourism industry as the economic enabler that it truly is.

Could the Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism tell the House what measures our government is taking to support Canada's dynamic tourism industry?

● (1500)

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent work as chair of the tourism caucus of the House.

Tourism has strong support from the government. We are spending \$800 million over two years on tourism. In addition, budget 2008 has allocated \$24 million for tourism related infrastructure on the St. Lawrence and Saguenay, \$9 million for national museums and \$25 million for the Olympic torch relay. Tourism income has increased for 17 consecutive quarters.

We are working hard to help achieve significant progress for tourism in our country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last December, the Minister of International Cooperation told this House that the government did not plan to close the Montreal office of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. International peacekeeping organizations are already complaining about the lack of staff trained in French. This is part of the Pearson centre's mandate. Since then, the Montreal office has been empty and calls have been transferred to the Ottawa office.

Can the Minister of International Cooperation confirm whether or not the Pearson centre in Montreal is closed?

[English]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the closing. As I said, there are no plans to close. In fact, I will commit to look into the situation and get back to the member.

\* \* \*

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives cannot be trusted to stand up for Canadians abroad. We see that on the death penalty file in torture cases, and we now see it in the case of Canadian citizen Brenda Martin in Mexico.

Brenda Martin has not received any semblance of justice in Mexico. She has not received any help from her own government. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Trade was just in Mexico and ignored her. Her health has begun to decline and she is now on a suicide watch in a prison hospital.

When will the Prime Minister stand up for Brenda Martin?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is so far from the truth. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, myself and a lot of members of the cabinet raised this case with the Mexican authorities. We are very deeply concerned about her health and the conditions of her detention. What we are doing here is helping her to have a positive resolution of her case as soon as possible.

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#### WAYS AND MEANS

##### NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1) I wish to table a notice of ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 26, 2008, and to enact provisions to preserve the fiscal plan set out in that budget.

I am also providing notice today of our intention to include with this ways and means motion language to protect Canada's fiscal framework from the effects of Bill C-253 which would risk sending the federal government back into deficit.

I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion.

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Due to the unusual circumstance that has required the finance minister to do what he is apparently doing, I wonder if you would consider the fact that this matter has already been passed by the majority of this House of Commons and therefore the motion put forward by the minister that the bill not go before the Senate is out of order.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I believe you will be well familiar with the fact that this approach is entirely in order. We are dealing with a different matter than Bill C-253 and the approach that is being adopted in this ways and means motion is entirely appropriate.

#### Points of Order

I invite my friend to actually take the time to review the ways and means motion so that he can gain a fuller appreciation of its approach. I would be happy to return to you, Mr. Speaker, with further submissions later on.

• (1505)

**The Speaker:** I am sure there will be further argument on this point once the House has seen the ways and means motion that has been tabled.

\* \* \*

#### POINTS OF ORDER

##### RESPONSE TO ORAL QUESTION

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order with regard to yesterday's question period when the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food misinformed the House on milling wheat prices available to western farmers through the Canadian Wheat Board.

I read a Canadian Wheat Board bases price contract program. Farmers could have availed themselves of prices ranging above \$700 per tonne. This is more than twice the price the minister said. I am willing to table that information before the House if I am permitted—

**The Speaker:** I think the hon. member for Malpeque, who has considerable experience in matters procedural, is aware that disagreement of the facts is not a point of order.

I am sure the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food will appreciate any assistance the hon. member can give him and he could pass his figures and statistics over to the minister. I am sure if the minister feels that some kind of correction in his statement is necessary after reviewing the facts and figures the hon. member for Malpeque is producing, he will want to make the necessary corrections to the record. However, to get into an argument about it under the guise of a question of privilege or a point of order, in my view, is not in order.

Is the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food rising on the same point?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would be very happy to see those reports coming from the Wheat Board on a monthly basis but it keeps denying me. The member for Malpeque certainly proves that he is never last but he is also never pertinent.

**The Speaker:** Yes, you see the difficulty we get into when we get into points of order that are not really points of order.

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#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**The Speaker:** The Chair would like to take a brief moment to provide some information to the House regarding the management of private members' business.

*Privilege*

[*Translation*]

After a replenishment of the order of precedence, the Chair has developed the practice of reviewing the items there so that the House can be alerted to bills which, at first glance, appear to infringe on the financial initiative of the Crown. The aim of this practice is to allow members the opportunity to intervene in a timely fashion to present their views about the need for a royal recommendation.

[*English*]

Accordingly, following the March 3 replenishment of the order of precedence with 15 new items, I wish to inform the House that two bills give the Chair some concern as to the spending provisions they contemplate. They are: Bill C-490, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (application for supplement, retroactive payments and other amendments), standing in the name of the member for Alfred-Pellan; and Bill C-445, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for loss of retirement income), standing in the name of the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

I would encourage hon. members who wish to make arguments regarding the need for a royal recommendation in the case of Bill C-490 and Bill C-445, or in the case of any of the other bills now on the order of precedence, to do so at an early opportunity.

[*Translation*]

I thank the House for its attention.

[*English*]

The Chair has notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Ajax—Pickering. I will hear him now.

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### PRIVILEGE

#### ALLEGED OBSTRUCTION OF MEMBER IN THE CONDUCT OF HIS DUTIES

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege arising out of a letter I received from Peter Downard, a lawyer at Fasken Martineau on behalf of Mr. Chris Froggatt, chief of staff to the Minister of the Environment. I am raising this matter at the earliest opportunity as I was officially served with this letter yesterday afternoon.

I believe that by instructing his counsel to send this letter, Mr. Froggatt has deliberately obstructed and interfered with me in the conduct of my duties as a member of Parliament and is, therefore, in contempt of the House of Commons and has violated my privileges as a member.

As noted on page 84 of Marleau and Montpetit, it states:

Over the years, Members have brought to the attention of the House instances which they believed were attempts to obstruct, impede, interfere, intimidate or molest them, their staffs or individuals who had some business with them or the House. In a technical sense, such actions are considered to be contempts of the House and not breaches of privilege. Since these matters relate so closely to the right of the House to the services of its Members, they are often considered to be breaches of privilege.

Also on page 84 of Marleau and Montpetit it states:

...that parliamentary privilege includes the right of a member to discharge his responsibilities as a member of the House free from threats or attempts at intimidation.

I believe that Mr. Froggatt has crossed this line.

In his letter of March 7, 2008, Mr. Downard alleged that I defamed Mr. Froggatt during an interview on CTV *Newsnet* and threatens to launch a libel suit should I not comply with his demands for an apology and retraction.

Specifically, Mr. Downard writes:

Your statements in the CTV *Newsnet* were false and seriously defamatory of Mr. Froggatt. A reasonable viewer would have understood your statements to mean that Mr. Froggatt had interfered with or attempted to interfere with a police investigation into [the Minister of the Environment] and caused or attempted to cause the OPP to alter a decision you allege the OPP had made to forward its file to the RCMP so that the RCMP could conduct an investigation of [the Minister of the Environment].

I deny all of the charges that have been levelled at me by Mr. Froggatt. In particular, I deny that anything that has been said is defamatory or untrue.

At the root of my question of privilege is Mr. Froggatt's attempt to prevent me from debating the issue of conduct by the Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, serious questions have been raised in the House about the conduct of the minister during the 2006 municipal election in the city of Ottawa. You are also aware that the Ontario Provincial Police have charged Ottawa mayor, Larry O'Brien, with two counts of bribery under the Criminal Code.

At the end of its investigation, the OPP indicated that it would be forwarding its files to the RCMP for further investigation. The next day, the OPP withdrew that statement. As far as we are aware, the only intervening events between those two statements were a series of phone calls made by Mr. Froggatt to the OPP.

I have repeatedly questioned the Minister of the Environment about his involvement in both the actions of Mayor O'Brien and his dealings with the OPP in this matter. It was those questions that led to the CTV *Newsnet* interview, of which Mr. Froggatt now complains.

It is clear that the primary goal of Mr. Froggatt is to prevent me from continuing to raise the very serious questions that I have about his actions and the actions of the Minister of the Environment with respect to the OPP investigation.

Mr. Froggatt is well aware that he is unable to directly control what I say in this House. As a result, he has chosen to attempt to intimidate me outside the House by threatening a lawsuit should I refuse to withdraw my earlier comments and refrain from accusing him of inappropriate activity.

I believe that the involvement of the Minister of the Environment in a bribery scandal and improper interference by the chief of staff to a minister are two issues that are clearly of public importance. Indeed, I have laid these issues before the House on a number of occasions. Mr. Froggatt's attempt to stifle debate is clearly a violation of my privileges.

As I have read from the letter that I received from Mr. Downard, I have a copy of it to be tabled in the House.

Mr. Speaker, should you find there is a prima facie case of privilege I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.



*Privilege*

• (1510)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as you and all members of the House are aware, the privileges that extend to a member of Parliament that their speech is free from any consequences in terms of libel or other harm that they may cause and free from any responsibility is restricted to their duties as members of Parliament in this House.

There is a big difference between our Westminster parliamentary system, based on the mother Parliament in Britain, and as it has evolved here in Canada, and those of, say, the Republic of Russia right now where one becomes immune from any form of prosecution or any form of liability simply by one's status as a member of the house.

The fact that one is a member of Parliament does not give one licence to make reckless accusations that harm the reputation of any individual in this country, regardless of one's position or status.

Any comments that are made outside of this chamber, outside of one's direct role in the House, are comments for which a member must assume responsibility, comments which they should recognize have risks and that they should have a basis on which they can defend the truthfulness and accuracy of those remarks.

Were it to be otherwise, the situation that would result would be one that would be most unfortunate. Any member of the House could speak freely to the newspapers, on television, communicate in any form or fashion they wished, and have their comments reported widely which could harm the reputation of all kinds of private individuals or public figures, regardless of the basis for them.

Our parliamentary privilege does not work like that. We are simply restricted to comments made in the House. On that basis, I think it is very easy for you, Mr. Speaker, to dispose of this matter because there simply is no privilege being interfered with.

A very unfortunate trend has been coming from the official opposition in the House. It is an official opposition whose members have resorted to an ongoing program of character assassination. I recognize that they consider that to be part of the political game and they can do it in the House with the protection and the privileges of the House, but they must take seriously the responsibilities of every Canadian citizen outside the House.

They are not freed from that burden nor are they freed from the duties of every other citizen when they step outside the House and make their comments. They are in the same position of having to defend their public statements and utterances as every other Canadian citizen. If they make reckless and false accusations of criminal behaviour, which is the worst kind of bully tactic, if they go out there and say that someone is an ax murderer who is not, that someone is a criminal who is not, and they say those things without any consequences, that would be a serious affront to our democratic system and our Parliament.

We protect members within the House to allow for freedom of speech but we also respect the rights of every citizen and recognize that there is a difference between what Parliament means and what the House means. It is by virtue of membership and participation in the House that those privileges exist. It is for the protection of what

happens in this chamber that those privileges exist. It is not to give individuals licence to engage in reckless behaviour and destroy people's reputations without any basis, which is exactly the conduct that the member continues to engage in outside the House.

On that basis, he must, as any other citizen outside the House, be prepared to defend those comments, not to cry like a baby that he is not allowed to say what he wants. He must assume the adult responsibilities for the truth of the comments he makes. If they are not true, then he should own up to the lack of evidence and own up to the lack of truth and be prepared to defend those words in court. That is all he is being asked to do.

It is not an unreasonable proposition for any individual or any citizen. It is the basis of our democracy. That is why laws against libel and slander exist. They are as old as our traditions in this western Parliament. They are laws that come out of our common law tradition to protect the people. While it may not be consistent with the Liberals' strategy, when they have no policies to talk about and no facts on which to base their accusations, they still engage in repeated false accusations that harm the individual reputations of people, harm their families and their loved ones and ruin people's lives. This is what that man is seeking the right to be able to do without consequences.

• (1515)

A member cannot do that, by virtue of being a member of Parliament, outside this House. A member can make his or her best efforts in this House, engage in debate, and that privilege exists, but there is no such privilege outside this House.

The fact that this question is even being entertained in front of you, Mr. Speaker, the fact that it has been raised, demonstrates the dangerous path that we are going down.

The particular case is quite clear. The police themselves have said that his accusations are false. The police have said that none of the interference which on television he alleges existed, exists. The police have said that in a public forum.

The facts do not bear out anything he said. If he disagrees with this, he can attempt to rely on those facts in a court of law for comments he wishes to make outside this House, but privileges of this House, and the privilege to speak, are restricted to inside this House.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, my comments are very clear. I stand by what I say both in this House and outside of this House.

The issue is when members of Parliament in trying to execute their duties as members of Parliament ask legitimate questions of the government about matters of deep concern to the country, matters that are well reported, are sued by individuals who try to do indirectly what they cannot do directly, to try to intimidate individuals into not asking legitimate, fair questions on matters of fact, in my opinion, that is a serious attack upon the privileges of members of Parliament.

I believe the courts are being abused and used to try to stifle the abilities of members of Parliament to ask questions.

**The Speaker:** In the circumstances, I feel I am in a position to dispose of this matter.

*Business of Supply*

The hon. member for Ajax—Pickering has not sent me a copy of the letter that is the basis for his complaint. I am sure he will send that over and I will review it before I make a final decision on this matter, but unless the letter convinces me of something that he did not read, because he read a section of it and to me the section was quite clear, the complaint was all about statements he had made on a television program, and those are not ones that are subject to parliamentary privilege.

As has been pointed out by the hon. government House leader, a privilege exists in respect of statements that members make in this House, but also in committees. Something he neglected to mention is that comments in committee are also protected. Statements made outside the House are not protected. If the hon. member received a letter that alleges he said something that was defamatory of someone else—and that is what I sense from the segment he read—somewhere other than in the House, then the question of privilege is not available to him to have this matter somehow protected under that guise.

As I have indicated to the hon. member, I will review the letter when I receive a copy. If my ruling on this matter needs to change as a result of reviewing the letter, I will come back to the House. Otherwise, I consider the matter closed. I do not believe this is a question of privilege, unless otherwise convinced by the letter and in which case I will be back.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—SECURITIES REGULATIONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** Prior to oral question period, the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain had the floor. He has two minutes to conclude his remarks.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will use the two minutes remaining to summarize the Bloc Québécois' position with regard to the Minister of Finance's intention to establish a single securities regulator.

It is very important to clearly understand that Quebecers do not support this initiative. Securities fall under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. It is imperative for the government, and the Minister of Finance in particular, to realize that it will face a major obstacle, especially in Quebec, if it decides to proceed with this initiative.

The National Assembly of Quebec is unanimously opposed to the establishment of a common securities regulator. I find it difficult to believe that any Quebec members, whether Liberal or Conservative, would vote against this motion that defends the interests of Quebec by concurring with the National Assembly of Quebec.

We should also remember that establishing a common securities regulator would jeopardize the survival of trading activities in Montreal and, additionally, would favour the concentration of

financial markets in Toronto. Once again, this situation is completely unacceptable to Quebec.

In closing, I would remind you that the World Bank and the OECD reported that the current system, governed by an agreement among all provinces except Ontario, provides for a market that permits exchanges. This system works very well and is more cost-effective than that proposed by the Minister of Finance.

For all these reasons, the members of the Bloc Québécois will definitely be voting in favour of the motion asking the Minister of Finance to abandon his initiative.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I know that we only have five minutes to put questions to the hon. member who just spoke so eloquently and persuasively. He explained Quebec's specific problem really well, namely the unanimous reservations raised by this bill. It is rather surprising to see that the central government does not respect the wish of the Quebec nation, after recently recognizing our nation. It is also surprising to see other provinces opposed to such concentration. This is yet another scheme to crush Quebec's aspirations.

My question to the hon. member has to do with the behaviour of Conservative members from Quebec. I am surprised by the behaviour of those Conservative members, who were elected by claiming that the Bloc Québécois was not representing Quebec's interests very well. They promised they would do a better job of protecting those interests, since they were going to form the government and thus be in a position to influence the government's decisions.

Today, I was surprised to hear, among others, the member for Lévis—Bellechasse, address the House to defend the federal government's indefensible position.

As my colleague pointed out, the three provincial parties in Quebec unanimously passed a motion against this House of Commons' bill. Quebec's finance minister, who is a provincial Liberal, wrote a long letter to her federal counterpart, telling him that she would never accept the implementation of this legislation.

So, all politicians in Quebec are opposed to this bill, including federal NDP members, such as the member for Outremont. As for Conservative members from Quebec, they see no reason to protect Quebec's interests. They would rather defend the interests of Ottawa, at the expense of Quebec.

Is this the new way to make one's presence felt in Ottawa? Does the hon. member not find it surprising to see this attitude on the part of Conservative members from Quebec?

• (1525)

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** Mr. Speaker, the question my colleague is asking is about the Quebec nation and the position of Conservative members. My answer is that indeed, Conservative members, who bragged about recognizing Quebec as a nation, are now ready to take one of its exclusive powers away from that nation.

*Business of Supply*

Presently, Quebec exerts this power through the Autorité des marchés financiers, which oversees securities transactions in Quebec. The Conservative members—and particularly the Conservative members from Quebec—are ready to go against the interests of Quebec and support the bill which the Minister of Finance wants to propose.

I must say that this is absolutely incomprehensible and unacceptable.

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain on his speech.

The argument used by the Conservative members from Quebec involves, first, recognizing that the majority of financial transactions are now under the responsibility of Ontario, and, second, deciding that through centralizing these transactions under a single Canadian authority, the position of Ontario would be strengthened since more than 80% of securities transactions in Canada would be managed in Ontario.

For my colleague, is there any coherence to the position advocated by the Conservative members representing Quebec in Ottawa? Is this not just part of an ideology that promotes the interests of Canada in Quebec, rather than the opposite?

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** Mr. Speaker, it is very certain that when it comes to standing up for Quebec's interests, opinion in Quebec is unanimous on this situation. The three parties in the National Assembly have adopted a motion stating that they are completely opposed to the bill to be introduced by the Minister of Finance.

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to take the opportunity offered today so that I can state my opinion about this unprecedented economic power grab against Quebec and the provinces that the present Conservative government is preparing to carry out: the creation of a common securities regulator. It is truly an unprecedented economic power grab, designed to give the federal government the upper hand. We know that when the information and the financial power are all in one hand, then that hand is holding all the powers needed to crush a nation.

The 2008 budget confirms what was announced some years ago as one of this government's intentions: create a single securities regulator. This has been talked about for a number of years, as we know. It has been 40 years, in fact, since the idea that Canada should have a single window or a single securities regulatory body first started circulating. The subject really got brought back to the table in 2003, under the Liberal government, which created a committee of experts to study the possibility of creating a single securities commission.

In 2005, the Ontario government decided to do its own investigation and so it assigned a group of experts, which became the well-known "Purdy Crawford group", to study the benefits of a single system for regulating securities. We all know that Ontario wants to have both the Canadian stock exchanges and the securities regulation system concentrated in that province. As well, the 2006 federal budget took up the idea again, and it then came back in the November 2006 economic statement and the 2007 budget.

Finally, the present Minister of Finance took up the idea, but this time he asked his committee of experts to draft a bill, or what could become a bill, to create this single securities commission.

For the benefit of the people listening to us, I would like to recall what we mean by securities, because not everyone is accustomed to that term. These are securities that could be negotiable or exchangeable, that could be listed on the stock exchange, shares, obligations, investment certificates, obligations, warrants or insurance policies. In other words, everything that can be traded on the stock exchange is considered to be a security.

This securities market, this commerce, is currently regulated in Quebec by the Autorité des marchés financiers. That is the body that is responsible for all regulation of these securities. Because it has a clearly defined mission, the Autorité des marchés financiers is also responsible for enforcing the laws governing the financial sector, which includes insurance, securities and deposit institutions, except for banks, which are under federal jurisdiction. The Autorité des marchés financiers also supervises the distribution of financial products and services.

Each province, except Ontario, has a group, an agency, an authority or financial markets that belong to it alone. However, to ensure the free circulation of money within Canada, each of the provinces has adopted a passport system.

• (1530)

These are agreements among the provinces that enable Quebec companies, for example, to do business on the Alberta or Saskatchewan markets or the market of any other province.

Above all this, but not heading it up, is the Investment Dealers Association of Canada. All the provinces and territories and the Investment Dealers Association of Canada, except Ontario, can do business with the international securities regulator.

This morning I heard a member of the party across the floor say that a single Canadian capital market would help Canada open up to the world. We are already open to the world, though, thanks to the fact that both the provinces and Canada can do business under the aegis of an international securities regulator. There are no guarantees that we would open up a larger market if we had one common regulator or one common agency for regulating securities.

The provinces have their own securities regulators. They have had this power ever since the Constitution Act, 1867. Section 92(13) says that this is a matter of exclusive provincial jurisdiction or power.

It is fascinating to see just how determined the Minister of Finance is to interfere in areas of provincial jurisdiction and particularly areas within the purview of Quebec, which has the power to manage the free flow of capital.

Quebec's jurisdiction must be respected. As we have often pointed out today, Ms. Jérôme-Forget, the Quebec finance minister, sent quite an explicit letter to her federal counterpart saying and I quote:

First of all, I reiterate that the existing regulatory system in Canada works well—

*Business of Supply*

In addition, it has been noted that the OECD and the International Monetary Fund have congratulated Quebec and Canada on their passport system and the free flow of securities.

The minister says, on the other hand, that the Government of Canada would do better if it applied its energies to its own fields of jurisdiction and:

—worked to more effectively crack down on economic crime rather than trying to impose itself in a field of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

We have made reference to the Vincent Lacroix story, but that could have happened in any other province.

I want, therefore, to ask the Minister of Finance to back down. If we are really a nation, as the people on the other side of the House seemed to recognize, then they must recognize that we are entitled to our own financial powers and these powers should be respected.

• (1535)

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my Bloc Québécois colleague, who even went so far as to quote the IMF, which apparently said the model was perfect. I would like to share with him another quote from the IMF:

Securities regulation is currently a provincial responsibility, but the presence of multiple regulators has resulted in inadequate enforcement and inconsistent investor protection and adds to the cost of raising funds. It also makes it hard for the country to respond to changes in the global market place or to rapidly innovate.

My Bloc Québécois colleague often talks about the Quebec nation. How will this help Quebec businesses if we prevent them from raising funds in Ontario, when we know that 80% of the money available in stock brokerage is in Ontario? How will that help Quebec businesses?

• (1540)

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my hon. colleague's question, because it gives me the opportunity to explain more about the International Monetary Fund.

I do not know where my colleague found his quotation, but in budget 2008, presented here by the minister, page 134 states:

In 2007–08, Canada participated in the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Financial Sector Assessment Program. The IMF concluded that "Canada's financial system is mature, sophisticated, and well managed. Financial stability is underpinned by sound macroeconomic policies and strong prudential regulation and supervision".

That being said, let me address the second part of his question. He asked why it would not be good for Quebec to do business with Ontario. First of all, Quebec does do business with Ontario at this time, although it does not have a passport system. Also, the Minister of Finance must prove to us that Quebec and the provinces will in fact benefit, much more so than they do at this time, from developing their regions and their own businesses.

I am surprised to hear a Quebecker from the Quebec City area ask such a question.

**Mr. André Arthur (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, more than once today, I have heard critics from the Bloc Québécois extol the success of the Autorité des marchés financiers, which monitors trading in Quebec with integrity. They seem to have forgotten that one of the worst fraud cases in the history of Canadian stock exchanges has not yet been resolved and that it took place in Quebec. I am referring to the Norbourg scandal.

There were thousands of victims of a spectacular scam that would not have been possible without the cooperation of employees at the Autorité des marchés financiers and the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec.

Are Bloc members aware that these people were victims because the Government of Quebec did not do its job and did not monitor Norbourg, and that someone else might have done a better job?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member will need to reply in 30 seconds.

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Mr. Speaker, 30 seconds will not be enough for an answer to this question.

The Government of Quebec may perhaps have lacked vigilance. Nevertheless, the Autorité des marchés financiers did its job. Having a single Canadian national commission, however, does not give us the assurance that this will not happen again. One need only look at the United States and its single commission. That did not prevent—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Resuming debate.

The hon. member for St. Catharines.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to note at the outset that I will be sharing my time with the member for Yellowhead. Over the last number of months, he has taken over the responsibility of chairing the finance committee.

I want to take a moment to compliment him for the work he has done in chairing the committee. It is a very important committee here in the House. He has done an excellent job of making sure that we stay on track with respect to government business. I think he is doing a very good job in a very non-partisan way.

We have already heard today about how the government is taking steps to improve the fragmented, inefficient system of securities regulation currently in place in our country. We have outlined an approach that will reduce costs and boost efficiency while giving all regions of our country a meaningful voice along the way.

It is important to note, however, that while the government is working to strengthen securities regulation in our country, this is only one aspect of what we are doing to create a competitive advantage in a global marketplace. Allow me to briefly describe in more detail the government's long term strategy to achieve just that.

We heard the previous speaker mention the International Monetary Fund. The International Monetary Fund concluded a month ago in its financial sector assessment program update that Canada boasts one of the most highly developed and sophisticated financial sectors in the world. It noted that our financial system is solid and that Canadian banks and other financial institutions are sound and well capitalized.

The IMF pointed this out in their report and noted that, while the Canadian banking system appears sound, we face some challenges ahead in the midst of global financial turmoil. I note that the IMF has strongly recommended a single securities regulator as a way to make Canada's system better.

Indeed, the former managing director of the IMF has been quite public in his support of the government's call for securities regulation reform. Last June, he said:

Given that Canada is playing in the highest league, you should equip yourself with the best instrument. I think that on financial issues you still have to provide your customers—your investors and savers of your country—with better tools....

The design of markets and the flexibility of markets and the competition of markets is a very important element of public policy. Canada is currently the only G7 country without a common securities regulator, and Canada's investors deserve better.

Our government recognized very early on that to encourage a stronger and more prosperous economy we must improve Canada's capital markets at the same time. That is why in our long term economic plan, "Advantage Canada", we emphasize the need to create a competitive advantage in global capital markets.

In budget 2007 we announced the blueprint to achieve this in the "Creating a Canadian Advantage in Global Capital Markets" plan. This plan offers increased protection in opportunities for investors, better jobs, more investment and greater prosperity.

It is based on four fundamental building blocks.

First, it proposes a modernization of the fragmented and complex laws that govern our securities markets. It proposes a new principles-based approach to securities regulation, tailored to the unique makeup of Canada's capital markets.

Second, it recognizes the need to protect the investments of Canadians by providing the highest standards of corporate governance, enforcing our laws vigorously, and tackling white collar crime. It is important that strong enforcement be visible to investors, as this perception reinforces investor confidence and encourages increased participation in our markets.

Third, there is a recognition of the need for better access to investment opportunities. Competition and choice for businesses and investors will be enhanced by measures that improve access to global capital markets and complement the effective functioning of domestic securities markets.

Finally, the government is working to ensure that Canadians have the financial literacy and information they need to make sound financial decisions for their companies and their families.

It is an ambitious plan, and it is less than a year old, but this government, as it is in so many other areas, is already delivering results.

● (1545)

On enhancing regulatory efficiency, the government has launched the expert panel on securities regulation, of course, but we have also revised Canadian insolvency legislation to better protect "securities financing agreements" in case of insolvency. In addition, we have taken the time to take a step back and we have consulted with the provinces on security transfer laws.

On strengthening market integrity, the government appointed a senior expert adviser to assess the effectiveness of the RCMP-led Integrated Market Enforcement Teams. The report was published in December. The RCMP and other federal partners have already begun implementing its recommendations. We have also participated in the

### *Business of Supply*

federal-provincial-territorial securities fraud working group of police, security regulators and prosecutors.

On creating greater opportunity for businesses and investors, a great deal has already been achieved. We have adopted measures that will reduce borrowing costs for Canadian businesses and make cross-border capital flows much more efficient, including the signing of a new protocol amending the Canada-U.S. tax treaty and changing tax rules to remove the withholding tax on arm's-length interest payments made to non-residents.

We have also amended tax rules for investments in securities listed on prescribed stock exchanges. This will improve responsiveness to market and regulatory developments.

Finally, we are pursuing a number of initiatives to improve the information available to investors. This includes working with British Columbia to adapt its high school financial literacy program into a web-based instrument available across our great country.

Our government has also supported the work of the Financial Consumer Agency to improve financial literacy in Canada.

We have no intention of abandoning any efforts to make Canada's capital market systems work better and to give Canadians greater investment choice, increased market access and improved investor protection by doing so.

Even the *Toronto Star* has underlined the importance of securities reform in our country, stating in a pointed editorial that Canada's current system was "fragmented", leaving investors with "no assurance their rights will be enforced on a consistent and fair basis wherever they invest".

Allow me to go on. The current system, the *Star* contends, has made it "harder and more expensive for firms to raise needed investment capital here at home". Because Canadian companies can go elsewhere to raise capital more cheaply and with less fuss, they do.

The *Star* report goes on to say:

And that means Canada is losing opportunities and business to financial centres like New York and London, all because there is no place for provincial parochialism in today's global capital market.

Canada needs a single, national securities regulator...Corporate Canada knows it. Investors know it. It is high time [with all due respect] the provinces caught on.

We have the right plan to make that happen and the determination to follow through on that plan.

This motion is simply wrong. It has no place in our country's economy and it has no place passing here in the House of Commons.

*Business of Supply*

• (1550)

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a comment with respect to the member's speech. There are some really good Liberals in the country. One I happen to know is Harold MacKay from Saskatchewan, who was appointed to a commission by Mr. Chrétien or the previous prime minister to study this whole issue of a single regulator in Canada. He came down decisively in favour of the position that is being presented by Minister Flaherty and the Conservative government, as we can see if we look at the report.

I wanted to pass on that information. This may be another point at which the Liberal opposition party will be supporting the Conservative government once again.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** I must say that I am disappointed in my seatmate for having named another member of the House, but I now recognize the hon. member for St. Catharines.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain or certainly defend my colleague from Saskatchewan who stood up to make that point so vigorously. There is a reason that he got so carried away and mentioned the finance minister's name.

He is so excited about a single securities regulator in this country that he just cannot stand not mentioning the finance minister's name, because he knows that we finally have a finance minister in this country who is bound and determined to deliver a single securities regulator for us. With this, we can get things done. We can make sure, as provinces, territories and a country, that when we are approached by other countries, by investors and by businesses, we can make the right decisions, timely decisions, and we can make sure that our economy stays strong in this country.

• (1555)

**Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to add my voice to this debate.

I am sharing my time with the hon. member for St. Catharines, a wonderful member of the finance committee. I have gotten to know him very well. His talent is certainly appreciated by all the members of the committee. He is a well respected member on that committee. It is really good to see that members, such as the member, work hard at making sure the country brings in good, reasonable laws for their ridings. It is a privilege for me to chair that committee. We try to lower the temperature politically as much as we possibly can so we can deal with issues that come to us.

The motion brought forward by the Bloc is an interesting one. On this motion we are talking about the review of the securities regulatory system. I want to talk about the expert panel that was set up to deal with this. I want to add my voice to explain how that expert panel was set up and the quality of the people who are on it. I want to talk a little about what that means for Quebec and for all of Canada.

It is interesting to hear some of the rhetoric and the opposition with regard to the panel and how it is being set up. It almost makes it sound as though there were a conspiracy by the federal government against certain areas of the country or certain provinces. That is absolutely not true. It is being done in a collaborative way. It is not about trying to assert control. It is about trying to collaborate with

the provinces and territories in the best interests of the country so that we have a plan in this country that actually works and works well.

It is not something we have sprung on the country by any means. The Minister of Finance had it well laid out in budget 2007. This is something we are working on with the provinces and territories so that we can adapt a new approach to have a common securities regulations system in this country.

It goes back to June 19, 2007 when the government convened a meeting with the provinces and territories. They were all part of this right from the very beginning. At that meeting the Minister of Finance highlighted recent achievements in implementing the capital markets plan.

In a statement following that meeting the Government of Canada announced that it would be setting up a third party expert group to advise on five areas. I will lay them out so that the House knows exactly what is going on.

The first one is the outcomes, principles and performance measures that will best anchor securities regulation and the pursuit of a Canadian advantage in capital markets. Second is how Canada could best promote and advance proportionate, more principles-based regulation, starting from existing harmonized legislation and national and multilateral regulatory instruments. Third is how this progress could facilitate, and be reinforced by, better coordination of enforcement efforts. The enforcement of these rules have to be very important. Fourth is how this approach to regulation could be implemented—let me emphasize this for members—under a passport or under a common securities regulator. Fifth is the transition path, including key steps and timelines, that participating provinces and territories could adopt to effect proposed changes to the content, structure and enforcement of regulation.

The panel will provide a concrete proposal. It is not to be some vague obscure model that will be brought forward, but a model common securities act based on advice from recognized experts for discussion among the federal and provincial ministers. That is what the panel hopefully will come forward with.

What will it do? This will help in building a consensus across the country. Why is that important? It will give the opportunity for capital markets to be established for the common securities regulatory system to work in the best interests of this country.

That does not sound to me like federal interference. It sounds like the minister is doing his very best to make sure that we have legislation that is working in the best interests of the country and for all parts of the country.

*Business of Supply*

•(1600)

I come from the west. We deal with issues that are different from province to province. Canada is not an easy place to govern. We have to respect that it has many diverse areas, but we do so at our own peril at times. For example, trade between provinces is more restricted than trade with other countries such as the United States. Sometimes it is easier to work with outside nations than it is to work within our own borders. That is because we are governed by different rules.

A perfect example is one that is routinely debated in this House, which is the Wheat Board. From an agricultural perspective, it is very different to grow a crop of wheat in the west compared to growing a crop of wheat in Ontario, Quebec or Atlantic Canada, as to what regulations govern that and what they mean and how that disadvantages certain areas of the country.

I had the opportunity to chair the health committee for a number of years. I also worked in the health field for a number of years. Doctors cannot move from one province to another because of the regulations and that hurts the country.

This illustrates what is happening with respect to security on the financial side and the rules which govern that in this country.

This is an important issue. It has nothing to do with Quebec. It has nothing to do with whether or not Quebec will win under this. This is for the people of Quebec, Atlantic Canada, Ontario and the rest of Canada as well.

This government has appointed some very good people to the panel. One might argue that the government might be biased because we are appointing people who are biased and therefore the outcome will be biased. That is not the case whatsoever. Some very capable people are on this panel. The panel will bring forward a recommendation by the end of this year. It is not something that will happen over a long period of time. The panel is going to be focused. The recommendation will be acted on as quickly as possible. The panel will be doing important work.

It is also important that we as members of this House understand what is being debated here. It is important that we understand the issues that are behind the reason for this panel. Hopefully, we will be able to support everything that comes out of it.

I want to spend a bit of time explaining who some of the individuals are that will be sitting on the panel and tasked with this work. This is really important to clarify so people are comfortable with these individuals.

The chair of this panel is Tom Hockin, who led the Investment Funds Institute of Canada and the Canadian Institute of Financial Planning from 1994 to 2006. As a former minister of international trade he carried out the negotiations on the side accords of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993. His work has left a lasting economic legacy in Quebec and all of Canada, and in fact, in the United States and Mexico as well. Mr. Hockin will be assisted by very capable and respected members.

One such member is Denis Desautels, former auditor general of Canada from 1991 to 2001 and chairman of the board of Laurentian

Bank of Canada, and a board member of Bombardier, Le Groupe Jean Coutu and the International Development Research Centre.

Another individual on this panel is Hal Kvisle, president and CEO of TransCanada corporation and a member of the board of directors of the Bank of Montreal. He is a very capable individual. His credentials speak for themselves.

Ian D. Bruce, the chief executive officer of Peters and Co., and a former member of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy is another member of the panel.

Dawn Russell, associate professor and former dean of law at Dalhousie University is a very capable member.

Terry Salman, chairman, president and CEO of Salman Partners and former chair of the Investment Dealers Association of Canada is a member.

Heather Zordel, a partner at Cassels Brock and Blackwell is a member of the panel.

•(1605)

They are the individuals who make up the panel. There is no secret here. They are very credible individuals. They are people we should be able to put our trust in. The recommendations they bring forward are exactly that, recommendations. They will be brought here to be dealt with by the minister who will have the wealth of their knowledge to be able to make a decision that is in the best interests of the country. But that is not all. They also have the opportunity of having some experts contribute to the panel. They include Howard Davies, the director of the London School of Economics and David Green, adviser of international affairs at the Financial Reporting Council, head of international policy coordination, EU affairs, and many other things. Peter Hogg is the other member.

It is very important that we give them the opportunity to advise an approach in full respect of all the regions of Canada, not a fragmented system that exists today but that we look at making sure that we do what is in the best interests of every province as a whole in Canada. We need to make sure that we do not make the mistakes that we made in our country with trade between provinces. We need to make sure that we have common regulations that work in the best interests of this country from coast to coast to coast. That is the objective. That is what needs to take place. That is what we are debating today and the Bloc's opposition to this is ill-founded.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ)** Mr. Speaker. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

I am pleased to take part in this Bloc Québécois opposition day. On February 21, the Minister of Finance confirmed his government's intention to proceed with its plan for a common securities regulator. The expert panel appointed by the minister started out with the mandate of examining the advantages of a single regulatory system for securities, yet this group appears to have been struck in order to validate the minister's project. It is our fear that the idea behind this project is to continue centralizing Canada's finances in Toronto. The former Ontario finance minister wants to centralize financial operations in Toronto.

*Business of Supply*

The Bloc Québécois is opposed to the federal government's stubborn determination to deprive Quebec of this regulatory tool for the financial market. This situation has been unanimously condemned by the National Assembly and the Quebec Minister of Finance finds it unacceptable. We will therefore do everything possible to protect this constitutional jurisdiction of Quebec and to protect the Autorité des marchés financiers from Ottawa's desire to centralize the regulation of financial markets in Toronto. In this connection, and in some others as well, the Liberals are getting along famously with the Conservatives. The regulation of financial markets must be centralized in Toronto, and too bad for the constitutional jurisdictions of Quebec.

What I find particularly striking is that there has not been a week go by in this House since I first came here without some bill or statement that attempts to trample over Quebec's areas of jurisdiction. This is, in my opinion, unacceptable, and is a way of viewing Canada that sets us apart from the other parties here. We have to rise every time to stick up for our rights. We have to remind the government, and the official opposition which will surely, as it has since this session started, support the government's centralizing initiative, that the regulation of securities falls solely under the jurisdiction of Quebec.

All of the political parties in Quebec are opposed to this project. The federalists oppose it, as do the sovereigntists. So this is not a sovereigntist idea because both agree on this. The Quebec Minister of Finance recently wrote to her federal counterpart in order to speak out against this initiative, which once again demonstrates Ottawa's disdain for Quebec's constitutional jurisdictions. Yet, and I must remind myself again of this fact, she is a staunch federalist, this minister.

The purpose of this initiative is to keep Quebec and the provinces from making financial decisions on their own territory. This plan disregards Quebec's constitutional jurisdictions, as property rights, civil law, and bonds and stock trading, are all provincial jurisdictions. End of story. By tabling such a bill, Canada's Minister of Finance will remove the power to regulate financial markets from Quebec without asking Quebec, its elected representatives or its economic stakeholders. The National Assembly has unanimously condemned this initiative.

The question we might ask is the following. How can a member of Parliament who claims to be representing Quebec support such an idea? We cannot allow the federal government to ignore this motion. We represent seven million Quebecers, or 25% of this federation's population, who disagree with the government's will. The government's position is shameful. Quebec is on the verge of being robbed yet again.

I invite all the federal members from Quebec to denounce, over and over again, Ottawa's plan to interfere in our jurisdictions. They have to get behind the Bloc Québécois motion and this unanimous decision of the National Assembly of Quebec. The Autorité des marchés financiers is the last bastion of stock exchange activities in Montreal.

We find that the current system works well. Why get rid of something that is not broken? Creating a single securities commission will create a regulatory monopoly in Toronto, causing

us to lose the current system and the benefits of regulatory competition.

● (1610)

We refuse to allow this system to be taken away from us. Furthermore, the OECD has ranked Canada second in terms of securities regulation. The World Bank has also ranked Canada a leader in this field.

Why would the federal government want to change an approach that is working, that is recognized internationally and that allows efficient and effective defence of financial operations in Quebec and Canada?

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Bloc Québécois member. For the benefit of the people who are watching this debate, I would like to reread the motion of the Bloc member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately abandon the idea of creating a common securities regulator, since securities regulations fall under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and because this initiative is unanimously condemned in Quebec.

[English]

I am not surprised that a member from the Bloc Québécois would put forward this motion.

In Canada we know that a common securities regulator would be absolutely and unequivocally in the best interest of Canada. Therefore, it is not surprising that someone who is espousing the separation of Quebec from Canada would not be in favour of a common securities regulator because, of course, it would work completely against the agenda of separation and the destabilization of Canada.

For anyone or any person wishing to invest in Canada, it is clear that having a patchwork of different regulators in different provinces creates enormous hurdles and a disincentive to invest in this country in order to create economic activity and create jobs.

A single regulator would create a level playing field. It would create less ambiguity, and it would create more stability for investors wishing to invest and create jobs in Canada.

My question to the member from the Bloc is not so much about this motion. This motion goes against the grain of everything that would make sense for Canada; that is, to have a common securities regulator.

I am wondering if the member could speak to the question of market fraud and these integrated market enforcement teams that are meant to take action against white collar crime, those people that would defraud investors and create some uncertainties in the marketplace.

Also, what protection should this government be offering to small investors in Canada who are continually being taken advantage of and losing money in the marketplace? While the large investors are making huge profits, the small investors are being abused by the markets. What would this member propose the federal government do to combat that?



•(1615)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comment and his question, although I completely disagree with everything he said.

First of all, it is not because we are sovereigntists that we do not want this Parliament to deny our powers. I would remind the member that subsection 92(13) of the Constitution Act, 1867, grants Quebec power with respect to securities.

To me, it is only natural that Quebec should demand these rights. There is no proof that a single securities commission would be better and would prevent fraud and abuse. On the contrary, it seems to me that the Autorité des marchés financiers, which is responsible for overseeing the areas of insurance, securities, deposit institutions and so on, has a better grasp of the problems and can pave the way for civil litigation, as we have seen.

There is a saying that “small is beautiful”, and that is certainly true in this case. The Autorité des marchés financiers has been able to take some very positive measures, such as creating the FTQ workers' fund. These measures have really helped protect savers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** I know that the members are impatient, but when it takes three minutes to ask a question and two minutes to answer it, the five minutes are up.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

**Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great interest that I rise today on this Bloc Québécois opposition day. The issue we are debating today is a very important one for Quebec: it condemns the Conservative government's obstinacy in seeking to impose a securities commission despite clear, unanimous opposition from Quebec's National Assembly.

I would like to read the motion put forward by the Bloc Québécois, because it seems that several Conservative members, particularly those from Quebec, do not understand what is at stake. Here is the motion:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately abandon the idea of creating a common securities regulator, since securities regulations fall under the legislative jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and because this initiative is unanimously condemned in Quebec.

The reason we tabled this motion is that, as I said earlier, this government is stubbornly seeking to concentrate all of Canada's financial administration activities in Toronto, even though this is a constitutional responsibility that belongs to the Government of Quebec. The Conservative government's desire to do this was made clear once again during the last budget when the Minister of Finance reiterated his firm intention to propose a single pan-Canadian securities commission.

The minister emphasized that he wanted to introduce a bill to create a single regulatory body. To accomplish that, the minister gave the expert panel a very clear mandate. We must recall that when the federal government set up the expert panel on securities regulation, the experts were initially supposed to study ways to optimize securities trading throughout Canada.

### *Business of Supply*

When work began on February 21, the Minister of Finance gave the committee some disturbing directives by saying that it should “develop a model common securities act to create a Canadian advantage in global capital markets”.

This situation is simply unacceptable. The minister is stubbornly going ahead with a bill that is counter to the unanimous will of Quebec's National Assembly and that is a flagrant violation of Quebec's constitutional jurisdictions.

As always, the Bloc Québécois is the only party standing up for Quebec's interests. We have seen that today as all of the members from Quebec who belong to other parties, such as the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, obstinately seek to go forward with this bill.

The Quebec National Assembly and all stakeholders in Quebec are clearly against creating a regulator that would concentrate all market surveillance centrally in Toronto. This is why we introduced the motion.

We want to send a clear message to this government and to the federal Parliament to say that they must respect Quebec's jurisdictions and the unanimous position of the Quebec National Assembly. We are also introducing this motion because securities are important to Quebec's economy. They include the interchangeable, fungible and negotiable instruments that can be listed on a stock exchange.

This motion represents not only the position of the Bloc Québécois, but also the position of all the political parties, federalist or sovereigntist, in the Quebec National Assembly. It represents the position of the Government of Quebec as has been expressed a number of times by the Quebec finance minister, Monique Jérôme-Forget, who is perplexed and annoyed by the Conservative government's stubbornness in moving forward with this initiative.

•(1620)

I will read an excerpt from the letter that Monique Jérôme-Forget, Quebec's finance minister, sent to her federal counterpart on February 28, two days after the budget was tabled:

First of all, I reiterate that the existing regulatory system in Canada works well and satisfies both the needs of pan-Canadian participants and the interests of the various regions.

That is a federalist talking.

She went on to say:

Accordingly, I will continue to oppose the implementation of any model leading to the concentration of market oversight responsibilities in the hands of a common or single regulator, regardless of how you call it.

The Quebec finance minister is clearly saying that she wants nothing to do with the model the federal Minister of Finance is pushing for. She urges the federal Minister of Finance to fix the problems in his own fields of jurisdiction, by, for example, cracking down on economic crime, instead of trying to disrupt a proven system that is recognized internationally as one of the best.

*Business of Supply*

In Quebec, securities trading is currently regulated by the *Autorité des marchés financiers*, which applies the rules governing the issuance of corporate shares and bonds. The *Autorité des marchés financiers* applies legislation governing the financial services sector. It also supports participation in a passport system together with the securities commissions of the other provinces, with the exception of Ontario. This passport mechanism, similar to the one implemented by the European Union, facilitates interprovincial transactions and ensures the efficient operation of the market across Canada. The World Bank and the OECD have reported that the current system works well and that it is efficient. So why change it and interfere in matters that do not fall within the jurisdiction of the federal Parliament?

It is important to remind this House that one of the main objectives of securities regulation is to protect investors. In 2006, a study by the World Bank and *Lex Mundi* ranked Canada third in terms of investor protection. That is pretty good for a system which has been described here as not working very well. Furthermore, the 2006 report states: “—the 2006 OECD report ranked Canada second with respect to securities regulation quality—”.

Why do the Conservatives wish to impose their own vision, throw a system that works out the window and go against the Quebec consensus? The National Assembly of Quebec unanimously condemned the federal government's initiative on October 16. The Quebec federation of chambers of commerce supports the Quebec government's position and is also opposed to the Conservative government's initiative. This is further proof that recognition of the Quebec nation by the government is merely symbolic. Otherwise, it would respect our authority and would not dare try to impose its centralist vision on us with this pan-Canadian securities commission.

When I began my speech, I asked the Conservative members from Quebec to pay attention, because they do not seem to understand the importance of this debate. What are they doing to defend Quebec's position? Why are they not standing up in cabinet for the unanimous position of the National Assembly of Quebec? Once again, this debate shows how powerless they are and how they are under the thumb of their government. It shows that only the Bloc Québécois members are really defending Quebec's interests, because, as always, we in the Bloc Québécois have a duty to defend Quebec, and that is what we are doing on this opposition day.

• (1625)

[English]

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address some of the comments of the Bloc members.

I want to make it clear that I am a provincial rights person. I think the Constitution of our country should be adhered to and followed. However, I want to emphasize this for the Bloc members.

Under section 91 of the Constitution, the federal government is given exclusive jurisdiction over something called trade and commerce. Every public company in the province of Quebec is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Unless I am missing something here, it is the only major public exchange we have in Canada. Why are Quebec companies listing on the Toronto Stock Exchange? They want investors in Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan, Ontario and all other provinces to invest in their companies, which is

a good thing to do. Companies need capital to run a business. I did not know the Bloc was back to the socialistic mentality of 50 or 60 years ago, but in a free market economy companies need capital. Those companies have freely listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange to raise capital and to grow and become good companies, which they are.

I have invested in many of these Quebec companies over the years. They are good companies, and I think it is a good thing. However, if I were a shareholder, and I have been one, I would object to having to put up with the inefficiencies of adhering to 13 provinces and territories, their regulations, their lawyers and the expenses involved in trying to do business. It is unnecessary.

Americans would shake their heads over this. They have one agency, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, that sets the rules for all 50 states. They have big capital markets. It is the place to do business in the world.

We want to do business in Canada and grow Quebec companies and other companies. Why does the member want to handicap Quebec companies by imposing all the rules and regulations from 12 other jurisdictions on them and pay lawyers and bureaucrats in Saskatchewan, or in Alberta, or in other provinces, to impose the unnecessary duplication of rules on the trading of their shares on one market? It does not make any sense to me.

• (1630)

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear my colleague say that he is concerned about the provinces.

If he is so concerned, then he should listen to Quebec and the provinces. Positions were adopted unanimously by the National Assembly of Quebec, which said that it wanted to regulate securities itself. This system works very well.

As I said in my speech, according to the OECD, Canada has the second most efficient securities system. We are also a top performer when it comes to securities regulation. So why change things all of a sudden? There is no reason. Absolutely nothing about the Minister of Finance's proposal proves that the system would be more efficient if it was centralized. That is not true. The system works. My Liberal, or rather Conservative, colleague—

**An hon. member:** It is the same thing.

**Mr. Guy André:** In any event, they have the same centralist positions.

The member says so himself: he invests in Canadian companies and Quebec companies, and the system works. Good. I know that the system works well. We are going to keep our jurisdiction over securities.

*Business of Supply*

As for the constitution, I believe that my friend should take another look at the constitutional legislation, because Quebec has jurisdiction over securities.

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the attempt of what we are discussing today is to make the regulatory system more efficient by combining and streamlining the different jurisdictions into a single window regulatory system. Businesses across the country do this. There is no reason why—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé for a very short response.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat that this is one of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction. The current system is working very well across Canada, and the provinces and territories have their own securities legislation.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to speak in the House today about the Bloc Québécois motion concerning a national regulator. Earlier, a Bloc member said that there was only one party in the House of Commons defending the interests of Quebecers. Unfortunately, I completely disagree. Obviously there is a party in this corner, the NDP, that defends Quebecers, the working families of Quebec, just as it defends the interests of all Canadians. Also, it is not true to say that only the Bloc speaks on behalf of Quebecers. The NDP also defends the interests of real people in Quebec.

I am taking into account the interests of ordinary people across the country as I speak to this Bloc Québécois motion. We have a problem with this Conservative government. We are the only party that has always been opposed to this Conservative government's program. First the Bloc Québécois supported the Conservative Party for a year and a half. Then, after the byelections last summer, it realized that it was not in the best interest of Quebec to do that, so it changed course. Now, it is siding more with the NDP. We are very pleased that the Bloc Québécois has recognized the NDP's leadership. Now the Liberal Party is defending and supporting the Conservatives' program.

We do not agree with the government's approach. When the government talks about creating a common securities regulator, it is trying to go beyond the regulation we should have across Canada to protect ordinary people from corporate fraud.

We know full well that in Quebec this system works well. We recently saw the trial of Vincent Lacroix. Quebec already has a serious system that can bring people to trial and sentence them for committing securities fraud.

Our problem is that we cannot trust this Conservative government. Two years ago, it took over power from the Liberal Party, which was involved in a number of scandals, as we know. Since the Conservatives have been in power, they have not taken any effective measures, they have not taken any measures to have a healthy system that protects Canadians. Our former finance critic spoke many times in this House about the Conservative Party's lack of commitment.

When the Minister of Finance talks about implementing a national securities regulatory mechanism, we do not trust him. The reason is simple: for two years we have been listening to the Conservative government talk out of both sides of its mouth. We heard this in matters of international trade, an area I am quite familiar with. We heard this in the softwood lumber issue. The government said it would do something in the interest of the softwood lumber sector across the country. Instead, it put a softwood lumber agreement in place that has cost 10,000 jobs across the country so far.

We also hear this double talk from the Conservative Party concerning NAFTA. They said they had no desire at all to renegotiate NAFTA, but then we clearly heard the Minister of International Trade speak openly with members of the U.S. Congress and say that he was quite willing to renegotiate NAFTA.

• (1635)

We hear this double talk not only in the area of international trade, but also in the budgets presented by this Conservative government. Every time, the Conservatives make it a priority to lower taxes for big business.

The Conservative government is now talking about establishing sound securities regulations for the entire country. Oh, sure. It has no credibility in this matter. It has not shown the least bit of interest in establishing a protective system or measures that would reduce the current amount of securities fraud. I will come back to this, because it is very important. The problem remains that the Conservative government cannot be trusted in this area. That is very clear. It did not take any of the steps that it should have taken and did not do its job. That is the main reason we will support this motion.

We will support it for another reason, and that is the principle of cooperation among the provinces and the federal government. This Conservative government rarely talks about it, but certain regions of this country, such as Quebec and Manitoba, have taken steps in the area of securities. At the same time, the federal government is not showing any desire to cooperate, discuss or negotiate in order to create a system. Unless we have an effective system, based on negotiations and cooperative federalism, Ottawa will always dictate what happens.

For these reasons, we cannot support the federal government's approach because it does not have credibility and it did not hold the usual discussions for a change of this nature.

I would like to go back to the Quebec system for a few moments. The National Assembly of Quebec clearly stated that this Conservative government's idea is not a good one. In this area, Quebec has clearly put in place a regulatory system that is more advanced than those found in some other Canadian regions. We should examine what works in the Quebec system and the possibility of implementing it in other regions.

*Business of Supply*

The government chose not to do that. Following the Vincent Lacroix trial, it did not take note of how well the system works and it did not consider how to put such an efficient system in place elsewhere. It did not do that. It said that it would be the one to decide, even though this Conservative government does not have any credibility in this field.

A corrupt Liberal government was replaced by a Conservative government that promised to do better. However, particularly in recent months, we have been treated to the same types of scandals we saw under the former Liberal government. Nothing has changed. We now have the Cadman affair and NAFTAgate, the repercussions of which will be felt beyond our Canadian borders. Last week I was in Washington and people were talking about how that deliberate leak of information was totally unacceptable. This is another Conservative Party scandal.

I do not have the 60 pages of notes on the many Conservative scandals, but one example is the Elections Canada scandal where they tried to deliberately get around Elections Canada's rules to spend more than the legislated maximum amount.

• (1640)

Once again, in light of all of these scandals, can we trust the Conservative government when it comes to securities? I think not. Obviously, we cannot trust the government.

Those are all of the problems related to this issue. The Conservative government lacks credibility and, for the past two years, it has been behaving just like the former Liberal government. Nothing has changed. I bet that when the Liberals come back here—they are not here today—they will—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, I should not have said that.

I will explain. That is why the Liberals always side with the Conservative government. Confidence in the way the system works is wanting, and there is a crying need for real change. Everything that relates to how the country is governed, to federal-provincial relations, and to how the government deals with real problems that people face every day is part of the approach.

We do not believe that the government will take the right approach. We think that when the government wants to regulate securities, it is actually trying to take power away from the provinces, who are doing an excellent job of regulating. The government wants to chip away at the security we have and give us a system that is worse than the one we have now.

• (1645)

[*English*]

These are the reasons why we are saying that essentially we cannot agree with the government's approach. Essentially because this scandal-ridden Conservative government now has about the same credibility as the former scandal-ridden Liberal government.

We cannot say we are going to give Conservatives a licence to impose securities regulations right across the country because we do not believe that they are going to act in the appropriate way. When

there are other provinces, Manitoba and Quebec being notable among them, that have actually put in place an effective system, why would the government not try to cooperate with those provinces and build on that system, and do it in an effective way that actually brings us a better system? Those are the questions that we have to ask.

I would like to talk now about the measures that the NDP has already proposed because it is an important element to add to this debate today. The member of Parliament for Winnipeg North has brought to the House, a number of different times, important motions and important suggestions to the national government.

She has put forward proposals about the issue of corporate crime and cracking down on corporate crime. The government has not picked up any of the elements that she has been proposing over the course of the past few years. She has been a very tireless crusader for diminishing the level of corporate crime and yet we have not seen the government pick up any of the elements that she and this party have put forward.

We find it remarkably suspicious that the Conservatives might try to impose something nationally when they have not put in place the building blocks that we have clearly suggested need to take place as first steps to building that comprehensive support in securities regulations right across the country.

Here are some of the elements. We have talked about an increased and independent mandate for the RCMP-integrated market enforcement team. We have called for that, but we have not seen it actualized in any of the government proposals.

We have talked about bringing international standards to Canadian corporate accounting and law. We have not seen any action on that front.

We have talked about an examination of new laws here in the House that might prevent non-compete payments and we have not seen that action as well.

We have talked about, and the member for Winnipeg North has talked about, really harnessing the expertise of the Department of Finance, the Solicitor General, Industry Canada and other federal departments. The member for Winnipeg North has been talking about this for a number of years.

What has happened? No action, essentially no action regardless of the fact that this is clearly an identified problem in certain parts of the country. When we see the province of Manitoba introducing changes to its securities act rather than having the federal government pick up on that and improve it, we see no action at the federal government level.

I would like to talk for a moment about an article that was published last fall on this issue. It is by Greg Selinger who is the chair of the Council of Ministers of Securities Regulation. He is also the Manitoba minister of finance, one of the best financially managed provinces in the country. Of course, it is an NDP government.

*Business of Supply*

I note that having analyzed over 20 years of NDP governments, along with governments from the Parti Québécois, Liberal governments and Conservative governments, the federal ministry of finance, after that longitudinal and most comprehensive study in Canadian history, gave A marks to the NDP. Most NDP budgets in the actual fiscal year-end are balanced.

We cannot say the same for the other parties. In fact, two-thirds of Conservative budgets were in deficit over that 20 year period. Not their budgets, not the political spin at the beginning but the actual fiscal period returns. They were in deficit. The only ones worse than the Conservatives were the Liberals where 86% of the time they were in deficit in the actual fiscal period returns.

• (1650)

When I say that Manitoba is one of the best financially managed provinces in the country, it is no surprise. The NDP simply manages money better. Why is that? It is because our origins are from the best financial managers in the country, the ordinary working men and women. They are the ones who must manage household budgets. They actually need to work every day to scrimp and save to do the things they do to raise their families and contribute to their communities. They are the best financial managers in the country, which is why the NDP, not the Conservatives and Liberals because they have no proof to point to, has been noted by the federal Department of Finance as being the best financial management party in the country. That is an important element to add. We can never forget that.

I will now come back to what the Manitoba minister of finance said in the *National Post* on October 26. He said:

Critics also try to convince Canadians that our securities regulatory system is enormously complex and expensive. In fact, as my colleague, Quebec Minister of Finance Monique Jerome-Forget, pointed out in a recent speech, direct regulatory costs and financing costs are typically lower in Canada than in the United States, and the Canadian system is as uniform and harmonized as the American system.

He goes on to say:

The provincial and territorial governments recognize that markets evolve rapidly, and that securities regulatory systems require constant innovation and reform. Since the Provincial-Territorial Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Securities Regulation was signed in 2004, the Council of Ministers has worked hard to implement practical and meaningful reforms, with considerable success. The Council of Ministers is committed to the passport system, which improves access to Canada's capital markets by enabling participants to deal with only one regulator and one set of rules. Moreover, it recognizes the fact that securities regulation in Canada is matter of provincial jurisdiction.

He concludes by saying:

The fact is that Canada has vibrant, healthy and safe capital markets with a world-class, well-performing regulatory system. Provincial and territorial ministers are committed to continuous improvement of our regulatory system and the competitiveness of our capital markets.... The federal government should respect our jurisdiction and support the passport system. That would send a strong and important signal to Canadians and to the international community about the true state of Canadian securities regulation and Canadian capital markets

The solutions lie in what the member for Winnipeg North has proposed. The solutions do not lie in the Conservatives' attempt to try to run roughshod over provincial jurisdiction and to try to give a special gift to their corporate friends. That is why we are opposing what the Conservatives are doing.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am quite surprised by this dramatic shift in policy by

the NDP. It was only a few months ago that the finance critic for the NDP, the member for Winnipeg North, declared that her party was a large proponent of a common securities regulator. She, as the finance critic, openly admitted that Canada did not seem to have the toolbox necessary to deal with corporate fraud.

In May 2007, in a *Toronto Star* interview, she was quoted as saying that she was convinced of the need for a national securities regulator, rather than the piecemeal approach, the provincial approach.

Why has the NDP abandoned the position of its former critic of just a few months ago?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the political spin of the Conservatives is quite funny to see. The member for Kitchener—Conestoga mentions a toolbox and then does not mention any of the tools that the member for Winnipeg North put forward that the Conservatives have refused to implement.

There is a whole variety of tools and I mentioned some of them in my speech a few minutes ago, as the member for Kitchener—Conestoga would surely have heard. We and the member for Winnipeg North have put forward a whole range of tools. Have the Conservatives used any of them? No, not a single one.

As the NDP is the only party seriously thinking about this issue, I would ask the Conservatives to please take our toolbox, use the tools and implement the program. They, of course, will not because it is very clear that they do not want a crackdown on corporate crime. Nothing in the Conservative government's record shows that it is serious about cracking down on corporate crime.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate my colleague on his speech. There were a few sidetracks at the start, when he was questioning the paternity of the true defence of Quebec values, but everyone in this House knows that the Bloc Québécois proclaims this loud and strong. I will, of course, not deny, however, that we understand each other well on a number of issues. The proof, moreover, lies in the fact that the hon. member has said he approved of this Bloc Québécois motion and his party would follow suit.

I congratulate him for one thing in particular. He spoke of the Conservative double-speak and I would like to hear his reaction on that. In 2006, the Conservatives campaigned on a supposed openness toward Quebec and the provinces and spoke of asymmetrical federalism. This government used a number of terms. In fact, at that time it was not the government but it aspired to form the government. With certain symbolic gestures, this openness may have taken some people in. Today we know the true face of the Conservatives, and this is what I will question my colleague about.

*Business of Supply*

Thanks to the Constitution, particularly in this area, Quebec and the provinces have the right to express their opinions internationally on the subject of securities. When someone wants to take away a power that has been given to a province, to Quebec in particular, by the Constitution, this is a backward step. One can imagine that it is worse for sovereigntists, but I am convinced that my colleague agrees with me. What the Minister of Finance wants to do at this time with his pan-Canadian securities commission is in real contradiction with this talk of openness.

Can the hon. member comment on this flagrant contradiction by the Conservative government, a contradiction that is totally unjustified and unjustifiable?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, it appears as though the Conservative government is speaking out of both sides of its mouth. People, not just in Quebec, but across the country, were taken in by this double talk. They wanted to believe what the Conservatives were saying, but now they realize that the Conservatives are doing exactly the opposite. The member for Richmond—Arthabaska already mentioned this.

The Conservatives spoke about openness towards Quebec, and also proposed a securities commission. The commission would penalize Quebec instead of working with the Quebec government and with the Quebec National Assembly to find a way to improve the situation in the country.

Add to that the other existing tools that the NDP gave the Conservative government to fight fraud in large corporations. We gave them the tools. The member for Winnipeg North offered the tools, but the Conservatives refused to use them. They do not take this and many other matters seriously.

In the end, the Conservative government is acting exactly like the former Liberal government. It says one thing and does another, at the expense of the majority of Canadians.

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is my turn to congratulate my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster. But I just want to remind members that the virtues he is attributing to his party are perhaps unwarranted. He said that we supported the Conservatives when it came time to vote.

When we supported the Conservatives during the vote, it was in the interests of Quebec. The NDP voted, with the Conservatives and the Liberals, in favour of a bill that was very offensive to Quebec, the clarity bill, which was sponsored by the current Leader of the Opposition.

Quebec remembers that. Furthermore, last year, my colleague from Trois-Rivières introduced a motion in this House calling on the House of Commons to recognize that Quebec should receive a fair share of economic spinoffs representative of the significance of its aeronautics industry. But once again, the NDP voted with the Conservatives against Quebec.

Quebec has made its feelings known about the withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan, because 70% of Quebecers are opposed to our being there. The NDP voted against the motion to end our mission in Afghanistan in 2009, which extended our mission to 2011. If they had voted with us, the mission would not have been extended to 2011.

We are happy that they have finally had a moment of clarity when it comes to Quebec, but will our NDP friends realize that they have also spoken out of both sides of their mouths and actions for Quebec have been contradictory? It is time for them to join forces with the Bloc Québécois to defend the values and interests of Quebecers.

● (1700)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, despite my fondness for the hon. member, I would like to clarify a few things. The Bloc Québécois wanted to extend the mission in Afghanistan until 2009, as though it were a value espoused by Quebecers. We, however, said no. We said that an immediate withdrawal was needed. I do not think that the Bloc was really reflecting the interests of Quebec at that time.

Now, for two budgets and two non-confidence votes, the Bloc has supported the Conservative Party, regardless of what the Conservatives were doing to Quebec and regardless of the fact that the Bloc obtained nothing. The Bloc Québécois supported the Conservative Party. That is why, two years later, the Conservatives are still here and able to wreak havoc in Quebec and elsewhere in the country.

The Bloc Québécois made its biggest mistake in the softwood lumber file. I am sorry, but there are thousands of people in Quebec who have lost their jobs because the Bloc supported the Conservative Party. These people are in Abitibi, Saguenay, and Mauricie. These people lost their jobs because the softwood lumber agreement was a big trap for Quebec and for the softwood lumber workers in this country. The Bloc should have continued to defend the principle that it defended in the summer of 2006. At that time, the critic for international trade, the hon. member for Joliette, said he was against the softwood lumber agreement. However, the Bloc Québécois changed its position, which cost thousands of jobs in Quebec. So I am sorry but despite my fondness for the member, I cannot accept what he is proposing.

Actually, it is the NDP that supported the interests of Quebecers in this Parliament. Sometimes the Bloc joins us, which is even better, but sometimes the Bloc Québécois has false starts and supports the Conservative Party. We all know how that turns out. It is too bad.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will start by commenting on that last answer, because we just heard a typical answer from the NDP, to the effect that “Ottawa knows best”. A member from British Columbia is telling us that everyone in Quebec was wrong. Everyone asked the Bloc Québécois to support the softwood lumber agreement: unions, employers, the National Assembly. The feeling was the same all across Quebec. If you had come to Quebec, you would have known that everyone supported that agreement. It was far from perfect—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Order, please. I would like to remind the hon. member to avoid using the second person and concentrate on using the third person. In addition, I think he will want to know that, contrary to what he may have been expecting, instead of having 20 minutes to give his speech, he will have 10 minutes. He therefore has 10 minutes to make his comments, because, unfortunately, I will have to interrupt him at 5:15 p.m. to put the question.

The hon. member for Jeanne-Le Ber.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** Mr. Speaker, that does not present a problem. I will proceed as quickly as possible. However, what the hon. member said needed to be corrected, just like the Afghan mission.

We need to get serious, forget about all the speeches and focus on actions. There have been votes. There have been three votes on this issue. On three different occasions, we have had to choose between extending and not extending the mission. When the first vote was held, on a motion to extend the mission, the Bloc, like the NDP, voted against extending the mission until 2009. But some Liberals voted for the motion, which meant that the mission was extended for a second time.

A second vote was held in this House on a motion not to extend the mission. The Bloc Québécois was consistent and obviously voted for the motion not to extend the mission. The NDP saved the government by voting against that motion to end the mission.

Now, the NDP can trot out all sorts of political and strategic arguments to justify its actions, but it used the wrong strategy, and because of its partisan interests, the Liberals are now supporting the government on extending the mission until 2011. The NDP can claim they were using partisan strategies, but when they come up with strategies and make a mistake, then maybe their strategists are not as good as all that.

But I digress. I could also have talked about the Clarity Act. For a party that calls itself the New Democratic Party, it is extremely paradoxical, shameful even, to vote for an act that basically denies Quebeckers the right to make their own decisions about their future—a right recognized in all international conventions, the right to self-determination. Until the NDP apologizes for this, it cannot claim to be defending consensuses reached in Quebec. Today, of course, it is supporting one of those consensuses.

I should take a moment to catch my breath. I got a little angry as I listened to what my NDP colleague had to say. I am sure that all Quebeckers who were listening to us got angry too—at least, many of the Quebeckers around me did.

That consensus was loud and clear in the National Assembly, where the following motion was unanimously adopted:

That the Assembly ask the Federal Government to abandon its Canada-wide securities commission project.

That seems pretty clear to me:

That the Assembly ask the Federal Government to abandon its Canada-wide securities commission project.

It is so simple that I think even a Conservative member might be able to understand it. Even Conservative members from Quebec can understand it. The Liberals might even understand it. Of course, they would have to be awake and alert enough to understand what people are saying.

Quebeckers elected 125 members to represent them, and these representatives have asked the federal government not to go ahead with this project. We got an answer this morning. I listened to the Minister of Finance speak with the sort of pathetic paternalism that borders on contempt when, much like the NDP did earlier, he told us that everyone in Quebec is wrong. The 125 members of the National

Assembly do not know what is good for Quebec. Quebec's chamber of commerce does not know what is good for Quebec either. Unions do not know what is good for Quebec. Editorialists and political observers—all those people—are wrong because the Minister of Finance is the one who knows what is good for Quebec. He only wants what is best for us. And he will end up taking away the best of everything we Quebeckers have.

• (1705)

This type of arrogance was to have disappeared with the election of the Conservative government. For years, the Liberals as well as the NDP—with their comments on softwood lumber, such as those we just heard—have been taken to task for this attitude.

The Conservatives had promised Quebeckers that they would stop interfering in Quebec's jurisdictions. It was supposed to have been the end of Liberal arrogance, but it has persisted. In only two years, the Conservatives have learned many lessons, after observing the Liberals over the course of 13 years.

It is unacceptable that the promise made to Quebeckers has not been kept. It will be even more regrettable when Quebec MPs vote against this motion tonight. It is absolutely shameful. Tonight, they will choose between voting against their party or voting against Quebec. They will vote against the Quebec nation. If I am wrong, I will admit it in this House. However, I am convinced that these members will choose to vote against Quebec. This evening we will watch the Liberal and Conservative members from Quebec vote against this motion. Only the Bloc Québécois steadfastly defends Quebec. It does not do so occasionally, like the NDP; it does not do so from time to time, like the Liberals; and it does not do so by accident, like the Conservatives. Only the Bloc Québécois members always defend Quebec.

For 13 years, the Liberal members of Parliament from Quebec rolled over and toed their party's line. They always preferred voting against Quebec to voting against their party.

The Conservative MPs strut around Quebec saying they have recognized the Quebec nation. What is that recognition worth if they promote a position that goes against a unanimous decision of the National Assembly of Quebec? How can they claim even for a minute that they represent Quebec when they vote against a motion like the one before us today, which represents a consensus in Quebec?

Earlier I said that everyone in Quebec was against the government's bill to create a national commission. It was rather paradoxical to hear the minister talk this morning about national standards and the need for a national voice. What nation is he talking about? I thought we were told in this House that Quebeckers formed a nation. Will these Quebeckers have their voice within this federal agency? Of course not. That is why everyone in Quebec is opposed to this plan.

*Business of Supply*

Everyone in Quebec is opposed to this plan, except 20 or so Liberal and Conservative MPs who will vote against this motion, unless I am wrong. Believe me, that is my greatest wish. I hope I am wrong. I hope that when the time comes to vote, all the MPs from Quebec, Liberal and Conservative alike, will say enough is enough. The National Assembly, the assembly of the nation of Quebec which represents all Quebecers, unanimously passed a motion. I hope that, as members of the House of Commons who represent the nation of Quebec—as unanimously recognized by the House—they will put aside their party lines and their partisan interests. I hope they will stand up and vote in favour of the Bloc Québécois motion and thereby respect the areas of jurisdiction of the National Assembly and the nation of Quebec.

• (1710)

I see that I have to end my presentation. I would have been pleased to answer a few questions. The Liberal and Conservative MPs from Quebec still have 15 minutes left to accept the arguments of the National Assembly of Quebec and its unanimous motion.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Call in the members.

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

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

*(Division No. 63)*

## YEAS

## Members

André  
Asselin  
Bachand  
Bell (Vancouver Island North)  
Bevington  
Blaikie  
Bonsant

Angus  
Atamanenko  
Barbot  
Bellavance  
Bigras  
Blais  
Bouchard

Bourgeois  
Cardin  
Charlton  
Comartin  
Crowder  
Davies  
Demers  
Dewar  
Faille  
Gagnon  
Godin  
Guimond  
Laforest  
Lavallée  
Lemay  
Lévesque  
Malo  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
Masse  
McDonough  
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)  
Mulcair  
Nash  
Paquette  
Picard  
Priddy  
Siksay  
St-Hilaire  
Thi Lac  
Wasylycia-Leis — 73

Brunelle  
Carrier  
Chow  
Crête  
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)  
DeBellefeuille  
Deschamps  
Duceppe  
Freeman  
Gaudet  
Gravel  
Julian  
Laframboise  
Layton  
Lessard  
Lussier  
Marston  
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)  
Mathysen  
Ménard (Hochelaga)  
Mourani  
Nadeau  
Ouellet  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Roy  
St-Cyr  
Stoffer  
Vincent

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott  
Albrecht  
Allen  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Bagnell  
Baird  
Batters  
Bell (North Vancouver)  
Benoit  
Bevilacqua  
Blackburn  
Boshcoff  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Bruinooge  
Calkins  
Cannis  
Carrie  
Chan  
Clement  
Cotler  
Cummins  
D'Amours  
Day  
Devolin  
Dion  
Doyle  
Dykstra  
Emerson  
Eyking  
Finley  
Flaherty  
Folco  
Galipeau  
Godfrey  
Goodale  
Gourde  
Guarnieri  
Harris  
Hawn  
Hiebert  
Hinton  
Hubbard  
Jaffer  
Jennings  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Khan

Ablonczy  
Alghabra  
Allison  
Anders  
Arthur  
Bains  
Barnes  
Bélanger  
Bennett  
Bernier  
Bezan  
Blaney  
Boucher  
Brison  
Brown (Barrie)  
Byrne  
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)  
Cannon (Pontiac)  
Casson  
Chong  
Comuzzi  
Cullen (Etobicoke North)  
Cuzner  
Davidson  
Del Mastro  
Dhalla  
Dosanjh  
Dryden  
Easter  
Epp  
Fast  
Fitzpatrick  
Fletcher  
Fry  
Gallant  
Goldring  
Goodyear  
Grewal  
Hanger  
Harvey  
Hearn  
Hill  
Holland  
Ignatieff  
Jean  
Kadis  
Karygiannis  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Komarnicki



*Private Members' Business*

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

● (1745)

[*English*]

**HERITAGE LIGHTHOUSE PROTECTION ACT**

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC)** moved that Bill S-215, An Act to protect heritage lighthouses, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill S-215, An Act to protect heritage lighthouses.

As we know, this initiative has been before us several times previously and has always received broad support. In fact, this is the seventh edition of this bill since 2000. I am proud to sponsor this bill in the House, but there were many people before me that have taken up this cause and I would like to take a moment to mention them now.

This bill owes a great deal to the work done by the late Senator Forrestall and carried on by Senator Carney and Senator Murray, who together moulded this bill from a desire to protect part of Canada's maritime heritage into the legislation that we have today.

Senator Carney has worked tirelessly to champion this initiative. In fact, she worked right up until her last day in the Senate to ensure that a number of administrative and financial concerns were addressed.

As well, I would be remiss if I did not thank the member for South Shore—St. Margaret's for his help on this initiative.

I would also like to recognize the hard work of Mr. Barry MacDonald and his organization, the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society. I thank Barry. Mr. MacDonald's contribution to this legislation was paramount when it came to continuing this process that would allow us to protect not just the lighthouses of the fine province of Nova Scotia but throughout the country as well.

In fact, there are nine lighthouses in my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, which include some of the six imperial tower lighthouses. Cove Island is one of these and it is a treasure. Cove Island Lighthouse was built in 1858, while Griffith Island Lighthouse, which is also in my riding, along with Chantry Island, Point Clark, Nottawasaga and the Christian Island lighthouses were all built in 1859.

This bill would provide for the designation of heritage lighthouses to require that they be reasonably maintained to prevent unauthorized alteration or disposal and to facilitate the sale or transfer of heritage lighthouses. We can all appreciate the role that lighthouses have played in shaping Canada's history since the 18th century on Canada's coasts, along the St. Lawrence River and on the Great Lakes.

Lighthouses have long shaped the history and economic development of this country. These majestic structures have helped to open key transportation corridors into the heartland of central Canada and the markets of our neighbours to the south.

Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Lee	Lemieux
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Malhi	Maloney
Manning	Mark
Marleau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Matthews	Mayes
McCallum	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
Merrifield	Miller
Mills	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Pacetti	Paradis
Patry	Pearson
Petit	Poilievre
Preston	Rajotte
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Reid
Richardson	Ritz
Rota	Russell
Savage	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schellenberger
Scott	Shipley
Silva	Simard
Simms	Skelton
Smith	Solberg
Sorenson	St. Amand
St. Denis	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Szabo
Telegdi	Temelkovski
Thibault (West Nova)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Tweed
Valley	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Volpe
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Wilfert	Williams
Wilson	Wrzesnewskyj
Yelich	Zed- — 198

**PAIRED**

Members

Guay	Guergis
Kotto	Lalonde
Pallister	Prentice- — 6

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

● (1740)

[*English*]

It being 5:47 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

*Private Members' Business*

What makes lighthouses so special and memorable? Perhaps it is because they represent where we have come from as a people and a nation. They stand as unwavering proud and unique symbols of our maritime history.

If we look closely, it is hard not to imagine lighthouse keepers in their lonely outposts, protecting our mariners as they strove to steer their vessels safely through rough waters in fog and darkness. For those mariners, the glowing, steady beam of the lighthouse shining from the shore must have instilled a sense of relief, a sense that they had made it, and that their lives and their cargo were safe.

Let us talk a moment about some of the people who manned those often remote lighthouses across the country. Friends of mine, Bert and Pearl Hopkins of Tobermory are two of those people. They spent years in various lighthouses, finishing up their careers on Caribou Island in Lake Superior.

There is no denying lighthouses have played a critical role in the development of Canada as a nation. Like the railroad tracks that etch our landscape and the grain elevators that dominate the prairie sky, lighthouses are embedded in the Canadian consciousness. They are woven into songs, poetry, stories and art. Today, they are frequented by thousands of hikers and tourists from across Canada and around the world.

Light stations were pivotal in Canada becoming a trading nation, lighting the way for safe passage of mariners, commerce and opportunity. Lighthouses were essential, modern technologies that facilitated trade within and between nations.

The first Canadian lighthouse and the second oldest lighthouse on the continent was constructed at Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island in 1734.

Another important east coast lighthouse, the Sambro Lighthouse, was established by the very first act passed by Nova Scotia's House of Assembly in 1758. The act placed a tax on incoming vessels and alcohol imports to pay for the lighthouse. It is the oldest operating lighthouse in North America and a Canadian national historic site that celebrates its 250th anniversary this year, an event that makes passage of this bill so important and timely.

● (1750)

The history of lighthouses on the Great Lakes goes back to 1803 when a decision was made to construct a lighthouse at Mississauga Point on Lake Ontario. Several other towers were built on the lower Great Lakes during the next two decades. It was not until 1847 that the first lighthouse on Lake Huron was built at Godridge. The establishment of more lighthouses continued through the mid-1850s, prompted by the settlement of my region along the Bruce Peninsula and the free trade agreement with the United States in 1854, which considerably increased shipping.

John Francis is the owner and publisher of the Tobermory Press and one of my constituents. He is also a lighthouse enthusiast, and his comments on this bill should be heard by the House. He wrote, "The lighthouses on the Great Lakes are among the most important historical buildings in Canada. As government assets, lighthouses are valued only for their function. Preservation and public access are often incompatible with tight budgets and limited manpower. The transfer of responsibility from the federal ministry to private trusts

and historical societies will ensure that historical lighthouses are carefully preserved and accessible to the public".

Fish, fur and lumber were abundant in the upper Great Lakes area. Harvesting these resources led to increased economic activity and navigation through central Canadian waters. This fundamental need sparked plans for the imperial towers.

Named to denote the fact that their material and construction costs would be assumed by Great Britain, the imperial lighthouses were absolutely majestic. During the mid-1800s, 11 were planned and six were built. Constructed from limestone and whitewash, these stone towers are truly magnificent.

On the west coast, the start of the Fraser River gold rush in 1858 saw Victoria, B.C. go from a small frontier settlement to a thriving city in a matter of months. The huge increase in shipping that resulted from the gold rush quickly led to demands from shipowners and captains for aids to navigation.

The Fisgard Lighthouse was the first permanent lighthouse constructed on the west coast of Canada. It was constructed in 1859 along with Race Rocks Lighthouse, and thus began B.C.'s association with lighthouses in support of its maritime transportation and heritage.

By the first decade of the 20th century, more than 800 staffed lighthouses and other aids to navigation, such as lighted beacons and foghorns, were in service across the country. Before the advent of the automobile, our waterways were the highways of choice for travellers and their cargo. Today, however, rapid technological changes have set aside the traditional roles of our lighthouses.

In the 21st century, new marine safety and navigation technologies are replacing lighthouses as aids to navigation. These new technologies are more effective and accessible to vessel operators. As a result, many of our lighthouses are becoming operationally redundant. As a result of our focus on new and more effective aids to navigation, expenditures on upkeep and maintenance of lighthouses have been reduced and many are now in a state of disrepair.

Should we care about this state of neglect? Yes, we should. For one thing, since lighthouses often define a community, they can be integrated in community development and other activities that can support tourism and historical purposes. That is why we should all support Bill S-215, a bill that would provide statutory protection for lighthouses across Canada.

I want to speak a little about the role of lighthouses in the 21st century. For example, today much of the shores around the Great Lakes have been transformed into cottage country. Surplus lighthouses represent an opportunity to enhance recreational activities and help redefine communities. As a result, communities across the country are looking at these properties in a new light. There is ample evidence of this.

Ongoing growth and ecotourism has resulted in Fisheries and Oceans Canada divesting more than 130 lighthouse properties. Many of these have been successfully converted into interpretive centres, museums, bed and breakfasts, gift shops, restaurants and other small business ventures.

Let me talk for a moment about lighthouses in my home province which have undergone major, very successful transformations. Cove Island Lightstation, which I mentioned earlier, is in my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and is one of the few lighthouses on the Great Lakes that has retained navigational significance. It continues to be in top-notch condition, and is the only imperial tower to have its original Fresnel lens. Its incredible strength means the light can reach 20 miles.

● (1755)

Standing in what is now Fathom Five National Marine Park, the very first underwater national park in Canada, Cove Island Lighthouse remains the crown jewel of the 6 imperial towers. Its role in opening navigation on Lake Huron led to its designation as a federal heritage building. Standing tall above the rugged shore, this tower is one of the highest in the entire country.

During the summer months the light station is accessible to visitors through boat tours operating out of Tobermory. The sight success is largely due to the collaborative effort between Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association. This cooperation resulted in the restoration of both the tower and keeper's residence for multiple purposes.

Similarly, Cabot Head Lightstation, also in my riding, was refurbished by the Friends of Cabot Head who operate the restored building as a museum for local residents and tourists. Visitors to this area can also catch boat tours to the Flowerpot Island Lightstation, which is also located in Fathom Five National Marine Park.

Its lightkeeper's residence and several other buildings were renovated by Fisheries and Oceans and the Friends of the Bruce District Parks Association. Their efforts to restore the structures have resulted in the lightkeeper's dwelling operating seasonally as a museum and gift shop.

Thanks to the Friends of Fathom Five and the former St. Edmund's Township, the Big Tub Lighthouse was made more accessible to visitors. A viewing area was cleared and an interpretive sign was installed. This tower at Lighthouse Point was particularly important for guiding ships from the treacherous waters of Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay into the harbour.

Tobermory's light still guides boats through powerful currents, dense fog and shoals to the safety of Big Tub Harbour. Underwater shipwrecks are a testament to the dangerous waters, and those undersea monuments still attract scuba divers in large numbers from around the world. Big Tub, Flowerpot Island, Cabot Head and Cove

### *Private Members' Business*

Island are just a few examples of Ontario's lighthouses that have undergone noteworthy restoration as part of tourism and economic development.

With the help of community groups like those just mentioned, lighthouses are being restored to their original splendour.

This government is committed to working with community members and other levels of government, and Bill S-215 enhances our ability to join forces to preserve these vital links to our past. Light stations in central Canada hold tremendous heritage value, economic worth and architectural significance as they do in our many coastal areas.

What does Bill S-215 do? Bill S-215 enshrines in cultural and historical significance, and acknowledges the places of lightstations in our maritime and national heritage. This bill offers lighthouses much needed protection. Bill S-215 would protect heritage lighthouses under the legislative authority of Parliament. The bill would require heritage lighthouses to be reasonably maintained and would prevent unauthorized alteration or disposal.

Other provisions under Bill S-215 align with other federal government efforts to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada. Honouring our maritime heritage is a shared responsibility. Under the proposed bill the minister responsible for Parks Canada would designate the heritage process and would task or establish a new organization to administer the provisions of the bill, and this includes developing criteria for designating, maintaining or altering heritage.

There is a proposed amendment coming forth, and the government wholeheartedly supports the spirit of this bill since the late Senator Forrestall first championed this initiative in 2000, and there has been general support for it in the House.

The government is pleased to support it, along with its Fisheries and Oceans divestiture program. It is the government's view that what this amendment does in a nutshell is it would amend the bill by replacing the terms "related built structure" with "related buildings".

● (1800)

I see that my time is quickly running out, so I will urge all members of the House to support this bill. I think we may have unanimous support. It is a very non-partisan bill. It is something that will go a long way to protect the lighthouses.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I believe we will get unanimous support for the bill.

I thank my hon. colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for carriage of Bill S-215. This is an important bill for coastal Canada. Those of us from the east coast think we have all the lighthouses. Those from the west coast think they have all the lighthouses. There are about 25 lighthouses sitting around me here. It is quite interesting to see the amount of lights in the Great Lakes.

*Private Members' Business*

I would like to recognize Senator Carney, who has since retired, for her carriage of this issue in the Senate, certainly Senator Lowell Murray, and most important, I would be remiss if I did not mention Senator Forrestall. The late Senator Mike Forrestall had carriage of this bill at least a half dozen times in the upper chamber. He was an avid advocate of lighthouses and the need to protect them. I quite frankly think if it were not for Senator Forrestall, we probably would not have this bill before us today.

I think it is a giant step forward. I appreciate the support that this place has shown.

**Mr. Larry Miller:** Mr. Speaker, there was not a question there and that is okay. Once again I would like to thank the member for South Shore—St. Margaret's for all his work on this issue, and yes, the work that was done in the other place by the aforementioned senators. It is unbelievable what they did. My colleague was right, that without their work in the early years on this issue, we probably would not have a bill.

It is important to mention some of the groups that are headed by people like Barry MacDonald from Nova Scotia. They have a big care for this. In the last few days when it looked like we could see daylight at the end of the tunnel and we are here today, Barry made the comment, "I don't think that I could go through this again". This is the seventh time and let us be seven times lucky.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a straightforward question. Actually, it is practically a comment. I wonder just how enthusiastic we could possibly be about this bill. Indeed, this is not the first time such a bill has been introduced, but rather the umpteenth time.

Unfortunately, it is hard to get excited and support such a bill. There is finally a move to designate heritage lighthouses, but no one is willing to put any money, not a penny, not one red cent, into ensuring that the lighthouses in question will survive and prosper. There are all sorts of horror stories regarding heritage lighthouses. I also have some in my riding. More than anything, some substance needs to be added. This is merely a bare-bones bill, and on that I agree with my colleague entirely. I am therefore left to wonder how he can be so enthusiastic about such a bill, when there is no money behind it.

[*English*]

**Mr. Larry Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Bloc for the question, but he is totally mistaken.

I am glad to hear that he sees a lot of merit in this and I will be expecting his vote of support.

The truth of the matter is that any of these lighthouses that will have the opportunity to be designated as heritage and taken over through proposals by different groups, like some of the ones I mentioned earlier, will be handed over in good operating condition. They have to be in good general repair. It would be very unfair to ask any group to take them over. They will be fixed. The money does come with it. This bill allows it to happen in a controlled budget. It is not wide open as some members in the House think that government can operate it. It is a good way to do it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor.

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

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with applause like that from the Conservative Party, I am beginning to think I did something right, or maybe not.

I would like to congratulate my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound who has brought this bill forward in this House. I would also like to congratulate my colleague on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margaret's, who brought this up in its former version which was known as Bill S-220.

A big congratulations goes to the hon. Pat Carney who did so much for so many years on this, as did Senator Forrestall. These people have been mentioned for all the good work they have done to make this a big issue when it comes to heritage lighthouses.

My colleague from the Bloc, the member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine mentioned something about the money situation. I think what he talked about is the operating funds, or core funding as we like to call it. In that case many smaller communities are unable to take over these lighthouses for the simple reason they are unable to provide the upkeep, certainly when it comes to heating and when it comes to maintaining the exteriors, being in the harsh climate that they are, because after all, these are lighthouses, and many of them find themselves in trouble. It is a constant battle to raise funds in order to keep these lighthouses up. They have been around for 250 years. We have made alterations to these lighthouses but keep in mind that we have always managed to maintain the character of the lighthouses.

I speak of my neck of the woods, the east coast lighthouses, particularly for Newfoundland and Labrador, but also for Nova Scotia. My hon. colleague talked about the ones around the Great Lakes which also share a great deal of history. We cannot forget how Pat Carney so eloquently spoke of the lighthouses on the west coast.

I would like to bring out some of the arguments that Senator Michael Forrestall of Nova Scotia and Senator Carney, who championed this for quite some time, made about supporting a bill like this and the designations that are needed for heritage lighthouses.

In 1988 Pat Carney talked about Canada's Heritage Railway Act and she compared protecting lighthouses to that legislation. Lighthouses fall under federal jurisdiction when it comes to their being altered, sold, removed, assigned, transferred or otherwise disposed of without public consultation. Therein lies the key to this bill, which we do support. Yes, we do support it.

*Private Members' Business*

When the public consultation process is engaged, it becomes far more beneficial to the community, the not for profit group, or the municipality which chooses to take over that building, because only then will there be buy-in from the community. Only then will the lighthouse survive. Only then will these lighthouses continue to be the beacons they always were. It is not so much from a navigation point of view because many of them have been decommissioned, but this time they will be revered because of their cultural and historical perspective.

As I like to say about Newfoundland and Labrador, and I do not mean this as a slight, we are brimming over with character, brimming over with culture. Many colleagues can attest to that. My colleague from Nova Scotia would probably say the same thing.

I want to talk about the west coast for just a second. Senator Carney spoke about British Columbia having 52 of Canada's surviving 583 lighthouses. Buildings are vulnerable because fisheries are vulnerable. Fisheries and Oceans Canada over the years was responsible for the lighthouses. There was really no mandate to protect them for the sake of heritage and culture. The bill attempts to help us restore some of the dignity that has been lost in many of these cases.

With respect to Bill S-215, formerly known as Bill S-220, there is a controversy surrounding the potential costs of implementing the bill. There was a ruling some time ago about private members' bills and whether they dip into the public purse and require a royal recommendation. This avoids that. On October 29, 2003 the Speaker ruled, "After examining the bill, I can find no obligation for the spending of public funds either by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board or by the Minister of Canadian Heritage". That is something to consider as well.

• (1810)

When the bill comes before the committee, the official opposition will explore that aspect of the spending and the operational funds required, as I spoke of earlier. I would like to talk about that.

Through the preparatory process for Bill S-220, which preceded this bill, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada, through Parks Canada, asserted that there are 750 lighthouses in Canada that would require funding pursuant to the provisions of the bill. The figure has presumably been applied to the cost analysis by these departments.

In looking at some of the facts and figures involved here, let us look at some of the lighthouses in question. The figures state that only 3% of our lighthouses across the nation have genuine heritage protection, which was done by some of the departments and that may be questionable, and only 12% have received partial protection. In British Columbia, the figure is even lower, B.C. having 52 of the 583 lighthouses.

I want to talk about a submission from the Heritage Canada Foundation to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. This brief was done in light of Bill S-220 in the last session. I would like to read into the record some of the things the foundation had to say, which I found quite compelling:

Bill S-220—

—now Bill S-215—

An Act to protect heritage lighthouses, provides a means for the Government of Canada to examine, recognize, protect and maintain a highly significant group of heritage structures. Binding, legal protection for designated heritage lighthouses is absolutely essential.

Agreed.

Otherwise, accountability is compromised, and decisions about the stewardship of heritage buildings can be made in an arbitrary manner. It is important to stress that the all provincial and territorial jurisdictions and, by delegated authority, all municipal governments in Canada have binding heritage statutes and related legal measures, such as covenants and easements, to protect and guide the management of heritage property. Within the federal jurisdiction, only railways stations are subject to such binding legislation.

That is very key.

Prior to the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act, the Government of Canada recognized only six heritage railway stations in the entire country through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and even these had no legal protection. Today, 166 heritage railway stations have been designated by the federal government.

Therefore, it is a program that genuinely works. Therefore, what has been tried, true and tested in the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act can also be applied to lighthouses.

The Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office evaluates the heritage significance of federally owned heritage buildings, but it is a closed process. Herein lies what I feel is the crux of this issue, which is to say, it makes mention here of the fact that there was no public consultation required. This is what my colleague spoke of and this is what we have to address as we send the bill off to committee.

Basically the community values heritage property. That is what the Heritage Canada Foundation states and I could not agree more. We certainly do have along the east coast so much history involved with our heritage lighthouses that it is long overdue, given that so many people volunteer so many hours to maintaining our culture and heritage through our lighthouses, whether they be around the Great Lakes, on the west coast or certainly on the east coast.

Since I only have one minute, I would like to quickly mention some of the lighthouses of which I am particularly fond: Cape Sable Lighthouse, Nova Scotia; Sambro Island Gas House in Nova Scotia, incredible, built in 1861 on Cape Sable Island; Seal Island Lighthouse, built in 1830; Estevan Point, British Columbia; all are amazing structures that stand the test of time and certainly so proud to be a part of this particular bill.

I would like to mention some of the Newfoundland and Labrador areas of distinction that I believe should be recognized from a heritage and cultural perspective: Belle Isle, Cape Pine, Trepassey, St. Mary's Bay, Cape Race, Fortune Bay, Green Island Cove, Green Point, Gull Island, Notre Dame Bay, and funnily enough one called Bay Roberts, and one called Confusion Bay Light Tower. How is that for a quaint name for a lighthouse? How is that for being a beacon in the fog when someone has to look out and say, "Where are we, sir?" and the reply is, "We are in Confusion Bay, for goodness' sake". What does that say?

• (1815)

At the end of the day, the lighthouse proved to be the beacon it always had, and has, been. It is something of which we should be very proud, certainly from a cultural perspective.

*Private Members' Business*

In North Head and Brigus is the Conception Bay light tower. Then there are some of the more famous ones. Some are provincially owned, such as the Cape Bonavista lighthouse in my riding. Others are owned by Parks Canada, such as the Cape Spear lighthouse in the easternmost point in North America. A lot of people in the House would probably be familiar with it.

There is also the Port-aux-Basque lighthouse, the Channel Head light tower and the Random Head light tower. I would be remiss if I did not mention one of my favourites, the Long Point light tower in the Crow Head, Twillingate area. It received distinction a few weeks back, one of which I am extremely proud.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is the umpteenth time that we have had occasion to speak about the heritage lighthouse issue. I had a chance a little earlier to touch on this and on the position I want to take over the next 10 minutes.

I listened very attentively to what my colleagues had to say. I want to congratulate the colleague who has introduced this matter, although I cannot support it. They have finally noticed the sickness, but when the time came to cure it, they forgot. At most, it is as if they are treating cancer with an aspirin. That is not how to do it.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is responsible for these structures. I want to remind the House that Fisheries and Oceans may be responsible but often it does not take proper, appropriate care of its own facilities. The small craft harbours are a good example.

When it comes to heritage lighthouses, unfortunately, we have a bill that tries to provide a heritage classification for lighthouses that somehow deserve it. They deserve far more than this. First of all, they deserve not to be in the condition they are in today. Some are in a terrible state, although not because of the people who take care of them or have tried to. The terrible state of these lighthouses is due to the inaction of the federal government, which has just let things go. It is like a leaky roof. If the roof is not repaired, eventually it will collapse. That is what has happened to our heritage lighthouses.

Finally, there are a lot of problems with this bill. The first and worst is the funding. It is not a question of under-funding but of no funding. There is nothing, not one red cent. Yes, they are going to set up a nice committee on heritage lighthouses in each of the provinces. A little bit of work will go into this, but ultimately the lighthouses will just be left to their fates, as they have been so far. They are being completely ignored and neglected. I have seen lighthouses in my riding in particular about which the question arose. We need to remember how these lighthouses operate.

For most of them, the land they are on is contaminated. So we should also be talking about decontamination and not just classification or recognition. I agree that heritage recognition is needed for lighthouses, because they are in fact part of our history. We also have to remember that people worked in these lighthouses in extremely difficult circumstances.

I have had a chance to watch a very good program on French language television a few times. I would in fact invite you to watch it occasionally. It is really very educational and helps us to see things as they really are. The program is *Thalassa* and it is on TV5. It has

profiled people who have worked in lighthouses and people who are still working in them. These people live in very isolated situations. There is no situation more isolated. These people have strong bonds to the piece of property called a lighthouse. They are well aware that their work is a matter of safety.

This is the backdrop to the serious work that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, on which I sit, will be doing. In fact, we will be examining the bill in a little more detail. But I have told my colleagues from the outset that we cannot support a bill that ultimately recognizes a situation, a heritage property, and at the same time denies that the very essence of a heritage property is that it must be looked after.

● (1820)

If a property, a lighthouse for example, someday becomes a heritage property the most elementary fact is that the lighthouse has to be maintained properly. That would mean that the people who became its new owners would have something that is simply common sense. There is a disease, but at the same time this is not the right treatment for it. There is not a lot of flesh on the bones.

That is why we need to assert this position and redouble our efforts. A lot of facilities that belong to the federal government are deteriorating. On Parliament Hill, the West Block is a prime example. We constantly wonder how much longer it can accommodate members. Work has been going on for several years now. The government is not looking after its own facilities in a responsible and rigorous manner.

We are talking about heritage lighthouses. I would like to take this opportunity to talk about another type of infrastructure, specifically wharves and small craft harbours.

According to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, it would take at least \$600 million to rehabilitate this infrastructure, and I use the word "rehabilitate" advisedly. Since the annual budget for this sort of work is \$100 million, it is easy to see that there is not enough money to meet the needs. It is like a leaky roof that will collapse. Unfortunately, that is what will happen.

I would like to say something else about heritage lighthouses. The bill establishes a process for selecting and designating heritage lighthouses and provides for setting up an advisory committee and holding consultations with interest groups. I listened to my Liberal colleague's speech earlier, and I was interested in what he had to say about consultation.

*Private Members' Business*

It is also important to mention that many communities and developers would like to develop this infrastructure. However, by putting up roadblocks, the federal government might simply prolong the status quo and consequently the deterioration of the lighthouses. The federal government should also be modest enough to recognize that it does not have any lessons to teach the provinces about heritage protection. I am thinking in particular of the West Block on Parliament Hill, which I mentioned earlier, the degradation of lighthouses and, obviously, small craft harbours.

Some sites should be decontaminated before they are transferred to local authorities. I am reminded of a lighthouse in the Gaspé and Lower St. Lawrence area that the community is looking after. It is the Madeleine lighthouse. It is a beautiful spot. Unfortunately, it could cost as much as \$2 million to decontaminate this site. The lighthouse was recognized as a heritage lighthouse, but no thought was given to the fact that the site was contaminated, mainly with mercury.

I would therefore urge my colleagues to be very careful. Logically, we need to think about designating heritage lighthouses, but at the same time, we need to go much farther to make this a meaningful bill. Those are my main comments today. After the vote, we will have the opportunity to work on this bill in committee.

• (1825)

[English]

**Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last year I spoke to a predecessor of the current bill, Bill S-220. I am honoured to once again stand to talk about the importance of lighthouses.

It has been, as others have said, almost 10 years since the original bill was introduced. I would like to recognize the work of Senator Michael Forrestall and acknowledge also the work of Senator Pat Carney, as others have done. Without those people before us, ensuring that the importance of this was laid out, we might not be here today.

In speaking to the bill previously, I mentioned what a lot of people conjure up in their minds when we speak the word "lighthouse", images of seafarers past and present who ply our coasts in trade or commerce, or just for pleasure. Our lighthouses have long been a part of our coastal history and our coastal heritage from sea to sea to sea.

I mentioned that it was a rare thing for a private member's bill or motion, if passed, to be enacted. A few bills have not been enacted such as the seniors charter or the veterans first motion, which were passed by a majority of the House. It seems to be a broken promise on the part of the Prime Minister who said he would honour the will of Parliament.

If this bill passes, I hope it is enacted. It also needs to have the funding attached to ensure the upkeep and maintenance of these treasures is a reality. Since the bill has been debated for many years, it must finally pass and be enacted.

Another vision springs to mind when one says the word lighthouse, especially in these times of increasing activity and changing weather patterns on our B.C. coast. One not so romantic is the stark reality that many thousands of people who live on our coast

rely on the ocean for their livelihoods. They rely on our lighthouses for information, guidance and assistance. These are not the unstaffed lighthouses or lighthouses that will soon be turned into museums, but staffed lighthouses that employ thousands of people, workers who are on call 24 hours a days, 7 days a week to provide ears and eyes on our coast as well as assistance in times of need.

These gems of the Pacific coast, our light stations, are part of a living and working history. Canadians recognize these sites as historical icons with an important and continuing role in safety of mariners and aviators who ply our marine highways, transporting workers and coastal products that we need.

Our citizens have again and again demanded to keep these sites funded and staffed. Our 27 staffed light stations are strategically located to provide many services to the mariners, aviators, coastal communities and isolated inhabitants of coastal British Columbia.

Weather information is passed to Canadian Coast Guard radio stations on a schedule, seven times daily. Special weathers are submitted on significant changes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Lightkeepers also give updated weather reports on request, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This information is vital to aviators and mariners, as they move up and down the coast, in order to track weather systems and to find windows of opportunity for safe journeys.

The coastal economy also relies on our staffed light stations. Dependable weather information is vital to coastal communities. From Campbell River, one airline alone, Vancouver Island Air, flies 14,000 float plane passengers a year up this coast, delivering mail, workers and supplies. Lightkeepers provide meteorological services. Canada utilizes light station weather reports for forecasting weather warnings and continued tracking of climate data that will provide such necessary correlations as climate change occurs.

Because of their strategic location and federal presence, light stations are able to provide coastal security and testify to sovereignty. On many occasions, lightkeepers liaise with other departments such as the Department of National Defence, the RCMP, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and provincial wildlife and forestry departments, and provide them with any information and assistance upon request.

Many forest fires have been spotted by lightkeepers and they take an active role in the RCMP's coast watch program. Keepers act as first responders on many incidents and work closely with coastal search and rescue units in B.C. Light stations also act as staging grounds for medivacs.

• (1830)

There are many people working and staffing the 27 light stations along our B.C. coast. One such couple is Steve and Alice Bergh. They staff the Chatham Point light station in my riding of Vancouver Island North. Steve and Alice have been at Chatham Point light station since their arrival in 1989. Since then, they have saved numerous boats from sinking and have assisted many mariners.

### Government Orders

The list of major incidents is quite long, says Steve:

—we have rescued divers, provided first aid to seriously injured victims, attended to a drowning victim, provided shelter to a lost hypothermic logger in an open boat in a blizzard who without our foghorn to guide him to our station would have suffered a serious fate....

I have quite a large file of letters and articles from mariners and boaters who have found assistance there in their hour of need.

Chatham Point is not the only station to provide this kind of assistance. They all do. The dedication of the lightkeepers all over the coast is well documented. Those saved are many.

I would like to read for the House an excerpt from a letter in the *Western Mariner* journal of January 2007. Mr. Ross Campbell writes a harrowing story:

It was howling outside, storm-force in fact, and the slack tide was allowing unusually large seas to roll into our small bay, making the boats heave at their lines. I was up, on-and-off, all night, checking and fretting and, of course, listening to the local weathers on WX2. Chatham Point, our nearest manned lighthouse, provided a special report at 02:20 hrs: visibility three miles; winds from the southeast at 40 knots and gusting; seas five feet, 'moderate'. The next regular report had the wind at southeast 55 and gusting.

All the light-keepers give 100% for the travellers on this coast but after listening to the 'local weathers' over the years, I get the impression that the keepers at Chatham Point never sleep! They often supply the kind of up-to-the-minute, useful-to-the-mariner information that no automated system can ever duplicate such as the observation of the different sea-states in the various channels visible from Chatham Point. But it's the special reports in the worst conditions, at the darkest times of night, and the speedy and capable response to any need in their area, that I so much respect.

I believe every mariner and aviator on the BC coast appreciates the dedication to safety that these light-keepers demonstrate. I say, "Bravo!" and a heart-felt "Thank-you!"

I have to concur with Mr. Campbell of the *MV Columbia III* from Sonora Island, B.C.

Another light keeper at Cape Beale was recently recognized for spotting four mariners clinging to an overturned vessel. He was able to direct the search and rescue vessels out of Bamfield to assist. He then walked down to the beach to find a fifth man and give him aid.

Light stations are important investments in the prevention of marine casualties.

Lightkeepers provide such a variety of services, including the maintenance and protection of the light stations. Sites that have been de-staffed are in notoriously bad repair with no on site protections in place.

This is another reason why the preservation on site of historically significant working heritage light stations is important. Staffing these heritage and non-heritage sites is imperative.

Moneys and legal protections should be made available to preserve those heritage sites that need repair, such as Pachena Point's lantern dome. The tower at Pachena is suffering due to the ravages of the weather and without major work soon may not be savable. It is the sole remaining wooden light tower on the west coast. It is one of only two first order fresnel lenses on the west coast and the only dual bull's eye first order fresnel lens anywhere. The tower was 100 years old last year and was built by hand after the wreck of the *Valencia*.

Pachena Point light station is on the West Coast Trail and sees between 6,000 and 10,000 hikers a year, thousands of weekend campers and hundreds of day hikers, all of whom come to see the

tower. Without fail they ask two main questions: can we see the inside and does it still work? The answer to both of these questions is no. Thousands of people come to see our light stations. On the west coast, this one is probably the most photographed site on Vancouver Island. It is currently depicted on a Canadian stamp.

• (1835)

I have highlighted only a few of the 27 staffed light stations, not to mention the other 29 decommissioned or automated stations, for a total of 56 on the B.C. coast.

What we need is a commitment to keep the buildings and structures at light stations staffed and maintained for the safety, security and benefit of our coastal communities, and for workers, for travel and for the historical and current education and benefit of every Canadian.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** There being no other members rising, the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound does have a five minute right of reply before I put the question.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[For continuation of proceedings see part B]

[Continuation of proceedings from part A]

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1840)

[English]

### AFGHANISTAN

The House resumed from March 10 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to split my time with the member for Victoria.

As we stand on this particular issue of Afghanistan, and it is not the first time that I have spoken on it, I note that it has been an ongoing difficult issue for this Parliament. It is difficult to debate, because so many times the rhetoric has focused around supporting our troops rather than examining the mission that we are asking those brave troops to carry out for us, far away from their homes in another land.



*Government Orders*

It is difficult, too, because midway through the time we were in Afghanistan, the reassignment in 2005 had no direction from Parliament. It had no debate in Parliament.

The book written by Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, sums up this situation very well. It brings out how important the debate in Parliament is, how important it is to come to grips with an issue like this in a public forum, with the attendant details of what we are doing in our foreign policy and our military policy.

Our engagement in Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan was ill-conceived, it was not debated, and it was led by a chief of staff seemingly motivated to show his friends in the U.S. military how tough he was. This type of leadership has been very difficult for us. It has also shown up in many other ways.

General Hillier's role in the making of this situation cannot be understated. In many ways, we have allowed the military to run the engagement. He continues to try to usurp the real democratic responsibility of this House and of the members in this House with his comments of February 22, when he suggested in his approach to this debate that somehow the suicide bombings of the previous week might well be the result of this debate in Parliament, somehow making the Taliban ready to tip the balance by engaging in that type of activity. This is patently unbelievable but has cast General Hillier further as one who would interfere at will in the serious debate that must take place on this further deployment.

In reality, the two suicide bombings in that period suggest something quite different. They are tragic and horrible events.

The first targeted the police force in Kandahar and, quite honestly, was most likely coming out of the local situation within that province, one that has been constantly cited as a real problem by most independent witnesses: a corrupt, duplicitous police force. If members have the opportunity, they can read a very good account of this in a book by Sarah Chayes, *The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban*. She describes the process by which the police force in Kandahar was corrupted very badly through the early part of this decade.

The second incident, which took place in Spin Buldak against a Canadian armoured patrol, represents a failure of the Canadian command to heed the advice of their local allies, the Afghan authorities. How can we consider the direction of negotiation and settlement when we are not yet ready to listen to what we consider the legitimate authority in this volatile country?

We have seen that as well with the kinds of things that come out of the assembly in Afghanistan, where they are asking for the cessation of bombing of civilians and calling for more active engagement in diplomacy with the insurgent forces.

The only way that we as Canadians will be able to move toward promoting negotiation, dialogue and ceasefires is to completely change the way we are doing business in Afghanistan, including getting a change in leadership, relieving our brave combat troops of their unfair burden, and appealing to the United Nations to take over the complete responsibility for an ongoing peacemaking effort in this war-torn country, one that has been war torn over many decades.

● (1845)

This debate has been made more difficult by ongoing and relentless name-calling and accusations hurled by members in the House in our direction, especially now that we, along with the Bloc, are standing up to this motion.

How have we reached this point where a large majority of the House appears on the verge of extending the mission to 2011 when the same individuals, who were here a scant 20 months ago, made a decision, which was very close, to extend the mission to 2009?

I want to review that direction that has taken place. In August 2007, in Montebello, the Prime Minister served notice to U.S. President George W. Bush that Canadian troops would be pulled out of Afghanistan in February 2009 unless he was able to get a political endorsement to extend their mission. At the same time, we heard Canadians officials saying that we would be in Afghanistan until 2011. This has moved the direction and, thanks to the Liberals, it now looks like the Prime Minister will get his endorsement.

In 2001, the Liberals first sent troops to Afghanistan with the understanding that they would not be there very long. Early in, early out was the cry from the Liberals. However, that cry was forgotten as the Liberals moved inch by inch to having the same position as the Conservatives.

In 2005, the former Liberal government deployed 2,400 troops to a combat mission in the Kandahar province of Afghanistan with no end date for the mission.

On November 22, 2006, the Leader of the Liberal Party told the *Victoria Times Colonist*:

Canada should withdraw its troops "with honour" from Afghanistan before 2009 because their current mission is misguided.

That was the position then. On April 24, 2007, the Leader of the Liberal Party moved a motion stating that he was against the mission but that he did not want it to end until after 2009. Six days later, the Liberals voted in favour of continuing the mission by voting against an NDP motion for the immediate withdrawal of Canadian Forces from combat.

A month later, the Liberal position again moved closer to the Conservatives when the leader of the party told the *Globe and Mail* that he was open to keeping Canadian troops in Afghanistan after February 2009.

We then had the development of the Manley report which brought us to this point. It calls for an extension of two more years in Afghanistan. On February 12, 2008, a Liberal press release stated:

The Liberal Party will support a continuation of the military presence in Kandahar until February 2011....

The same release states that the Liberals are still firmly committed to withdrawing troops by 2011, just as they had been committed to withdrawing them by 2009, just like they had been committed in the beginning to early in, early out.

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Day by day, month by month, the Liberals have moved closer to the Conservative position. What is that position? It is really a blank cheque commitment to the United States to keep our young men and women in a combat situation in Afghanistan, unlike many of our NATO allies, in the midst of combat, in the dangerous areas of combat and with a projection of an end by 2011 but no sense that there is a progress point that they can go to.

This wrong-headed approach is focused only on a military solution, a military solution that will do nothing but create more enemies and a position at odds with what Canadians want.

In July 2007, an Angus Reid poll showed that nearly 50% of Canadians supported withdrawal before 2009 and 16% supported an extension. In an Angus Reid poll in August 2007, 49% of Canadians saw the mission as futile. In September 2007, a *Globe and Mail* Labour Day poll showed that 85% of Canadians did not want the mission extended past February 2009. However, here we are today moving in that direction, it appears, by the large majority of members in this House.

• (1850)

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the NDP's position and that of the Bloc, which is that we should just pull out of Afghanistan.

Given that the NDP speaks in this House about women's rights and human rights, would the member comment on what a number of experts are saying would happen if we were to pull out of Afghanistan now? They are saying that the women who are now educated, many of whom are actually in the legislature helping to develop a future for their nation, would likely be beheaded and slaughtered. I wonder how he deals with that fact, given the NDP's claim, at least, to want to protect human rights.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question because it is one that we have heard a number of times before and it is one that he referred to as a fact. He said that when we pull the 2,400 troops out of Kandahar province, the fact is that we will be in a situation where women who stand up in Afghanistan will be beheaded. I do not support that kind of logic when we can simply say something and it is a fact.

What we have in Afghanistan right now is a continually deteriorating situation and we need to move to a point where we can bring some measure of solution to Afghanistan. Is it the partition of that country? Is it, as Pakistan has done, to create semi-autonomous areas within its own country to deal with the different types of cultures that it has within its mix? That may well be part of it, but we need to move in that direction.

I do not think continuing with a combat role has shown any sense that it is moving us toward a solution, which is why we, the New Democratic Party, after careful consideration, through much debate and through a convention that ratified our point of view—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** Questions or comments. The hon. member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont.

**Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member said that day by day the Liberals had moved closer to the Conservative position.

On an issue this important to the country, I would think it would be important for us to have an honest debate and, at times, to try to build some consensus and to approach this as not a Liberal, Conservative, NDP or Bloc mission but a Canadian mission.

Would the member be advocating for us to just solidify the positions that we have and stick to those positions regardless of the debate and all of the information, or does he think that from time to time it might be better for us in Parliament to have some consensus around an issue this important?

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, in my discussion I talked about where we are now in terms of where the parties have moved.

I want the general public to understand what has happened here because that kind of knowledge is useful. We have had many speakers speak to the issues in this conflict but I want people to understand the process. I want people to understand the way that the decision making has occurred, which is simply what I have done today.

• (1855)

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when the House is this quiet on this kind of issue I feel like there can almost be an understanding of what peace might be. Every party in the House wants Canada to help Afghanistan achieve a just and lasting peace.

This evening we are deciding whether this peace can happen using a war fighting combat mission ending in 2011. Yesterday I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence suggest that there are members in the House who want to abandon Afghanistan. For the record, I personally believe that Canada should play a role in peace-building in Afghanistan for as long as it takes, even beyond 2011. I also want to say that I am proud of the courage and loyalty to our country displayed by our brave soldiers in carrying out the mission set by Parliament.

However, I find it very difficult to believe that the current mission and the role that the Liberals and Conservatives are asking our Canadian Forces to play is the best path toward a lasting peace, nor am I convinced that this mission has been well thought out with the support that our soldiers need to succeed there.

The fundamental flaw of the mission, I believe, is the absence of a comprehensive strategy of conflict resolution. I will explain a little more what I mean later, but without it I believe we are dooming our troops to a war without end against an enemy that we create more of every day.

We know that DND has overrun its annual budget by \$1 billion again, for a total of \$3.6 billion in overrun since 2001. Even that amount has not stemmed the violence or the tide of newly recruited insurgents fighting back. In terms of troop numbers, the Manley report calls for 1,000 more troops and the U.S. army general, Dan McNeill, said last June that NATO was about 5,000 troops short.

If this counter-insurgency mission were to follow U.S. policy in troop levels, as it has in other respects, according to its own counter-insurgency manual for missions of Afghanistan's type, we would need some 480,000 troops on the ground.

Rather than commit billions of dollars and 2,500 Canadian troops to a poorly designed mission of war, I have come to believe that it would be preferable to consider a different approach that includes an act of diplomatic process run by the United Nations toward conflict resolution and a sustainable peace.

The resolutions to many modern conflicts over the past couple of decades have come about through a parallel peace process that genuinely addresses the political causes and issues of the conflict and, in doing so, isolates the criminal elements.

I know the government has a rare allergy to research, especially in the social sciences, but I would like to raise something that the Liberal-Conservative alliance has apparently not yet considered, that is, how to resolve conflicts without reliance on absolute military victories. In conflict resolution theory, it is understood that demonizing and dehumanizing an assigned enemy group is directly counterproductive to achieving peace.

In Canada, we have and continue to dismiss the Taliban as criminals and fanatics, without acknowledging the legitimate issues of political exclusion at play. Without a process to incorporate the legitimate political objectives of all sides in a structure of collaborative governance, we cannot claim to ourselves or to those whose hearts and souls we seek to win to be truly seeking peace. Sustainable peace is not possible so long as political exclusion continues and yet we continue to exclude a large segment of Afghan society from the national government.

● (1900)

Recently, the independent journalist and historian, Gwynne Dyer, wrote that the original U.S. mission in Afghanistan threw out all the prominent Pashtun political and religious leaders who had dealings with the Taliban. He continues:

Six years after the invasion that wasn't, the Pashtuns are still largely frozen out. That is why the Taliban are coming back.

Afghanistan...is also a country where the biggest minority has been largely excluded from power by foreign invaders who sided with the smaller minorities, and then blocked the process of accommodation by which the various Afghan ethnic groups normally make power-sharing deals.

The Taliban are still the main political vehicle of the Pashtuns, because there has been no time to build another. It doesn't mean that all Pashtuns are fanatics or terrorists. Indeed, not all the Taliban are fanatics (though many of them are), and hardly any of them nurse the desire to carry out terrorist acts in other countries. That was the specialty of their...Arab guests, who fled across the border into the tribal areas of Pakistan almost six years ago. The current fighting in the south, the Pashtun heartland, which is causing a steady dribble of American, British and Canadian casualties, will continue until the Western countries pull out.

No one knows for sure the political answer for Afghanistan. The problem, however, is that at the moment we are not looking for it. We are stuck with the simplistic answer that turns all the Taliban into the enemy, without acknowledging the legitimate political motivations behind the insurgency.

I am not saying that the path to peace will be easy. There will undoubtedly be broken deals and ceasefires before the criminal element can be identified and isolated. Until there is a political

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process to address the legitimate political issues, we cannot rightfully identify a group as the enemy of peace without being the enemy of peace ourselves.

In other words, we are told by our government that the Taliban do not compromise, and the Taliban tell their new recruits that we do not compromise. This is how wars continue without resolution, and this is how we are fighting the war in Afghanistan.

The path to peace is a long and challenging one. It is a path that requires patience, restraint, and both physical and emotional courage. However, it is a path that will cost fewer lives and fewer dollars, and most importantly, will truly and sustainably resolve the conflict in the long run.

It is for this reason that I have long opposed the current counterinsurgency mission in Afghanistan and I have argued for a new approach. As columnist James Travers recently wrote:

Talking to the enemy isn't sleeping with the enemy...By demonizing enemies and diminishing their importance to local solutions, the Prime Minister gravitated to the wrong side of potentially positive trends...But talking is a prelude to peace and peace is made between enemies—

What the NDP is asking for is a UN-led, rather than a NATO-led, process. Unlike NATO, the UN's explicit mandate is to preserve and promote international peace and security. UN agencies, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme and the Peacebuilding Commission, tasked with carrying out this mandate, have a vital role to play in meeting the challenges in Afghanistan.

We believe that Canada should be leading the way on the path to peace, that we should be using the considerable skills and expertise Canadians bring to the table on Afghanistan.

This Liberal-Conservative motion is asking us to vote on a continuation of the same failed approach without the dimension that I consider crucial to a successful mission in Afghanistan, for Afghans and for Canadians.

I and my NDP colleagues understand the gravity of this vote as the most solemn task with which a parliamentarian is faced. We refuse to abandon Afghanistan.

We also refuse to accept the same futile approach that is making things worse. And most of all, we refuse to ask our troops to risk their lives for a mission of war when the option of peace has been neither explored nor exhausted.

● (1905)

**Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I hardly know where to begin with this particular colleague and her speech.

First, let me state that she said at the outset of her remarks that there was no party in this place that wanted to abandon Afghanistan. Yet, I clearly remember the NDP bringing forward a motion not that long ago to do exactly that, to pull our soldiers out of Afghanistan immediately, with no contingency plan of who would replace them, and who would protect the Afghans from the resurging Taliban. To stand here tonight and suggest that the NDP did not do that and somehow rewrite history is a bit of a stretch of the imagination.

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Near the end of her remarks, she said that the NDP refused to abandon Afghanistan, except that is exactly what it advocates doing: to abandon the Afghan people and leave them to their own devices. This naiveté persists with the NDP, that if we all hold our hands and sing *Kumbaya*, somehow everybody is going to be peaceful and join together in song and the world will be a better place. It is ridiculous.

In order to have a peace process that she spent most of her time talking about, both sides must want peace. That is what we have to start with. If we look at the history of the Taliban, that is not what it wants. It wants to reinstall its evil regime in Afghanistan and use it as a base for worldwide terrorism. That is what it wants and what it was doing before the allies, the UN-sanctioned mission, moved in and pushed them out.

She talks about a path to peace. Both sides must want peace for there to be peace.

She talks about the simplicity of the present mission. I do not think it is simple at all or that anybody believes it is simple. It is a complicated situation.

If NDP members learned nothing else from the six female Afghan members of parliament who were here just last week, if they were listening to their message at all, they would understand that those people have a price on their heads and that if we abandon them, they will be the first—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. government whip took up half the time, so the remaining half is for the member for Victoria.

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know where to begin with those comments.

Certainly, naiveté is dividing the world into good and evil. I did listen and found very moving some of the comments of the female Afghan MPs. What I heard on national radio in fact additionally was that one of the things they valued about Canada was the humanitarian aid.

I certainly do not think that what is happening in Afghanistan can be achieved without measures of security. Clearly, I recognize that, as do all of my colleagues, but there is a very clear difference between establishing measures of security and even having forces there to maintain security under, for example, a UN chapter VII and having a war fighting mission, as the government has nurtured and encouraged in the past years.

I want to be very clear. We would signify to our allies that Canada would withdraw in a safe and orderly way. That has always been the language that we in the NDP have used. The hon. colleague chooses to twist it to match his own belief, but the wording of “a safe and orderly withdrawal” is not leaving without options.

I do not know if he calls leaving no options the NDP's suggestion that we not be involved in the UN agencies, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme and the Peacebuilding Commission. These are examples of where using the combined effort of these agencies could be very useful in at least beginning the path toward peace.

• (1910)

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian men and women in the military, police and those working

in development or with NGOs deserve our full support. I support them and so does our party.

The problem we have is that the government is not being upfront with Canadians. Canadians need facts about what we are doing, how we are doing it, and why we are doing it. That is the problem with the government. It refuses to tell Canadians all the facts.

Time and time again, parliamentarians, whether members of Parliament or Senators, have gone to Afghanistan on fact-finding missions only to be disappointed by the lack of transparency the government has shown them on development in that region.

Upon arriving in Afghanistan, these parliamentarians are restricted to certain areas and given the government's promotional material. We all realize that we cannot just go into any country that is war-torn, but these parliamentarians just want to be able to see first-hand how aid money is being spent, who is receiving it, and what are the results.

Time and time again, they come back to Canada not knowing the full picture of progress or non-progress of development in Afghanistan.

If development efforts are successful, why are the Conservatives not showing parliamentarians and all Canadians the results that have been achieved? This could go a long way in reassuring Canadians that the assistance being provided to the Afghan people is done in the best ways possible.

Because of the failure of the government's communication, we have no choice. The only source of information comes from NGOs working in the area. Disturbing reports we have been receiving over the past year have been coming from the Senlis Council.

Here are some of the observations that the Senlis Council has reported to us. One of the biggest problems in the south is the poppy growing business. As long as Afghanistan remains the world's number one supplier of heroin, the Taliban will remain well financed. Afghanistan produces 80% to 90% of the heroin supply in the world and its production is increasing every year. Most of that heroin is going to the European Union and mostly European countries.

The Senlis Council is calling for a village-based poppy for medicine program. This type of program can put money in the pockets of poor farmers and provide a cheap source of pain killing medication throughout the third world. As long as the Taliban and other insurgents have access to this kind of money in Kandahar, we will never have a safe place for development.

Before I became a member of Parliament, I worked in underdeveloped countries helping farmers become productive. We helped them with their irrigation and growing techniques. We introduced new varieties and better fertilizer management.

We helped build greenhouses to grow their transplants and to keep the farmers from working the fields in the rainy season so they could protect their seedlings in these greenhouses. We installed refrigeration systems to improve the quality of their produce and we implemented cooperative marketing to maximize their returns for their crops.

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The results of these new practices made these farmers proud and prosperous. Canadians not only have to get rid of the heroin from the Taliban leaders, we also have to help these farmers have a better future with other crops. We have great farmers and organizations right here in this country who could greatly help these farmers in Afghanistan by growing these new crops to help replace the poppy production.

The Senlis Council has many other recommendations and I strongly urge the government to listen to it because its members are on the ground seeing what is going on. I will mention a few more recommendations coming from the Senlis Council.

It says we should appoint a special envoy to coordinate Canada's efforts in Afghanistan. The appointment of a special envoy will help the war zone coordination and optimization of Canada's development, diplomatic and military, and optimize civilian volunteer resources to achieve Canada's main objective.

We should also increase spending to reflect the importance of Afghanistan as Canada's top foreign policy. Optimizing Canada's development efforts in support of its military efforts will require significant increase in delivery of humanitarian aid and development.

● (1915)

Canada must raise its annual development spending from \$139 million and provide the Canadian embassy with the resources necessary to reflect the top priority Afghanistan represents in Canada's foreign policy. It has to empower Canadians to assist in bringing prosperity to Afghanistan.

The Canadian government should facilitate the deployment of Canadian volunteer experts to bring sustainable prosperity to Afghanistan, similar to what I mentioned about farmers going over there to help. It should enable assistance programs and professional exchanges between Canadians and Afghans. It will not only increase mutual understanding, but it will also empower Canadians to provide direct support to communities in Kandahar, and enhance Afghanistan's potential for prosperity.

As everybody in the House knows, Mr. Manley and his panel has released a report with some recommendations for aid and developments in Afghanistan. Under the section titled "Government of Canada International Assistance to Afghanistan", it states:

—the Canadian aid program in Afghanistan has been impeded not only by the dangerous security environment in Kandahar but by CIDA's own administrative constraints. More than half of CIDA funding in Afghanistan flows through multilateral agencies, and another 35 per cent is channelled through national programs administered by the central government in Kabul. This leaves little for locally managed quick-action projects that bring immediate improvements to everyday life for Afghans, or for "signature" projects readily identifiable as supported by Canada. Funding allocations aside, CIDA staffers in Kandahar do not often venture beyond their base, in part, we were told, because of restrictive security regulations maintained by CIDA's headquarters in Canada. While it is undeniably difficult to place civilians in a conflict zone, CIDA should delegate decisions about security of movement to civilian and military officials on the ground who are best placed to make such assessments. It makes little sense to post brave and talented professional staff to Kandahar only to restrict them from making regular contact with the people they are expected to help.

It goes on to say:

While we acknowledge the courage and professionalism of the civilians posted to Kandahar, the Canadian-led PRT in Kandahar also displays signs of the fragmentation and uncoordinated effort that prevail throughout the programming

of international development aid in Afghanistan. Effectiveness would be enhanced by aligning national and departmental priorities and operations more closely...

I hope the government will take note of these recommendations and follow through with them.

I have spoken to representatives from the NATO countries over the last few months. As already was recognized in the debate over the last few days, countries from NATO and Europe are not contributing enough on the military side. However, we can learn a lot from these countries on what they do on the aid side. Many of these countries, such as Norway, Denmark, Holland and Britain have better systems in delivering aid, with better results.

The main reason for the results, as mentioned before in the report, is the military and aid people on the ground in the countries delivering aid are working close together. They are able to make decisions and disburse funds faster and more effectively. The Afghan people can see it and they can associate with the countries that are not there to protect them but are there to deliver aid.

● (1920)

NATO representatives told me the most positive result is that the Afghan people see the benefits of the aid almost immediately after the arrival of the military personnel in their villages. As soon as the Taliban have been chased out, automatically the aid goes in, whether it is water or help to build schools. All of a sudden the villagers see that positive results are happening. Their success is two-fold, protection and development, working hand in hand.

As the Senlis Council report has stated, Canada's incoherent development strategy is failing to address even the basic needs of Kandahar's people. This failure is increasing the support of insurgency. It states that a complete overhaul of development infrastructure is also necessary. As well, a new strategy and structure is needed to ensure Canada's development efforts complement those of its military.

I will repeat, again, that they have to work together. They have to be on the ground. There have to be results quickly or the Afghans will lose any faith in the country that takes over in a military exercise. The failure to address the extreme poverty, hunger and mortality rates as well as to boost economic development has caused local Afghan support to decrease and has compromised the entire Canadian mission.

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The focus has to be more on development. The Prime Minister recently announced a guaranteed defence spending increase. No one is disputing that. Our military needs the best equipment and training, without question. However, if we are to increase defence spending, why not go in tandem and increase aid and development and deliver it in the proper manner? Most important, as I previously stated, we need to change the administration, how it is dealt with and the way this aid is delivered.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary for Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I note that at the start of the member's intervention, he talked about communication. I cannot help but reflect back on how this mission started in Afghanistan. We went to Kabul. Then without debate, without warning, the Liberal prime minister of the day announced that Canadian troops would go into Kandahar, the most dangerous part of Afghanistan.

The Liberal approach to the Conservative approach is in sharp contrast. Our Prime Minister has brought the mission to Parliament for a vote, not once but twice. We have had debates in Parliament. Under the Liberal Party there were none. We have had a non-partisan panel, which the member is fond of quoting. Under the previous regime, there were no non-partisan panels. It was only a dictatorial decision.

I do not want to get into how the Liberals have left the military under-equipped and so on. However, I will ask the member a fundamental question. Why does he think the former Liberal prime minister sent Canadian troops into Kandahar?

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member realizes, and I am sure everybody in the House does, something terrible happened on September 11. We were not going to shy away from the problems that were happening on the world scene. We knew we had an obligation to deal with it. We knew we had to do some kind of a mission in Asia to find out where the terrorists were coming from and how they were being funded.

We worked with the UN. We did not go in tandem with the United States. We worked with the UN and NATO. We said that would help and go to Afghanistan. It was a good decision.

We are in tough area. Canadians are not scared to do the heavy lifting and take on the tough areas, especially when some of the other countries in NATO were holding back. Therefore, we had to show some leadership, and we did it.

That is not the issue today. The issue is not why we are in Kabul and why we are in Afghanistan. We know why we are there. We are not like the NDP. We know we have to do our duty on the international scene, so we stepped up to the plate and sent our men and women over there.

My entire speech today dealt with aid. We would have been a lot more successful in Afghanistan if when the military went in, the aid immediately followed and was disbursed quickly. Then we would have seen results. The people of Afghanistan would then have seen what Canada was all about.

Why are we debating this? Because the Conservatives took over as government. The next thing we knew no time lines were in place and no results from the aid were provided.

The Conservative government is fortunate that the Liberals are open-minded and flexible enough to work out an agreement. Our caucus put forward some concrete proposals. The wisdom of the Conservative government has taken most of them into consideration. It also had to get a former Liberal minister to make recommendations.

We have bailed out the Conservatives again and we are willing to work with them in Afghanistan. However, we also have to put the government's feet to the fire on issues like aid and others. We do not believe in running and hiding. We want time lines and we want to see results. That is what we are pushing for today.

• (1925)

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will point out to my hon. colleague that we did in fact go into Afghanistan with the Americans as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

We have already accepted the Manley report, commissioned by this government. He had a lot of good information in it.

The member puts a lot of stock in reports of NGOs, like Senlis. He apparently does not put any stock in reports by the Canadian Forces, which I find remarkable, particularly since Senlis, as an NGO, misled the defence committee so blatantly that it could not have been accidental. It stretches the credibility of an outfit like Senlis when it has been so misleading in the past.

On the specific issue of poppies, there is no question that it is a big problem. There is no short term solution. A lot of things need to be done, such as altering the crops, as was mentioned, to potentially a medicine program.

I would like my hon. colleague's assessment on having a legitimate poppies for medicine program in that country or any other country. To have that, however, there needs to be a basic law and order and justice structure that will allow that kind of business to go on without being unduly influenced by drug lords and crime. I suggest we are not there yet and that it will be some time before we get there. Could he comment on that?

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the hon. member, but it is not that simple. I was the CIDA critic and I realize it is not that simple to change a country like Afghanistan, which has almost as many people as Canada but in the space of maybe Manitoba, and make it as prosperous and have all the laws, rules, regulations and prosperity as a country likes ours.

Yes, he is right. There has to be a multifaceted approach. Law and order and its parliamentary system have to be dealt with. Unless people can see change happen in security and some sort of prosperity, they will go back to the system they had. That is the whole issue. If we are to stop the poor farmers and citizens from relying on the Taliban, we need to have alternatives in place for them. We have to show them another way. If not, it will go backward.

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I appreciate his comments. It is not a simple matter. We need to have time lines in place as to how long we will be there. We have to hold CIDA and many other organizations' feet to the fire to get results. Sometimes we have no choice because of the tight-lipped government and the lack of transparency of what happens in Afghanistan. We have to rely on reports from NGOs to get news about what happens over there, and that is unfortunate.

• (1930)

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the previous speech. I certainly want to compliment the member for the quotes that he did pull out of the Manley report, but I also want to read a quote for him and get his interpretation of it. He has quoted the former minister on a number of occasions, both in his speech and in his responses, at great length.

Mr. Manley says in his opening letter:

To achieve these objectives, much still needs to be done.

Institutions that are respected need to be built and the Afghan National Army and Police need to be further recruited and trained.

Agricultural districts need to be reclaimed from land mines and poppy fields, so that traditional crops can once again flourish where they have in the past.

Both the reality and the perception of corruption in the Government of Afghanistan must be rooted out. They are undermining not only the hope for an Afghan solution but also support for the Western forces sacrificing their lives to help secure the situation.

What Mr. Manley says in his report is very clear. He says that our work there is not done. It is not done with respect to the three things that we stand for: defence, diplomacy, and development assistance. We cannot have two without having the third.

I think what the member has suggested is that there is the potential to do this without defence. I want to get a very clear understanding, based on the report authored by Mr. Manley, of what the member is suggesting with respect to that issue.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad this has been brought up, because I am not saying for one minute here that we can succeed in Afghanistan without defence. To the contrary, we cannot succeed in defence, in the military operations, unless we have the proper aid and the proper development aid, the aid that is happening on the ground, so that if one is a soldier there protecting the people, the people also have to see the aid coming into their villages. It has to go in tandem. We must have both working together. We cannot have just the aid working without the defence helping it, without the military side by side.

That is why we have not been as successful there as we could have been over the last two years. If we would have had both working in tandem, our results would have been better. They would have been at a better place right now.

That is the whole premise of my speech here tonight: the military has to be there, but the aid has to be there with the military. If both are working together, we are going to see results. We are going to see the Afghan people looking at Canadians doing the right job for them and helping them to go from being a poor and very stressed country to being a prosperous country. But they have to be working together.

I am not saying for one minute that defence should not be there over the next year. It should be, but the defence is not going to be

able to do its job unless the aid is coming in there with it and going in tandem.

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary for Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is humbling to be here today to speak on Canada's mission in Afghanistan. This is probably one of the most important issues we will deal with as parliamentarians.

In my riding of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, I have 17 Wing, which is located at CFB Winnipeg, an integral part of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

In addition to CFB Winnipeg, in Manitoba we also have CFB Shilo, both of which provide logistics and manpower for the current mission.

Moreover, my riding has very strong connections to the military. For example, Charleswood and St. James were settled largely by World War II veterans. We have the Royal Canadian Legion Nos. 4 and 100 nearby, as well as Army, Navy and Air Force Branch 183, all within the confines of my riding.

I would like to highlight the concentration of the military presence in my riding, both past and present, because it underscores the importance of this mission to the people of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia.

The people in my riding have deep roots in the military. The chances are better than not that if we meet someone from my constituency, he or she has served or fought for Canada, or at the very least has relatives or descendants who did. Since 2004, 17 Wing has sent almost 400 personnel to aid the mission in Afghanistan.

I should say at this time that I am splitting my time with the member for St. Catharines.

In addition to the 4,000 personnel who were sent to Afghanistan, three of the five chaplains are included. I can tell members that 17 Wing has been at the centre of the mission to rebuild Afghanistan, whether it has been in helping men and women embark from Shilo to provide an in theatre support element or in providing essential chaplain services. It is for these reasons that no one underestimates the seriousness of this debate in my riding.

[*Translation*]

I have met with a number of men and women who have been to Afghanistan, and they all, without exception, believe strongly in the usefulness of their mission.

• (1935)

[*English*]

I have also visited several soldiers who have been wounded in Afghanistan, including amputees and spinal cord injury victims. What has struck me deeply is the fact that each one of these injured individuals wanted to rejoin his regiment. They wanted to go back. If they could not go back, they still wanted to serve the military.

I want to share the story of a corporal, a remarkable young man I met two summers ago just after he got a bullet in his spine. It left him a C6 quadriplegic, so he has the use of his arms but not his hands. It is a pretty serious injury.

*Government Orders*

I talked to him on the phone this afternoon in preparation for this speech and asked him how he felt today. With his permission, here is what was said by Corporal Chris Klodts, who on July 8, 2006, got a bullet in the spine: "Freedom requires sacrifice, and for freedom, I am happy to have sacrificed". He went on to say, "I would go right back if I could".

That is the best that Canada has to offer. If there is any doubt from anyone on the merits of our mission, we just need to look at the people coming back and hear their words.

From Facebook, I have another quote from the friend of a person I will not name. Again, I have been given permission to share this with Parliament:

Most of the anti-war crowd have currently attached themselves to a limited pragmatic argument; that no matter how moral our continuing presence may or may not be, they claim that it is not practical to stay here as we have no chance of success and that the expense in terms of money or Canadian lives is not worth any possible benefit.

Most soldiers I know feel that we have a realistic chance of success, even when constrained to fight in a moral manner...even though our enemies are under no such constraints. As I've written extensively on that subject before, I won't get into it again. However, we as a society have not investigated that benefit of our action in practical terms, and less so the heavy costs of not continuing to support the people of Afghanistan....

He is in Afghanistan today as we speak. He goes on:

—most of the soldiers I know understand what's at stake in our fight. Maybe they all haven't verbalized it to the same degree as I just have, but there is a general perception that Canadians don't quite realize just how much is at stake. We fear that they will throw away our gains and sacrifice our future security for immediate comfort and smug self-righteousness. To be honest, that fickleness scares the...out of us more than the Taliban do....

That is pretty heavy stuff and is from a fellow in Afghanistan today. I now have met hundreds of people who have gone to Afghanistan, and I can say that without exception I hear the same sentiments.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

Although the families of these soldiers are sad that their loved ones have been injured, they are very proud of them.

It is hard to imagine anything more Canadian than these families, who gather to help those in need, whether it is their own families or people on the other side of the world.

[*English*]

I can tell the House that the people of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia support the soldiers and the mission. They understand that freedom must be earned and not taken for granted. They understand that the price of freedom is sometimes paid in blood. They understand that in order for Canadian values to be shared with the world we may need to fight against those who wish to see them destroyed.

I want the members of the House to imagine a place where it is a crime to create music, where dancing is illegal, where creating art and freedom of expression is illegal and where 1,000 year old historical monuments are not cherished but blasted to rubble in the blink of an eye. I want members to imagine a place where being female automatically makes one an inferior person, not worthy of education, without any legal rights, let alone a voice of one's own,

and where putting on nail polish is punishable by cutting of a person's fingers.

With those images in mind, I think we can understand why we are in Afghanistan.

The United Nations and NATO have recognized this. Canada is part of a world effort. This is not a Canada-U.S. effort or a U.S.-led effort. This is a NATO-led effort, with the support of the United Nations. Those people, if those who refuse to accept the realities of this world get their way, will, unfortunately, experience the realities in which many people live.

We are so fortunate to live in this great country. May the people of Canada and our armed forces keep our land glorious and free.

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my friend and colleague has had a lot of contact with soldiers, with people who have been there and done it, and the sentiments that they expressed are obviously very meaningful and very touching.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could comment on his impressions from those people or from his own studies about what would happen if in fact we did do what the NDP would have us do and pull out prematurely.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the people of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia support the soldiers and the mission.

• (1945)

[*English*]

The people of my riding of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia support the mission because they know and understand that without western security there will be atrocity after atrocity on a scale the world has rarely seen. I do not want that to happen and I do not think the people around the world want that to happen. That is why we must stand firm and support our troops, support the mission and support the Afghan people.

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would also like the member to answer a question having to do with the prospect of humanitarian aid and development occurring in the absence of security.

The member has been very articulate in voicing his support for a mission in Afghanistan and he knows that Canada is involved in providing a lot of humanitarian aid through CIDA and through many of the Canadian NGOs, like the Mennonite Economic Development Associates and many others that are doing excellent work there.

The NDP and the Bloc seem to think that we can somehow pull the security out of Kandahar, the most dangerous part of Afghanistan, and yet continue to deliver humanitarian aid and rebuild that country. Does the member agree with the NDP and the Bloc that that is possible?

**Mr. Steven Fletcher:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the Bloc are either not being intellectually honest with themselves or they are, as the government whip has said, living in Kumbaya land.



*Government Orders*

The reality of the world is that not everyone is a nice person, not everyone shares the values that we have in Canada and in the west. The fact is that if the west and Canada, Canada being the leading country in the west, were to remove its support, there would be atrocities and murder, perhaps even worse than what we saw in Rwanda.

The people of my riding and, I think, the people of Canada understand that helping people, either in their own country or strangers in a far off land, is a Canadian value. In fact, I cannot think of something more Canadian than helping strangers in need, and that is what we are doing in Afghanistan.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak to this motion and to follow the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, especially his response to the last question, which certainly hits home for all of us who understand what it is and recognize what our responsibilities are as Canadians.

The government motion makes a simple but serious request. It asks the House to say that our country is one that recognizes and honours the obligations that we owe to our allies and the international community. It asks the House to say that Canada keeps its word. I am proud to stand in my place today and speak in its favour.

Our work in Afghanistan is just. We are there to uphold and preserve the rule of law in the global arena. Canada is in Afghanistan at the invitation of its democratically elected government. We are there as part of an international contingent, working side by side with 37 other countries, among them our oldest and truest friends. Our presence was requested and is sanctioned by the United Nations, and our presence was requested and is sanctioned by NATO.

I will quote John Manley from the forward of the independent panel report. He states:

But our presence in that distant land does matter.

Canada's commitment in Afghanistan matters because it concerns global and Canadian security, Canada's international reputation, and the well-being of some of the world's most impoverished and vulnerable people. Our commitment is important because it has already involved the sacrifice of Canadian lives.

Our commitment in Afghanistan has not and will not be easy but if everything important were easy, it would have already been accomplished.

When we look down the road, we see the potential potholes and, yes, the work will be hard, but we should not let the challenges ahead conceal how far we have actually come. When the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, girls and women were forbidden from working or attending school after the age of eight. Stadiums, once used for soccer, played host to public executions.

This is a rough list from the *New York Times* of some of the things banned under the Taliban: anything made from human hair, satellite dishes, cinematography, any equipment that produces the joy of music, pool tables, chess, masks, tapes, computers, VCRs, televisions, anything that talks about music, nail polish, firecrackers, statues, sewing catalogues, pictures and even Christmas cards.

For five long years the Taliban waged systematic war on Afghanistan society, destroying its social, economical and physical capital in pursuit of a perverted utopia. It is not easy to fix a society

so thoroughly dismantled but great strides have been made. Twentieth century conflicts were measured in yards and miles. In the 21st century, the metrics are different: hospitals and wells, roads and bridges, ballots, ballot boxes and book bags.

Since 2002, more than five million refugees have returned to Afghanistan eager to begin rebuilding the shattered lives that they have left behind. That is progress. In the last five years, Afghanistan's economy has grown at a rate of 10% per year. The average income has doubled. That is progress.

Four million children are enrolled in school for the first time and more than 40% of these newly enrolled students are female. In total, there are now six million children in school in Afghanistan. That is progress.

Ten million Afghans are registered to vote. In fact, in the parliamentary elections of 2005, 28% of those elected to govern were women. Here in Canada it is only 21%. In its first elected Parliament, it has 7% more than we have here in Canada.

● (1950)

These are victories in progress in a developing democracy. The progress we have made is substantial. The victories we have won are real. If we refuse to consolidate that progress, if we refuse to defend our gains, then all of our sacrifices will indeed have been in vain.

Our mission in Afghanistan rests on three Ds, which are in the introduction of the Manley report: defence, diplomacy and development assistance. Like a stool, it requires three legs to stand, and like a stool, the mission will collapse if we remove one of any of the three.

Security and development must proceed in tandem. Canadian troops must defend what Canadian development funds have built. That is not to say that Canada must shoulder this burden alone. The government motion asks that Canada extend its commitment to 2011, but we will only extend that commitment if we can secure a partner that will expand the ISAF's capacity by 1,000 troops by the end of February 2009.

Canada's allies share our stake in Afghanistan's success. They should share more fairly in the cost of that success. But no one has a greater stake in Afghanistan's success than its own people. It is only right, therefore, that responsibility for security is increasingly transferred to the Afghan national security forces as their capabilities steadily increase.

Today, the Afghan national army is approximately 50,000 strong. By the end of 2010, it is projected to reach 70,000, the target identified by the Afghanistan Compact. Its members are becoming better trained and they are gaining more discipline.

As the capabilities of these NATO forces expand, they will depend less and less on foreign support. Together with our allies, we in time will achieve our aim: an Afghanistan secured and governed by Afghans.

*Government Orders*

I would like to conclude with a word about the sacrifices made by our brave Canadian soldiers. In 2007 we lost 12 soldiers to improvised explosive devices. We lost 11 soldiers to roadside bombs and landmines. We saw deaths from suicide bombings, truck and helicopter crashes. Each was, is and remains a terrible tragedy, but in 2007 we did not lose a single soldier in the combat component of this mission. The last combat deaths came in September 2006, in the last days of Operation Medusa.

In conventional combat the Taliban is impotent in the face of Canadian might. When we take the fight to our enemy, we win. As long as we are in Afghanistan in any capacity, Canadian lives will be at risk, but it is, quite frankly, sophistry of the lowest kind to suggest that an end to the combat component of this mission and a retreat to our bunkers would somehow make Canadians safer. This motion recognizes that reality.

When the cold war ended, the world forgot about Afghanistan and the price for the people living there was immediate: civil war followed by tyrannical rule. In September 2001 the west learned that we, too, could be endangered by the failure of a state half a world away.

The lesson is clear. We owe it to ourselves and to the people of Afghanistan to finish the job that we have started and leave behind a stable, functioning state that threatens neither its citizens nor ours. I believe the policy laid out by this government will in fact do just that. In less than 48 hours we are going to have an opportunity to vote on the motion.

I can only submit, I can only suggest and I can only hope that all members of the House, regardless of party affiliation, will see that the support for our soldiers, for our mission, for our country and the outcomes that it provides for us and for the Afghan people will indeed be followed and supported.

• (1955)

**Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier tonight I was listening to the member for Western Arctic. He said many things but there was one thing he was very critical of. He said that day by day the Liberals have moved closer to the Conservative position. He was bashing the two parties for coming together on this.

I am wondering if the member could talk about how important it is, on an issue as important as this one, that we achieve some form of consensus in Parliament.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Mr. Speaker, the member's question is very important, considering that this is only the second time with respect to the Afghanistan mission that we have actually had a vote here in the House of Commons.

This is a minority Parliament. It is unwieldy and not easy to work with at best, but there have been times in the two years that I have been here where I have seen diplomacy and partisanship separated. Diplomacy and doing what is right in this country become two common themes.

I would submit that it is not what was suggested by the member from the NDP, that there has been some sort of collusion. That makes no sense. Quite frankly, what we have seen is a consensus on an issue that impacts us as a country and impacts Afghanistan.

Therefore, the issue has come before the members of the House on behalf of people of this country. Indeed we can say, as we have said in the number of wars that we have been involved in, that we have come together in support of our soldiers. We will support those who need our assistance. We will support a motion that is built on consensus, and that is a motion that will carry the day in this House.

• (2000)

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, people talk about what this mission is about. One of the things people forget is that it is actually about Canada's national interests. It is about many things, but people think that what happens in Afghanistan, whether we get it right or wrong, will not affect us in Canada.

I would like my hon. colleague's comments on this little hypothesis. We saw what happened to our markets and economy after 9/11. We saw what happened to our ability to travel freely across borders and have commerce move freely across borders. I would suggest to my colleague that what happens to our allies, most specifically what happens to the United States, has a direct impact on our economy, our prosperity, our security and our quality of life.

I would like his comments on that with respect to the meaning of the mission to Canada's national interests.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is a pointed one in the sense that sometimes we do forget after time the purpose of the mission.

As recommended in the Manley report itself, we indeed must continue with a much stronger and more open style of communication within our country so that people understand and know why we are in Afghanistan.

Perhaps we did not even think about this, but while nations slept, we hoped that Afghanistan would simply take care of itself and that if we ignored the issues with respect to the tyranny that the Taliban brought to that country, or let it pass us by, that somehow it would have no impact. We saw the impact. We see the impact that it has today.

The member mentioned the issues around travel. I cannot think of an airport in North America where there has not been heightened security, heightened inspection, heightened investigation. Every person who gets on a plane to travel anywhere in North America or the world is subjected to a different type of security check than they were prior to 9/11.

We think about that event which happened years ago. I cannot think of anyone who does not understand clearly that the world is a large place, but no matter where events such as that occur, everyone is impacted. I cannot think of any other reason than what happened on 9/11 that we as Canadians would not have taken up our responsibilities, not just for those people who were in the twin towers in the United States, not just on behalf of our good friends to the south, but on behalf of Afghanistan, and certainly on behalf of Canadians. We have been impacted by that devastation.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the government's motion on Afghanistan. I will be sharing my time with my friend, the member for Cambridge.

*Government Orders*

As I was reading a newspaper from my riding yesterday, I happened upon a thoughtful and insightful letter written by one of my constituents, Mr. Peter Claus, and with his permission, I would like to share some of his words. He commented that there is a growing attitude from some quarters that we do not belong in Afghanistan, that by being there we are morally bankrupting ourselves fighting an American war. He followed this by stating that the question he would like to ask the critics is if our military does not belong there, where does it belong? Indeed, it seems there are some people who have short and selective memories.

The military has and continues to be a fundamental part of our country, leading and shaping its very formation, protecting its interests, and projecting our values. This country was founded on the principles of freedom and justice, and many times over the years we have fought for these principles abroad. Before Canada was known as a peacekeeping nation, it had a long and distinguished military history stretching from our participation in the Boer War through two world wars and Korea. Our involvement in these world conflicts helped develop our credibility on the world stage, allowing us to punch above our weight in international relations.

Afghanistan is the latest manifestation of our commitment to encourage the growth of democratic values abroad. Canada is in Afghanistan because its democratically elected government requested our aid. However, we are also there for the protection of our own Canadian citizens.

In the past, Afghanistan and the surrounding areas have been a breeding ground for fanaticism and a launching pad for global extremism. Those involved want to snuff out our fundamental principles of freedom and justice, and they want to kill the people who support these elemental beliefs. In 2001 they were cowardly unsuccessful, but since our commitment to fighting them on their own ground, they have been less so.

As Dr. Sima Samar, a member of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, affirmed:

If Afghanistan is not safe, Canada is not safe. Stability here will help security throughout the world. Security here means law enforcement and a decrease in training camps for terrorists.... These are problems for everyone in the world, not specifically Afghans.

Canada, alongside our international allies, is committed to helping the people of Afghanistan build a stable, democratic and self-sufficient country. The work of Canada and the international community is guided by the January 2006 Afghanistan Compact, a framework for coordinating the work and resources of the Afghan government and its international partners in three priority areas: security, development, and good government. The job is divided into two separate but interconnected categories: a combat mission to fight the Taliban; and a humanitarian one to rebuild damaged infrastructure in the villages, bring medical help, and ask what the villagers need.

Let us pause for a moment to reflect on this last aspect, ask what the villagers need. How long has it been since anyone asked ordinary Afghans what they needed? Certainly not the Taliban, who murdered their critics, kept their population in abject poverty, refused their right to education, especially for women, and revised history in the relentless effort of fanaticism.

Canada is playing a key role in the NATO led and UN sanctioned International Security Assistance Force whose role is to help restore security to allow the rebuilding of Afghanistan to continue. Human security is a basic requirement for everything else. Development and reconstruction work, the building of roads, bridges, schools and hospitals, for example, can only take place when civilian workers and the projects they are working on are themselves safe from harm. This is a secure space that Canada's military and our international partners are there to provide.

I am immensely proud of our men and women in uniform. My son-in-law as well as several of my constituents have served in Afghanistan as part of the military and reconstruction efforts. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank them for their service.

According to one of the Manley report recommendations embodied in the government's Afghanistan motion, it was recognized that Canada should continue a military presence and have responsibility for security in Kandahar beyond February 2009. In a manner fully consistent with the UN mandate in Afghanistan, this mission should consist of an increasing emphasis on training the Afghan national security forces expeditiously to take a lead responsibility for security in Kandahar and Afghanistan as a whole.

● (2005)

Canada is sharing its expertise with the Afghan national army through a team of Canadian Forces mentors who work closely with ANA units in Kandahar province through the Canadian operational mentor liaison team. The approximately 150 Canadian Forces members involved have helped to train more than 35,000 graduates of the Canadian Afghan National Army Training Center. They are helping the ANA reach a level where it can plan, carry out and sustain security operations in the province on its own.

Through these efforts, the national Afghan army, along with its Canadian partners, is creating a country where refugees who fled the country during the Taliban reign are venturing back, wanting to be a part of this energetic and optimistic rebuilding. Since 2002, more than five million have returned, including more than 365,000 in 2007. Within six months of their return, 90% have found jobs in the fledgling Afghan economy.

A viable economy is critical to a stable country. Canada has the distinction of being the top micro finance program donor. More than 418,000 people are accessing small loans and savings services in 23 provinces, including Kandahar, with more two-thirds of them being women.

Hand in hand with the developing economy is support for community development and infrastructure. Canada directly supports the national solidarity program which, led by the Afghan government, is providing more than two-thirds of rural Afghans, including women, with the opportunity to have a voice in the development process.

*Government Orders*

One project at a time, they help to identify community needs, such as safe drinking water and sanitation, transport, irrigation, electricity, education, health, public buildings and improvements in agriculture. There are more than 33,600 local infrastructure projects approved, with over 16,500 completed.

Canada leads the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar, helping Afghans to rebuild their daily lives in a number of key areas. Paved roads are something that we take for granted but they are essential to everyday life.

One of the priority infrastructure projects has been the rebuilding of the Kandahar-Spin Boldak highway and construction of several bridges. The highway will help farmers move produce to bigger markets, assist urban doctors to reach villages without medical services, and increase the speed with which police can respond to emergencies.

We are working to strengthen the Afghan national police and improve the prison system, so the new Afghanistan can effectively police its own population and bring law and order back to the country. It is time for the people to feel safe in their communities.

Canada's internationally recognized excellence in policing has been put to good use. Over 600 ANP have received training from a complement of 16 civilian and over 30 military police trainers and mentors. Our investment in police reform has not only encompassed training but has included funding salaries, providing uniforms and equipment, and building police facilities in and around Kandahar City. These police officers are there to support the Afghan rule of law in their own country.

International support to the government of Afghanistan is aimed at building its ability to govern, not doing the job for it. Canada's success may be measured in a self-sustaining government that promotes human rights and a justice system that allows for better protection of its citizens. Canada's contributions to Afghanistan have always been with the ultimate aim of establishing a country that will be better governed, more peaceful, and more secure than before our presence there.

Afghans need assistance to have properly trained and equipped citizens to allow them to facilitate their own peaceful and political solution to the conflict. We need to continue to support their fight for this aim until a more stable and secure Afghanistan emerges.

A young soldier, when speaking about his recently completed tour in Afghanistan, said that he could not wait to get back there; it was the most worthwhile thing that he had ever done.

He is a shining example of our men and women in uniform who continue to serve with courage, with commitment, with integrity and with loyalty. Our national commitment to them should be no less. They deserve to be valued and respected for their contributions to protecting Canadians in Afghanistan.

It is morally wrong to send soldiers to fight if they are not supported and there is no commitment to get the job done.

This motion acknowledges what is required for Canada's mission to succeed. I urge the hon. members that we have an ethical obligation to give it our full support.

● (2010)

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Oxford for his comments and for the support that he has given, not just on this side of the House as the Conservative government but speaking as he passionately has for Canadians.

The Bloc and the NDP quite honestly are basically saying that what we need to do is lay down our guns and just go in and build the infrastructure.

Having been in the enforcement business for a number of years prior to becoming a member of Parliament, I wonder if the member would have some comments with regard to how that might actually benefit Canada and how that might actually help us without losing the number of people that may be protected by just going in and doing the reconstruction without having the security.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for such an intelligent question. We cannot be in Afghanistan to help the Afghani people rebuild their country without being prepared to take up arms to defend them in doing it.

I think anyone who listened to my colleague from St. Catharines heard him illustrate very clearly what is happening in Afghanistan. Our people who are there now and have been there for the last four years have faced tremendous danger with respect to not military fighting in the normal sense but the roadside bombs and suicide bombers. That also impacts the Afghani people. They are also affected by those things.

Therefore, without our military there to provide that assistance, the aid that is truly needed in Afghanistan will not happen. Quite frankly, this is a very principled position. It is neither a Liberal position nor a Conservative position. It is a Canadian position. It is one that we should all embrace. It is for the good of Canada, but it is also for the good of Afghanistan.

● (2015)

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about trust for just a minute and get my colleague's thoughts on that.

Trust is hard won and easily lost. One of the things that Canada has regained after a few years of losing it in the last few years is in fact trust, trust among our allies, trust in the international community, and trust in a perverse way from our enemies who know they can trust us to do the right thing, to their detriment but that is okay.

We talk about responsibility to protect. That was a phrase coined at the United Nations by a former prime minister and those are great words, but people have to be able to trust us to put those words into action.

I would like my hon. colleague's comments on what would happen to the trust that Canada is currently held in if we simply up and walk away from the mission in Afghanistan and abandon the Afghan people at this point?

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, I think the question is an important one. It really leads to why we are in Afghanistan. As a nation we have been there as defenders of other people around the world.

More recently, we were in the Balkans and I think our people built a tremendous reputation there as an organization, as a country, and as a military presence that is worthy and trustful.

I think that it is the same scenario in Afghanistan. The rest of the world knows that Canada is there. We are there for the good of the people. We are not there for the short haul. It is an important part of why we are in Afghanistan.

We have talked about 9/11 in the United States. That did not just affect Americans. That also affected Canadians. There were a number of Canadians in those twin towers on that eventful day. We should not lose sight of why we are in Afghanistan.

There is no question that it is for the good of the people of Afghanistan to help them rebuild, to get their women and children back to schools, and to give them the opportunities to grow, but it is also for the good of Canadians.

As I indicated earlier, if we do not fight them there, we will end up fighting them on our own soil. I think our military has obviously given us that trust around the world and people can rely on us.

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this very important motion on behalf of the great people of Cambridge and North Dumfries. It is a motion that represents an effort to achieve a bipartisan consensus in this House on the future of the mission in Afghanistan.

There is no doubt that our presence in Afghanistan is not only an obligation but it is our duty as part of an international effort requested by the democratically elected government of Afghanistan.

Alongside our international partners and as part of a UN mandated and NATO-led mission, we are doing our part to create a safer environment, an environment where development and reconstruction can take place. Through our efforts, we can help Afghans build the foundations for stability and lasting peace.

This motion supports a military presence in Kandahar beyond February 2009 into July 2011. This motion has been created in an effort to bridge the gap between the Conservative and the Liberal parties, the two key parties in this House. It represents leadership by the government in finding common ground that both sides can support.

By carefully examining the Liberal Party's position, our current government has been able to meet almost 95% of the opposition's concerns. In this willingness to negotiate and to work together, this motion has become a paramount achievement. It is not a Liberal or a Conservative motion. It is not a Liberal or a Conservative decision. It is a decision made by the vast majority of representatives elected by the Canadian people. It is a tough decision by courageous people.

This motion stipulates an end date and is conditional that NATO provide 1,000 extra troops and some additional equipment to support our troops in Afghanistan.

By extending the mission we are able to enhance our focus and build on our reconstruction efforts and training, both of which are completely necessary for the rebuilding of this war-torn nation.

### *Government Orders*

In order to fully understand our presence in Afghanistan and appreciate the incredible work our troops are doing in this nation, it is important to understand the reasons why we are there in the first place.

I am not simply referring to our international obligations that I previously spoke of, but I am referring to the countless benefits that the Afghan society will inherit due to our participation.

By continuing our mission we assist in helping Afghanistan with its infrastructure, community development, economy, and the health and educational sectors so needed by these citizens yet denied by the Taliban.

Furthermore, we will and have already assisted in the establishment of elections, its democratic legislature, the justice system, the Afghan national police, the country's freedom of expression, gender equality, human rights, the right to simply be educated, and to dream and feel safe at night.

Lastly, we must assist in the most important factor of all, one that is necessary for any nation's development, and that is security.

By continuing our efforts in Afghanistan, we are able to help train the Afghan national army and assist in landmine clearance and disarmament programs.

Our efforts in these three key areas of development, governance and security are guided by the Afghanistan Compact, which is a five year blueprint for coordinating the work of the Afghan government and employs 60 international partners in doing so.

We are making important investments in the future of that country. Our commitments are already delivering remarkable results. We support projects that strengthen democratic development and assist in building public institutions. Reliable community-based policing systems, building the capacity of the judicial system, and a corrections system that meets international standards are key components to rebuilding the legitimacy of the Afghan government.

● (2020)

Our troops are relying on us to continue making this effort a reality, but what is more, the Afghan people are relying on the international community to help rebuild both their lives and their country. Because of our efforts, more than six million children are now in school, one-third of them girls. That compares to only 700,000 and only male children in 2001.

As we know, education is the essential component of a successful future for any nation. Canada directly supports 4,000 community based schools and the training of 9,000 teachers. This progress is invaluable, it is undeniable, and it is historically Canadian.

Because of our assistance, the country's per capita income doubled between 2004 and 2007.

*Government Orders*

Canada remains the top microfinance program donor, allowing over 418,000 people to access small loans and savings in 23 provinces, including Kandahar. Microfinancing is essential for people to access funds to create new businesses, from grocery stores to hairdressing salons and so on.

We are not just saving lives in Afghanistan. We are literally creating livelihoods for those people every day.

Through our national solidarity program, more than 19,000 community development councils have been established. More than 33,000 local infrastructure projects have been approved nationwide. Almost 6,000 kilometres of roads are being built or rebuilt. Our financial and physical assistance is tying the provinces of Afghanistan together, which will create a stronger society and economy going forward.

In harmony with rebuilding education and infrastructure, Canada is rebuilding the health of this new nation.

In 2004, 91% of Afghans did not have any medical care. Today, through our support, 83% have access to medical facilities and personal care. Infant mortality is down by 22% and 4,000 new medical facilities have opened. This is remarkable. As well, tuberculosis is on a rapid decline. We are winning on all fronts.

However, the improvements do not stop there. Along with developing stronger, healthier environments for civilians, Canada has assisted and continues to assist in the rebuilding of governing bodies.

Because of funding from countries such as Canada, more than 10 million Afghans are now registered to vote in free and fair elections. Thirty parliamentary commissions have been established. Three hundred members of parliament have been trained. Prosecutors, public defenders and over 200 judges have been trained to increase their knowledge of law, order and procedure.

Along with stabilizing the courts, Canada has assisted in the training of civilian police, military police and national police.

We are currently directly supporting the coordination and mentoring of training of soldiers in the Afghan national training centre in Kabul. Over 35,000 graduates have come out of that centre and have assisted in the disarming of former combatants to the tune of 85,000 light weapons and 16,000 heavy weapons. These weapons can no longer be used to create harm.

Judging from our recent work, Canada has been a paramount and positive force within the country of Afghanistan, and we must continue.

In my final seconds, I want to take this opportunity to offer my heartfelt thanks to all those who have served our country in the armed forces, many from my own riding, and to their families. I want to thank all the soldiers who have ensured that the people of Afghanistan will enjoy the same freedoms that we enjoy as Canadians.

● (2025)

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Cambridge for his passionate speech. As I look around tonight, I see that a number of young

people have joined us in the gallery. The member for Cambridge talked about these young people being incredibly impacted by this discussion and by the decision that will happen tomorrow or Thursday night, when there is a vote on this motion. I believe that these young people realize that in the great country of Canada, in the democracy we have, they have freedom, education and hope, and they can have vision.

Could the member for Cambridge express how important that is to the success of a nation and to the building of families? How important is it for the people and parents in Afghanistan to have that same opportunity for their families, although likely in a smaller way, that we share with our families in Canada?

**Mr. Gary Goodyear:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked a very intelligent and in depth question. The fact remains that we are very fortunate in Canada. We sometimes take for granted the freedoms that we have, but freedom is not free. Freedom does not come by way of a gift.

In many countries around the world, there are evil folks who want to take away these kinds of rights. They are obsessed with oppressing people. The best way to oppress a nation is to withhold some of the basic services, including food, to destroy the roads and telephone system so that there is no communication, and to make sure that people are not educated, for heaven's sake, so that they do not get to the point where they understand that life could be better.

We have a nation that was built on the backs of brave men and women. We are so fortunate in Canada to be able to go to school, to watch television when we want to, to make phone calls to whomever we want, and to come and go as we please. This is not the case in Afghanistan.

Young women in Afghanistan can have their fingers cut off for wearing nail polish. I heard a story about a young man who chose to go to university here in Canada and was killed by the Taliban because of his desire for education. That oppression against human rights is what that we are fighting to eliminate. We want to provide the Afghan people with some semblance of freedom so they can enjoy what we enjoy and move forward in making the entire world a more peaceful place.

● (2030)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of our colleagues from the Conservative Party across the aisle invoked the word "trust" and stated that Canadians were trusted in Afghanistan. That is quite important. There is no doubt that most Afghans, although not all, would trust the intentions of Canadians. However, there is another component to this trust. That is whether or not they trust us in our capacity to change the situation on the ground in Afghanistan.

The member for Cambridge talked of children being able to sleep at night without having to worry. He put it in a very visual way. The member for Edmonton Centre invoked the terminology of "responsibility to protect", but responsibility to protect also comes with a responsibility to rebuild.

*Government Orders*

We see a process of rebuilding taking place in Afghanistan, but it is quite worrisome. We see that the economic situation in Afghanistan is such that for average villagers to be able to provide food for the table, they have had to take part in the drug trade, in growing poppies.

Very specifically, I would like to ask the member for Cambridge this question. Afghanistan quite clearly has now become a narco-state and we—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. If the hon. member is going to ask a question, he should ask it right away.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Mr. Speaker, there have been news reports that the brother of Hamid Karzai, Mr. Walid Karzai, is one of the biggest poppy growers in Kandahar. What do we intend to do over the next two years to turn that particular situation around?

**Mr. Gary Goodyear:** Mr. Speaker, I think we are going to continue doing exactly what we are doing: providing hope to the Afghan people and rebuilding roads so they can get proper crops to proper markets.

I thank the hon. member for his support of our budget the other night and his support and confidence in this government, but I will say that one thing we are not going to do is take the member's advice and go and negotiate with the Taliban, which actually can never be trusted.

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House and speak to this important debate.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Nepean—Carleton.

The dialogue that our country is having on our role in this international mission in Afghanistan is a very important one. This government is trying to do whatever it can to inform Canadians about this mission so that we can come to the right decision on the future of our involvement in that country.

Before I get into how the government is working to promote this ongoing national discussion, I would like to begin by paying tribute to the many Canadian civilian workers and our Canadian Forces members in Afghanistan. They are serving our country with great courage, dedication and professionalism. I would also like to pay tribute to Canadians from across the country who have shown their support for our troops.

This time, there is a personal side to this for me. My nephew is with the British forces and arrived in the Kandahar area just in the last week. We certainly pray for his safety as well as that of all our forces.

Right now approximately 2,500 Canadian Forces members are serving as part of the United Nations mandated and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force to help bring security to Afghanistan, especially in the south. Their work in increasing the security of that country has made it possible for our diplomats, development workers and civilian police, among others, to make their own significant contribution.

Canada is among the world's top donors to Afghanistan and is an active contributor in areas such as education, health, community

development, and training and mentoring for the Afghan national army and the Afghan national police.

Canadians, military and civilian, are making a difference as a key part of an international effort to help rebuild a country that has suffered through decades of war and upheaval. We cannot thank them enough for the difference they are making. We know it is not an easy task.

Our forces are experiencing the most demanding operation since Korea. The mission carries risks and challenges.

The Canadian Forces in Afghanistan are making real, tangible progress where it counts in improving the lives of ordinary Afghans. They are doing so in many ways: on patrols that provide security and in provincial reconstruction teams that facilitate development.

Their contributions are helping to rebuild Afghanistan every day, one piece at a time. They have my full support and, I trust, that of every member of the House.

I would like to speak of Canadians, who have demonstrated incredible support for our troops over the past few years. Their outpouring has been incredible. I would like to recognize it here tonight.

Without the support of Canadians, the progress made by our Canadian Forces in Afghanistan would not have been possible. There has been support from people from across the country, from individual Canadians, businesses and associations. In every corner of Canada, people are taking time away from their own lives to show our troops that they and their work are valued.

I think we need to commend all of these people who have made such wonderful heartfelt gestures of appreciation to our troops, not because they had to, but because they felt deep in their hearts that they needed and wanted to give something back to our men and women in uniform.

Some of those examples I am talking about include the red Friday rallies that happen from coast to coast. People from across the country are wearing red in support of our troops on Fridays. I have a red T-shirt that was given to me by a family member from Markdale, in my riding, which I wear every Friday. To be honest, I wear it at other times as well. It makes us think about our troops over there.

I am talking about the daily messages posted on the “write to our troops” website of the Department of National Defence.

I am talking about quilting associations across the country making quilts for injured Canadian Forces personnel or for the families of the fallen.

As well, we have seen people gathering spontaneously on the overpasses of Highway 401 to salute fallen soldiers along what has been renamed the Highway of Heroes.

I am thinking, too, of businesses and employers taking the initiative to show their support. I am thinking of employers who support the reservists who work for them and ensure that they have jobs when they get back from service.

*Government Orders*

There is also the support coming from the sporting world. Our Canadian troops have been honoured at NHL games and were an important part of Grey Cup festivities last fall.

There are also things like the great many warm gestures over the holidays, such as letters, gifts, packages and email messages sent to our troops in Afghanistan.

• (2035)

Canadians of all ages, all religions and all professions know that the holidays are often a tough time of the year for our troops overseas and, of their own accord, took time from their families and all the things that make the holiday season special. They went out of their way to show our troops in Afghanistan that we remember them, that we care about them and that we appreciate all that they do.

It is initiatives like the one made by the Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association last holiday season. It donated more than 2,000 Christmas trees to the families of Canadian Forces members serving their country overseas. It is year in and year out efforts by the massive number of volunteers across this country who organize events and initiatives for family members of Canadian Forces personnel. I recently attended one of those myself, the third or fourth one.

These dedicated volunteers are a small army in and of themselves. Canadians make all of these efforts because they want to express their support directly to the troops. Such expressions of support mean a great deal to the men and women of the Canadian Forces as they help Afghans secure and stabilize their country.

In many ways, such heartfelt gestures fuel their work. It comforts them when the going gets tough. It reminds them that Canadians from the east coast to the west coast and in the north support their work.

One of the core responsibilities of any government is to foster debate on the important issues facing our country. When a matter of national importance must be decided, the Canadian public and its elected representatives must have the information they need to draw their own conclusions.

This government is absolutely committed to that principle. Canadians expect and deserve nothing less, especially as the end of Canada's current military mandate in Afghanistan, scheduled for February 2009, approaches. That is why this government took the responsible course of action and our Prime Minister struck the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, headed by former deputy prime minister, John Manley.

This panel was asked to explore options for Canada's mission in Afghanistan following the end of the current mandate. That non-partisan panel drew on the independent voices of five eminent Canadians with extensive foreign policy expertise and commitment to public service. It heard informed opinions on Afghanistan from across the spectrum: regional experts, development workers, academics and non-governmental organizations. Some were voices of support and some were not.

The panel members travelled to Afghanistan and saw for themselves the work being done on the ground. The panel provided a thorough report that assessed what had been done and that pointed

a way forward. It confirmed that Canada's effort in this international response to Afghanistan is important and should continue.

It said that notable progress had been made and it listed the very real challenges to be overcome for us to see further success in this mission, along with presenting some well-thought out recommendations aimed at ensuring further progress. This government listened. We welcomed the panel's report and we responded to its recommendations.

Among other things, the government immediately created a cabinet committee on Afghanistan and created an Afghanistan task force within the Privy Council Office. Both of these measures are designed to improve the coordination required for us to increase our effectiveness in Afghanistan.

We are increasing our technical briefings to the media on Afghanistan. There have been 15 technical briefings since Canada first deployed troops there in February 2002, 14 of which have taken place under this government.

Of course we, in partnership with our Liberal colleagues across the floor, also responded to the Manley panel report by bringing forward a motion to the House that would extend Canada's commitment to the United Nations' mandated mission in Afghanistan until 2011 but not without important conditions and, importantly, we have worked with the opposition on this motion. Our mission in Afghanistan is neither a Liberal nor a Conservative mission. It is a Canadian mission.

In closing, I would like to indicate my support for the mission there and the government's efforts in this regard.

For my nephew, Lane, who has just arrived in Afghanistan, I wish him have a safe trip home.

• (2040)

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for some very pertinent insights into what we are doing in Afghanistan, why we are there and the outreach that the Prime Minister had across the political landscape to solicit and obtain the support we need in order to continue the job we are doing in Afghanistan.

I will preface my question for my hon. friend by saying that I have the tremendous honour and privilege of representing the good people of Northumberland—Quinte West, in which we have CFB Trenton. As we know, CFB Trenton is the hub of Canada's air force and it is from there that almost all of our aid, equipment and men and women depart for that theatre.

When the member was discussing the men and women who are in Afghanistan and the need to ensure that they have the best possible uniforms, equipment and support, many people in Canada believe that the purchase of these goods and equipment, especially aircraft and other items, in particular the C-17 Globemaster, the replacement to the Hercules, that it has to do specifically with Afghanistan.



*Government Orders*

Although it is an assist there, could the member talk about the Canada first policy and the fact that this equipment was purchased because of its great use in Canada? I wonder if he could explain, not only the benefit that equipment has for Afghanistan, but the other benefits that the Canada first policy has toward Canada's sovereignty.

• (2045)

**Mr. Larry Miller:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the refurbishing of, not just our armed forces, but the equipment they use, after years of being starved, which I guess is a good word and one of many that I could use to describe it, of resources to do the job.

Anybody with the right training and the right tools can accomplish just about anything. Canadians, especially Canadian troops, have proved that better than anybody over the course of time. Their record in the two great wars, in Korea and now again here, plus all their peacekeeping missions in-between have proved that. They were gutted to the point where they hardly had anything left to work with. We have given that back to them.

We have northern security in Canada. We must protect our sovereignty in the north because it is a part of Canada. That does not mean that we cannot have agreements with countries around the world to traverse through there, but at the end of the day it remains Canada's north.

We have our DART from Kingston that can help out in disasters around the world. The tsunami was an instance where it was certainly used, and in many other cases around the world. We also provide clean water equipment in devastated villages, whether it be war-torn or natural disasters. Canada's record for providing humanitarian aid worldwide is second to none.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, quite incorrectly, one of the previous speakers made a suggestion that I said that we negotiate with the Taliban. I would like to point out that President Karzai, at a number of press conferences, has made that very suggestion.

I have a question for the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. President Karzai has suggested several times that we negotiate with the Taliban. Under what conditions would he agree with Mr. Karzai's statements?

**Mr. Larry Miller:** Mr. Speaker, sovereignty was the word that was floating around here a few minutes ago. We can have all kinds of debate out in the poppy fields or wherever but at the end of the day, every country has the right to sovereign decisions and that is an Afghan decision.

Canada has many of those same decisions and we do not want any other country telling us how to make our decisions, whether it be on the Arctic, on the coast or on anything in-between.

That is not to say that there are not things we could maybe help the Afghan government try to eradicate. It is a problem and maybe it can be turned into a positive in some ways through the medical aspect of opium, but at the end of the day it needs to be done through the cooperation and the decision by and with the Afghan government.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address

the global threat of terrorism with which our nation and many others are menaced.

Many believe that this global threat of terrorism that we watch often on the evening news, playing itself out in faraway lands, is not our problem but rather somebody else's problem. These people who take this view argue that the terrorists of the world are either responding to provocation or are engaged in faraway conflicts that are of no concern to Canada.

They also argue that if we shrink ourselves into a cocoon and we make ourselves small and unnoticed, perhaps this menace will not entertain itself upon us. Maybe there is a burglar in the house but if we hide under the bed they will not bother us. Recent history, however, does not support this narrative.

Let us consider the kinds of terrorist attacks that have carried themselves out over the last five years around the world and learn why it is so important for us never to allow Afghanistan to once again become a staging ground for this sort of terrorism.

Before I do list the number of attacks and the geography of those attacks, I would like to point out that the terrorists who carry them out are not concerned with race or religion, or with foreign policy of the target nations upon which they are carrying out these attacks. They are totally indiscriminate and they are capable of attacking anywhere, at any time.

They attack Muslims in Istanbul, Turkey. They attack Arabs in Tarabin, Taba and Sharm El-Sheikh, all in Egypt. They attack Europeans in Madrid, Spain and British in London. They have tormented and murdered countless Israelis over long periods of time of our democratic ally in the Middle East, and, of course, they killed 24 Canadians on 9/11 in attacks on the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and a downed plane over the United States.

We learned on that day, on 9/11, that if we do not go to Afghanistan, Afghanistan will come to us, and, thus, we are there today carrying out a UN-mandated mission, executed by NATO, part of roughly a three dozen-member coalition designed to defend and stabilize a democratically elected government at the request of that government.

The importance of carrying this effort to its ultimate conclusion cannot be overstated. If we leave now or before the job is done, the Taliban will surely capture ground. In the key battleground, that is, the southern province of Kandahar, that would allow a base of operations to form, which could then spread to other vulnerable provinces, like the neighbouring Helmand province, and eventually push its way north, recapture Afghanistan and turn it into the tyrannical, theocratic dungeon that it was before we arrived.

If that were to occur, we would once again have an entire nation controlled by those who seek our demise. This is a group that will attack anywhere or anytime, regardless of race, religion or foreign policy, and, as I have noted earlier, we are therefore subject to this menace, just as is every other free nation on the planet Earth.

*Government Orders*

● (2050)

Many of my colleagues have talked at great length about the projects that we are undertaking to provide basic necessities in Afghanistan in order to elaborate upon the social, physical and other forms of infrastructure already been built. I will not spend additional time on this because I believe it has been adequately covered. However, to expand education, to build roads and build accessibility to clean water, none of those good works will be possible if the workers, who are undertaking such works, are threatened on a regular basis by terrorists and extremists: thus the important and even quintessential role of our troops.

Our troops have shown, with great bravery, the sacrifices with which they are willing to give their lives and to turn over their efforts to secure the hard won gains that have been built up over this time.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs is also making note of the important work of our troops. I know he takes very seriously the work of our troops. That is why he is participating in the debate today.

On behalf of all my constituents in Nepean—Carleton, I want to say how grateful I am for the sacrifices of our soldiers and the lengths to which they are prepared to go to advance Canadian interest and defend Canadian security.

In this place we oftentimes honour those who have sacrificed before us. On Remembrance Day all of us attend 10 sometimes 15 different events in our communities to celebrate the role of past armed forces service people. A Liberal member is nodding in agreement that all of us hold these people in the highest esteem. We have carved on the stone wall outside of this room biblical inscriptions honouring those who gave their lives for their friends. It is the highest statement of loyalty to one's country. That is how we look back upon our grandparents and great grandparents.

What will our grandchildren and great grandchildren say of us? They will open their history books when they go to school. They will read of Canada's historic role, Vimy Ridge and Passendale, in helping to advance the allied cause in the first world war. They will learn of our historic role in defeating Nazism, Fascism during the second world war and pushing back the tide of evil communism in Korea. They will read of the role of the government in the eighties in overturning the apartheid system of South Africa. They will learn all of these great stories of Canadian contributions all around the world.

Then they will get to our point in history, here in 2008. They will ask themselves and perhaps, even more important, they will ask us. They will say: "Your ancestors carried a great torch and they handed that torch to you. What did you do that was so great in your time? Did you shrink from the challenge when the going got tough or did you stand strong for the values that made Canada what it is? Did you stand by your convictions and sacrifice the most in order to achieve the best for the world and for the security of future Canadians?"

I want to be able to tell them that we stood strong, that we did the Canadian thing and that we saw through the mission that we set out to achieve. God bless Canada.

● (2055)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member invoked the tremendous sacrifice of generations past and the ultimate sacrifice that Canadians have paid during this Afghanistan mission, this Afghanistan war. We have offered up probably what is best in our country. Many do lose life and many others do lose limb.

We know from the statistics of the returning soldiers, the young men and women who have lost limb or been physically wounded, that most are tremendously well taken care of. Approximately 85% believe they have receive the care that they require.

However, there are many more so-called walking wounded. Canadians would be shocked and surprised upon hearing that 37% of all returning soldiers have been diagnosed with some sort of mental health issue: substance abuse, deep depressions and post-traumatic stress disorder. What is especially disturbing, 75% have said that they have not received the care they need.

When talking of the great sacrifices that these young men and women are making and will continuing to be making over the next two years, what can the member opposite tell us in regard to the government's approach to dealing with this issue?

● (2100)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member has taken interest in this subject on the public accounts committee. More broadly, I would like to thank his party for its role in supporting this motion. This has been a truly Canadian exercise in consensus building, led by the Prime Minister but in cooperation with many others.

I note it was his party which led our country during the second world war. Ours led it during the first world war. Today we are uniting in a spirit of non-partisanship in order to see our way through this mission as well.

As the member has noted in the public accounts committee, our military leadership has already begun the process of hiring more counsellors and psychological experts to provide those soldiers, who come back suffering from post-traumatic stress, with the very best treatment that can possibly be summoned to put them on the road to recovery from some of the terrible things they would have seen and experienced in Afghanistan.

This is an important issue. We will have new veterans. Our legion halls will be populated with young men and women, which is a good thing. However, this brings a whole series of new challenges for Canada and responsibilities for legislators, like those here today, to ensure that those new veterans are given the very best care, both physically, psychologically and any other way they most need it.

*Government Orders***Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague who, as a young man, shows tremendous insight. In his last statement he has said that we have embarked upon a mission like others that will produce a whole new generation of veterans within the country. The member opposite, who made the previous point, also touches upon the fact that it is incumbent upon the government and a grateful nation to demonstrate the type of support those men and women will require upon their return.

The member would know, and the previous government recognized this as do we, that this requires investment. Close to \$100 million are specifically dedicated to the issue of support upon return. This is the stresses and strains that require specific psychological treatment. Operational stress disorder requires a very special approach. We are seeing that in places like Camp Hill Hospital in Halifax and others across the nation. It requires a whole team of counsellors, psychologists and occupational stress therapists. There are many strides and new innovative ways to help treat that type of trauma.

I am proud to say that this government and the previous government invested. We have doubled the number of individuals in our country and those in theatre who are embarking upon that very important support. The system is growing and will continue to grow with the support of this government and hopefully members opposite.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, the minister's name will go down in history as the defence minister who helped build this great Canadian consensus at such a pivotal time in the history of Canada. There is a grateful nation out there for his work, but even more so, and I think he would agree, for the soldiers who will come back, having served on the front lines of this great challenge. I agree with him that—

• (2105)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the debate we are having this evening is a solemn one and an important one.

As CTV News reported just a few hours ago that Jeremie Ouellet, 22 years old, with the 1st Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Manitoba, died in Afghanistan. He is now the 80th member of our military personnel to die in Afghanistan since 2002. I express the condolences of the entire House of Commons to his family.

This underlines very clearly the debate we are having here tonight.

Members of the Canadian Forces are incredibly dedicated and believe profoundly in our democracy. They will do what the House of Commons directs them to do, even at the cost of their lives. This debate about the future of our mission in Afghanistan is a profoundly important one. Canadian Forces personnel will follow the orders that are provided by our democratically elected government.

This is much more than a philosophical debate. The debate and the decision that is made by the House of Commons following it will

have profound implications on the future of Afghanistan and on the future of our Canadian Forces.

The NDP has offered an amendment to the government's motion, which is supported by the Liberal Party. It calls upon the government:

—to begin preparations for the safe withdrawal of Canadian soldiers from the combat mission in Afghanistan with no further mission extensions;

that, in the opinion of the House, the government should engage in a robust diplomatic process to prepare the groundwork for a political solution...

The motion also states, among other things:

that, in the opinion of the House, the government should provide effective and transparent development assistance under civilian direction consistent with the Afghanistan Compact.

In the 20 minutes I have been granted in the House tonight, I intend to respond to three questions that I believe we should all be looking at as members of the House of Commons. First, is the mission in Afghanistan working? Second, if it is not working, why is it not working? Third, what should we be doing in Afghanistan?

I will start with the first question because it is of fundamental importance as we debate in the House tonight, and mourn the death of the 80th member of the Canadian Forces. We must evaluate how the mission has gone so far and whether the mission is working with the objectives that were set originally.

A graph was done by the *Globe and Mail* last weekend on the issue of the military mission in Afghanistan. It showed that back in 2003, there were five Canadian Forces casualties in Afghanistan and about 500 serious security incidents across the country. In 2005 the number of Canadian casualties had gone from 5 to 10 and the number of security incidents from 500 to nearly 2,000. In 2006 the total security incidents had risen to over 5,000 from 500 just 3 years before and the total number of Canadian casualties was 300. In 2007 the total number of security incidents went from 5,000 to nearly 7,000 and the Canadian casualties had grown to 412.

What is projected in 2008 is a substantial increase again in the number of security incidents. One can presume as well, given the rapid escalation from five Canadian casualties to ten, to three hundred to four hundred and twelve, that the number of Canadian Forces casualties, under our direction with a democratically elected government, will increase as well.

• (2110)

One has to ask if the mission is working when one sees the steady increase in the number of security incidents, but also the dramatic increase in the number of Canadian casualties.

Let us look at some of the other evaluations that have been done on the same issue. The United Nations had an assessment in the fall of 2007. It indicated that the rates of insurgent and terrorist violence are at least 20% higher than they were in 2006. Christian Aid in late 2006 indicated that famine and drought are driving people to the Taliban in Afghanistan. The British House of Commons defence committee warned in July 2007 that civilian casualties, war damage and U.S. poppy eradication are turning ordinary people toward the Taliban.

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There are other evaluations. The drug trade is thriving, up 60% this year. More than one million Afghans are addicted to drugs, of which 60,000 are children. Violence against women is growing. Fifty per cent of women face domestic violence. Authorities rarely investigate complaints of violence against women.

There are other quotes evaluating whether this mission is working. Major General Andrew Leslie said in the summer of 2005, "Every time you kill an angry young man overseas, you're creating 15 more who will come after you".

Leo Docherty, British aide-de-camp, in *The Telegraph* indicated that "Afghanistan is a textbook case of how to screw up a counter-insurgency". He went on to say, "all we are doing is surviving. It's completely barking mad. It's a pretty clear equation if people are losing homes and poppy fields, they will go and fight. I know I would. We've been grotesquely clumsy".

Colonel Michel Drapeau in July 2007 said, "I don't think Canada is winning the war", and "This war is not winnable".

The evidence from reports, from quotations from those who would know this situation best and from what is actually happening on the ground clearly indicate that the mission is not working. That is undeniable.

I have listened attentively to the Conservatives who have spoken this evening. They seem to indicate, though they cannot prove, aside from some anecdotal evidence, that the mission is working. Their intent is to say that essentially more of the same will produce different results.

It is foolhardy to think that more of the same somehow will lead to a different result than what we have seen over the last five years. What we have seen in the last five years is clearly an increase in security concerns, an increase in the types of conditions, whether it is famine or poverty, that lead to the insecurity that one finds in Afghanistan.

The next question I would like to ask is, why is it not working? If the mission is not working, if the preponderance of the evidence is that very clearly, aside from anecdotal evidence that the Conservatives will provide, but on the basis of fact that very clearly the mission is not working, why is it not working?

I would like to answer that in part by citing Malalai Joya, the youngest member elected to the Afghani parliament and what she said in the *Independent* newspaper on January 31, 2008 about the situation in Afghanistan. She should know this best being a member of the Afghani parliament, although I will come back to her treatment by the warlords in the parliament of Afghanistan. She said the following:

After six years in control, this government has proved itself to be as bad as the Taliban — in fact, it is little more than a photocopy of the Taliban. The situation in Afghanistan is getting progressively worse — and not just for women, but for all Afghans.

She went on to say:

The government was not democratically elected, and it is now trying to use the country's Islamic law as a tool with which to limit women's rights.

In 2007 more women killed themselves in Afghanistan than ever before—

●(2115)

I will repeat that:

In 2007 more women killed themselves in Afghanistan than ever before—that shows that the situation hasn't got any better. The murder of women in Afghanistan is like the killing of birds, because this government is anti-women. Women are vulnerable—recently a 22-year-old woman was raped in front of her children by 15 local commanders of a fundamentalist party, closely connected to the government.

I utterly condemn this undemocratic act of those in power against Sayed Pervez Kambaksh. This situation has exposed the corruption of the government, which is inherently undemocratic, which does not believe in women's rights and which is willing to go to extreme lengths to prevent freedom of speech. Mr. Kambaksh has not broken any law, but he is a "real" journalist, one who is not afraid to write articles exposing the corruption of the fundamentalists in power. This has been a bloody year for journalists in Afghanistan, and they are now in a lot of danger.

The country's parliament is like a zoo, it is corrupt and chaotic. It is run by warlords who should be tried for their crimes. As the people running our country were not democratically elected, it should be no surprise that they are imposing these undemocratic sentences.

There are countless examples of human rights abuses—from rapes to imprisonments and killings. I want to raise international awareness of these issues but I have been forced to stay in Kabul after my passport was seized by the government.

Speaking out on this and other issues, she was suspended from the country's parliament. In an article that was written just last week, she talked about the situation of poverty, death, cold and famine taking place in Afghanistan. She said, "The situation continues because of the billions of dollars that Afghanistan has received from the international community. Most of the money has gone into the pockets of the warlords and drug lords that the U.S. and its allies have imposed on our country".

I think there are very clear indications why the mission is failing when there is a government that essentially is not acting in the interests of the citizens of Afghanistan.

I will go on to raise another issue why this mission is failing. An article in *The Vancouver Sun* last weekend talked about the largest humanitarian aid operation undertaken since the Taliban was removed from power in 2001. This was an aid operation that went to the community of Zhari Dasht in the northern part of Kandahar. There are 50,000 refugees in this camp. Many of the people in this camp are Pashtuns who are unable to return to their homes in other parts of Afghanistan. The article quotes Muhammad Rasal Haidari, who is a Pashtun prevented from returning to his home in northern Afghanistan by warlords from other tribal groups. He is unable to leave the south because of warlords from other groups, groups that are affiliated with the government.

The villages in this region have had no water for crops. There are no jobs of any kind. This largest humanitarian aid operation since the Taliban was removed delivered a sum total for those 50,000 people of a dollar's worth of rice. Those people in that part of Afghanistan have been waiting for seven years and the aid operation that was undertaken by the United States provided a dollar's worth of rice, perhaps 1,200 calories, perhaps half a day's food, to each one of those 50,000 refugees.

I would submit that when the aid actually delivered is that small in nature and when the Pashtuns are unable to leave their region because of warlords, it is understandable that our mission may well not be working.

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I will now come to the Oxfam report, “Community Peacebuilding in Afghanistan”, which was issued a few weeks ago.

Oxfam extensively surveyed the Afghani population. The results from Kandahar are particularly interesting, perhaps saddening to all of us in this House. When the Afghans in Kandahar were asked who the greatest threats to security were, they replied in the following way.

● (2120)

The fourth greatest threat was the Taliban, identified by 18% of those in Kandahar who were questioned. The international forces were identified by 21% as the third greatest threat to security. The second greatest threat to security, as indicated in the Oxfam report, were the warlords, identified by 24%. This has been a constant theme among those who are concerned about the situation in Afghanistan: 24% identified the warlords as the second greatest threat in the province of Kandahar and 29% identified the first greatest threat as the Afghani army, police and the government.

This is a fundamental reason why the mission is not working. When there are those great difficulties with warlords and the Afghani army and police, it is very clear that it is difficult to establish on the ground the type of conditions that the mission originally called for.

We have, as well, our situation of investing more than 90% of Canadian resources in Afghanistan to military means, not to development which is sorely needed according to all of the quotes and reports that we have been citing in this corner of the House. Very clearly, that is where the accent needs to be.

According to a report in *La Presse* this morning, in the next year we are looking at having spent a total of \$7.5 billion in Afghanistan. There have been substantial cost overruns and yet that money is going to military operations when it needs to go toward providing the developmental support that very clearly is needed.

The *Guardian* newspaper in December 2007 estimated that the amount of money intended for reconstruction that has disappeared into corrupt back pockets is \$18 billion a year.

There is the situation. What do we need to do? We need to learn the lessons, I would agree with my Conservative colleagues, of the second world war and the period right afterward. That was a time of the greatest civil strife and terrorism in European history, the period right after the war when the Nazis were defeated. After their military defeat by regular forces, the occupied population produced terrorists who engaged in bombings, sniper attacks, poisonings, other attacks on occupation forces and the civilian population. They operated as regulars in small terror units armed with automatic weapons and bazookas.

Faced with that terror, what happened was the profound Marshall plan, which actually led to substantial investments never before seen and never seen since. It actually allowed for the development work that changed the economy of Europe and provided the essentials to the population of Europe. The terrorists were there. The economic development and support was put in place.

That has not been the case in Afghanistan. That is what reduced the most substantive terrorist threats of the past 100 years. That is

very clearly what needs to be done, a new Marshall plan for Afghanistan.

More than that, we also need to have a substantial peace plan. A report which came out yesterday from the CCIC said very clearly that the Canadian government must:

—advocate for peace in Afghanistan by encouraging the international community and Afghan government to strengthen conditions for a future peace process and coordinate current efforts for peace. Canada's approach to Afghanistan must also be re-balanced to better support diplomatic efforts and development priorities.

That is exactly what we have called for.

There is no doubt that we have to change our approach in Afghanistan. The mission has not worked. We have identified the reasons why it has not worked and we have pointed the way to a solution in Afghanistan that would produce results.

I would like to end with two quotes that are important. The NATO Secretary General in May 2007 said:

There is no military solution for Afghanistan. Security alone is not enough. [Afghans] also want a job. They want to see reconstruction and development across the country.

● (2125)

Finally, Romano Prodi, the former president of the EU, said:

The military solution in Afghanistan will not succeed in getting a result, the problem must have a political solution.

That is the position of our party. That is what we hope will be the position of this House of Commons.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite interesting to hear the NDP member talk about this mission as failing. We will never build anything if we have NDP logic. Those members nitpick what is not right and what has gone wrong. They never dwell on what has been achieved in Afghanistan and they never talk about it.

When the British defence committee was visiting here, and I met its members, I asked them one question: “Do you have any party in your parliament calling for the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan?” I asked them that question and they said no. I asked the Germans and they said no. There was a German NGO here that was a left-leaning NGO with the same ideology as the NDP. She had come here to tell the NDP members not to abandon Afghanistan.

If their international cousins do not want to leave Afghanistan, and want to rebuild Afghanistan to provide security, why are they the only party among all the alliances that are there that is advocating to leave tomorrow? Why are they different from all their own ideology partners from around the world? Perhaps if they were to go and visit Afghanistan, they would join them.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, he is wrong. It is simply not true that these kinds of discussions are not taking place in other parts of the world. The reports and the quotes very clearly indicated that the same discussions are taking place in other democratic venues for the simple reason that people can read the facts.

They can read the facts, they can draw their conclusions, and we need to look at alternatives of how to accomplish the ends that I think all of us seek in Afghanistan.

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He cited the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom defence minister said in July 2007, “The solutions to narcotics, security and establishing the rule of law are political, not military”.

I believe he cited the Dutch. Lieutenant Colonel Tak, who is the Dutch commander in Uruzgan said, “Talking to the Taliban is essential”.

I have quoted the president of the European Union and the NATO secretary general as well. I can cite quotations that go exactly in the same direction as what the NDP has proposed for the rest of this evening.

It is simply untrue to say that other countries are not having these same discussions and other countries are not having these same proposals. We are having these discussions and proposals in various parts of the world. That is the reality and that is our goal as democratic legislators, to have that kind of debate.

I hope the evidence I presented convinces the parliamentary secretary to understand that this is not just a debate taking place with the NDP but in various democratic bodies around the world.

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's comments and his remarks. While I fundamentally disagree with much of what he said, and he quoted quite selectively from a number of individuals and statistics that point to what he describes as a failure in Afghanistan, he seems to be overlooking a tremendous amount of mounting evidence of positive progress that is there.

I have to ask him to at least acknowledge the six million children in school, a third of them being girls, the tumbling infant mortality rate, and the increasing GDP. There is enormous statistical evidence that points to the positive change that we have seen in the last six years.

I would point as well to his reference to the casualties as being in some way a benchmark to support his case. While tragedy in each and every instance of loss of life is undeniable, there is a reality that we are now in Kandahar province where the battle or the insurgency is fiercest. So there are some statistics that when glossed over really do not paint a proper picture.

The member quoted from a number of individuals in his remarks.

It is good to see you in the chair this evening and I know, Mr. Speaker, that you are following this debate intently. I enjoyed being at a legion in your riding at one time and meeting with some veterans.

Allow me to quote the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, who only last month, when posed the question of what would happen if countries were to make an about face or rescind the Security Council resolution which is what empowers nations to in fact be in Afghanistan participating in this international mission, said, “To do so, to leave, would be a misjudgment of historic proportions”.

This is coming from the UN Secretary General, and again, this is often absent from the speeches and the remarks from members of the NDP.

The person I really want to quote is an Afghan and that is Dr. Sima Samar who is the head of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. She has commented of course from I would suggest an important vantage point as the head of that important body in Afghanistan, a body that we work with quite closely, as do our international partners. Her advice was simple on the discussion of what Canadians and others should do. That was “finish the job you started”. She went on to say:

It's not just for protecting Afghanistan, or protecting Canadians. It is about the protection of humanity. This is a human responsibility. It isn't possible to escape this kind of responsibility.

I guess my questions then flowing from that quote are: How can the NDP deny the responsibility that Canadians have, having commenced this important effort, to rebuild this country, to offer humanitarian aid, all provided under the security of the Canadian Forces and the international security forces who are there working with the Afghans themselves, to build that capacity in their own country? How can the member possibly deny the reality that this cannot happen without the protection of Canadian Forces and if those Canadian Forces were to leave, as his party and his leader and he himself is suggesting, what would happen to the humanitarian effort and more importantly, what would happen to the Afghan people, the men, women and children who are protected by those military forces?

• (2130)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** I thank the hon. member for his good words and now the floor belongs to the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the situation for Afghans is getting worse and worse, and the number of incidents related to security, famine and poverty are getting worse and worse.

We are not talking about a stable situation where our troops, through the giving of their lives and sacrifices, are somehow maintaining stability. It is not the case. There is a desperate disintegration in Afghanistan.

We have seen widespread corruption by the government, the presence of war lords, and lack of trust in the Afghani police and the Afghani army in Kandahar in the south. That is very clear from the Oxfam report.

He has quoted some individuals; I have quoted some individuals. I think I will finish quoting back and forth because this is the kind of democratic debate that we do want to see. I think the input from all members has been very valuable tonight. I would like to quote people in countries who have been asked about this issue.

In July 2007, in Poland, 17% of the people there supported the mission. In Germany, over 50% wanted the troops out. In February 2008, in Britain, 62% of the public wanted all of their troops withdrawn from Afghanistan within a year.

Let us finish with Canadians. In July, in Canada, 16% supported an extension and 50% supported withdrawal before 2009. In September 2007, 85% of Canadians said that they did not want the mission extended past February 2009.

I think Canadians have heard the debate. They have listened to both sides and overwhelmingly Canadians are saying that they believe Parliament should take the same decision that the NDP is proposing.

● (2135)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont.

I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the constituents of Fleetwood—Port Kells to participate in the debate on our government's motion to extend Canada's mission in Afghanistan to 2011.

Canada is in Afghanistan at the request of that country's democratically elected government and as part of a UN mandated NATO-led mission that includes 37 other countries.

Our goal is to protect Canadians by ensuring that Afghanistan never again falls into the hands of the Taliban and that it becomes a stable, free and a democratic society.

Unfortunately, terrorism is a 21st century reality in Canada and everywhere else around the world. It is a reality that we must face together as free nations if we want to remain free.

As noted by our Prime Minister, "Canada can choose to ignore terrorism, but terrorism will not ignore Canada".

Afghanistan was, and most likely still is in some regions, a haven for terrorists. Al-Qaeda had training camps and bases in Afghanistan. It was the base from which it fomented anti-western sentiment and from which its allies planned and mounted terrorist attacks against the west.

It is in Canada's national interest to not let Afghanistan become a breeding ground for terrorism again. Afghans also deserve a chance at the values we enjoy: freedom, human rights, rule of law, and opportunity.

We must therefore not abandon Afghanistan. To do so would be to betray the interests of Canada and other western nations. It would also be a betrayal of the Afghani people. Afghans have been fighting for nearly three decades. First it was against the Soviets, who invaded in 1979, and then it was among themselves as different factions struggled to gain control of the country. More than one million Afghans died in the fighting.

By 1996 the Taliban militia had managed to secure its dominance over nearly 90% of Afghanistan. The Taliban brought a measure of peace to the country, but in exchange for this security, people paid a heavy price in the form of personal freedoms.

While many people had to accept the Taliban rule, millions fled their country. By September 2001, 2.5 million Afghani refugees were living under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran.

The international community refused to recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, instead viewing Burhanuddin Rabbani's government as legitimate even though it controlled only 10% of that country.

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When in control of Afghanistan, the Taliban imposed a strict regime of Islamic law, barring most women from education and work. Women were not allowed to work even if they had starving children and no husband or male relatives to support them. The Taliban even prohibited women from participating in a UN program that employed widows in making bread for the poor.

Women were not permitted in public without being covered head to foot in burkas. They were forced to stay at home behind blacked-out windows. When travelling outside their homes, they could do only so in the company of a close male relative.

Men were forced to wear beards. There were bans on all kinds of light entertainment, including music. Religious police patrolled the streets. Those found guilty of infractions, such as failure to attend prayers, the display of photographs of living creatures or the possession of music recordings or videotapes, were whipped. Thieves faced public amputation of hands and feet. Women found guilty of adultery were stoned to death.

● (2140)

The women of Afghanistan were the most oppressed group of people in the world. Hillary Clinton, then U.S. First Lady, declared that "women...are being brutalized by the Taliban, once again in the name...of religion".

In a 1999 report, Radhika Coomaraswamy, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, criticized the Taliban for widespread, systematic and officially sanctioned abuse of women. She accused the Taliban's Ministry of Vice and Virtue of deep discrimination against women and of being the "the most misogynist department in the whole world".

Canada and its NATO allies are creating conditions where the Afghan people can build a safe and just society, where men, women, girls and boys can live and worship freely and work to achieve their full potential.

Obviously, there is much to be done. Afghanistan is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Massive social disruption and loss of infrastructure resulting from 30 years of conflict will take years to address, and the harm to families and communities may never truly be healed.

That being said, things have begun to change in Afghanistan and the situation is already far better than it was under the Taliban. Where there was no true national government and no hint of democracy or legitimate governance, there is now an Afghan-drafted constitution that protects basic human rights.

Successful elections involving some nine million voters have taken place. An elected president now serves alongside an elected national legislature and regional councils.

Women who had been driven from public life and stripped of all freedom by the Taliban are now in government. Among the 351 members of the national assembly, 87 are women, some of whom visited with us here last week.

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Real progress is evident in many other areas. Some 4.6 million refugees have returned to their homeland and almost 6 million Afghan children are attending school, six times as many as in 2001. Thirty-seven per cent of the students are girls. One-third of Afghanistan's 45,000 trained teachers are women.

The economy has tripled its performance since 2001 and per capita income has doubled during that same period.

The latest information suggests that 8 in 10 Afghans have access to primary health care, a tenfold increase since 2001.

Some 62,000 former combatants have been demobilized and close to 100,000 landmines have been destroyed.

At the same time, the security situation remains a major challenge. Afghan and NATO forces have pushed into Taliban sanctuaries to extend the reach of the legitimate Afghan government. As Taliban forces have faced defeat in open engagements, they have begun to rely more on terrorist style attacks.

In attacks with improvised explosive devices and suicide bombs, the Taliban and other illegal armed groups have killed dozens of civilians, and 92% of victims have been Afghans. Insurgent forces continue to use violence and intimidation to advance their cause, including attacks on schools.

According to a survey by the Asia Foundation, two-thirds of Afghans believe that their country is heading in the right direction.

Once again, the opportunists are on the rise, seeking anew to make Afghanistan a lawless place, a locus of instability, terrorism and drug trafficking.

We must remain focused on preventing Afghanistan from relapsing into a failed state, where human rights would be routinely abused and terrorists would find a safe haven from which they could strike at Canada and our allies.

• (2145)

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my caucus mate from Fleetwood—Port Kells, who talked about human rights and the fact that women were downtrodden. I would like her to comment further on those issues dealing with human rights, particularly on how women were downtrodden under the Taliban regime.

It brought to mind the visit to Afghanistan by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. She interviewed a young lady who forgot she was wearing nail polish on her fingernails during the Taliban regime and had her fingers cut off because of it.

Women can now walk down the streets in Afghanistan, but I recall a general stating that under the Taliban regime if their heels clicked on the sidewalk it was interpreted as bringing attention to themselves and they were flogged in public.

I also heard, with great sadness, the stories about the large numbers of women who suffered fractured pelvises upon childbirth as a result of their lack of vitamin D. They were completely covered and never did see much sunlight.

Could the member comment a little more on what it means to the women of Afghanistan now that we are there protecting their rights?

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member about what we have accomplished in Afghanistan. Together with troops from other countries, the Canadian Forces have made a real impact on and a real difference in the lives of the Afghan people. All over the country buildings are being rebuilt, refugees are returning home, marketplaces are bustling, and little girls have started going to school.

There has been very substantial progress in governance. Afghans were able to choose their own leaders in fair and democratic presidential and parliamentary elections. Institutions such as the Afghan national army and the Afghan national police are assuming ever-increasing responsibilities in that country.

Let me talk about health care. Access to basic medical services has increased to 83%. In fact, the mortality rate has declined to 22%, with 80% having access to primary health care, a 72% increase since 2001.

Let us talk about drugs in that country. More than 90% of the world's opium and heroin comes from Afghanistan. All of us know that. The drug economy in Afghanistan supports the Taliban, the ruthless warlords and the drug lords.

However, forced crop destruction often drives poor farmers into the arms of the Taliban. The international community should consider a program to develop Afghanistan's agricultural sector to provide alternative livelihoods.

Talking about economic development in that country, I note that between January and May 2007, 60,000 new clients were in microfinanced activities.

Regarding education, 20,800 men and women are receiving legal awareness training within households. That is a much larger number than in 2001. More than 5,100 Afghani women are receiving literacy training in their homes. Under the Taliban, only 700,000 children went to school, all of them boys, but now more than six million children go to school and about 40% of them are girls. Thirty per cent of school teachers are women.

Let us talk about basic infrastructure in Afghanistan. Between March and June 2007, more than 100 reservoirs, 70 hand pumps, 1,000 wells, 100 irrigation canals and 650 kilometres of roads have been constructed and rehabilitated. There have been about 10,000 kilometres of new roads built. The time to travel between Kandahar and Kabul used to be almost 15 hours in 2001, but now it is almost 6 hours.

We are talking about humanitarian—

• (2150)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont.

**Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to stand in the House today and speak to this very important issue.



I will begin by commending the leadership of our party, the Conservative Party, and the Liberals who were involved in discussions to come to this point where we have reached a consensus on an issue that is incredibly important to our country, very consistent with our history as a country and very important, obviously, to the people of Afghanistan.

I want to talk a little about an opportunity I had in January of this year to visit the War Museum. It was my very first opportunity to visit the museum and I found it to be a real eye-opener. It was quite an experience to be reminded of our history as a nation, of the 115,000 Canadian men and women who have given their lives over time in World War I, World War II and other missions to not only to make Canada a better place and protect Canada, but to make the world a better place, oftentimes standing up for people who otherwise would not be able to stand up for themselves in the circumstances.

One of the things that I saw at the museum was a slide show that focused on the 71 or 72 men and women who had lost their lives at that point in time. It is now 80. The slide show focused on them as individuals with their families outside of the military setting. I was captivated. I had to watch every slide as it went through. I was struck by how many of these people had young families, sometimes two, three or even more kids in these pictures shown in circumstances just like I enjoy with my family on a regular basis.

It hit home for me what these men and women were willing to give up because they believed so strongly in this mission. When we have a chance to talk to the family members of these individuals, it is interesting to hear them articulate how important the mission was and how their family members believed so strongly and would want us to continue and finish the job.

There is no question in my mind that we cannot help but be impacted by those statements. These are real people, just like the people with whom I play hockey or with whom I went to school. They chose to go into a situation where they knew that they would be putting their lives on the line. They paid the ultimate price with their lives and gave up 40 or 50 years of life with their families because they knew that Canada would be a better place for it and that in the long term it was worth it, as hard as it is for us to imagine.

I want to talk a little about the town of Beaumont in my riding, a fast-growing town of almost 10,000 people. Beaumont has not been so unfortunate to lose a member of its community in this mission but what the people of Beaumont did during last summer really touched me. They decided that they needed to reach out so they chose a member of the armed forces, Corporal Francisco Gomez, and they decided to honour him. They put a monument up in front of their town hall. They had the family come out. The community came out in droves to a ceremony honouring this man's memory because they thought that this was so important. They recognize what the men and women of our forces do to make their town a better place within our country. I want to commend them for that. Recognizing these folks is something that we as Canadians need to do more of.

The motion itself is a fairly long motion but I want to focus on a few key points. I want to focus on the first clause, which is something that we are all very familiar with here. It reads:

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...the House recognizes the important contribution and sacrifice of the Canadian Forces and Canadian civilian personnel as part of the UN mandated, NATO-led mission deployed in Afghanistan at the request of the democratically elected government of Afghanistan;

The reason I want to focus on that clause is not to remind everybody here because we are all aware of that. The reason I want to focus on that clause is because when I go door-knocking or when I hold a round table and I talk to people, there is much confusion. People do not totally understand the mission. There is a misunderstanding on the part of some that somehow we invaded Afghanistan and we need to work to clear some of that up.

• (2155)

It does not help matters when certain parties in the House, particularly the NDP, as we have heard tonight, repeatedly mischaracterize the mission. The NDP talks of polls that reinforce its stand on the mission but it selectively chooses those polls and it never really focuses on the facts. In fact, I was interested in the previous member comparing casualties, not from 2005 to 2007 or 2006 to 2007 to 2008, but from 2003 to 2008, before we were in Kandahar. It was a totally unfair comparison.

It is interesting when we hear the quote that he selectively chose to talk about when he was talking about an Afghan woman. He did not use the quote, for example, that we heard on March 5 from Fawzia Koofi, a member of parliament who said, "I think the past five years, say five to six years in Afghanistan's history, were golden years for us for many reasons. First of all, the fact that you've seen women sitting in front of you representing their country for the first time in the country's history, you have 68 very intellectual and brave women sitting in the parliament, not only symbolically but meaningfully sitting in the parliament and representing the people".

That is the story that the NDP never tells. It is also interesting that NDP members never talk about the accomplishments. Strangely, they talk about things getting worse. We have heard over and over tonight the claim that things are getting worse. There was no talk whatsoever about the facts, the fact that more than six million children, a third of them girls, are enrolled in school in 2007-08. It is more than six million compared to 700,000 in 2001. That is a relevant fact.

We never hear them talk about the fact that per capita income has doubled between 2004 and 2007, nor the fact that, when it comes to health care, 83% of Afghans now have access to basic medical care compared to 9% in 2004. When we talk about vaccinations, Canada has directly supported the vaccination of more than seven million children against polio, including approximately 350,000 in Kandahar province alone. I have another fact concerning refugees. More than five million refugees have returned since 2002, including more than 365,000 in 2007. Those are the facts but the NDP never refers to those fact, which complicates the situation from the point of people's understanding.

I would be curious to know if there are NDP members holding round tables in their communities and sharing the facts with them and then allowing them to make their decisions.

I want to refer to another part of the motion which reads:

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that Canada should continue a military presence in Kandahar beyond February 2009, to July 2011, in a manner fully consistent with the UN mandate on Afghanistan....

Then it goes on to list the components of the military mission.

The notion that we should continue this mission is shared by several people from my riding and, interestingly, I have several people of Afghan and Pakistani origin in my riding. Not all of them are in favour of the mission. Some are opposed and some are in favour but, interestingly, their position is very similar. One of the reasons most clearly articulated by the people who are opposed is that the people of Afghanistan do not actually believe we will to finish the job. They talk about the history of countries going in and not finishing the job and therefore we should not be there because they do not believe we will finish the job either.

Interestingly, the position of those from those communities who are in favour of the mission is the very same reason. They say that we need to finish the job because in the past no one else has and if we leave we will leave the country in a worse condition than it was when we arrived.

All the NDP talks about are the challenges and it blows them up to be, I believe, more than they are. Admittedly, there are significant challenges, but we are dealing with a country that is the fourth poorest in the world and one that has a newly formed democracy. It is completely unreasonable to expect that this country will be like Canada tomorrow. There are some challenges. One of my constituents used the analogy of it being like a football game and being backed up to the one yard line. He said that the goal was not to throw a touchdown pass because if we were to try we would be in trouble. We need to move the yardsticks, get out to the 11-yard line for a first down again and then move the yardsticks again.

• (2200)

**Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and ask a question of my colleague from across the way.

**An hon. member:** Who is really one of us.

**Hon. Jay Hill:** Who is always one of us, of course.

I listened with great interest to the member's obviously well-researched and good presentation. It kind of reminded me of an issue that I have been raising and putting to members of the New Democratic Party during this debate over the last couple of days, and that is this whole notion that the NDP seems to be trying to perpetuate among Canadians that somehow we can negotiate with the Taliban and maybe the path to peace, I think the NDP is calling it, will somehow arrive at some sort of a power-sharing arrangement with the Taliban.

It strikes me as extremely odd when one looks at the history of this regime. Not only does the Taliban have a distinctly different view from the existing democratically elected government in its view of the separation or, in its case, the lack of separation between mosque and state, but also on the rights of women. Basically, it believes that the rights of women are somewhere beneath that of a cow or a donkey because it believes those animals are more useful than women.

I am not quite sure how it is that a party, which seems to like to present itself as a party that protects the rights of women, would even be able to suggest that power-sharing with a regime that believes in such ideologically backward notions could be possible. I wonder if my colleague would care to comment on that.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, there is a total contradiction in the NDP approach here in Canada versus what it is advocating for in Afghanistan. It is a complete contradiction.

We know that the Taliban has been known to pull women out of school and shoot them in public for the crime of teaching. There are even stories of the Taliban killing girls as they came out of school. I would point out that if one were to talk to people who have been there, whether it is the military or people from that area, they will almost unanimously say that the notion of negotiating with the Taliban leadership is absolutely ridiculous.

I note that the leader of the NDP Party at one point talked about sending people with shovels instead of guns. I would ask the question: If we send people with shovels instead of guns, who will protect the people with the shovels?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my question is very much in keeping with the theme of my colleague who just posed a question. It occurs to me, in a very practical and fundamental way, that just as one would not be able to do community work in a major city in this country without the protection of the police, or respond to a rash of fires without a fire department, what the NDP seems to be proposing here is that somehow the social situation in Afghanistan will improve if we allow for the security to be withdrawn.

Along the same lines, if there are fires we ban the fire department. If there is a rash of crimes, gun activity and violence, we do away with the police. This is what is so completely irrational and contradictory about what the NDP is espousing.

Unlike all other socialist countries in the world, whose parties at least seem to have some moderation and connection to reality, in this country it appears that the NDP has lost its moorings completely in terms of reality.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, there is a saying that I quote often, "Those who stand for nothing fall for anything". On this issue, the NDP does not stand for anything when it comes to Afghanistan but expects that Canadians will fall for the idea that we can somehow do all of the humanitarian things and all the good work in terms of helping to raise up a government without—

• (2205)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to participate in this important debate tonight.

Nothing is more important than a vote to send Canadians to war than a vote to engage in war, and there is no more serious matter that will ever come before the House of Commons.

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The decision to send Canadians into war, to ask members of the Canadian armed forces to engage in war and risk their lives is the most serious matter that I can contemplate being asked to consider as a member of Parliament. We must ensure any mission that they are asked to undertake supports the values that Canada represents. We must ensure it is a mission that is not futile. We must ensure it is a mission that has the strong support of Canadians.

The decision to engage in armed conflict, to kill other human beings is something that I will not take lightly. I have to remind the House that this is also what we are doing in Afghanistan. We do not talk a lot about that aspect of the mission, but we are killing people with whom we disagree. Taking others lives must never be done lightly.

I worry that we have not been struggling much with this in Canadian society, that we have been protected from that ugly reality of the war in Afghanistan, that we cannot get those kinds of statistics out of the Canadian armed forces or the government. However, there are many Afghan families for whom the reality of our role in that war has hit home directly because of the death of one of their loved ones in this conflict.

I am not a pacifist, but I do struggle with pacifism and I am challenged by friends and other Canadians who are pacifists.

I remember the legacy of J.S. Woodsworth, the leader of the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation, the precursor to the NDP. At the beginning of World War II, he said the following in the debate in his opposition to the war of Canada entering the second world war:

I rejoice that it is possible to say these things in a Canadian parliament under British institutions. It would not be possible in Germany, I recognize that...and I want to maintain the very essence of our British institutions of real liberty. The only way to do it is by an appeal to the moral forces which are still resident among our people, and not by another resort to brute force.

I think those are important words for us to consider again at this time. We have to be very clear about what engaging in war really means, what the costs of that are, both the personal cost and the cost to our country as a society. It has to be a last resort, as something that must be engaged in only when all else has failed, as a direction that has to be taken for clear and definable reasons related to protecting our security. However, going to war has to be seen as an act that must ultimately be regarded as a failure in itself.

There is a role for the Canadian armed forces, that a traditional peacekeeping role is one of which Canadians have been proud, of which our armed forces have accumulated significant experience and expertise and one that does require that members of our armed forces understand and have trained for war. Sadly, I do not believe that we have that option any longer in Afghanistan now that we have committed to being a combatant in that war. However, this is something that Canada has been known for and of which Canadians are justly proud.

Doing due diligence on sending Canadians to war is the best way I, as an elected representative, can support the women and men of the Canadian armed forces. It is my job to ensure that they are only asked to risk their lives for the most important of reasons, especially when that mission is far from home and when the direct threat to Canada is harder to perceive.

We know the members of the Canadian armed forces will do as they are asked to the very best of their ability. Our job here is to ensure the justice, the feasibility of that request is clear and we have to make sure that it is clear when so much is on the line.

I am glad the government has put this motion before the House. The decision to go to war properly belongs here with the elected representatives of Canadians. I commend the current government for recognizing that. I wish the previous government had followed that path.

● (2210)

The motion before us commits Canada continuing its combat role in Afghanistan through to 2011. I do not support continuing the mission in Afghanistan. It is the wrong mission for Canada. It is a radical departure from the role that Canadians have come to expect from our armed forces, that of peacekeepers who separate combatants rather than taking sides and joining in combat. Canadians know that peacekeeping is a dangerous role and have mourned the death of many Canadians who risked their lives carrying out that task. This should be the role of our armed forces.

We should ensure a clearer understanding of that role as an aspect of public policy, not just as an assumption or understanding. We need to have that understanding more clearly enshrined in our public policy.

We should give immediate notice of our intention to withdraw and that any withdrawal should be done immediately, but should be done in a safe and secure manner.

Why are we in Afghanistan? That question is at the heart of why I believe this is the wrong mission for Canada. We have heard often that we are there because we want to ensure women's rights. We have heard that in the last hour. We have heard that we wanted to ensure that girls could attend school.

As noble as that is, I do not believe for one second that is why Canada sent troops to Afghanistan. Bad as the situation was in Afghanistan under the Taliban, and it was absolutely horrible, it is absolutely wrong to say that that is the reason why Canada is fighting a combat role there today. In any case, I do not believe that many women would want us to engage in an armed conflict to ensure women's right. If that were the case, our military would be very busy around the world and perhaps even have been busy here at home.

In fact, the situation for women and girls has not dramatically improved. A case in point, the only woman elected to the Afghan parliament from a constituency, who was not on a party list, Malali Joya, was suspended recently for her criticism of the Afghan government, hardly a shining moment for democracy in Afghanistan or a shining moment for the participation of women in that government.

We are in Afghanistan because of the fear that gripped the United States and Canada and many other countries after the events of September 11, 2001. Post-September 11 the U.S. was looking to retaliate for the horrible attacks on New York and Washington, and we got caught up in that call for retaliation.

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It is hard to see how invading Afghanistan was the appropriate response to the terrorist attacks on the U.S. Those who carried out the attacks were Saudis, for instance. How conventional warfare can defeat terrorism has never been clearly demonstrated to my satisfaction in any case.

Frankly, I worry there are other reasons too that we are in Afghanistan, reasons related to the control of oil resources and the security of their transport. I worry too that we are there to take the pressure off the United States for the difficulties of the war in Iraq, a war that most Canadians believe is an illegal war and which our government refused to participate in.

Also, the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan is internal Afghan politics, regional disputes, the ambitions of warlords, which will never be solved by western intervention, especially western military intervention. This war has only made the situation worse.

We have a choice. The choice is between continuing the war or charting a path to peace. That is what the NDP is proposing. We do not say we should just abandon Afghanistan. We do not believe we should abandon our responsibilities as members of the global community or as a country that has participated actively in this war. However, we must put all our efforts into seeing a plan for a political solution in Afghanistan.

There is considerable opinion to say that the war in Afghanistan will not be won, that the war is an approach that only creates more problems, or that situation is getting worse, not better. Who said that? Here are some of the quotes that we have heard a number of times already in this debate.

One quote is, “every time you kill an angry young man overseas, you're creating 15 more who will come after you”. Major General Andrew Leslie, former chief of the Canadian land staff, said that.

Another quote is from retired Colonel Michel Drapeau, who said, “I don't think Canada is winning the war, and this war is not winnable”.

British Captain Leo Docherty said that Afghanistan is a “textbook case of how to screw up a counter-insurgency”.

Another quote is, “the situation is deteriorating and...NATO forces risk appearing like an army of occupation.” That is from the defence minister of Belgium.

Another one is, “one should not try to bury one's head in the sand...the operation is encountering real difficulties... the situation is not improving.” The French defence minister said that.

Finally, “if...the international community cannot find a”—political solution—“...then...we have no moral right to ask our young people to expose themselves to that danger”. The United Kingdom's defence minister said that.

• (2215)

Even the Manley report has noted that the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated in the Kandahar region. It states:

By many knowledgeable accounts, security generally has deteriorated in the South and East of Afghanistan, including Kandahar province where Canadian Forces are based, through 2006 and 2007. The Taliban insurgency to some degree has regrouped during the past 18 months; the frequency of its small attacks and the numbers of civilian fatalities it has inflicted were higher in 2007 than in 2006.

The war in Afghanistan has now gone on longer than the world wars and there is no end in sight, and by any measure this war is not being a success.

We can chart a path to peace, and here in this corner of the House we believe we can do that. That is expressed in our amendment to the motion before us, wherein the NDP has called on the government:

—to begin preparations for safe withdrawal of Canadian soldiers from the combat mission in Afghanistan with no further mission extensions;

—that the government should engage in a robust diplomatic process to prepare the groundwork for a political solution under explicit UN direction and authority, engaging both regional and local stakeholders and ensuring the full respect for international human rights and humanitarian law;

that, in the opinion of the House, the government should maintain the current suspension of the transfer of Afghan detainees to Afghan authorities until substantial reforms of the prison system are undertaken;

—that the government should provide effective and transparent development assistance under civilian direction consistent with the Afghan Compact.

We need to get the control out of the hands of NATO, a military alliance, and put it back in the direct control of the United Nations. If the United Nations has a skill set, it is at dealing with regional conflicts, and there is a significant regional conflict at the heart of the war in Afghanistan. The United Nations can bring significant civilian resources to the solving of the situation in Afghanistan.

Some will say that the United Nations has authorized the NATO mission. The United Nations has essentially contracted out the war in Afghanistan to NATO and it should take back direct control of that operation.

We need to support the kind of measures outlined by Oxfam in its Continuing Peace Building in Afghanistan report. Robert Fox from Oxfam said:

Our report shows that a national strategy for community peace-building is five years overdue: with increasing levels of violence, there is no time to lose.

Oxfam points out that most efforts to build peace have been at a national level, where they have been stymied by warlords, corruption or criminality. It states:

The recent deterioration in security, particularly in the south and southeast, is evidence that the top down approaches by themselves are inadequate without parallel nationwide, peace-work at the ground level.

For the vast majority of disputes, Afghans turn to local institutions to solve them...Yet little has been done to enhance communities' capabilities to resolve problems peacefully, reduce violence and resist militant interference.

It talks about the key elements of a national community peace building strategy, which include: phased capacity building throughout the country; peace-building taught in all schools and incorporated into teacher training; awareness raising initiatives, at national and local levels; mechanisms to monitor shuras' adherence to the constitution in human rights; measures to clarify the role of informal justice in the courts.

Mr. Fox noted:

Existing measures to promote peace in Afghanistan are not succeeding, not only because of the revival of the Taliban, but also because little has been done to support families, communities and tribes—the fundamental units of Afghan society—to resolve disputes among them.

There have been serious problems with how we have conducted the war. We know the problems of prisoner transfers. We should never have transferred prisoners to Afghan authorities and should not be doing so.

We know that torture has been practised in the Afghan prison system. We have obligations under the Geneva Convention about how we deal with prisoners and we must take responsibility for their safety, security and treatment. If we are prepared to be engaged in war in Afghanistan, we should have engaged all of the responsibilities related to that engagement and our obligations to prisoners taken have not been met.

The whole question of the military delivery of development aid is one that I first raised in the previous Parliament in discussions in a take note debate on Afghanistan. We now hear that the Manley report is recommending so-called signature projects, mostly for Canadian consumption, to show how the war is going well. We know that military projects, military delivered aid, have often been to allow for more effective military operations, not necessarily to assist the civilian population.

● (2220)

Canada has traditionally not used the military to deliver aid. It has been for us a civilian exercise. We need to get back to that tradition.

I also want to mention the situation of Omar Khadr, the Canadian child who was caught up in the war in Afghanistan, a Canadian child soldier who remains the only western foreign national in the Guantanamo detention camp. We should have had him home a long time ago. We put a lie to any concern that Canada has ever expressed for child soldiers around the world and the adults who manipulate them by not having done something about his situation. It is another example of how we are not taking all aspects and complications of being at war seriously.

I do not believe that more troops will solve the problem. Where does the number of 1,000 come from? Where is the commitment from other countries to support that number? Look at the experience of the Soviet Union. There are so many parallels and it had so many more troops in Afghanistan than we do and were still unsuccessful there in a mission that looks very similar to what we purport to be doing there.

There is the question of the spending on the war. We are spending billions of dollars on the war effort. We are spending to outfit our armed forces for combat. As I have already said, I do not believe that this should be their international role and I am concerned that a peacemaking role may demand other kinds of equipment and resources. We may be tying our hands for many years to come.

We have spent over \$7 billion so far and now we learn that we have overspent this year's budget for the war by \$1 billion alone. The fiscal management of the war effort seems to have been lost. The so-called great financial managers in the current government seem to be failing and dramatically so when it comes to managing the costs of the war in Afghanistan. It is taking significant resources at a time

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when there are other significant needs here at home and around the world. The proportion of aid and development aid to military spending is all wrong in terms of this effort.

The significant problems faced by returning veterans and their families and the failure to ensure appropriate health care support and assistance is also a serious issue. We have asked these people to risk their lives and their health. There should be no questions asked when it comes to providing the best care for any veteran who served in Afghanistan. There is absolutely no excuse for this continuing to be a problem in Canada.

This is the wrong mission for Canada. Canadian and Afghan lives are being lost. Life in Afghanistan is not improving. Opium production is up. Corruption is up. Suicide attacks are up. Security has not been improved. Women are not more equal or freer. We are not winning this war and I do not believe we can win this war. We must begin in earnest the search for a political solution, the search for a path to peace.

I cannot in good conscience vote to commit to Canada's continuing participation in the war in Afghanistan. We should withdraw immediately, safely and securely. We should undertake a comprehensive peace process. We should make sure that we have an ongoing commitment to aid and development work in Afghanistan.

We should live in the hope of these familiar words, "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more".

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I hardly know where to start. I will give the NDP members marks for being consistent. They consistently do not understand peacekeeping. They consistently do not understand that we have to equip and train the military forces to do the toughest job, and that makes them capable of doing any other job. But if we equip and train them to do the lowest common denominator when they have to do something else, we will simply lose lives and not accomplish the mission. The NDP members consistently misunderstand that. They consistently misunderstand the Taliban are not out there using pruning hooks and ploughshares. They are out there using weapons, weapons against Afghans, Canadians, Americans, Brits, Australians, Kiwis, and everybody else.

The NDP members trot out anecdotal evidence as, supposedly, justification for the fact that the war is not going well and they ignore the anecdotal evidence that they get from Canadian service men and women. Do they not believe the Canadian service men and women? Would they rather believe, for example, the people from the Senlis Council who come to the defence committee and grossly mislead the defence committee deliberately? Would they rather believe people like that or the men and women in uniform who are dying for the cause of Afghan freedom, who are dying for the cause of Canadian freedom? Ultimately, it is about Canadian freedom and it is about Canadian interests.

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They talk about taking NATO out and putting in the UN. Who the heck do they think the UN is? Who do they think the UN would turn to if not the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Poland, Lithuania, and everybody else who is there? Who the heck do they think they would be replaced by except ourselves?

For crying out loud, the NDP, the new Pollyanna party, really needs to get real.

They talk about the UN solving regional conflicts. The UN has never done a very good job of solving regional conflicts.

It goes on and on. They talk about the path to peace. The path to peace is not strewn with pruning hooks and rose petals. The path to peace is there because of people like Canadians, people like Lester Pearson, who they hold out as the icon of peacekeeping, which he was. Lester Pearson was also part of a government that increased defence spending to 7% of GDP because Lester Pearson knew that we could not stare down our enemies through words of peace and love; we had to stare them down through resolve and through strength. He did that. We did that collectively with our allies, like the United States, Britain and so on.

I could go on and on, but I have one question for my hon. colleague. Is there anything in the world that members of the New Democratic Party would support taking up arms for? Is there anything at all, any cause at all? Or will they continually be, like J.S. Mills said, made and kept free by the exertions of better men, and I will add, and women, than themselves?

• (2225)

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Speaker, I wish the parliamentary secretary had listened a little more closely to what I was saying, because I did recognize very clearly in my remarks that we have to train our armed forces to prepare for war. That is a key aspect of their training.

I am a little concerned that my colleague described peacemaking activities as the lowest common denominator of military activities. I find that is quite offensive and I think most Canadians would find that quite offensive.

Many Canadians have died doing the dangerous work of peacekeeping around the world. When Canadians participate in those kinds of missions, they have literally put themselves between warring combatants to hold the peace. There is no more dangerous work than that. Lives of Canadians were lost doing that kind of work. I think it is rather offensive to call that the lowest common denominator of military work. It is not an appropriate comment.

Canada has a proud tradition of military work. There is no armed force in the world that is better at it, that has more expertise in it, than the Canadian armed forces. Most Canadians are proud of our Canadian Forces and their work in peacekeeping over the years. I hope, as I am sure most Canadians hope, that we can resume that kind of role for our armed forces internationally.

There is nothing tougher than putting oneself between people at war, between people who have decided to kill each other to solve problems that may have arisen between them. We should not be dismissive of our peacekeeping missions for one second, even in the heat of a debate on an important issue like the war in Afghanistan.

I do not believe that we are talking about anecdotal evidence. The Manley report is one of the pieces of evidence that I quoted from which indicated how badly the effort in Afghanistan is going. That is hardly anecdotal evidence for the problems of the mission in Afghanistan. Mr. Manley may have reached different conclusions than I have, but certainly the evidence that he and his team have presented is worth considering. The quote I read about how badly the mission has gone, how badly the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated in the last two years, was directly from the Manley report. I hardly think that is anecdotal evidence.

It is a reason to build a strong case for this being the wrong mission for Canada and the effort is not being successful.

• (2230)

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** The mission that we are doing, quote Manley unquote.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Speaker, I did not yell at Conservatives when they were making their interventions in this important debate tonight and I wish they would have the same respect for those of us who may disagree with them.

I look forward to the opportunity to represent our views in this discussion and the views of many other Canadians. When those members heckle or yell at me because of what I am saying, they are also heckling and yelling at many Canadians who believe what I believe and have taken similar positions and have similar concerns. It is inappropriate to engage in that kind of activity given the seriousness of this debate.

I am never going to be one who underestimates the difficulties and the challenges of pursuing a path of peace. I am never going to be one who underestimates the risk of going down that kind of path. It is a difficult one and it requires effort and risk taking and the support of people through very difficult times and very difficult processes.

To undermine and underestimate the importance of that and the difficulty of that is also a serious problem with the kind of discussion we are having here tonight. Of course—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Questions and comments. The hon. the chief government whip should know that there are 90 seconds for the question and 90 seconds for the answer. Fair is fair.

**Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, fair would be the hon. member not trying to use up all his time so he did not have to face any more questions.

I am sick and tired of the New Democratic Party being all doom and gloom and saying how badly the mission is going. Those members refuse to look at any good news. They refuse to talk about all of the good things that are happening in Afghanistan, all the freedoms that have been given as a result of people dying for them on behalf of the Afghan people. That is the big difference.

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I would like every New Democratic member to have a lesson at some point in what exactly peacekeeping is all about. Afghanistan could not possibly be a peacekeeping mission at this particular time because there is no peace to keep. The old peacekeeping situation where a force was placed between two warring nations to keep them apart is not the situation in Afghanistan. My God, do those members not even watch the news from time to time to understand that the Taliban might be the person standing beside them? It is not somebody wearing a different coloured uniform.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Speaker, it is not just us in this corner of the House that are saying that there is another path that should be pursued in Afghanistan.

Even President Karzai has said that we need to be pursuing a political solution and a peace process in Afghanistan. I am going to quote what he said on Radio Free Europe on September 29, 2007. He said:

We are ready to negotiate to bring peace [to] this country. Continuation of the war, explosions, and suicide attacks should be stopped in any way possible. There were some contacts with [Taliban] in the past. But there is no specific, clear-cut line of communication — I mean, there is no official place for communication with the Taliban. I wish there were such a place.

That is the President of Afghanistan saying that he hoped that there could be a place created now in Afghanistan for that kind of process of talks, of negotiations with, of all people, of all organizations and of all groups, the Taliban, because he understands that it is important to the future of Afghanistan.

I think that there is a lesson that we can learn from his words. If he is the ally that we have heard he is, we should understand what he has said to us and take that very seriously. We intend to do that in this corner of the House. We intend to say that the path to peace is one that we should be pursuing, that we should be putting effort into, and we are going to continue to put that idea forward.

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to stand in the House to explain the reasons for Canada's engagement in Afghanistan. It is certainly an honour to participate when we have had so many eloquent speakers, including the Minister of National Defence, the chief government whip, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence. They have eloquently spoken about Canada's role in Afghanistan.

The question we are debating today is not an easy one. I am sure all members of the House, regardless of their views on the mission, are fully conscious of the stakes.

It is about the hopes and aspirations of millions of Afghans who yearn for a better future for themselves and their families.

It is about Canada's standing as a responsible member of the international community.

It is about one of the heaviest decisions any democratic government can be asked to consider: to send its men and women in harm's way to defend global security and promote Canadian values.

If someone were to ask me, there is no issue that is more critical than the one we are contemplating today. As parliamentarians, we have the duty to ensure every option is carefully weighed and given

due consideration. That is why I welcome this opportunity and look forward to our discussions in the days ahead.

Let me begin with what we can all agree on. The international community should not let Afghanistan fall back into the chaos and despair of the Taliban rule.

I need not remind members of the House of the horror of the Taliban regime that held the reins of power in Afghanistan until 2001. It placed Afghans under a brutal regime of fear and intimidation, persecuted women and girls, destroyed schools, historical landmarks and basic infrastructure, and gave safe harbour to the terrorists who attacked our southern neighbours in September of 2001.

I think we can all agree that no one who believes in justice and human decency would condone the return of the Taliban.

There is little doubt that the important work of our soldiers, diplomats, development officials and government advisers is making a difference. Their efforts are creating the conditions that serve as a bulwark to preventing the return of the Taliban.

Canadian Forces members are providing a secure environment for reconstruction and development to take place.

Diplomats and development officials are working with local communities and organizations to find ways to improve governance, infrastructure and government services.

Police trainers and corrections advisers are on the ground helping the Afghan government develop the capacity to govern more effectively and ensure the respect of the rule of law.

Their efforts are interconnected. Canada's approach recognizes that security, development and governance are mutually reinforcing. There cannot be one without the others.

As we all know, the going has not always been easy. Considerable challenges remain in Kandahar and across Afghanistan. However, I would urge all members to carefully consider the situation that prevailed in Afghanistan prior to the fall of the Taliban.

Afghanistan had been suffering from decades of conflict. Not only was there virtually no central government to speak of but most of the country's vital infrastructure had been destroyed. Roads, wells and irrigation canals were in rubble. Basic services such as health care and education were non-existent for the vast majority of Afghans. Even today, Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world.

What must be borne in mind here is that the Afghans, figuratively speaking, are rebuilding their country from scratch. The mission is a difficult one, but it is in Afghanistan that the need is greatest.

Canadians are generous. We believe our nation has a role to play to alleviate suffering, improve living standards, and protect those who are vulnerable around the world. It has always been a Canadian motto that we are only as strong as our weakest link. Canada has demonstrated its sincere commitment to these values time and time again.

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I think of my late great uncle, Frank Tascona, who was the president of the Barrie Legion on St. Vincent and Cundles. He spoke to me about the valour and the courage that Canadians showed throughout history in standing up for what is right.

I know that a strong majority of Canadians are supportive of our development and reconstruction efforts. Yet, many harbour some misgivings about the more assertive military role our troops have been asked to play in Afghanistan. That is understandable.

If there is a common thread in the Canadian tradition, it is the premium our nation has placed on finding common ground, our willingness to exhaust all options before resorting to force.

Indeed, our reluctance to take up arms is a virtue. Yet, when the cause is just and the sacrifice necessary, Canada has always answered the call.

As the Manley report recently observed, humanitarian disasters in places like Bosnia and Rwanda have led United Nations-mandated peace missions to increasingly rely on the robust use of force to protect those who are vulnerable.

• (2235)

The drafters of the United Nations charter, having just emerged from the most devastating war of the 20th century, had envisioned such situations. That is why they included a reference in chapter 7 of the charter which states:

The Security Council may take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain, to restore international peace and security.

The ISAF mission in Afghanistan is entirely in line with the spirit of the UN charter. The fact of the matter is the NATO-led international security assistance force mission is mandated by the United Nations. Last November the UN Security Council renewed once again the ISAF mandate.

Our government does not believe that Canada should say to the people of Afghanistan, “We are willing to help you, but only if your plight fits the peacekeeping mould. If the going gets tough, I am afraid there is not much that we can do for you”. That is not the Canadian way.

Afghans have suffered through decades of conflict and poverty. With our help they are getting back on their feet. To turn our backs at this point would jeopardize much of what has been achieved up to now and would reflect poorly on Canada's willingness to see its commitment through.

There is a strong agreement in the international community that the Afghan mission is important, that it cannot be allowed to fail. We are part of this mission with 39 other nations. Many others such as Japan and India are providing much needed development assistance.

Certainly, it is in the finest traditions of multilateralism as echoed in history through Canada with Lester Pearson as he spoke loudly on the international stage about the importance of multilateralism. This is a perfect case of that.

Canada is playing a leading role in this critical international endeavour. The burden we have carried in Kandahar is a heavy one, but Afghans and the international community are thankful for Canada's commitment and determination.

Our government does not believe Canada should abandon the people of Afghanistan after February 2009. To that end we issued a revised motion on the future of Afghanistan mission on February 21.

The motion reflects the wise counsel of the Manley panel. It embraces an even wider expanse of the common ground than before. It commits our government to notify NATO that Canada will end its presence in Kandahar as of July 2011, completing redeployment from the south by December of that year.

More importantly, it acknowledges what is required for Canada's mission to succeed in Afghanistan. It states two important conditions for the mission to be extended. First, that NATO secure a battle group of approximately 1,000 to rotate into Kandahar no later than February 2009. Second, that the government secure medium helicopter lift capacity and high performance unmanned aerial vehicles.

We believe this is a reasonable compromise that addresses the important questions Canadians have about future of the mission and it will give our brave men and women the means to succeed.

As the Prime Minister stated, it is a clear and principled position. We urge all members of the House to carefully consider their vote on this issue.

It has profound implications for Canada's international reputation, for the Canadian men and women who are bravely putting their lives on the line in Afghanistan and for the millions of Afghans who are looking to us for support as they strive to rebuild their country.

I believe the choice is clear and the government has taken the correct position.

I look at my own riding in Barrie, Ontario, and it has been amazing to see some of the support that the community has shown for the mission and for our troops. I think of the red Friday rally at Fred Grant Square where it was packed and we could not even move because there was that much support for our troops and for the mission in Afghanistan.

I think of the support our troops T-shirts that were sold at the Barrie Legion by Royden Johnson, and at the Army Navy Club by Dick Howie and Neil McKinnon. The work they did in supporting our troops was remarkable.

What was even more remarkable is that those shirts sold out within days because Canadians were excited and enthused to stand up for what is right. What is right is the Canadian mission in Afghanistan. It is playing that multilateral role. It is continuing the role that Canada has always shown throughout history.

It has been a pleasure to stand in the House today to support the Canadian position in Afghanistan.

• (2240)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the presentation of the Conservative member. He talked about “the Canadian position”, but what has been very clear as Canadians have expressed their view on the mission in Afghanistan is that the most recent polling shows that 85% of Canadians believe that our mission in Afghanistan should be ending within the year.



*Government Orders*

Therefore, “the Canadian position”, as expressed by Canadians from coast to coast to coast, is in line with the NDP position. It is not in line with the Conservative government position, so the member cannot say it is the Canadian position. It is the position of the Conservative government to stay in Afghanistan regardless of what is actually happening on the ground there.

That was the point I wanted to make, but the questions I would like to ask are the following.

The member has heard evidence tonight of the \$18 billion that has gone mainly into the back pockets of the warlords and drug lords in the Afghani government. He has heard evidence as well from Malalai Joya, a member of Parliament who has been muzzled in the Afghani parliament, but who has said that after six years in control the government has proven itself to be as bad as the Taliban and in fact is little more than a photocopy of the Taliban.

The situation in Afghanistan is getting progressively worse, not just for women but for all Afghans. In fact, she says that in 2007 in Afghanistan more women killed themselves than ever before. It shows that the situation has not improved.

The government members tonight basically have had two lines. One is that we have to continue because that is our position, regardless of what is actually happening on the ground. Second, they have said that the situation of the women in Afghanistan is something that concerns them. Yet the facts that the Afghani government has not improved the situation of women in Afghanistan at all, that most marriages are still forced, and that rape and murder are commonplace in Afghani government-controlled areas do not seem to have any impact on Conservative members.

My question is quite simple. Why do members of the Conservative Party simply refuse to criticize the Afghani government at any point for the widespread violations of human rights, for the abuse of women and for the widespread corruption in Afghanistan?

• (2245)

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, certainly it is difficult to comment on anecdotal evidence that is based more on myth than reality, but I would say that if there is one reason alone to be in Afghanistan, we simply have to look at the fact that when the Taliban ruled the day females were not allowed to vote, let alone sit in parliament, and that is happening today in Afghanistan.

I would like to point to more reasons why I think a lot of Canadians are very proud of the mission. I will give some examples of why we are so proud.

Close to six million children, one-third of them girls, enrolled in school in 2007-08.

The per capita income doubled between 2004 and 2007.

How about the fact that 83% of Afghans now have access to basic medical care? It was 9% in 2004.

These are not anecdotal points. These are facts about the success in Afghanistan.

How about the fact that Canadians directly support the vaccination of more than seven million children against polio, including approximately 350,000 in Kandahar province?

Another fact, not an anecdotal point based on myth or rumour, is that more than 10 million Afghans registered to vote in free and fair elections, and 347 women were candidates.

It is a testament to the accomplishment of what has happened in Afghanistan. We are seeing a country rebuilding from scratch. It is a country that was in a very weak position when the Taliban ruled the day with a heavy hand and with such depravity that it allowed that country to harbour terrorists.

I could not imagine a political party supporting that status quo. It is certainly an honour to support the position of the Minister of National Defence, this government and our Prime Minister, which is that Canada has a role to play in Afghanistan in the multilateral way in which we are doing it.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a letter that I would like to put on the record and then I would like the hon. member's comments. I would like to have those who are listening understand that terror does not have any borders.

The letter talks about Afghan pleas for Canadian help. It is from Dr. Bashir Ahmad, a medical intern from Herat University in Afghanistan. He states:

Afghanistan is my home. And it's a bitter reality to me, but we need external assistance to keep our country peaceful. People here are worried about rumours that international forces are planning to leave Afghanistan. If international forces leave, the future for us Afghans will go as well. There is hope in Afghanistan, but this hope depends on how strong the international commitment is. The involvement of the international community, including Canada, means more peace and security here.

Will the rest of the world be safe if Afghanistan is left in the hands of destructive forces? Our enemies do not recognize borders; if they win in Afghanistan, they will turn it into a base to attack the rest of the world. So continued international commitment in Afghanistan is something that must be done for the sake of a more secure and peaceful world.

I would like the member to comment.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, that letter eloquently read by my colleague from Blackstrap certainly speaks to the reason why we need to be in Afghanistan.

It is the Afghan people who are calling for help. It is Afghanistan that we are listening to. It is that country that is in need and looking to the world for leadership. Canada has answered that call, along with 39 other countries, and we have said that we have a role to play in standing up for what is right. I think it is certainly appropriate for the member for Blackstrap to read that letter for us.

It is also interesting to note that as we discuss Afghanistan here today, and when I look at this chamber, there are Conservative members who are eager to participate and express support for this. Hopefully we will see those who object to the mission showing up as well.

*Government Orders*

• (2250)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, this Thursday evening, parliamentarians will decide whether or not Canadian Forces will remain in Afghanistan beyond 2009 and, if they do, what will be their role. The premises for this decision are many and are included in the preamble to the motion.

Originally, Canada signed up for the UN mandated and NATO-led mission. In 2002, it joined the international coalition fighting the Taliban following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; in 2003, it provided 2,000 soldiers to manage ISAF; in 2005, it assumed responsibility for the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar province; from February 2006 to 2007, it deployed a combat group of 1,200 soldiers in Kandahar and, subsequently, following the signing of the Afghanistan compact, there was the prospect of a more comprehensive strategy known as the three Ds.

There is a great deal of scepticism about whether we will leave the Afghans with a country that has better government, is no longer at war and is safer after helping them to rebuild. Parliamentarians must decide if Canada is to remain in Afghanistan beyond 2009 in order to help that country to determine its own future. We must decide if we believe that training Afghan troops, providing assistance for a true reconstruction effort and helping establish governance will give Afghans their own nation.

The House is preparing to authorize the extension of the mission in Afghanistan until 2011. This extension will have conditions that could significantly alter the mission after 2009. If these conditions are of paramount importance to the citizens who elected us, they are of even greater importance to the military personnel and civilians working in the Kandahar region, among others.

These conditions are crucial because they will refocus the mission by accelerating training of the Afghan army and ensuring that we address the major development difficulties faced by Afghanistan rather than focus on a counter-insurgency mission.

Let us be clear: after 2009, the mission can no longer be about hunting the Taliban. Obviously there may be some combat. How can that be avoided without leaving innocent people to die? The military mission will focus above all on training soldiers and protecting civilians who are risking their lives to rebuild the country.

The soldiers in Kandahar are carrying out a difficult but unfortunately essential task. When we talk about securing a region, we are talking about a combat mission. It is a matter of neutralizing the Taliban because they will continue to attack the regions the Canadian Forces are responsible for in Kandahar province through guerrilla and suicide attacks.

The Canadian Forces are there to protect Afghan civilians. However, the dynamic of the mission has to change because this strategy no longer works for the long term. We know that the Taliban are hiding and training in Pakistan. We also know that they are being financed through opium revenues and that NATO's strategy in this regard is counter-productive. We know that the Taliban have to lose these strategic advantages and be seen for what they are by the Afghan people, in other words the worst possible alternative.

For this change to be successful, the Afghan army has to be able to protect citizens, and the economic and security conditions truly need to be improved. Those are the objectives the mission must achieve. We have to give combat soldiers, and civilians involved in reconstruction the economic and diplomatic means to bring about this change. They need a little more time to carry out their mission with the necessary success we are hoping for.

I would like to provide some background to help people better understand Canada's presence in Afghanistan and the means used so far for rebuilding a viable Afghanistan. First, Afghanistan is not Iraq. This distinction is important. This means that we are in Afghanistan in accordance with international law.

• (2255)

Article 5 of the NATO treaty authorizes a country attacked on its own soil, as the United States was on September 11, 2001, to request help from other NATO members.

Operation Enduring Freedom, which removed the Taliban from power, was legitimate from an international law point of view, and few opposed it. However, overthrowing the Taliban did not bring instant lasting peace to the Afghan people.

Soldiers were sent to bring peace to the country. As we all know, traditionally, the blue berets, under the UN, were deployed to separate parties in conflict. This type of operation worked during the cold war.

Today, conflicts are resulting in more and more civilian deaths. These are transnational conflicts, civil wars, not conflicts fought by armies.

Afghanistan is a little different from other countries to which Canada has sent troops, because in this case, coalition forces overthrew a government that supported terrorism and trampled human rights.

However, recent peacekeeping operations have shown the limits and shortcomings of this kind of operation in civil war zones. Interposition forces failed in Bosnia, where the UN was unable to prevent Srebrenica and so many other massacres. The blue berets failed so badly in Somalia that soldiers themselves were traumatized. The blue berets also failed in Rwanda, where General Dallaire could not prevent the genocide because his hands were tied by his restricted mandate. These examples show that traditional peacekeeping does not work in these kinds of situations.

Does that mean we should turn a blind eye to people who are in difficult situations? Do wealthy countries have a responsibility to help oppressed peoples?

Regardless of skepticism about a mission that was initiated by an American administration that is, it must be said, unpopular with most Canadians and Quebecers, the Afghan people need security.

Given the current state of the country, we have to admit that only an appropriate military presence supporting reconstruction efforts will result in real opportunities for success. The success of this mission is paramount. Failure would be extremely bad for NATO and for the credibility of other commitments we make to help people in difficult situations.

*Government Orders*

Nobody wants to see another Rwanda. To avoid potential tragedies, we need strong diplomatic action combined with the use of force to protect citizens. Moreover, it is the threat of force, the very possibility of it, that will prevent the kind of abuse that governments or military leaders might perpetrate against civilians.

Although this mission is important, the information we receive about this country, including the Manley report, indicates that the situation is very difficult and that the priorities are not well defined.

The motion we will be voting on sets conditions for the House to agree to extend the mission. Since we know that the solution is not strictly military, we need to redirect the mission towards rebuilding and solving correctional, legal and economic problems. We must play our diplomatic role to resolve regional problems. The Government of Canada must be completely transparent in order to keep the public and parliamentarians informed about the mission.

We must certainly not hand the Conservatives a blank cheque. On the contrary, we must ensure that they follow through on their commitments, as laid out in the motion, and for which they will be held accountable.

Although I am skeptical, as are many of my colleagues, I think we must consider the security needs of the Afghan people, our international obligations, our commitments and the hope to one day see the dictators of this world dethroned, because oppressed people will be able to trust in an international brotherhood that will not let its fellow brothers suffer with impunity.

Everyone will understand that I am in favour of this motion. Even if I am not able to be here on Thursday for reasons beyond my control, to be with my mother, who is gravely ill, I wanted my constituents to know that I am in favour of this motion. I am accountable to them; they have a right to know the reasoning behind my vote.

• (2300)

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** I listened carefully to my hon. colleague. *[English]*

I do thank my hon. colleague for her comments, and offer my condolences on the upcoming session with her mother.

I do appreciate my colleague's dedication to the debate, to come out late at night and speak her piece. That is commendable. She is obviously a very strong, independent woman and I know she appreciates the value of women's rights and freedoms in a country like Afghanistan and in a country like Canada.

I agree with her that it is not just a military solution. No one has ever said that. It will be a whole-of-government solution, as we have said all along. I appreciate her appreciation of the military element of that.

The question I have goes along with the political side. We talk about the Taliban having a free haven in areas of Pakistan. In the recent elections in the northwest territorial province, the ANP Party recently ousted the Taliban-friendly party. I am wondering if she has a comment on what effect that might have in making it a little less easy for the Taliban to regroup back in Pakistan.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Louise Thibault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question and his comments.

We must not fool ourselves. Personally, I read a great deal before making a decision, as I always do. I like to get to the bottom of things, and I am sure most of my hon. colleagues do the same. Where the Taliban come from and where they can hide in complete security is a real problem. From time to time, we read in the newspapers that Pakistani authorities have announced that they have discovered a second, third or fourth right-hand man of a leader. Soon it will be the sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

Unfortunately, I must say, I take this with a grain of salt, because I think that every effort necessary to really help a country like Afghanistan must be made. As everyone knows, this all goes back to the Middle Ages. A tremendous amount of work needs to be done and it should not be taken for granted that any progress will be made quickly. I think work needs to be done, but the most important thing is to make sure that the Afghan people and their government find a way over the years, through governance, to ensure that everything is done as democratically as possible and to create a regime that works for them and includes respect for human rights. Clearly, we must trust them and they must trust each other. One would certainly hope this can happen, because we really must withdraw from that country by 2011.

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like the member for Edmonton Centre, I would like to congratulate my colleague and thank her for her participation as an independent member.

I completely agree with the comments she has made in the House of Commons. She obviously has a good understanding of the situation and of Canada's reasons for participating in this international mission. It is also clear that she understands the contribution that Canada and other countries are making to this NATO and UN mission, as well as the collaboration that goes on to improve the quality of life of the Afghan people.

I would like to ask her a specific question. Does she think it is possible to have more development or to make an effort to improve human rights without security? Is that possible? My question is simple. Does she think there is a real link between the efforts of the military forces on the ground in Afghanistan, the efforts to increase development and the efforts to rebuild Afghanistan?

I think it is impossible to do all those things without security.

• (2305)

**Ms. Louise Thibault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his question.

I believe I mentioned that. When the minister rereads my speech tomorrow, he will see that I recognize that there has to be security. Security will be provided by the military. Our soldiers will not take off all their gear and go to work on reconstruction projects as civilians. I believe that everyone recognizes that if we are in Afghanistan, we are going to have to provide security. This is very clear to me, and the minister knows that better than anyone.

*Government Orders*

It is extremely important that we abide by this motion and provide assistance for development and better governance. I mentioned various points. We must help the Afghan people rebuild and get their country back. I do not mean that they do not have a country. They have been there for centuries. It is very important that we help them, but it is the Afghan people who will make the decisions, with NGOs and various countries that provide assistance. They must decide how they are going to rebuild with our help.

It is very important for us that the minister and his colleagues report to us and tell us, for example, how the money is being spent. I have heard a lot of criticism this week. People have asked: how many roads are there? How many schools are there? It is the government's duty to provide figures. It can keep sensitive defence matters to itself, but there are things we should know about and the public should know about, for example: we are making progress here; this is what we are doing there; this is how far we have come. And we need the whole truth. In my opinion, it is essential to tell people these things as a way of earning their trust.

This morning when I was reading the newspaper, I was dumbfounded to see that two days before the vote, suddenly they were talking about the budget. Who provided them with the documents? Who made sure this was disclosed to undermine, yet again, our vote, our motion and our participation? There are extraordinary things that happen at opportune moments when it comes to information.

To come back to the minister's question, we have to make sure that people are protected if we want them to make progress. That goes without saying. We also have to remember in the future when there are similar conflicts—and we hope there will not be—that we will have this same mentality, this same desire to help and that we have to stay the course and not get involved simply for various ideological reasons.

• (2310)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the question I have concerns making peace with the Taliban in order to make peace in Afghanistan. This has been raised by the members of the NDP who believe that somehow we should engage the Taliban, bring them to the table, that is where the disconnect is, and that the international security of assistance forces should be brought in to speak to the Taliban.

Does the member believe, as I think many of us believe, that would almost be impossible? I wonder if she has any comment on that.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Thibault:** Mr. Speaker, in short, I would say that even if it is very difficult and even if we are unlikely to succeed, I think we must at least try. As is the case for any group with individuals who are relatively or very extremist, there may be one or two whose views are closer to our own. That may well be. We should at least explore that possibility.

[*English*]

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to enter into this historic debate on behalf of my constituents in Calgary Southeast.

Tonight and yesterday, certain members of this place have questioned why Canadian troops, aid workers and diplomats are in Afghanistan. I would like to begin by offering 23 reasons. These are the names of the Canadians who were killed by terrorists in attacks planned from Afghanistan on September 11, 2001:

Michael Arczynski, a 45-year-old Canadian from Montreal; Garnet Bailey, a 53-year-old Canadian from Lloydminster, Saskatchewan who was aboard flight 175; David Barkway, a 34-year-old from Toronto; Ken Basnicki, a 47-year-old father from Toronto and many members of this House, myself included, know and are friends of his surviving wife, Maureen; Joseph Collison of Toronto; Cynthia Connolly of Montreal; Arron Dack, a 39-year-old Canadian from Toronto survived by his wife and two children; Michael Egan and his sister, Christine Egan who was visiting him from Winnipeg in the twin towers when they were struck; Albert William Elmarry, a Canadian of Egyptian origin, 30 years old from Toronto, who had recently married and was expecting his first child; Meredith Ewart and Peter Feidelberg, ages 29 and 34 respectively, a married couple who worked together on the 105th floor of the World Trade Center; Alexander Filipov, born in Regina, he is survived by three sons and his wife; Ralph Gerhardt, a 34-year-old Canadian from Toronto; Stuart Lee, a 31-year-old Canadian of Korean origin recently married; Mark Ludvigsen, a 32-year-old Canadian from New Brunswick; Bernard Mascarenhas from Newmarket, Ontario, survived by his wife Raynette, his son Sven, and his daughter Jaelyn; Colin McArthur of Montreal; Michel Pelletier survived by his three-month-old son and his two-year-old daughter; Donald Robson of Toronto; Roy Santos of British Columbia, a Canadian of Filipino origin; Vladimir Tomasevic, a 36-year-old Canadian of Croatian origin; Chantal Vincelli, a 38-year-old Canadian; and Deborah Lynn Williams, a 35-year-old Canadian young mother from Montreal.

These were the 23 Canadians that we know of whose lives were brutally and cowardly taken by vicious fanatics on September 11, 2001. I did not and cannot possibly include the many dozens of others who were murdered that day who had close affiliations with Canada; the spouses of Canadians, the sons and daughters of Canadians who may not have had citizenship, those with close connections to this country among the more than 2,000 human beings from all corners of the world, of all faiths, dozens of citizenships, who were massacred that day.

I begin with this precisely because it is too easy for us, particularly some of my friends in the New Democratic Party and Bloc Québécois to lose sight of the fundamental reasons why we are there.

We speak, as I will, of the importance of reconstruction, of defending basic rights, of women's rights, of children's rights, of creating security so that human and economic development may happen. But we need to go back from time to time and remind ourselves what it is that provoked the United Nations to authorize the use of force in Afghanistan.

*Government Orders*

• (2315)

Let there be no doubt. Of course, there might be some in this House who share some of the views of the so-called 9/11 truthers and the conspiracy theorists. Sometimes, if we listen really carefully, we tend to hear a little of that coming from some of my colleagues in the NDP. But let us recall that these 23 Canadians were massacred as a result of attacks that were planned over a series of years deliberately, viciously and cold-bloodedly by a network of terrorists whose principal leader was and is Osama bin Laden. These attacks were planned in the failed state of Afghanistan during the leadership of the Taliban regime, which not only tolerated the presence of Osama bin Laden and the network that planned and executed these murders of Canadians, but welcomed him and welcomed the money that came with him. They welcomed him because they saw in Osama bin Laden, what was known in Afghanistan at the time as an Arab Taliban fellow traveller with a common cause.

There is so much noise around this debate that we need to remember a few basic facts. I do not think we should listen to the conspiracy theorists of the loony left. We need to understand the motivations of Osama bin Laden and his Taliban hosts in Afghanistan in planning and executing these murders of Canadians and others. We simply need to listen to his own words, and those of Ayman al-Zawahiri, and the other leadership of al-Qaeda and their affiliated networks.

**Hon. Peter MacKay:** Mullah Omar.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mullah Omar, the still wanted former leader of the Taliban regime. What they explicitly and repeatedly have called for is the creation of a worldwide caliphate essentially based on eighth century principles, as seen through an extreme, brutal and violent form of Wahhabi Salafist militant jihadi Islam.

Let me make a distinction here. As the secretary of state responsible for multiculturalism in our cultural communities, I believe that the vast majority of Canadians, virtually all Canadians, are able to make a distinction between the vast majority of Canadian Muslims and those who observe Islam throughout the world, and the small extreme fringe who seek to pervert Islam to advance their own violent ideology.

The point is this. The critics of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, under the auspices of the United Nations in a coalition of some 36 other nations, would have us believe that we are there as hostile belligerents in some kind of a civil war context, and that our enemy seems to be a somewhat legitimate expression of Pashtun nationalism, and that if we could only sit down and understand the tribal aspirations and the competing nationalisms, we could all sit around and work things out. This is a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the struggle.

Those whom our troops and others under the auspices of ISAF are confronting in Afghanistan do not seek peace. They seek out conflict. They do not regard peace as a virtue. They do not regard the cessation of hostilities as an objective. Their objective is the construction of a worldwide caliphate, and for their purposes, they would like that to begin again in Afghanistan.

We need to understand the mentality by listening to their own words. The man who is most responsible for the planning of these

attacks against Canadians and others from Afghanistan, Sheikh Osama bin Laden, I think on three separate occasions, has explicitly identified Canada as one of his principal enemies.

• (2320)

This country and the good peaceful people of Canada did nothing to offend Sheikh bin Laden, Mullah Omar, or their like-minded allies.

The 23 Canadians who went to work, or went to visit family, or boarded flights that day, September 11, 2001, they were not enemies of any religion, of any people, of any country, of any nationality, of Pashtun nationalism, or of Islam in Afghanistan. They were peaceful loving mothers, fathers, husbands and wives who simply were trying to go about their business.

The same is true of the aid workers and diplomats who put their lives on the line every single day in Afghanistan for Canada and other countries across the world. They are not seeking out conflict. They are risking their lives to help save the lives of others, to ensure that Afghanistan does not yet again become a failed state where these sorts of attacks can once more be planned. The people who seek to drag Afghanistan back into the eighth century, back into the metaphorical dark ages, do not seek peace.

One of the things that most infuriates me in this debate is when I hear particularly members of the NDP refer to the strategy of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan as being characterized as “seek and destroy”, and that we must stop the “seek and destroy” nature of the military mission in Afghanistan. That is an obscenity.

Our troops are not there to destroy anyone. They are there to protect innocent people. Yes, occasionally that does require the use of force, but as often as not our troops in Afghanistan who have been the victims of casualties were not even engaged in active offensive posture combat. They were delivering aid. They were the troops who were delivering notebooks and pencils to Afghan children in a village when a suicide bomber arrived. They were people like Lieutenant Trevor Greene, now Captain Trevor Greene who was struck on the back of the neck at a sit-down shura meeting with tribal elders in March 2006.

Captain Green was not engaged in a seek and destroy mission. He was engaged in precisely the kind of peacekeeping that the NDP exhorts ought to be the centre of our mission in Afghanistan. He was sitting down in a small tribal shura in a village in rural Kandahar. As a sign of respect to the village elders, he removed, at the risk of his own life, his helmet. That is a metaphor for the role of Canada in Afghanistan. It did not stop some fanatic who seeks violence and not peace from striking Captain Greene on the head in an effort to kill him because he was an infidel, because he represented an effort to move the people of Afghanistan to a condition of basic respect for human rights and human dignity.

*Government Orders*

After the attacks that I have spoken about, after these 23 Canadians and thousands of others were killed, the United Nations took action. In fact, on the next day, September 12, 2001, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1368, which expressed the readiness of the United Nations to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks and to combat all forms of terrorism in accordance with its responsibilities under the charter of the United Nations.

Subsequent to that, the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 1373 and resolution 1386, all of them under Chapter VII of the UN charter, authorizing the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force to assist the Afghan interim authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and the surrounding areas, et cetera, and the renewal of those authorities in resolutions 1413, 1444, 1510, 1563, 1623, 1659, 1707, 1746, and resolution 1707 most recently.

• (2325)

Why do I mention those specifically? Because again and again we hear the repetition from the NDP and friends of theirs in the loony left that this is some kind of a hostile, unilateral “invasion of Afghanistan”, without multilateral authorization.

[*Translation*]

Let us not forget that what the NDP and the Bloc Québécois are really trying to do is get Canada to withdraw unilaterally from a multilateral mission. These two parties and many other observers say that Canada should end its participation in a UN-mandated multilateral mission.

[*English*]

Either we believe in multilateralism and walk the talk or we do not, but let us be clear. The position of some in this House is that Canada should withdraw itself, and I think permanently damage its credibility in the councils of nations of the world, by saying that we are no longer a reliable partner in multilateral security and peacemaking.

It is not only the UN Security Council. As members know, of course, we are there at the invitation of the democratically elected government of Afghanistan. The six brave women members of the Afghan parliament who joined us here in Ottawa last week reminded us that we are there at not just the invitation but the exhortation of the citizens of Afghanistan, particularly its women.

Former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan said that the ISAF mission in Afghanistan is “the single most important international security mission in the world today”.

Ban Ki-moon, the current Secretary-General of the United Nations, said in a recent op-ed:

Almost more dismaying is the response of some outside Afghanistan, who react by calling for a disengagement or the full withdrawal of international forces. This would be a misjudgment of historic proportions, the repetition of a mistake that has already had terrible consequences.

He went on:

Our collective success depends on the continuing presence of the International Security Assistance Force, commanded by NATO and helping local governments in nearly every province to maintain security and carry out reconstruction projects.

Finally, he said:

The Afghan government has far to go before it regains control of its own destiny, but that day will come. It is hard work. There is little glory. It requires sacrifices. And that is why we are there.

This is not a member of this government speaking. This is not a member of the Canadian Forces speaking. This is the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I would like to ask certain members of this House, who pretend to be champions of multilateralism, how they can possibly look at themselves in the mirror when they want Canada, for all practical purposes, to withdraw from what the United Nations Security Council and Secretary-General have said are the sine qua non of international security. The credibility of the United Nations will fall or stand by the success or failure of the mission in Afghanistan.

Let us be clear. The entire concept of multilateral cooperation in international security is being put to the test every day in Afghanistan.

If we pull out, not only will we be abandoning the women and children of Afghanistan to the tender mercies of the Taliban, not only will we be giving a moral and practical victory to those violent extremists who seek to impose a vicious theocracy on many parts of the world, and not only will we be doing a dishonour to the memory of those Canadians whose lives were taken by those attacks planned on 9/11, but we would be saying that Canada has lost faith in the United Nations and multilateralism as a basis for solving international security challenges.

In closing, I implore all members of this House and Canadians who value Canada's role in the world and believe that we owe it to these 23 Canadians to stand proud with our men and women, our diplomats, our aid workers and our forces, to let them finish the job.

• (2330)

**Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk for a minute about the importance of this debate and then get my colleague's comments on it.

First, I have to say that I truly enjoyed his remarks. I wish more people could be present to hear them.

It was a little less than 18 years ago that I was in the gallery. I was in uniform at the time. I was here planning a potential deployment of CF-18s to “Gulf War I”, a deployment which eventually took place and liberated the people of Kuwait.

The debate that night, which was a little earlier than this one, was on whether Canada should participate in that mission. It was enlightening for me to sit in the gallery and listen to the debate. The House was certainly not full, but there were quite a number of people present from all parties. There was lively debate back and forth.

It was quite interesting for me as a military member and a Canadian to listen to the debate. The value of these kinds of things and those kinds of events in this place really struck me, never thinking for a minute in my wildest dreams that I would actually be here 18 years later participating in the same thing.

*Government Orders*

I would like to ask my hon. colleague about the importance of debates like this as an expression of democracy and a commitment that this Prime Minister and this government made to allow parliamentarians from all parties to participate in hours and hours of debate on this very important question before Canada, the most important question that Canada has had to answer in a very long time.

I would like my hon. colleague's thoughts on the importance of the debate and the importance of all party participation in this event.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, that question could not have come from a better member, because I think that particular member walks the talk. Not only did he walk the talk by proudly wearing the uniform of this country for most of his adult life and then seeking to serve his country in this Parliament, but he has walked the talk in these debates by sitting through every single hour of the current debate, some 30 hours, and all of those that preceded it in this Parliament. He deserves credit.

The member for Edmonton Centre is an example of how parliamentarians should discharge their duty with dignity. Our troops both here and abroad who may be following this debate will see in him the encouraging sign of a responsible parliamentarian.

He raises a very sound point. I am glad to see that we apparently have the basis of a consensus between the government and the official opposition on the motion, which follows the principal recommendations of the Manley commission, but I was discouraged, even through the course of this debate, to hear members of the Liberal Party criticizing this government for supposedly not having had sufficiently robust consultation, parliamentary debate, information and transparency. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Sometimes the Prime Minister is accused of centralizing things and for reserving all decisions as executive powers and so forth. However, this is the first Prime Minister, and members may correct me if I am wrong, since the second world war who has taken the historically exclusive power of the executive in matters of war and peace and has offered to be bound by a decision of the House of Commons. This is an historic debate leading to an historic vote that we did not, quite frankly, necessarily have to have.

Let us not forget that the official opposition, when it was in government, committed to the Kandahar mission, and committed before that to ISAF and the whole UN process in Afghanistan, without a vote in this place. This will be the second vote on this matter, and both of those votes will have occurred under this government, this most recent after some 30 hours of debate.

My colleague, the Minister of National Defence, tells me that he and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and colleagues have appeared some 14 times—

• (2335)

**Hon. Peter MacKay:** Seventeen.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Seventeen times before standing committees of the House to discuss these issues.

Our government has had how many technical briefings?

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Fifteen.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** It has had 15 technical briefings on this matter of our mission in Afghanistan. We have done everything we can to help try to inform the public debate, most notably by the Prime Minister's appointment of the Manley commission and entrusting it to the former deputy leader of our principal political opposition.

There obviously is room for disagreement about this, which is precisely why we are having the debate, but it is completely not factual to suggest, as some have, that this government has not been willing to listen to and in fact be bound ultimately by the opinions of parliamentarians as the representatives of Canadians.

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity, for a very articulate and informed contribution to this important debate. I could not agree with him more and I would associate myself with the glowing comments that he made about the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

I want to go back to one of the important elements that he spoke of and that is the human impact and the human face of the issues that we are discussing here, the impact that it has on Canada and the impact that this debate and Canada's participation continues to have on the people of Afghanistan.

My colleague referenced the important memory of the 23 Canadians who lost their lives and the many others who were affected. He referenced as well the appearance here just last week of six courageous female Afghan members of Parliament. It was an unthinkable occurrence just a few years ago that women could be democratically elected, let alone even vote in that country. Yet, here they were, proudly representing their country, making representations to the Canadian people which could be summed up in one word: help. They wanted the continued assistance of the Canadian people so they could in turn continue to provide inspiration, hope and help to their people.

I have a simple question. I would ask my friend to elucidate further, for those tuned in to this debate, as to the actual human assistance and impact being imparted to Afghanistan and what that does for the children, the women and the men of Afghanistan, in empowering them with the ability to do more, to build their own country and to put their children and their children's children in a better place.

Canadians need to understand how much we have contributed to the building of a country to give it some of the very same rights and privileges that we enjoy in this country.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the defence minister for his tremendous leadership on this historic matter.

*Government Orders*

I, too, was moved when I met the six women Afghan parliamentarians last week because it reminded me and, I think, all of us who had that opportunity, that we take so easily for granted our privileges and our rights. We go about this tremendous vocation of representing the people of this country without really giving it a second thought. Just the presence of these women reminded us that every day they literally risk their lives. If any member of the Taliban could get their hands on them, these women would be dragged away and God only knows what kind of violence would be inflicted upon them.

My colleagues throughout the debate have covered all the statistics about the millions of girls in school and the small businesses that Canadian aid has helped to develop for Afghan women and the fact that 38% of the Afghan parliament consists of women. We should at least know the statistics by now.

However, as a point of comparison, I want to reference this. Before the liberation of Afghanistan in 2001, we occasionally would see grainy videos from Afghanistan broadcast in the western world. We would see women getting rounded up, brought in to the soccer stadium at Kabul and shot in the back of the head or stoned. Members of the Bloc and NDP rightly stood up and asked what we were doing to stop this.

If we did what those members wanted and pulled out of Afghanistan, believe me when I say that hundreds more women like those would be dragged back into the soccer stadiums and public spaces of Afghanistan and brutally executed, stoned to death, half buried or shot in the back of the neck for the crime of walking down the street without covering their face or without a male escort or for having spoken up and fought for the rights of Afghan women.

I predict that if we and the ISAF nations were to pull out of Afghanistan and those atrocities happened again to these Afghan women, we would be hearing from the same voices in the NDP and the Bloc asking us what we were doing to stop it and to defend the women of Afghanistan.

We are there right now defending these women and ensuring they do not get dragged back into the kind of violence that they once did not so many years ago.

● (2340)

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened earlier this evening to some of the comments of fellow colleagues in this chamber. It is important for people back home to realize that one of the most fundamental questions we always ask on an endeavour like this is, why are we there?

I would boil it down to this. My colleague identified Afghanistan as having been a rogue state. Our purpose in many respects is to bring order to what was chaos. That is as simple an equation as I can boil this down to. I think it has tremendous value.

It is worthwhile for some of the people in this place, and those watching at home, to think of what prompted us to get into this.

I remember being phoned early on the morning of September 11. I watched the planes crash into the towers and the towers collapse. I personally had a friend who was working in downtown New York, and he still does, as an investment banker. He told me the story of

walking north from those buildings, as the smoke poured out of them and as the emergency vehicles rushed in. He watched as people jumped from the upper stories of the World Trade Center. He used his shirt, his tie and various items of clothing to cover his mouth so he did not breathe in as much of the soot and the dust as what would have normally happened had he not shielded his lungs.

I was in New York one month after the towers collapsed. For the folks back home in Calgary, I want to paint this picture, and for members here I hope it will provide some sense of gravity of the situation.

We have the Petro-Canada tower in downtown Calgary. It was built when the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau nationalized Petrofina, and it is not necessarily a loved institution in our city. Nonetheless, each tower of the two complexes of the World Trade Center was twice as wide and twice as tall as the Petro-Canada tower. Each of those towers therefore represented eight times the mass of the Petro-Canada tower. When those two buildings came down, that was 16 times the size of the Petro-Canada tower.

When I was there a month later, three blocks away from the epicentre of that destruction was police tape, and nobody but emergency workers were allowed to walk in that space. Then another two blocks beyond that, for a total of five blocks, no motorized vehicles were allowed. Therefore, an area of 10 blocks, 5 blocks each side all the way around, 10 blocks by 10 blocks, 100 square city blocks, was taken out and immobilized as a result of those towers collapsing.

It was not just those two towers. All the buildings surrounding them were heavily damaged or fully collapsed as a result of the debris that came down. Every street in every direction for as far as the eye could see, nose to nose, was lined with nothing but containers, massive dumpsters, the types of things we would imagine being loaded on the barge of a ship. The containers were full of nothing but debris. I do not know whether the debris was parts of buildings, or paper, or people.

● (2345)

In my city, that would represent an area in downtown Calgary from the Bow River, north of the city, right down to the railway tracks in the south, to the Beltline, and from basically the car dealerships in the west, right out to the East Village and Inglewood in the east. It would be the entirety of downtown Calgary that literally was immobilized and rendered useless as a result of the collapse of those towers.

I went there both a month afterward and two months afterward. When I stood three blocks away from that epicentre a month after that incident occurred, I stood there and I watched as the steam was still venting from the epicentre. That of course made sense because New York, being the highly civilized place that it is, with all the traffic and the people and the transit cars and the subway system, and everything else that is involved was built into the granite block that is Manhattan, and there were countless electrical and natural gas and other mains operating underneath the World Trade Center. There were fires still at 1000°C burning underground causing that venting and steam. That was still the case two months later when I visited. It was less, but it was still there in evidence.



*Government Orders*

So that, in a sense, boils down one kernel to why it was crucial for us to step in. We could not allow something like that to happen again without making our best possible effort to stem it.

Since that time, I have had the honour of having people come to visit my office who have personally lost loved ones as a result of these terrorist attacks.

I know that Senator Tkachuk, in the other place, has a bill that he is putting forward on this very issue.

I had a lady sit in my office here in the East Block on Parliament Hill. She wants us to change, in a sense, the justice system to allow her and others like her to pursue civil actions against terrorist fundraisers.

**An hon. member:** Maureen Basnicki.

**Mr. Rob Anders:** Maureen Basnicki. That is right.

She sat on the couch in my office and told me about how her husband was over 100 storeys high in the World Trade Center. The reason she knows he was there is because he phoned home. She was not there to take the call, but nonetheless, somebody else let her know that he had made his best effort. He talked about how difficult it was and that he was above where those planes crashed into the building, and did not know how they would escape or get out or what the scenario would possibly be, not knowing of course that those towers would later collapse.

Joined with her was a gentleman whose relative was the first to have his throat slashed on board the United flight that crashed into a Pennsylvania farm field en route to Washington, D.C.

These people are frustrated. They know there are groups out there that raise money on behalf of terrorist organizations and funnel it to help those causes.

Maybe it is martyr money that is given to people who make the ultimate sacrifice as the ultimate terrorist in the cause. Maybe it is money that is given to help buy the detonating devices or the bombs. Maybe it is money to provide safe houses. Maybe it is money to help provide or manufacture false travel documents, et cetera.

But anyhow, they want to have the ability to go after these terrorist fundraising groups through civil action, through lawsuits, because they are having a great deal of difficulty in proving it in criminal court.

They would have a much easier time going after these groups with a probability in a sense and reasonable grounds in civil courts. I wholeheartedly support them in their effort. I think it is a valuable tool that we have in our potential arsenal to go after terrorism and we should pursue it wholeheartedly.

Earlier this evening, I heard the NDP ask questions and catcall some of my colleagues and make criticisms.

I would like to point out that some of the soldiers I know affectionately call the leader of the NDP Taliban Jack. I think that needs to be said. It needs to be heard and the soldiers need to know that we are listening.

The NDP members attacked the credibility of the government this evening. They said that Mr. Karzai and his government were not perfect. I think I would be the first one to stand and say that I do not think the NDP is perfect.

● (2350)

The NDP, despite the fact that we won the cold war in eastern Europe, still does not support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The NDP is the party that proposed unilateral disarmament to leave Europe defenceless to the Warsaw Pact so that they would have served as a mere speed bump had those tanks rolled westward.

I will let that credibility sink in, but so many times in the past the NDP have always been the appeasers of aggressors. I am not sure what line in the sand NDP members would draw before they would be willing to stand up and fight.

They say that the Karzai government is not perfect. I would ask all members to think on this fact long and hard. This Parliament that we stand in today is the result of at least 1,000 years of history.

I was very lucky to be in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and travel to London on the 50th anniversary. When we think how long it took with King Canute in the 800s to establish property law and then in 1215 at Runnymede for some of the barons to say that the king should indeed have restrictions on his ability to tax.

I imagine the NDP in 1215 would have been a jester, running around saying, "Oh, but my Lordship, I don't think you can make any criticisms of King John because you have serfs on your land". That is cute, but nonetheless, that was an important forward movement with regard to the restriction of the powers of the monarch so that we did not have capriciousness.

It took longer yet with the glorious revolution and various other things through history to arrive at the Parliament we have today. For the NDP members to expect that in a place like Afghanistan it will have a Parliament exactly like ours today, after 1,000 years of British common law history, is ridiculous. They should look at the situation and really compare what is fair.

In that respect, would our NDP colleagues prefer that the Taliban was still in charge? Is that what they would like? Or, would they have preferred that the Soviets had won their way and, instead, imposed their sense of order? Or, would they have us pull out and either allow the Taliban back in or possibly even allow the Iranians to impose their sense of justice on the place? It is nonsensical. If we are not there, who?

I also want to talk about the thanks that are well deserved with regard to these endeavours. We in this place have it pretty good. We are here in an air-conditioned room. It may be cold outside and we have suffered a storm on the weekend, but life is not so bad for parliamentarians when we consider the contrast. I thank the men and women who serve.

*Government Orders*

I remember the cook who was on board the HMCS *Toronto* when I was lucky to be embedded with them in the Arabian Sea in Operation Apollo. This gentleman spent 18 months at sea because his trade was hard to come by. I do not think there is enough of them in the navy. Ideally, he should only have spent six months on board that vessel but he was there 18 months later after first being deployed still doing his job and serving our country. I thank him tremendously for providing the meals and the bolster to the morale of those sailors on-board our vessels.

I also want to thank a gentleman by the name of Doug Movat who I met this past November at a Remembrance Day ceremony at the Bowness Legion that is in or close to my riding. Doug served in the infantry in Afghanistan. He told me stories about being in 54° Celsius temperatures, which is pretty hot. I think the hottest I have ever experienced was when I was at a port in Fujairah. It was 45° in the shade and I thought that was something else. However, he suffered through 54° temperatures while wearing a Kevlar vest in Afghanistan. I thank him for his sacrifice.

● (2355)

I also appreciate the young men who have been willing to join the cause, people like Lieutenant Will Lymer, who signed up with the Governor General's Foot Guards, did his basic training, his weapons training and finally his leadership training. Will sometimes gets up at 5 a.m. to run his new recruits. I am not sure it is something I would do, but I humbly appreciate what he does.

This weekend we had one of the largest dumps of snow that I think I have ever seen in my lifetime and I was born in Winnipeg. I think that says something, Mr. Speaker. This weekend Will stood out in the storm for at least six hours so that his recruits could train to shoot their C7s.

There are so many sacrifices. We could talk about those who have passed on in service. These are the real heroes. As one of the

American comedians, Dennis Miller, puts it, we live the life of Riley. These men and women put themselves on the front line to defend civilization, to bring order out of that chaos.

We recently, with my committee and Veterans Affairs, did a tour of some of our bases across the country. I think of the dark, sunless hours in places like Cold Lake. I look at the member behind me and I know that he spent a lot of time in Cold Lake, bless his heart.

● (2400)

**Mr. Laurie Hawn:** Dark, sunless hours.

**Mr. Rob Anders:** They are dark, sunless hours. But I appreciate all those men and women who make those sacrifices.

I met a young man when I was there in Cold Lake. For three years he has been wanting to serve in Afghanistan. He would continue to serve and be the engineer who keeps those lights going on the runways, the backup batteries and chargers. He could make double or triple the amount of money working in the oil patch in northern Alberta for fewer hours.

This man, good soldier that he is, stays on board with that cause and hopes that he can see service in Afghanistan. That is nobility for the cause. I hope the NDP takes some of that to heart.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** It being midnight, pursuant to order made Thursday, March 6, 2008, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings on Motion No. 5, under government business, at this time.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later today at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 12 a.m.

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