



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 12, 2008

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 12, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1005)

[*English*]

AIRLINE PASSENGER BILL OF RIGHTS

The House resumed from June 4 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Order. It being 10:05 a.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, June 10, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 465 under private members' business in the name of the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 149*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Albrecht
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Angus
Asselin
Bachand
Baird
Barnes
Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bennett
Bezan
Black
Blaney
Bouchard
Bourgeois
Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge
Byrne
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)

Ablonczy
Alghabra
Allison
Anders
André
Arthur
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Barbot
Bélangier
Bellavance
Benoit
Bigras
Blais
Bonsant
Boucher
Breitkreuz
Brown (Oakville)
Brown (Barrie)
Brunelle
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)

Cardin
Casson
Chong
Clarke
Coderre
Crête
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner
Davidson
DeBellefeuille
Demers
Devolin
Dhaliwal
Doyle
Duceppe
Easter
Eyking
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Folco
Fry
Galipeau
Gaudet
Godin
Goodale
Gourde
Grewal
Guergis
Hall Findlay
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jaffer
Jennings
Kadis
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Laforest
Lake
Lauzon
Lebel
Lemay
Lessard
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacAulay
Malo
Manning
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mathysen
McCallum
McGuire
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Merrifield
Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau
Norlock
Obhrai
Ouellet

Carrier
Charlton
Christopherson
Clement
Comuzzi
Crowder
Cummins
D'Amours
Davies
Del Mastro
Deschamps
Dewar
Dhalla
Dryden
Dykstra
Epp
Faille
Finley
Fletcher
Freeman
Gagnon
Gallant
Godfrey
Goldring
Goodyear
Gravel
Guarnieri
Guimond
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Holland
Jean
Julian
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karygiannis
Keeper
Khan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laframboise
Lalonde
Lavallée
Lee
Lemieux
Lévesque
Lunn
Lussier
MacKenzie
Maloney
Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mayes
McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Menzies
Miller
Minna
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Neville
O'Connor
Oda
Pacetti

Private Members' Business

Paquette
 Patry
 Perron
 Picard
 Poilievre
 Preston
 Proulx
 Rajotte
 Reid
 Ritz
 Rota
 Russell
 Savoie
 Scheer
 Sgro
 Siksay
 Simard
 Skelton
 Sorenson
 St. Amand
 Stanton
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Telegdi
 Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Toews
 Trost
 Tweed
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Volpe
 Warawa
 Watson
 Wrzesniewskij
 Zed— 249

Paradis
 Pearson
 Petit
 Plamondon
 Prentice
 Priddy
 Rae
 Redman
 Richardson
 Rodriguez
 Roy
 Savage
 Scarpaleggia
 Schellenberger
 Shipley
 Silva
 Simms
 Solberg
 St-Cyr
 St. Denis
 Stoffer
 Strahl
 Szabo
 Thi Lac
 Tilson
 Tonks
 Turner
 Valley
 Van Loan
 Vincent
 Wallace
 Wasylcia-Leis
 Wilson
 Yelich

Asselin
 Bachand
 Barbot
 Bélanger
 Bellavance
 Bigras
 Blais
 Bouchard
 Brison
 Brunelle
 Cardin
 Chariton
 Coderre
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Davies
 Demers
 Dewar
 Dhalla
 Duceppe
 Eyking
 Folco
 Fry
 Gaudet
 Godin
 Gravel
 Guimond
 Holland
 Julian
 Karetak-Lindell
 Keeper
 Laframboise
 Lavallée
 Lemay
 Lévesque
 MacAulay
 Maloney
 Marston
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 Mathysen
 McGuinty
 McTeague
 Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
 Mourani
 Murphy (Charlottetown)
 Nadeau
 Ouellet
 Paquette
 Pearson
 Picard
 Priddy
 Rae
 Rodriguez
 Roy
 Savage
 Scarpaleggia
 Siksay
 Simard
 St-Cyr
 St. Denis
 Szabo
 Thi Lac
 Basques)
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Valley
 Volpe
 Wilson
 Zed— 137

Atamanenko
 Bagnell
 Barnes
 Bell (Vancouver Island North)
 Bennett
 Black
 Bonsant
 Bourgeois
 Brown (Oakville)
 Byrne
 Carrier
 Christopherson
 Crête
 Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
 D'Amours
 DeBellefeuille
 Deschamps
 Dhaliwal
 Dryden
 Easter
 Faille
 Freeman
 Gagnon
 Godfrey
 Goodale
 Guarnieri
 Hall Findlay
 Jennings
 Kadis
 Karygiannis
 Laforest
 Lalonde
 Lee
 Lessard
 Lussier
 Malo
 Marleau
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
 McCallum
 McGuire
 Ménard (Hochelaga)
 Minna
 Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
 Murray
 Neville
 Pacetti
 Patry
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Proulx
 Redman
 Rota
 Russell
 Savoie
 Sgro
 Silva
 Simms
 St. Amand
 Stoffer
 Telegdi
 Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
 Tonks
 Vincent
 Wasylcia-Leis
 Wrzesniewskij

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from June 6 consideration of Bill C-207, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for new graduates working in designated regions), as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 10, the House will proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the motions at report stage of Bill C-207 under private members' business.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 1.

● (1040)

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

(Division No. 150)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
 Angus

André
 Arthur

Abbott
 Albrecht
 Allison
 Anders
 Baird
 Bezan
 Boucher
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Bruinooog
 Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
 Casson

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
 Allen
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Benoit
 Blaney
 Breitzkreuz
 Brown (Barrie)
 Calkins
 Cannon (Pontiac)
 Chong

Private Members' Business

Clarke
Comuzzi
Davidson
Devolin
Dykstra
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Galipeau
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKenzie
Mays
Merrifield
Mills
Moore (Fundy Royal)
O'Connor
Oda
Petit
Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Scheer
Shipley
Solberg
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Turner
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Yelich — 111

Clement
Cummins
Del Mastro
Doyle
Epp
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lukiwski
Lunney
Manning
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Norlock
Obhrai
Paradis
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Schellenberger
Skelton
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Trost
Tweed
Van Loan
Wallace
Watson

Dewar
Dhalla
Duceppe
Eyking
Folco
Fry
Gaudet
Godin
Gravel
Guimond
Holland
Julian
Karetak-Lindell
Keeper
Laframboise
Lavallée
Lemay
Lévesque
MacAulay
Maloney
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mathysen
McGuinty
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau
Ouellet
Paquette
Pearson
Picard
Priddy
Redman
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St. Amand
Stoffer
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Tonks
Vincent
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wrzesnewskij

Dhaliwal
Dryden
Easter
Faille
Freeman
Gagnon
Godfrey
Goodale
Guarnieri
Hall Findlay
Jennings
Kadis
Karygiannis
Laforest
Lalonde
Lee
Lessard
Lussier
Malo
Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
McCallum
McGuire
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Minna
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Neville
Pacetti
Patry
Perron
Plamondon
Proulx
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Denis
Szabo
Thi Lac
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
Valley
Volpe
Wilson
Zed — 136

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 carried.

The next question is on the amendment to Motion No. 2.

● (1050)

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

(Division No. 151)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Angus
Asselin
Bachand
Barbot
Bélanger
Bellavance
Bigras
Blais
Bouchard
Brisson
Brunelle
Cardin
Charlton
Coderre
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies
Demers

André
Arthur
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Barnes
Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bennett
Black
Bonsant
Bourgeois
Brown (Oakville)
Byrne
Carrier
Christopherson
Crête
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
D'Amours
DeBellefeuille
Deschamps

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Baird
Bezan
Boucher
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Casson
Clarke
Comuzzi
Davidson
Devolin
Dykstra
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Galipeau
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan

Ablonczy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Benoit
Blaney
Breitkreuz
Brown (Barrie)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Chong
Clement
Cummins
Del Mastro
Doyle
Epp
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki

Private Members' Business

Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKenzie
Mayes
Merrifield
Mills
Moore (Fundy Royal)
O'Connor
Oda
Petit
Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Scheer
Shipley
Solberg
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Wallace
Watson

Lake
Lebel
Lukiwski
Lunney
Manning
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Norlock
Obhrai
Paradis
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Schellenberger
Skelton
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Yelich— 110

Lemay
Lévesque
MacAulay
Maloney
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mathysen
McGuinity
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau
Ouellet
Paquette
Pearson
Picard
Priddy
Redman
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St. Amand
Stoffer
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Tonks
Vincent
Wasylycia-Leis
Wrzesnewskyj

Lessard
Lussier
Malo
Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
McCallum
McGuire
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Minna
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Neville
Pacetti
Patry
Perron
Plamondon
Proulx
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Denis
Szabo
Thi Lac
Valley
Volpe
Wilson
Zed— 136

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to Motion No. 2 carried.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 2, as amended.

● (1100)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 152)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Angus
Asselin
Bachand
Barbot
Bélangier
Bellavance
Bigras
Blais
Bouchard
Brisson
Brunelle
Cardin
Charlton
Coderre
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies
Demers
Dewar
Dhalla
Duceppe
Eyking
Folco
Fry
Gaudet
Godin
Gravel
Guimond
Holland
Julian
Karetak-Lindell
Keeper
Laframboise
Lavallée

André
Arthur
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Barnes
Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bennett
Black
Bonsant
Bourgeois
Brown (Oakville)
Byrne
Carrier
Christopherson
Crête
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
D'Amours
DeBellefeuille
Deschamps
Dhaliwal
Dryden
Easter
Faille
Freeman
Gagnon
Godfrey
Goodale
Guarnieri
Hall Findlay
Jennings
Kadis
Karygiannis
Laforest
Lalonde
Lee

Abbott
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Baird
Bezan
Boucher
Brown (Barrie)
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Casson
Clarke
Comuzzi
Davidson
Devolin
Dykstra
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Galipeau
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKenzie
Mayes
Merrifield
Mills
Moore (Fundy Royal)
O'Connor
Oda
Petit
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Schellenberger
Skelton

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Benoit
Blaney
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Chong
Clement
Cummins
Del Mastro
Doyle
Epp
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lukiwski
Lunney
Manning
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Norlock
Obhrai
Paradis
Poilievre
Rajotte
Richardson
Scheer
Shipley
Solberg

Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Yelich— 107

Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Wallace
Watson

Redman
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Denis
Szabo
Thi Lac
Basques
Thibault (West Nova)
Valley
Volpe
Wilson
Zed— 135

Rota
Russell
Savoie
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St. Amand
Stoffer
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Vincent
Wasylycia-Leis
Wrzesnewskyj

PAIRED

Nil

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ) moved that Bill C-207, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for new graduates working in designated regions) be concurred in.

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 2, as amended, carried.

• (1105)

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

(Division No. 153)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Arthur
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bagnell
Barbot	Barnes
Bélanger	Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bellavance	Bennett
Bigras	Black
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brison	Brown (Oakville)
Brunelle	Byrne
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Christopherson
Coderre	Crête
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Dewar	Dhaliwal
Dhalla	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Gravel	Guarnieri
Guimond	Hall Findlay
Holland	Jennings
Julian	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keeper	Laforest
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Lee
Lemay	Lessard
Lévesque	Lussier
MacAulay	Malo
Maloney	Marleau
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen	McCallum
McGuinty	McGuire
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Minna
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nadeau	Neville
Ouellet	Pacetti
Paquette	Patry
Pearson	Perron
Picard	Plamondon
Priddy	Proulx

Abbott
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Baird
Bezan
Boucher
Brown (Barrie)
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Casson
Clarke
Comuzzi
Davidson
Devolin
Dykstra
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Galipeau
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKenzie
Mayes
Merrifield
Mills
Moore (Fundy Royal)
O'Connor
Oda
Petit
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Schellenberger
Skelton
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Yelich— 107

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Benoit
Blaney
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Chong
Clement
Cummins
Del Mastro
Doyle
Epp
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lukiwski
Lunney
Manning
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Norlock
Obhrai
Paradis
Poilievre
Rajotte
Richardson
Scheer
Shipley
Solberg
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Wallace
Watson

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time? With leave of the House, now?

Private Members' Business

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Robert Bouchard moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion, the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1115)

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

(Division No. 154)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Arthur
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bagnell
Barbot	Barnes
Bélangier	Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bellavance	Bennett
Bigras	Black
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brison	Brown (Oakville)
Brunelle	Byrne
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Christopherson
Coderre	Crête
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Dewar	Dhaliwal
Dhalla	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gaudet	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Gravel	Guarnieri
Guimond	Hall Findlay
Holland	Jennings
Julian	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keeper	Laforest
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Lee
Lemay	Lessard
Lévesque	Lussier
MacAulay	Malo
Maloney	Marleau
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathyssen	McCallum
McGuinty	McGuire
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)

Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau
Ouellet
Paquette
Pearson
Picard
Priddy
Redman
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Denis
Szabo
Thi Lac
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Valley
Volpe
Wilson
Zed- — 135

Minna
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Neville
Pacetti
Patry
Perron
Plamondon
Proulx
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St. Amand
Stoffer
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Vincent
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wrzesnewskij

NAYS

Members

Ablonezy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Benoit
Blaney
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Chong
Clement
Cummins
Del Mastro
Doyle
Epp
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Heam
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lukiwski
Lunney
Manning
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Norlock
Obhrai
Paradis
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Schellenberger
Skelton
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Yelich- — 108

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made Tuesday, June 10, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development concerning the extension of time to consider Bill C-469.

The hon. chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, I think if you were to seek it you would find unanimous consent to apply the results from the previous motion to this motion, with Conservative members present this morning voting in favour.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

The question is on the motion.

• (1120)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 155)***YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Alghabra
Allen	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	André
Angus	Arthur
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bagnell
Baird	Barbot
Barnes	Bélangier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bellavance
Bennett	Benoit
Bezan	Bigras
Black	Blais
Blaney	Bonsant
Bouchard	Boucher
Bourgeois	Brisson
Brown (Oakville)	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)	Brunelle
Byrne	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Cardin	Carrier
Casson	Charlton
Chong	Christopherson

Clarke
Coderre
Crowder
Cummins
D'Amours
Davies
Del Mastro
Deschamps
Dewar
Doyle
Duceppe
Easter
Eyking
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Folco
Fry
Galipeau
Gaudet
Godin
Goodale
Gourde
Grewal
Guergis
Hall Findlay
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jaffer
Jennings
Kadis
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Laforest
Lake
Lauzon
Lebel
Lemay
Lessard
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacAulay
Malo
Manning
Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mathysen
McCallum
McGuire
Ménard (Hochelega)
Menzies
Miller
Minna
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Neville
O'Connor
Oda
Pacetti
Paradis
Pearson
Petit
Plamondon
Prentice
Priddy
Rajotte
Reid
Ritz
Roy
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger
Shiple
Silva
Simms
Solberg
St-Cyr
St. Denis
Stoffer
Strahl

Routine Proceedings

Clement
Crête
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner
Davidson
DeBellefeuille
Demers
Devolin
Dhalla
Dryden
Dykstra
Epp
Faille
Finley
Fletcher
Freeman
Gagnon
Gallant
Godfrey
Goldring
Goodyear
Gravel
Guamieri
Guimond
Hanger
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Holland
Jean
Julian
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karygiannis
Keeper
Khan
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laframboise
Lalonde
Lavallée
Lee
Lemieux
Lévesque
Lunn
Lussier
MacKenzie
Maloney
Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mayes
McGuinity
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Merrifield
Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau
Norlock
Obhrai
Ouellet
Paquette
Patry
Perron
Picard
Poilievre
Preston
Proulx
Redman
Richardson
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Scheer
Sgro
Siksay
Simard
Skelton
Sorenson
St. Amand
Stanton
Storseth
Sweet

Routine Proceedings

Szabo	Telegdi
Thi Lac	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tilson	Toews
Tonks	Trost
Turner	Tweed
Valley	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Vincent	Wallace
Warawa	Wasylycia-Leis
Watson	Wrzesnewskyj
Yelich	Zed— 240

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[English]

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at this time, I wish to table, in both official languages, copies of a letter I have sent to the chair of the Standing Committee on Health setting out proposals for amendments to Bill C-51, which the government will invite the committee to consider.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to eight petitions.

* * *

LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS RE-ENACTMENT ACT

Mr. Rob Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Justice, I am pleased to table two reports today. The first is the review report of the Minister of Justice on the implementation and operation of section 4 of the Legislative Instruments Re-enactment Act.

* * *

JUDICIAL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS COMMISSION

Mr. Rob Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second report I am pleased to table today is the report of the 2007 Judicial Compensation and Benefits Commission.

* * *

COPYRIGHT ACT

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-61, An Act to amend the Copyright Act.
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

● (1125)

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the reports of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation in the congressional visit by members at the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group in Washington, D.C., from April 22 to 25, 2008, and also the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance conference, the Canadian/U.S. Border: A Unified Focus, in Ottawa, Ontario, April 27 to 29, 2008.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, respecting its participation in the meeting of the political committee of the APF held in Strasbourg, France, on April 10 and 11, 2008.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the tenth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Regulating Immigration Consultants".

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Fabian Manning (Avalon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, on the condition of the eelgrass beds in James Bay.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food entitled "Product of Canada' claims: Truth and transparency are necessary". This is a report that we spent a couple of months working on.

[Translation]

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food, entitled "An Analysis and Comparison of Selected Canada-United States Farm Input Costs".

Routine Proceedings

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th and 12th reports of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. The 11th report entitled “Towards Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Rising to the Challenge of Achieving General Equality” was adopted unanimously by all committee members.

I would like to thank my committee colleagues: Kathleen Lahey; Armine Yalnizyan; Nancy Peckford; the committee analysts, Clara Morgan, Karine Richer, Shahrzad Mobasher Fard; and the committee clerk, Danielle Belisle, for their hard and dedicated work.

[Translation]

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “Consideration of Proposed Amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act”.

[English]

I am pleased to report that the committee has agreed to the government request to undertake consultations in order to amend or develop a new navigable waters protection act. The committee has made eight recommendations to that effect and looks forward to holding broader consultations once the government introduces a proposed bill.

* * *

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-562, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am moved this morning when I think about all of the people who supported the first version of this bill and were so eager to see it implemented.

However, my thoughts go especially to all those who are suffering, who meet the conditions in this bill and who could choose to die with dignity. As long as the Criminal Code is not amended—and I am proposing that it should be—they will not have this choice.

I hope that this Parliament will make it possible for these people to exercise this ultimate freedom.

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

● (1130)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP) moved that the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development presented on Thursday, June 5, 2008, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with the member for Victoria.

The need to adopt effective standards of corporate social responsibility, particularly insofar as greater sensitivity to and engagement with the interests and concerns of affected indigenous communities, has been a point of focus for me and my NDP colleagues. My colleague from Halifax has worked tirelessly on the whole issue of corporate social responsibility.

As the Canadian government expands its foreign policy and trade ties in Central and South America, Canadian corporate behaviour should be examined much more closely.

Already, Canadian extractive companies are responsible for billions of dollars of investments in projects throughout Central and South America.

I had some experience in the case of Central America. I am familiar with this subject. In the 1980s I was a project organizer for a development project there, and on the ground, investments can have a significant impact for good or ill upon the communities in which they are made.

Canadian mining companies account for \$50 billion of cumulative direct investment around the world. That is a lot of economic activity and that means the lives of many people in other countries are tied to these activities.

Canadians want to know that Canadian companies are improving the lives of people touched by their work, not ruining their livelihood and trampling on their human rights.

Resource riches can be used to prop up corrupt and repressive regimes, like in Zimbabwe and Sudan. Canadian investments in places like Burma have been contributing to the junta, the regime there, and its oppression of the Burmese people. These are Canadian companies that are having a direct effect, in a negative way, on people around the world.

Worse still, many Canadian companies have not held themselves to the same human rights, labour and environmental standards that they are required to abide by right here in Canada. We think that should change. The report on corporate social responsibility that the government has would require them to do the same.

It is interesting to note that this report was a joint project between business and civil society. It was a consensus report. The government has had it for over 400 days.

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Last year, after the consensus report was delivered to the government, the government said, “We will respond in due course in a short period of time”. It has been more than 400 days since the government has had this report, which was an amazing feat. My predecessor, Ed Broadbent, was the one who pushed for this to happen, working with the member for Halifax.

Many said it could not be done, that business and civil society, those who are pushing for more human rights and standards, both labour and environment standards, could not agree. They did agree. Business and civil society came up with a comprehensive report.

What does that report say? In a nutshell it says the following: That Canadian companies would follow the same standards as they follow here in Canada; that there would be reporting of their activities abroad; that there would be compliance with the framework agreement; and that there would be an ombudsperson to oversee this activity.

It is 2008. The standards that citizens enjoy here in Canada should be exported around the world.

Stephen Lewis has said many times that the whole notion of globalization has benefited disproportionately the north developed countries over the south, and that it is high time we globalize human rights, environmental standards, and the appreciation that the wealth that is created in the south should be something that is honoured by the wages we pay.

● (1135)

The government has an opportunity to move forward international standards on human rights and environmental rights, and Canada's place in the world by adopting the corporate social responsibility framework that was agreed to by business and by civil society.

If the government has been pressured by companies like Barrick Gold or other special interests, and we know there was activity in Tanzania and Chile when the committee travelled abroad, it should listen to the voices of many, instead of listening to the voices of some. The government should listen to the voices of Canadians who unequivocally have called on it to adopt corporate social responsibility. It should join the majority of Canadians

The government should adopt this corporate social responsibility report, do the right thing, show us proud, and make Canada stand tall on the world stage.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member and I have similar views on this issue and we have worked on it at some meetings together. I have convened some meetings with people who are interested in doing this.

I would like to emphasize an excellent point my colleague made. This is one of those rare occasions when civil society and the business community agreed on a report. When there is a controversial report, it is not surprising for the government not to reply, but when all bodies agree, a rare situation, one would think it would be incumbent on the government to reply quickly. Obviously, the government does not have to agree with everything, but when there is such consensus, it could certainly move forward on a lot of fronts.

One thing that I am particularly interested in, and the member could clarify this for me because I was not prepared for this debate, is with respect to an ombudsperson who would look into these cases internationally. Quite often we get letters concerning situations that need investigating. It is a lot harder for us to find out the facts in other countries but an ombudsperson could give us an unbiased, neutral view on a situation, and help us perform our functions as members of Parliament.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his work on this issue. Right now we have a regime of voluntary compliance for corporate social responsibility. It is kind of analogous to having voluntary human rights. We cannot have that. A company either has corporate social responsibility or it does. To have voluntary, it may as well not bother.

Let me be clear about the position of the ombudsperson. He or she would oversee compliance, verify facts or complaints brought against Canadian companies by individuals, and determine if a complaint relates to the set out standards. The ombudsperson would really pull everything together and provide a framework and objectivity so people could understand. That is important for both companies and for those people concerned about standards being broken. I think it is an excellent way to go. The government should adopt this report and the framework.

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Ottawa Centre for moving this motion and for sharing his time with me.

In my opinion, this motion is long overdue. It is very important for me to speak to this issue because I am keenly aware that in my riding of Victoria, the business community has been exercising leadership on this front by forming what has been called a values based business network through which they promote a triple bottom line approach in business. The business community develops business cases for sustainability. It works, learns and promotes ethical business practices. It collaborates on marketing and branding. It develops projects that strengthen the micro-economy.

This is an issue that is particularly important to me. I have seen how it can work. It is beneficial not just for the bottom line, but in promoting social justice.

My colleagues in the NDP caucus and I have been calling for such measures for a long time. My colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster has presented Bill C-492 which would begin to address the issue of basic human rights and environmental abuses by Canadian corporations abroad. This is a continuing problem that received extensive national attention in 2007 with the release of the advisory report from the National Roundtable on Corporate Social Responsibility. The report's recommendations to enhance Canada's social responsibility standards were inevitable, given the disturbing accounts by round table participants on human rights abuses, allegedly perpetrated by Canadian companies while operating overseas. A year and a half later, the federal government has yet to adopt these recommendations designed to prevent such injustices. It is the responsibility of the government to give leadership and to ensure that the standards set out in the report's recommendations are met.

The basis of this report offers a pragmatic and comprehensive series of recommendations for the Government of Canada to implement toward developing the world's most progressive framework of corporate social responsibility. The report recommends standards based on existing international best practices, voluntary frameworks topped up with additional made in Canada standards that put as their focus assurances that Canadian extractive corporate practices enhance and protect human rights and the environment. This is not just good for social justice, but it is good for the bottom line as corporate social responsibility practices are increasingly being recognized.

Recently, Niall FitzGerald, former CEO of Unilever said:

Corporate social responsibility is a hard-edged business decision. Not because it is nice to do or because people are forcing us to do it...but because it is good for our business.

Companies are beginning to realize that a business has a responsibility beyond its basic responsibility to its shareholders, a responsibility to a broader constituency that includes key stakeholders, customers, employees, and in the case of corporations functioning abroad, to the people, the foreign nationals in that country and the aboriginal people.

There seems to be an irony between the government's inaction on this file and its historic apology to the aboriginal people of Canada yesterday. The government continues to allow for exploitation of aboriginal people in other countries through unsustainable and harmful corporate business practices, as has happened in Suriname or Tanzania where the labour practices of Barrick Gold, a Canadian company, caused conflict.

We have begun to see the cracks form in bottom line capitalism with the demise of huge multinational corporations such as Enron and WorldCom and with the trials of Conrad Black or Ezra Levant. It has opened our eyes to the need for corporate social responsibility standards.

• (1140)

As the global food crisis increases, these discussions are broadening and suggest the need for a paradigm shift. Business must find new ways to contribute to society. The emphasis on free trade must give way to the promotion of fair trade principles. Doing business must no longer mean exploitation of people or devastation of the habitat.

The implementation of measures to ensure corporate social responsibility is anything but a business as usual approach. Rather, a corporate social responsibility is effectively part of what I would call a new social contract between business and society. Government must stand up, take note and look at these recommendations that were made through a consensus report. The government must begin to consider these more seriously and implement them.

Throughout Canada successful businesses have taken on the challenge toward corporate social responsibility. One such company in Canada at the forefront of this new way of doing business is Mountain Equipment Co-op. Former CEO Peter Robinson, one of the new thought leaders, has remarked, "Ethics is the new competitive environment". Companies like MEC believe that corporate social responsibility is not only good for business, but it

Routine Proceedings

also offers a net competitive advantage for their businesses. In my own city, as I said, the values based network is comprised of hundreds of small businesses. They are exercising leadership by recognizing a triple bottom line approach to doing business.

The Conservative government must follow the lead of businesses across the country. Canada's brand as a democratic country that respects human rights depends on it. We must make corporate social responsibility a part of Canada's policy.

Today Canada can take action to ensure that we do not continue to exploit aboriginal people in other countries through its corporations. The recommendations that were proposed in the report stress that corporations operating abroad have a responsibility not only to follow the rules of the countries where they are operating, which in many cases especially in some developing countries are not applied, but they should follow the standards of corporate social responsibilities and the laws as they are in Canada.

This is what this report attempts to do. I do not know if the business community in Canada is leading. This is what Canadians expect. Yesterday the Conservative government itself expressed regret and apologized to first nations people for the exploitation that has occurred over the years. Now it has the opportunity to prevent that kind of exploitation in other countries by taking action on this report.

• (1145)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the greatest mining industry in the world and is the biggest exporter. We are all over the world. By and large we do a fantastic job but every once in a while a rogue company comes up.

In my international work I had to travel to one country to solve terrible local laws that were going to be passed against Canadian investment in general. It would have hurt all sorts of Canadian companies because of one operator. In another country there was a cruel dictatorship. Once again a Canadian company was implicated. There are only a handful of these type of operators sometimes causing problems for us and for our great mining industry which is a world leader. I am sure that is why the industry signed on to this report. It would help companies as much as anyone else to get this in place so that we did not have these rogue operations.

My question is a little off topic. One of the complaints I hear is that the local government is not enforcing the rules. Primarily these companies should be caught by local legislation and enforcement but that is not occurring.

Could the member comment on Canada's foreign policy and our place in the world? In my view we have reduced the investments that we are making in diplomacy. We have reduced the investments that were helping the democratic evolution of new countries, of fledgling democracies. If we were to put more effort into some of these countries, they would be able to protect themselves not only from rogue investments from Canada, but from all the companies in the world that may try to exploit aboriginal and other people in a country that has not yet developed sufficient laws and enforcement of its own. I think that is the type of role Canada has traditionally played.

Routine Proceedings

• (1150)

Ms. Denise Savoie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has raised extremely important issues. I will try to address some of them.

The question that Canada could do more in terms of overseas development aid to help countries build capacity is excellent. It certainly is what we on this side of the House have been calling for. We have been asking the Government of Canada to meet its millennium development goals. We are still far from that. Although development aid has increased, it has not in comparison to GDP. We are falling behind our own promises in terms of our responsibilities to the world.

It is absolutely understandable that countries in the developing world often do not have the capacity to implement some of the laws that are in place in those countries.

We only need to look at some of the agreements that were made, for example, in Suriname. Agreements were made with Canadian companies in the extractive sector with very little, if any, benefit to the aboriginal people. We know that by definition the extractive industry is finite. It is important that Canada do everything possible to ensure there is some social justice. We know that these trade deals are often coercive and unequal and we need to have more equitable trade.

The whole point I tried to make earlier is that there are many companies in Canada and business leaders in my own city that are giving leadership and showing the way. They are demonstrating to the government that they would like the government to take a stand on that, to make it easier.

As my hon. colleague just said, it would facilitate the task for those companies that want to uphold these higher standards.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this important subject about corporate social responsibility and the round table conferences that were held.

First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development for their hard work on this issue and for the motions that were brought forward. I can assure everyone that the motion was passed unanimously to be tabled in the House.

I would like to highlight some important points. Canada is a major player in the international extractive sector. We are very much a world leader in mining. Between 1992 and 2006, the share of global mining exploration attributed to Canadian companies jumped from 25% to 43%. In fact, investment in the energy and metalurgic sector reached \$121 billion in 2006, making this sector the second largest component of Canadian direct investment abroad. As I understand it, 24 mining companies are planning to invest \$11 billion in Africa alone.

Although Canada has been doing this voluntarily, it has been a leader because Canadian companies have all been doing very well in maintaining the high standards that are expected from Canadian companies. As a matter of fact, Transparency International recently released a report in which it evaluated 42 petroleum companies on

the basis of the public disclosure of three types of information: all payments to government on a country-to-country basis, other financial information pertaining to operations and anti-corruption programs. I am proud to say that Canada's Nexon, Petro-Canada and Talisman Energy consistently scored very well in those categories, often ranking high or very high above country averages. Therefore, it is very clear that our companies are doing very well.

However, this still means that we can move forward and see how we can improve. To that effect, the Government of Canada initiated the round table conference that was done. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in the round table conference and for the recommendations that were made to the advisory group's recommendation. I would like to thank the hundreds of people who attended all of these sessions and who took time to present their views.

We remain committed to consulting with key stakeholders and we will move forward in addressing these complex issues in a time of need. However, when we do that we want to get it right so we are taking the time to get this right and very soon.

During the committee of the whole debate, the Minister of Foreign Affairs assured my colleague that he would be responding to the recommendations soon. However, we want to ensure we respond in a proper and rightful manner and that it is right for Canada.

Some of my colleagues have stated what Canada needs to do. I want to quickly say what Canada has been doing. Canada has been a signatory to OECD's guidelines of multinational enterprises that promote the adoption of effective CSR principles. Also, Canada strongly supported the international extractive industries transparency initiative, EITI, aimed at building the capacity of countries to increase the transfer of companies' payments and corresponding government revenues from the extractive sector.

Our partnership with mining associations and the aboriginal organizations is to develop a mining capability to help aboriginal people evaluate and participate in the opportunities offered by the mining sector. This has been adopted in many countries including the Philippines, Australia, Norway and Peru. Those are just a few examples of how we are moving in the right direction.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs has stated that he would be responding soon to this report, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

• (1155)

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.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

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

● (1240)

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

(Division No. 156)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Arthur	Baird
Benoit	Bezan
Blaney	Boucher
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Casson	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Comuzzi	Cummins
Davidson	Del Mastro
Devolin	Doyle
Dykstra	Epp
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Fletcher
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKenzie
Manning	Mayes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Paradis	Petit
Poilievre	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Richardson
Ritz	Scheer
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Bigras	Black
Bonsant	Bouchard
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Carrier	Charlton
Christopherson	Coderre
Crête	Crowder
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Dewar	Dion
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Keeper	Laforest
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Lemay
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Malo	Maloney
Marleau	Marston
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mathysen
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague
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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I declare the motion defeated.

When we were last debating there were 10 minutes for questions and comments. I now call for questions and comments. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca has the floor.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, based on his speech, does the parliamentary secretary believe that the Special Economic Measures Act needs to be rewritten?

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We know that SEMA is obsolete, that it does not address many of the needs of the 21st century in terms of ensuring that extractive industries working abroad are able to commonly agreed to norms and in terms of the social responsibility to which we know our private sector would like to adhere. The guidelines, to some degree are there but improvements need to be made and one important aspect on the punitive side is the utilization of a Special Economic Measures Act that works.

I would like to know whether his government will rewrite SEMA.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member should know, as we all know, Canadian companies are held to a very high standard by the Government of Canada. We expect them to comply not only with the rules of local countries, but what the Canadian public expects of them as well. That is the key element. The other day I had dinner with the Chilean delegation and it asked me this question. I said that Canadians expected Canadian companies to hold to these very high standards.

Yes, we have standards, but there are always challenges, and the member is right that things change. This is why the round table conference was held by the government with industry stakeholders, NGOs and everybody. Comprehensive round table conferences were held in four cities of Canada.

The recommendations are now with the government. The Minister of Foreign Affairs stated, during committee of the whole, that he would respond to those recommendations after they had been studied, to ensure we got it right and that the laws of Canada were complied with. We should wait until that report comes forward before asking these kinds of questions.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for the way he and the whole committee handled this report when it went to committee.

We all believe there must be some type of balance in the approach we take. We want to encourage Canadian investment around the world. We recognize the importance this has for our country and for the prosperity of Canadians, but also there is responsibility. Before companies go into some of the countries, they sign on to the fact that they will be socially responsible.

In committee the parliamentary secretary spoke at some length about the oil company Talisman and how it had, over the last number of years, improved its social responsibility, to the point where witnesses say it was really a leader in showing how one could make a difference.

We see oil companies, mining companies and others that are now more than ever taking a look at how they can impact certain countries, encourage human rights and other things. I know the parliamentary secretary is from Calgary, which has a number of good, corporately social responsible companies, especially Talisman. Could he give a little information on that?

•(1245)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Crowfoot for his work as chair of the foreign affairs committee and

specifically for his work on this file. This motion was in front of the committee, and has been debated for a while.

As I mentioned in my speech earlier that Transparency International recently released a report in which it evaluated 42 petroleum companies on the basis of public disclosure. Guess which companies stood out? It was the Canadian companies. Canada's Nexon, Petro-Canada and Talisman Energy consistently ranked well in all categories, either high or very high, above average.

Companies are taking corporate social responsibility very well. Talisman now has a complete department that looks into corporate social responsibility.

Let me provide another concrete example to show how Canadian companies themselves do a very good job of meeting the standards.

Last January I was in Ecuador for the inauguration of President Correa. A lot of Canadian mining companies are in Ecuador, close to 43 of them. One company had not met the corporate social responsibility. It was the other Canadian companies that told that company to clean up its act. It was the Canadians policing themselves, because it is in the larger interest of Canada to ensure that it has well run, corporately social responsible companies.

As I mentioned, our investment is over \$121 billion and it is vital for Canadian industries to police these things.

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary was born in Africa. Why on earth is his government not doing more to address the catastrophe currently unfolding in Zimbabwe?

Right now people are being murdered. Leaders in the MDC are being murdered. The regime on top of Mr. Mugabe and the four members of his joint operations committee have engaged in a new tactic. They are taking innocent civilians, pouring gasoline on them and burning them alive. That is happening right now. What do we hear from the government? Absolutely nothing.

We said never again and the Prime Minister said never again, but never again is happening right now, in front of our noses and the government has done nothing.

Will the parliamentary secretary take the issue to his Minister of Foreign Affairs, his government and his Prime Minister and demand that SADC and the African Union tell the leadership in Zimbabwe that they will be prosecuted under the ICC if it does not stop its violence right now, that they will help to organize a multilateral peacemaking force to enter into Zimbabwe, like the Brits did in Sierra Leone, to stop the conflict and end Zimbabwe's agony.

Will he do this, as a person who was born in Africa? Will he ask his government to take a leadership role to end the agony taking place in Zimbabwe?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. I was born in Tanzania and I know very well the history of Tanzania. I was there during the time when the winds of change were taking place on the continent and what is today called Zimbabwe was ruled by a white regime. The country I was staying in was in the forefront of fighting colonialism and white supremacy rule.

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I agree with the member that the situation now in Zimbabwe is terrible. It is not only terrible, but, as one of the pastors from South Africa stated last week, Zimbabwe has become a police state under Mr. Mugabe.

This government is acting very strongly and has made strong representations to the African Union and to the South African government to have peer pressure put on Mr. Mugabe to ensure that there is a fair and transparent election.

The good thing about all of this is Mr. Mugabe lost the election and now we have a run-off. Now it is critically important for the people of Zimbabwe to make their choice as to who will run.

The member is absolutely right that Mr. Mugabe is using all the state apparatus to ensure he stays in power. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us to make that noise. However, I will never accept any kind of intervention as an invasion of Africa by any other forces out there. We must work with the African leaders to ensure they address the issues in Zimbabwe because it is in their interests as well.

• (1250)

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today to the issue of corporate social responsibility, particularly in the extractive industries.

I want to start by correcting the parliamentary secretary's comments. He suggested that this began with the advent of the Conservative government, but that is not the case.

Much of what we are talking about today is the landmark report from the parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, tabled in June 2005. It is a landmark report on mining in developing countries and corporate social responsibility.

I would be remiss if I did not, on behalf of all members of the House, thank non-governmental organizations, like KAIROS, which have really done a yeoman's job of ensuring that this issue has been kept in the forefront for several years. For quite a while, it seemed like the issue had disappeared, but we all know how important it is. NGOs, like KAIROS, have really done a great job of keeping our feet to the fire, as elected officials, to ensure this issue is in front of Canadians.

This is an extremely important issue. I want to talk for a moment on some basic concepts in terms of what corporate social responsibility is rather than pure rights.

Although major objective of extractive companies is to earn profits, they also have a responsibility to advance social goals, given the transboundary nature of their operations and the concomitant reduction of the welfare role, particularly in developing in countries. Some may put forth the argument that these are private companies and they really do not have a role to play whatsoever, but they do have that role to play.

We all know about the common concept of triple bottom line. This is not a theoretical issue; it is an issue that connects to the bottom line of the private sector, and I will get into that in a moment.

Corporate social responsibility implies compliance plus the active development and implementation of a mainstream business strategy,

supported by technological and organizational innovation to prevent, and this is important, social impact while at the same time optimizing social benefits from the outset. Through responsible management, it also involves the mitigation, on an ongoing basis, of negative effects, if and when they occur.

Historically this was not the case. In fact, Milton Friedman, in his 1970 book *The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits*, made the argument that social performance was totally contained in marketplace performance. I would argue, with all due respect to Milton Friedman, that he is wrong.

Today we know that social responsibility in business is not entirely up to the marketplace, with the objective of ensuring the private sector extracts profits. Engaging in social responsibility is important not only for the people in the countries where the company is located, but also for its ability to do its best and provide its highest level of performance.

The approach to corporate social responsibility can be summarized in the following way. Operating a successful business is important with respect to the interests of employees, investors, suppliers and customers. It is important to make social investment in a local community in response to the perceived moral imperatives as well as ensuring a healthy workforce. I will give the House an example.

I have been to South Africa 13 times. I used to work there in years past. Extractive industries in South Africa found that their employees were rapidly dying due to tuberculosis, malaria and other infectious diseases. The underlying cause of this were viruses known as the HIV class.

Extractive industries, particularly those involved in diamond and gold manufacturing, could not accept this. The destruction of their workforces was having a profound negative impact on their bottom line. These industries became involved in the health care of their workforce by enabling them to get access to medications, particularly the antiretroviral medications that not only prevent a person going from HIV positive to developing AIDS, but also significantly diminish infecting other people.

• (1255)

Allow me a short aside. It is important because this discovery was actually made and championed by the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

Doctors Montaner and Kerr found that the highly active anti-retroviral therapy, that is, triple therapy, can actually drop the viral load so low for individuals that it prevents them from being able to infect another person. This is actually quite remarkable, because if we can drop somebody's viral load so low as to prevent him or her from being able to infect another person, it dramatically truncates the ability of the virus to infect new people. This is a huge challenge we have in terms of trying to arrest what is arguably the biggest challenge in global health.

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The South African extractive industries got involved in that and were able to keep their workforce healthy. By keeping the workforce healthy, they were able to significantly improve their bottom line. That is the essence of the moral imperative. That is how it connects the moral imperative with the profit-making nature of the private sector.

It differs quite significantly from Milton Friedman, who believed that the private sector market could, by the very nature of driving toward the acquisition of profit, take care of these social needs as a downstream effect. We now know that is not the case at all.

We would like to see Canada championing a series of requirements that the private sector understands it has to adhere to when working abroad. If these companies do not, there will be consequences for that. I know that the private sector would like to have those guidelines, because currently these companies are working in the dark a little.

I believe we have to define for the private sector the guidelines we want it to adhere to in terms of mitigating the environmental and social impacts in all spheres, the biophysical, the economic and the social, and anticipating, preventing and dealing with these at the outset, not after the fact.

I want to look at the positive and negative effects of extractive industries for a moment. I am glad that the issue of Talisman was brought up, because I was in Sudan when Talisman was there. I went into the bush south of Bahr El Ghazal in Southern Sudan when the war was going on.

For all that people were harassing and being critical of Talisman for being part of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, the fact of the matter is that Talisman was the only group on the ground providing health care and educational opportunities for the Nuer and Dinka tribespeople who live in Southern Sudan.

As for removing Talisman, all those people who wanted Talisman to go actually deprived some very impoverished people in Southern Sudan of health care and educational benefits. In the process, Talisman was replaced with another company, which does not care whatsoever what happens to those people. Subsequent to that, Talisman has done what I think is a very good job under the auspices of Greg Manhas and his team to provide a very good model that other extractive industries may wish to look at in terms of corporate social responsibility.

The downstream effects have been very interesting, not only in terms of the extractive industries but also in terms of other large industrial endeavours in developing countries. We know that developing countries do not have the capacity on the ground and most of them are rife and riven with corruption. We have seen massive environmental damage, horrific health effects on people who live in certain areas, conflict, and something called the Dutch disease.

What is the Dutch disease? Developing countries have put all their eggs in one basket, an extractive industry, at the expense of maximizing innovation in other non-extractive industries. In the process, they have negatively affected their economy and the downstream effect. By focusing on one industry and not putting adequate resources into other industries to diversify their economies

in years to come, they get the Dutch disease. These countries have been negatively affected.

● (1300)

Let us look at a couple of examples. What is happening in the delta region in Nigeria right now is horrific. Companies such as Shell and others are committing atrocious acts in collusion with the Nigerian government, I have to say, against the people who live in the delta.

In Ogoniland, which is part of the delta, we see gas flaring. Gas flaring is causing catastrophic effects on the health of the people who live there, from sky-high cancer levels to other illnesses. The spinoff benefits to the people are negligible at best. The people who are hired on the rigs are not local people. They are foreigners and very few in number. If locals are hired, it is for menial work.

There is no ability to build capacity in these developing countries. That is what these extractive industries should be doing. It is not for them to be aid agencies, we know that, but it will improve their bottom line if they are able to sensibly utilize some of their profits to invest in the social well-being of the people there.

They can invest in training and in capacity building, which is key. They can give the people jobs and an opportunity to acquire skills so they will be better able to contribute to their economy. They can give them water security, food security and health care. All of these things could be done by the private sector.

The Canadian government should work with the private sector to enable this. They could be very good and very willing partners. A partnership between a private sector company and the Canadian government through CIDA could be a very constructive partnership, in effect, by working with people on the ground, with domestic NGOs, in a recipient country to build capacity, to enable countries to have the water security, food security and health care they require and also the economic development these countries need to be able to improve.

However, some of this is heartbreaking to see. I will give the example of sub-Saharan Africa, which is the poorest area in the world.

Do members know that sub-Saharan Africa has 40% of the world's natural resources? Yet the poorest people in the world live there. Why is that? Because of lack of capacity and also because of conflict and corruption, what I call the three c's, which are the three biggest problems that affect that part of the world. The extractive industries have the ability to play a very important role here.

I will also talk for a minute about environmental impacts. I mentioned the devastating effects of oil exploration in Ogoniland in the delta in Nigeria, but we also can look at the Congo River basin in Amazonia.

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In the Congo River basin, particularly in the eastern part of the Congo, there has been a genocide taking place for a number of years. More than 7 million people were killed in under five years in the eastern Congo. Did anyone hear about that? Did anyone care or do anything about that? No, they did not. Right now, every day, day in and day out, this means that the equivalent of four large passenger jets are exploding and killing more than a thousand people. That is the equivalent.

A thousand people are dying every day in the eastern Congo, but what do we hear? Nothing. Could we imagine what would happen if 1,000 people or even 100 people were dying every day in the west? There would be enormous attention paid to that.

What is also interesting is that in the eastern Congo there is a lot of extractive industry taking place for coltan, gold, diamonds and other minerals. The absence of any interest is allowing a festering wound to continue on the body politic of the world. The murder, maiming and mass rape of ultimately millions of civilians in eastern Congo is done in front of us but in such a way that no one is paying any attention.

These issues are not hidden. They are in front of us. The absence of any interest on the part of the west to address these problems is something that I frankly cannot begin to fathom, having seen this so many times myself.

In Amazonia, the same thing is happening with the destruction of the environment.

However, not all is for naught. There are things we can do. There are things that Canada could lead on. There is a willingness on the part of our private sector to work with the government to establish a set of guidelines to be adhered to.

● (1305)

As I said to the parliamentary secretary, the government should also rewrite the Special Economic Measures Act. SEMA is obsolete. We must have a way of imposing punitive actions against a private sector actor from Canada which is acting in ways that are egregious abroad, ways that we would never tolerate within our own country. I would encourage the Government of Canada to do that.

I would also say that the government needs to work with the private sector to enable that to happen. It needs a buy-in from the private sector to do that.

The government could also learn from companies such as Talisman, which has done a good job. I know that some of the other private sector groups in the world, such as Rio Tinto, BHP and placer mining, for example, have been doing some good work in trying to improve their ability to engage in CSR, but I have to say that they need to do a better job of letting the public and us know about that. Many would be willing to work with them.

I also found it very interesting when dealing with the private sector that while there is certainly some goodwill because companies understand the triple bottom line, they may not necessarily know how to achieve it. There is the ability for those of us in Canada who are involved in this area to offer ideas, solutions and ways of operationalizing this.

I would suggest that if anyone from the private sector is interested in engaging in this, what they could do is utilize the administrative structure that UNAIDS did. It is called the "Three Ones". What is it? It is one framework, one operational mechanism, and one oversight mechanism. If companies do that, they are able to utilize their moneys in the most efficient and effective fashion possible.

I would also suggest dealing with what I would argue is one of the biggest challenges, as I mentioned early on, and that is the issue of capacity building. What international and large NGOs often do, which I think is really criminal, is that they hand a framework to developing countries.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars will be spent on producing this framework. These NGOs will give it to a developing country and say, "Here it is". The people of the developing country will look at it and say, "That is nice, but how on earth can we hope to actually implement this if we do not have the capacity to implement?"

I will use a case as an example. President Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia is a remarkable woman. She is trying to dig her country out of years of being subjected to conflict as a result of the greed and avarice of a thug, former president Taylor of Liberia, who subjected his people to unspeakable horrors. He destroyed his country. It was all because of a desire to have diamonds.

What President Johnson-Sirleaf needs is capacity building. She needs western countries and the private sector to help in building up the capacity within her own country so that Liberians can have the administrative frameworks and the governance structures that are required.

They need the ability to have the proper checks and balances, the banking system, the legal system and the security apparatus so the people of the country can be secure and also so there is the ability to invest in the educational opportunities the Liberian people need.

What do we have? Nothing. The world just disappears. Extraction still takes place, but there is an inability to connect the extractive industries and their profits. That is not only for the private sector but, very importantly, for the countries who need to use those moneys to build up their own capacity.

The last issue is conflict. I want to go again to the issue of Zimbabwe, because it is very important. We know that Mr. Mugabe and the four members of his joint operations committee have destroyed their country. We know that they are burning civilians alive. We know that as Zimbabwe falls, so does the entire southern African region in many ways.

I would implore the Canadian government to work with SADEC and the African Union to say to the leadership in Zimbabwe that if it does not stop this violence, if it does not allow election monitors to go into the country, and if it does not have a free and open election at the end of this month, then that leadership will be prosecuted for crimes against humanity.

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If the leadership does not comply, then we must tell its members that we are going to organize an invasion force, a multilateral peacemaking force, to go into Zimbabwe. It should not be difficult. We know that 80% of the country is living on less than a dollar a day and most are malnourished and starving. A very small number is brutalizing these people. It needs to be removed.

The British did it in Sierra Leone and ended a conflict there that claimed a quarter of a million lives. We need to do the same in Zimbabwe as far as I am concerned. If we do not, then our responsibility to protect will mean absolutely nothing.

● (1310)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege Monday night of having supper with Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel prize laureate and founder of the Grameen Bank. It was a really interesting conversation.

I would be interested in my learned colleague's views with respect to the issue of social businesses. Social businesses, as conceptualized by Mr. Yunus, are essentially set up in the same manner as regular businesses which have a business plan, model and financing, but at the end when the businesses become profitable, the limitation is that the businesses can only take out their original capital and thereafter whatever moneys are generated by the businesses are pushed back into the businesses for social purposes.

I know my hon. friend has travelled extensively. I know that he is concerned about these issues. I would be interested in his observations with respect to Professor Yunus' developments, particularly in Bangladesh.

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for the question and again congratulate him on the passage of his bill that would ensure that CIDA has a mandate for poverty reduction. It was an incredible achievement and we certainly hope that the government comes to the House as soon as possible and tells us how it is going to implement this private member's bill championed by my colleague.

Dr. Yunus, the champion and originator of the Grameen Bank, and the concept of microcredit, is really an extraordinary individual. I agree with my friend. I think that what Canada and CIDA should be doing is to expand the work that it has done in terms of microcredit. CIDA does involve itself to some degree in microcredit, but I think it needs to expand its involvement in microcredit because the rate of return on microcredit can be anywhere from 90% to 110%. Second, it should also go beyond microcredit to do exactly what my colleague is talking about which is the utilization of microcredit for social business entrepreneurship.

There are some remarkable models that have occurred, not only in Bangladesh but also in certain parts of Africa, Central America and South America where this has worked very well. I know my colleague and many of us would like to work with the government, to work with CIDA, and to work with its president, Mr. Greenhill, to ensure that Canada can be a leader in this area which will really get assets on the ground, which does not happen as often as it should.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for his involvement in this sector.

The 14th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development was tabled in the House in March 2005. The government responded in October 2005, and subsequently created a national round table made up of all stakeholders in the mining sector, including NGOs, mining companies and anyone directly or indirectly involved.

That consultation group carried out its mission for over a year. It consulted people across the country. It issued a number of recommendations on March 29, 2007 including some concerning Canadian standards for corporate social responsibility. Certain recommendations, based on the global reporting initiative, would require the government to produce reports on corporate social responsibility. More importantly, one recommendation called for the creation of an independent ombudsman's office. NGOs and our committee also support that recommendation.

I would like to know what my hon. colleague thinks of creating an ombudsman's office.

● (1315)

[*English*]

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, it was omitted by the parliamentary secretary, but I would be remiss if I did not say to my friend and colleague that the chair of the foreign affairs committee at the time who did the groundbreaking 2005 report on extractive industries was my colleague who asked the question. So I thank our then chair for doing this. He and the team worked very well to put out a groundbreaking report and I encourage people to actually read it because it is very good.

This is a very important question. An ombudsman would be good because it would give transparency to an area that historically has been obscured and opaque. The interesting thing is we are not coming down on the private sector. We are offering something that will be beneficial to the private sector, to the extractive industries which are working in the developing world, and to the countries that are there.

To simply go into a country and engage in extractive industries without being able to make the social investment is really one-half of the opportunity that lies before them. Being able to have an ombudsman, as my friend suggested, would enable the private sector, those companies that are adhering to it, to actually be lauded in our country and be applauded in the private sector for being able to be intelligent in terms of their business plan, intelligent in terms of their investment in their industry, and intelligent in terms of their investment into the social capital in the communities they are working in. It is truly a win-win situation.

A corollary of this is really what took place in Europe where the European Union came up with a very sensible suggestion. It said that there is an obligation, as European countries, when working in a developing country or in a developed country. If they are paying moneys to the government or to whoever they are paying moneys to, then they have to list those moneys. Those moneys have to be listed and made public. In other words, everyone will know where the moneys are being paid to and in that way they can significantly reduce the corruption factor that is the cancer that eats away at the ability of developing countries to be able to move forward.

We do not do enough. Often many countries in the west have a traditional view in aid and development and aid is not the answer. Aid is part of the solution. The biggest solution is the ability for investment to get into a country where it can actually grow and improve the social welfare of the people there. That is the answer.

There is a requirement for an environment which is free of conflict, an environment where there is an adequate judicial system, an adequate security system, and an adequate area where investors can ensure that their investment is not going to be stolen. Any countries that enable that situation to occur will be able to get out from their debt hole which affects 2.5 billion people on our planet who live on less than \$2 a day.

There are so many opportunities, so many things that we can do. I would implore the government to listen to some of the concrete solutions that have been put forward that will enable us to get out of this never-ending cycle where aid really does not go anywhere or does not maximize the ability to help those who are most impoverished in our world. The failure to do that comes to affect us all negatively in the future.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, the interesting conversation with Dr. Yunus and the member's response lead me to wonder whether there should be some consideration for Canadians operating abroad to actually enter into some form of non-profit businesses as part of their corporate social responsibility. For instance, a domestic bank operating internationally enters into something like micro-finance.

I cannot think of an example with respect to a mining company, but if we are asking for some level of corporate social responsibility from our Canadian corporations, why would we not expect that possibly part of their corporate social responsibility include—

• (1320)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. There is time for a one minute response.

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I know my friend could have gone on a lot longer. It was an excellent inspired question.

A model that can be looked at now is the changes that have occurred in the mining industry in South Africa where they have actually made investments into social businesses, but they could also easily make investments into health care, primary health care as well as into education, capacity building and governance structures. Those are absolutely essential.

I would say that our government has a role to play in terms of leaning heavily and putting conditionality on the recipient country. If

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that recipient country's leadership is corrupt, then pressure must be applied to that country and conditionality must be applied to it in terms of our ability to work with it. Also we can get into the removal of trade barriers which—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate, the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise in the House to discuss this end of session motion concerning an extremely important debate. I would like to reread the motion to keep it at the forefront of our minds:

That the government provide its response in a reasonable time—

This is a reasonable motion. This report has been around for so long, the motion could well have said “immediately”. It continues:

—to the advisory group report: National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Canadian Extractive Industry in Developing Countries.

Why did I say that the motion could have been even tougher? Because the report it refers to was tabled on March 29, 2007. I would like to clarify, for the benefit of members seated to my right, that this report followed up on another that was tabled on June 20, 2005, the result of work done by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The committee unanimously adopted the 14th report, entitled “Mining in Developing Countries - Corporate Social Responsibility”.

We were proud of what we accomplished. The report contained provisions that put constraints on companies. It called on the Government of Canada to adopt a series of specific measures to:

ensure that Canadian companies have the necessary knowledge, support and incentives to conduct their activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner and in conformity with international human rights standards.

All I want to say about the report is that none of the unanimously adopted recommendations were implemented, except for the one urging the government to meet with companies and stakeholders in the sector. None of the other recommendations were acted upon by the Liberal government under Paul Martin—pardon me, Mr. Speaker, I forgot—

The Acting Speaker: The member should say, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard. And I know that I am not allowed to say that we do not often see him, so I will apologize for that right now.

Nevertheless, it is fortunate that the work carried out by the round tables, which initially had no follow up because the government had not entered into an agreement with the two other parties, in the end produced fantastic results. In fact, members of the consultative group, Canadian and Quebec NGOs and the experts were able to come to an agreement with a good part of the Canadian extractive industry. Everyone can be proud of the outcome. Some of the recommendations are found in a report to which the government is asked to respond in a reasonable period of time.

Routine Proceedings

•(1325)

I will say once again that the report was tabled on March 29, 2007, and therefore, the government should respond as quickly as possible to this report which, I believe, is extremely important.

First, before discussing the report's main recommendations, I would like to outline the context for this issue. The social and environmental responsibilities of Canadian companies abroad, particularly Canadian extractive companies, has been a concern for some time, not only for my party and, I suppose, for the other parties, but also for all citizens. That is an extremely important factor.

Second, Canada is a world leader in the mining industry. Per capita, Canada has more mining companies working abroad than any other country. They are found—and we heard groups complain about this—in Africa, South America, and Asia, where Myanmar is one specific example.

These companies are corporations and, in most cases, are listed on Canadian stock exchanges. Finally and unfortunately—and this is the reason for the complaints and the call to action—these companies are associated with forced population displacements, significant environmental damage, support for repressive regimes, serious human rights violations and sometimes even assassinations. There are many examples.

One case I want to mention was very closely followed by Parliament, and that was the Talisman affair. Someone mentioned earlier that Talisman had atoned for its sins, if I may put it that way, and today recognizes its social responsibility in the west. But when we in this Parliament heard of Talisman in late 1999 and 2000, the company held shares, along with other countries, in southern Sudan. When Talisman went into Sudan and started working with these other entities, we became aware that by adhering to a contract with the Government of Sudan, these companies had caused a resurgence of the war between north and south, which had been going on for 45 years, since the country gained independence.

Why did war flare up again when this oil company was bought and revived? Simply because, until then, the two sides in the war were exhausted, both financially and otherwise. With royalties from companies, including Talisman, the Sudanese government armed itself better and resumed waging war on the south.

•(1330)

As a result, peace, which otherwise would have been reached sooner, was slower in coming. There was considerable pressure here. A UN report condemned the abuses perpetrated by the company and especially the fact that Talisman was colluding with the army. The report was raised in Parliament, and the minister at the time, Mr. Axworthy, whom I can name because he is no longer here, was questioned. He was very embarrassed by what the UN report said about Talisman, so he sent his own investigator, Mr. Harker, who came back saying the same things. As we understood it, Mr. Axworthy was required to do something. He resigned shortly thereafter.

The next Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Manley, was also questioned. I also questioned him in committee. Mr. Manley agreed and asked who would be better off if Talisman were forced to leave

the country. That is an important question, because the Government of Canada was afraid at the time—and it may still be afraid—that if it tried to do something with one or more of the companies, they would leave.

Why do I say this? The committee proposed a framework for all Canadian businesses operating abroad because action needs to be taken for more than just a single business on just one occasion. Instead, what is needed is a code for all businesses, rules that can be used to monitor those businesses, rules that, if violated, could result in complaints and rules that will be strictly enforced. All businesses must know that they are being monitored—not just one business.

I must point out, if I may, that various kinds of businesses exist—and I worked in labour relations for a long time. Some will say that a specific business respects workers and the public, and that it does everything by the book. I do not dispute that; it is quite possible. However, given the increasing importance of shareholders these days, even that business could, at some point, be forced to change its activities. Other businesses do not conform to what is expected of them in terms of their corporate social and economic responsibilities and still others do whatever it takes to shirk them.

Under such circumstances, we should be quite pleased that the NGOs, the members of the advisory group—which included the government—that was created to look into the situation, and the experts were able to reach an agreement with what was called a large portion of the Canadian mining industry. On March 29, 2007, they urged the Government of Canada, to adopt a set of corporate social responsibility standards that Canadian extractive-sector companies operating abroad are expected to meet.

•(1335)

Some observers will say that this report is very restrained. And, since it is the result of a consensus, it may also appear to be effective because it also includes some coercive measures.

First, it asks that a clear social responsibility standard or code be established that Canadian mining companies would have to abide by abroad. I want to say from the outset that this request comes with financial incentives. The report also asks that companies file an annual report of their activities in order to be listed on the stock exchange. It recommends that an ombudsman be put in place to review complaints and ensure follow-up. The report recommends that offenders no longer be entitled to tax benefits, loan guarantees and other forms of government assistance.

Armed with the moral authority attached to these measures, Canada could then convince other countries to follow suit in mining and other industries. The committee also wanted Canada and its parliamentarians to propose these same measures in various international fora and parliamentary assemblies. For the first time, the Canadian extractive industry is stepping up to the plate. One might say we are on the eve of a major breakthrough. Let us not forget that there are a great many Canadian industries abroad.

Routine Proceedings

It is extremely important that the government take this issue seriously. This affects Canada's reputation. It is serious. It affects people's ability to earn a living. How many Africans, South Americans and Asians are struggling right now with Canadian companies that are not demonstrating one bit of the social responsibility that is expected of them?

I mentioned population displacements. We have all heard members here give a number of examples of such displacements that occur quite simply because that is what the local government wants. I could also mention the collusion between these companies and the governments that profit from the wealth passing through, as the mining companies pay lucrative royalties in order to do as they like, completely undisturbed and often with the support of the army or the local police.

Although the motion indicates that this needs to be done in a reasonable time, the government must make its position known quickly. To me, a reasonable time means quickly. I hope the government will support what the experts and those who represent the public have agreed on.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Professor Bonnie Campbell, who played a major role in all this and the mining companies that—

• (1340)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I regret that I must interrupt the hon. member.

We shall now proceed to questions and comments. The hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île for her involvement on this issue. I should note that when her committee's 14th report was tabled in March 2005, she was the vice-chair.

I would like to ask her a question and make one or two comments.

We know that 60% of the mining companies in the world are Canadian. Something rather strange is that in June 2007, the Prime Minister of Canada said the following at the G-8 summit in Germany:

Canada has recently completed a nation-wide consultation process involving stakeholders with the Canadian extractive sector (mining, oil and gas) in developing countries. Implementation of the recommendations from this process will place Canada among the most active G8 countries in advancing international guidelines and principles on corporate social responsibility in this sector.

That was three months after the release of the report by the advisory group, which had been created in October 2005. This report contained several recommendations. But it is rather strange that the Prime Minister used the advisory group's report to say that everything was fantastic and that Canada would become very proactive and the best country in the world in terms of corporate social responsibility, but, 15 months later, nothing has been done.

The primary recommendation in the report was to create an independent ombudsman's office, which would be responsible for receiving complaints from Canadians and non-Canadians about the operations in developing countries of Canadian extractive companies. It also recommended that a tripartite compliance review committee be created. Furthermore, the report recommended that provisions be developed for withdrawing government assistance in

the case of serious failure by a company to meet the corporate social responsibility standards.

Does my colleague support the recommendations of the advisory group?

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, having worked with my colleague for a long time, I would say yes as much as he would.

I said earlier that it seems extremely important to me that the government respond to and follow up on this report. If the companies and the groups representing those who want Canadian companies to show social and economic responsibility could come to an agreement, it would seem illogical to me that the government is not following up on these recommendations. My colleague has given me a chance to reiterate this very important point.

I now also have an opportunity to point out that these two parties, by meeting and coming to an agreement, have adopted a concrete approach. The ombudsman will receive complaints. He can launch an investigation, visit the companies, advise them to change their habits. If they do not, he can write a report and recommend sanctions. These sanctions are essential. Some companies do not need the threat of sanctions, others do.

I do not think that anyone can oppose setting up a framework. So, I am wondering what the government is waiting for. I would like to thank those who made it possible for us to ask these questions today.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in this House and add my support to our government's efforts to promote and encourage effective corporate social responsibility to Canada's extractive sector. I commend all members of all parties for the way they have commended Canada's extractive sector.

I recognize the complexity of the task at hand and I fully support the government's careful, considered approach to the advisory group's recommendations.

This issue is far too complex and involves too many different players to feel like we are pressured into moving too quickly and certainly the considered, careful approach is one that we would expect from any responsible government, which is why I am encouraged that our government is taking the time to get it right.

I am also very encouraged by the enormous progress that Canada has made on this issue over the many years. I was encouraged today when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out in his speech some very effective, voluntary, corporate social responsible practices that have been put in place by Canadian companies over a number of years.

We see those responsibilities playing out in many different countries around the world. Many of these companies and industry associations are recognized for the great work they are doing in communities in Canada and abroad in support of education, health and social well-being and diversified economic development. Each one of those is a speech in itself.

Routine Proceedings

Many corporations and many of our responsible oil companies are helping to enhance the education system, the health care system and the way of life for many people around the world. The government certainly encourages this.

We encourage and expect all Canadian companies in all sectors to respect all applicable laws and international standards and to work in close collaboration with host governments. We applaud their ongoing efforts to make a positive impact in the communities in which they are operating. However, there is a shared responsibility among all actors, including governments, to ensure the right conditions are in place to facilitate good corporate conduct. We have heard that here in this place today. We have heard different members from other parties talk about the government putting in place good practices and we see that is happening.

I would like to take a few moments today to recognize some of the great work the government is doing in support of corporate social responsible, or CSR, principles.

In addition to organizing the round tables under discussion today, Canada is also a strong supporter of the international extractive industries transparency initiative, or EITI. This was one of the advisory group's central recommendations. We can see that the government is living up to that. It has been recommended and we endorse that type of recommendation.

The initiative supports and promotes improved governance in resource rich developing nations by publishing and verifying all company payments and government revenues stemming from the extractive sector. It is proving to be an effective way of publishing what companies pay and what governments receive in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

I do not think it is a surprise to anyone that around the world these principles are not universal. These principles are not something that every governing body around the world would sign onto. Therefore, Canada plays a major role in working government to government to encourage these types of socially responsible principles.

• (1350)

The advisory group also recommended enhanced public reporting by the Canada Investment Fund for Africa, yet another step this government has endorsed.

As a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, Canada is a proud signatory to the OECD's guidelines for multinational enterprises. This is a multilateral instrument to promote corporate social responsibility and has been the cornerstone of Canada's approach to this issue.

This means that Canada is obliged to establish and maintain a national contact point, someone who is responsible for promoting OECD guidelines, handling inquiries and helping to resolve issues concerning specific instances of Canadian businesses' conduct abroad, including the business of mining and oil companies or, what we call, the extractive sector. The principle is being endorsed.

There has been talk about an ombudsman. We have a contact person responsible for some of that who is a director general within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. This is an effective way to engage stakeholders and to promote a positive, open

and constructive dialogue between multinational companies and those that are affected by their operations in those countries.

As members know, Canada is also a member of the International Labour Organization, or the ILO. We fully support the ILO's tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy. This is considered to be the universal basic reference point for social responsibility in the context of work or labour.

Export Development Canada, EDC, announced last year its support for the Ecuador principles. These principles are an international financing benchmark for assessing and managing social and environmental risks in project financing.

Canada has also provided financial support for a number of domestic and international initiatives aimed at promoting corporate social responsibility. For example, we provided financial support to the UN special representative to the secretary-general on business and human rights.

We have supported efforts to identify best practices for companies that are operating in combat zones. When Canadian corporations are in countries where conflict and war has broken out, there is a list of best practices for those companies.

What do Canadians expect? Canadians expect that in those types of situations our Canadian companies remain responsible. Therefore, a clear line of operating principles has been laid out.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade is undertaking a comprehensive initiative to ensure that its trade and diplomatic officers in Canada and abroad have the information and tools they need to provide effective corporate social responsible advice to Canadian clients around the world. This includes informational sessions and targeted training modules to ensure our embassies abroad and the regional DFAIT offices have individuals who, when they need training on how to understand the corporate social responsibilities in that given country, are given that training to ensure they have the ability not only to understand the principles laid out, but that they can then pass it on to the companies operating within that jurisdiction.

We also recognize the importance of fostering close partnerships with host governments in helping developing countries build the capacity they need to establish strong, effective, corporate social responsible regimes in their own countries.

We do recognize that not all governments, especially those governments in developing countries, have the tools, the knowledge or the capacity to ensure that corporate social responsible principles are being applied in their own countries. If their own home governments are not going to put these policies in place, Canadians can be assured that Canada will.

Statements by Members

●(1355)

That is why, for example, we are providing financial assistance to help Peru join the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises. Peru's adherence to the declaration would be a huge step forward for that country in terms of corporate social responsibility practices and adherence to the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises. Our involvement in Peru also contributes to strengthening economic partnerships in Latin America, a region that is of utmost priority for this government. It is an initiative that we are very proud to support.

In fact, resource governance is an issue in which Canada can play a big role. Our vast experience in developing our own resources over the decades has given us a wide scope of expertise to share with partners in developing nations. This would be an excellent area of further cooperation as developing countries build up their own expertise and create the foundations for successful, open and responsible extraction sectors that can benefit their citizens.

The Government of Canada, in partnership with mining associations and aboriginal organizations, has also developed a mining kit to help aboriginal people evaluate and participate in the opportunities offered by the mining sector. This kit is now used and adapted in many countries, including the Philippines, Australia, Norway and Peru. They recognize Canada's initiative and they are following up on our practice. Indeed, Canada's voice on this issue is an influential one that is being heard around the world.

We are also working closely with our partners through APEC, OAS, La Francophonie and G-8 to communicate the importance of corporate social responsibility principles to the business community. Indeed, at last year's G-8 summit in Germany, leaders agreed to promote a consolidated set of internationally recognized corporate social responsibility guidelines for the extractive sector. This is yet another good example of how we are working with our global partners on this important issue.

I am happy to say that we are even extending this principled approach to our trade negotiations. The member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca brought up the importance of trade negotiations and the removal of trade barriers.

As members know, we recently signed a free trade agreement with Peru. While this is a very significant victory for Canadian exporters and investors who will now enjoy unprecedented access to this important market, the agreement is good and important for another reason also. This treaty is Canada's first free trade agreement to include language that encourages the parties to support positive corporate socially responsible practices and reminds enterprises of the importance of incorporating those corporate social responsibility standards in their internal policies. We also signed parallel agreements on labour and the environment.

Canada is a leader in this. The opposition has asked when the government will come forward with a reply. It is a considered reply. It is a reply that will be coming in due course and we look forward to that.

We are grateful for the opportunity to share the good things that Canada is doing in—

●(1400)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings on the motion at this time.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, debate on the motion is deferred until a future sitting.

We will now move on to statements by members. The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock has the floor.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

Mr. Barry Devolin (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as summer gets into full swing, many towns across my riding of Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock are again preparing for their annual fairs and agricultural exhibitions.

In most cases, it is the local agricultural society that runs these multi-day events. While fairs have always been one of their major functions, agricultural societies also pursue the advancement of agriculture with other activities, such as the buying and selling of seed and the keeping of breeding stock.

My riding boasts a variety of traditional summer and fall fairs, many with well over 100 years of history, as well as numerous other fall festivals.

This weekend the 159th annual Millbrook Fair kicks off fair season in my riding. I am pleased to say my family and I will be there to take part in the opening ceremonies. Next weekend it is the 160th annual Oakwood Fair.

I recognize that many of these events continue today because of the hard work and dedication of many volunteers. For most of the year, fair and exhibition volunteers give freely of their time, skills, creativity and energy for the benefit of people and communities, helping to make Canada one of the best places to live.

* * *

CHILD LABOUR

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize World Day Against Child Labour. The International Labour Organization estimates that about 165 million children between the ages of five and fourteen are involved in child labour around the world.

[*Translation*]

Many of these children work long hours, often in dangerous conditions. In addition, child labour being directly linked to poverty, numerous families depend on a working child to contribute to the family income. That leaves little room for education.

Today more than ever, each child deserves quality education and training to succeed.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

In the millennium development goals, the United Nations set targets ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education and that there be gender parity in education. These targets cannot be met unless the factors that generate child labour and prevent poor families from sending children to school are addressed.

I call on all my colleagues to raise awareness that education is the right response to child labour.

* * *

*[Translation]***BERTHIERVILLE MUSIC FESTIVAL**

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight a significant event scheduled for the week of July 31 to August 3 in my riding, Berthier—Maskinongé.

This is the 14th edition of the Berthierville “Tout pour la musique” festival. This event will be better than ever in 2008. It has been gaining momentum every year with its varied program showcasing local talent.

The festival's vitality and creativity, together with the warm welcome extended by the people of Berthierville, reflect who we are. The festival makes an invaluable contribution to the economy and shows off our magnificent region.

I would like to thank and congratulate the organizing committee, the many volunteers, the sponsors, and the municipal authorities who have worked together to ensure the success of the Tout pour la musique festival. I would also like to salute the exceptional contribution of the president, Bernard Grégoire, who has overseen this event for many years now.

* * *

*[English]***LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today people are asking a very good question. Where did the Liberals go? Not once, not twice, but 28 times, the Liberals have either supported, abstained or simply not shown up to vote on key government legislation. On every occasion, the Liberals spouted out empty rhetoric and told Canadians that they were vehemently opposed to the government agenda and threatened to force an election, and every time the Liberals backed down.

The Liberal record is clear. They supported our Speech from the Throne. The Liberals endorsed our environmental plans, the toughest in Canadian history. The Liberals supported our tough on crime legislation. Most recently, on the budget bill and immigration reforms, the Liberals tried to fearmonger and feign contempt, but when it came time to vote, again they backed down.

With a deeply divided caucus and his carbon tax trick to defend, it is no surprise the Liberal leader is backing down.

Canadians will not be tricked.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were shocked and saddened this week by the passage of the Conservative government's immigration law. The new law will abolish any guarantee of fairness in the system. It will not help reunite families and it will not end the backlog of almost a million applications. Instead, it will shift the focus to temporary workers who have no opportunity to put down Canadian roots. It will allow the Conservative minister to make totally arbitrary decisions about who stays and who goes.

We needed real reforms. We need to clear that application backlog. We need to bring families together.

The Conservatives could not bring in this awful law alone. They needed help and they got it. The Conservatives' new best friends, the Liberal caucus, sat by and watched the law pass. They could have stopped it. They should have stopped it, but they did not. Thousands of families will suffer as a result of the Liberals' self-serving refusal to simply say no.

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● (1405)

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, June is Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Traumatic head injury is the leading cause of death or disability in young men. A shocking 30% of children and youth who participate in sport sustain a head injury. There are more than 100,000 brain injuries a year in Canada.

The good news is the majority of these sport related injuries are preventable. A helmet that conforms to Canadian Standards Association standards can protect precious brains from injuries that kill, disable or permanently rob a life of its potential. The only sport helmets that currently conform to standards are hockey and lacrosse helmets.

In March 2007, I tabled Bill C-412 that would amend the Hazardous Products Act to prohibit the sale, import or advertising of substandard recreational snow sport helmets.

As it stands, my bill will not soon come to the House for debate, but the Minister of Health could make this amendment through governor in council. He has not been willing to do so, choosing instead to support industry. I urge him to do it now, this month, before more young lives are destroyed.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Denis Lebel (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party is determined to impose his famous carbon tax on Canadians, plunging them into a spiral of reckless spending.

We will not let the Liberals do this, because they are hiding what they really have planned for Canadians, which is to create a new permanent tax to fund reckless spending.

Canadians know when someone is trying to put one over on them by tying up plans with a pretty green ribbon, in the form of strict emissions management. When politicians use vague terms such as “green shift”, Canadians can be sure that taxes will go in one direction only, and that is up.

Canadians understand what the real impact on their buying power will be. The carbon tax is nothing but a new permanent tax that will kill jobs and raise the cost of gasoline, electricity and everything Canadians buy.

Canadians know they cannot trust the Liberal leader.

* * *

GILLES CARLE

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last night, at the same time that we were given the good news that four of his films will be available on DVD this fall, the Association des propriétaires de cinémas et cinéparcs du Québec was awarding the Bobine d'Or to Gilles Carle in recognition of his significant contribution to the Quebec film industry.

Throughout his prolific career, this pioneer of our national film industry viewed his fellow Quebecers from a unique but never sentimental perspective. He received many national and international honours attesting to his genius for depicting our strengths and our weaknesses—both in documentaries and fiction. As a director, he shone the spotlight on the talented performers and craftspeople whose love of movie-making he inspired.

Although the passage of time is taking its toll on the man himself, his works will remain forever powerful.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I salute you, Gilles Carle.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX PROPOSAL

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituents will not be tricked by the Liberals' carbon tax.

My constituents know that the Liberal leader has a serious spending problem. He has already made billions of dollars in spending promises to various special interest groups. Now the Liberals are trying to pay for all this irresponsible spending by tricking Canadians into paying a permanent new carbon tax. The Liberals' carbon tax would destroy jobs and drive up the cost of gas, electricity and everything else. We know it is bad when the Liberal

environment critic cannot even convince his own brother, the Ontario premier, that it is a good plan.

Our Conservative government will stand up for rural Canada, for the farmers, for young families, for small business, seniors and shift workers. We will stand up against this Liberal carbon tax. In the rural areas of my riding, families have to travel a long distance. Fuel is a major input cost on every farm.

Even today in the finance committee, Liberals endorsed fuel tax increases. Why are the Liberals intent on hurting rural Canada, rural Canadians, seniors and those living on fixed incomes?

* * *

● (1410)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Frederick Couchie, father of Marianna Couchie, Chief of Nipissing No. 10 reserve. Fred Couchie was sent to Garnier Indian residential school at the age of nine. His name was taken from him and in its place, he was given the number 76. Away from his family and community he was robbed of his culture, his language and his dignity. Consequently, throughout his life Fred suffered from both physical and psychological health problems.

The residential school system existed because one group of people thought that they were better than another and believed that they had the right to impose their language, culture and beliefs on the first nations people.

I wish to remind Canadians of the atrocities that are committed when one group thinks itself as superior. Race, gender, culture, religion, and sexual orientation are but a few of the excuses humans use to subjugate others.

Today I call on all Canadians to study our history, understand the consequences of discrimination and avoid repeating historic blunders so that thousands of people like Fred Couchie did not suffer in vain.

Chi-meegwetch.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *tansi, delangete*, yesterday was truly a historic day. A sincere and meaningful apology for the sad legacy of residential schools was given by this government.

Although the apology was significant and necessary, this government is pleased to be putting our words into actions by following through with compensation to former students of residential schools, and most important, getting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission up and running.

Under the leadership of the chief commissioner, Justice Harry LaForme, the commission will play an important role leading to a better understanding of the history and the impact residential schools had on aboriginal communities.

Statements by Members

I am pleased that the work of the commission began on June 1 and that this government is following through on its commitments to Canada's aboriginal communities.

As a friend of many survivors of residential schools, yesterday's apology was a significant step in a new direction.

It is an honour to serve as a member of this Conservative government that has kept its promise.

* * *

IRAQ

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on June 3 of this year, the House adopted a motion to allow those American soldiers opposed to the Iraq war to stay in Canada. Some Canadians, including some members of the House, opposed this initiative, mainly on the grounds that these young people voluntarily chose to enlist.

I am reading a book by Joshua Key, one of the war resisters in Canada, called *The Deserter's Tale*, which outlines how a poor Oklahoma boy from a dysfunctional family was lured into the U.S. Army with promises of health insurance and higher education.

It is important for all of us to clearly understand how poor American kids are targeted into enlisting and how many are lied to.

Joshua Key was explicitly told on a number of occasions that he would be building bridges in the U.S. as an engineer and not fighting in Iraq. However, he ended up in Iraq, taking part in house raids where U.S. soldiers abducted the men of the families, terrified women and children and pillaged their homes.

We need to understand the nature of this war and its effect. As an immediate humanitarian gesture, I urge the minister to cancel the deportation of another war resister, Corey Glass, who faces a prison sentence and criminal record because of his opposition to the illegal war.

* * *

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative members truly distinguished themselves at Tuesday's late night meeting of the ethics committee. Whereas members from all opposition parties came to the meeting in a spirit of compromise and cooperation, the Conservative members of the committee had three items on their agenda: delay, disruption and disrespect.

One member introduced a motion that said Elections Canada, the organization that certified his election as a member of Parliament, was biased and incompetent.

Conservative members of the committee actually voted against amendments they themselves had proposed. Later they argued in favour of amendments that they had tried to have ruled out of order.

The government members went on to engage in bitter, personal and unacceptable attacks against the chair of the committee. A particular member led this attack, an attack on common decency and respect. I can only assume he was preparing for his radio appearance the next day.

It was a shameful display of the government's propensity to always, always race to the bottom.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RAYMOND LALIBERTÉ

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it was with much sadness that we learned of the passing of Raymond Laliberté. This great man was one of the pillars of the union movement in Quebec's educational sector during the pivotal time of the Quiet Revolution. He was a person of strong conviction and dedication and left a lasting mark on the Centrale des syndicats du Québec.

From 1965 to 1970, he was head of the Corporation générale des instituteurs et institutrices catholiques du Québec, which became the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec and then the Centrale des syndicats du Québec. He oversaw the process to make this organization non-denominational and bring it more in line with the entire Quebec labour movement.

Raymond Laliberté was a genuine pedagogue, a progressive man and a remarkable humanitarian. Known for his discretion and humility, this trailblazer nonetheless laid the groundwork for the modern, educated society that is Quebec today.

* * *

● (1415)

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the Conservative members opposite is the Prime Minister's point man on the Conservative election financing scandal and a parliamentary secretary who covers for a number of cabinet ministers.

Why then, on the national day of apology to residential school survivors, did the member engage in inexcusably hurtful and demeaning remarks toward aboriginal Canadians?

The member publicly complained about compensation to residential school survivors saying:

Some of us are starting to ask, are we really getting value for all of this money and is money really going to solve the problem?

He went on to say:

—we need to engender the values of hard work and independence and self reliance.

Aboriginal Canadians have always been independent and self-reliant for thousands of years and they could teach that member the meaning of hard work and what it is like to get his hands dirty in order to feed his family.

The member should recognize this and should apologize.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer a full apology to aboriginal people, to the House and to all Canadians.

Yesterday, on a day when the House and all Canadians were celebrating a new beginning, I made remarks that were hurtful and wrong.

I accept responsibility for them, and I apologize.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday leaders in the House formally apologized for the legacy of residential schools. We must now move forward toward truth and reconciliation.

Will the Prime Minister give his words weight by, for example, honouring his election promise to compensate the victims of schools who have been left out of the settlement, such as Île-à-la-Crosse in Saskatchewan?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, there were a number of schools similar to Indian residential schools that were run by provincial governments. They were not covered by the settlement, which was ultimately negotiated with the Assembly of First Nations. We understand these are unresolved issues and I know the minister, I and others have spoken about the need for governments to address these issues.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Except, Mr. Speaker, that during the election the Prime Minister did not say “a government”. He said “his government” would solve this issue—

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Immediately.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: —immediately. He must honour his words and show that he will, indeed, compensate these schools in order to show that the words yesterday will be followed by a new era for Canada in our relationship with aboriginal peoples.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the case of Île-à-la-Crosse, the Leader of the Opposition should know that there was a federal residential school in Île-à-la-Crosse, but in fact there are no living survivors of that school today. There was later a provincial residential school. As I indicated, we understand that remains an unresolved issue.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): I think there were survivors, Mr. Speaker, but we need to check to see if the Prime Minister is right. If he is wrong, I am sure he will then compensate.

• (1420)

[Translation]

I would also like to ask the Prime Minister if the words spoken yesterday by the aboriginal leaders changed his mind in any way. Is he now willing to ensure that Canada, which has always defended

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human rights around the world, everywhere and under any circumstances, honours its commitment regarding the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows that Canada has never made such a commitment—it did not even make such a commitment when his party was in power. We have made our position very clear: we are in favour of an agreement on the issue of such important rights.

However, so far, we have some concerns about that agreement. And we have proposed amendments in the House of Commons with a view to improving aboriginal rights in Canada, for example, property rights for aboriginal women. I hope we will have the support of the opposition.

[English]

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank all party leaders for their words yesterday. They were words of apology and sorrow for the horror of residential schools. I honour those words and hope they are embraced by all Canadians.

However, yesterday the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board demonstrated through his words ignorance and intolerance, the same attitudes that led to the historic wrongs that were the subject of yesterday's apology.

Will the Prime Minister denounce those words, words that smack of racism and paternalism?

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think we all heard the words from the parliamentary secretary just before question period. I urge all members to consider those. They were heartfelt and I appreciated his honesty and candour.

As he said, yesterday was a new beginning for a relationship between aboriginal and first nations people. We are delighted that apology was not only here in the House, with comments from all leaders, but was so well received by the leaders on the floor, truly a historic day.

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am saddened and hurt by the attitude expressed by the official spokesperson for the government. Referring to the residential school settlement, he said, “Some of us are starting to ask, are we really getting value for all of this money?” However, how do we place a value on a stolen child?

Just two hours later the Prime Minister stated, “There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail”.

Will the Prime Minister stand by his words and remove his parliamentary secretary?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as all members of the House know, the parliamentary secretary has apologized for remarks that were wrong. I know he also forthwith contacted national aboriginal associations to indicate that.

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I know that yesterday we had a historic event, something for which aboriginal people in our country have been waiting a very long time. I know all parties in the House were supportive of that spirit of apology. I also know the hon. member in question was very supportive of those actions of the government.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in addition to her troubled past and many ties to organized crime, yesterday we learned that Julie Couillard lobbied members of the Minister of Public Works' inner circle to obtain a contract for the Kevlar realty company. According to Michel Juneau-Katsuya, an intelligence expert, Ms. Couillard's approach appears to be a "classic recruitment exercise".

With all this compromising information that has come to light about Ms. Couillard, does the Prime Minister still believe that this is a private matter and does he intend to continue using this excuse to avoid testifying before the Standing Committee on Public Safety?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the contract mentioned by the Leader of the Bloc Québécois, the truth is that no decision has been made.

● (1425)

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have been told that there was an attempt, but that no decision was made. What I am saying is that the information is more than just disturbing and that it is not a question of private lives. It is a matter of public interest.

I will ask him this: will he stop hiding behind the excuse, which no one believes any longer, that this is a private matter? It is a public concern. Will he prove that he has a sense of honour and responsibility and testify before the Standing Committee on Public Safety? That is his duty.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works has already exercised his responsibility in this matter. With regard to the contract, no decision has been made. The reality is that we have a competitive process that is managed by the department's officials, as it should be.

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP knew about Julie Couillard's shady past before her relationship with the former minister of foreign affairs. The RCMP has acknowledged that if its investigation raises concerns, it must notify the authorities.

Given all of the troubling facts that have come to light since this whole affair began, is the Prime Minister saying that the RCMP acted unprofessionally in failing to notify him?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we do know is the RCMP did not advise the Privy Council Office or the Prime Minister's Office of any concerns of a security nature.

We also know the Department of Foreign Affairs is conducting a review of this matter. Any important findings that it turns up will be made public.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP may not have done its job, though I doubt that, but the department itself was responsible for conducting a security screening on its new minister.

Did Foreign Affairs Canada inform the Prime Minister of the former minister's questionable, dangerous relationship?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member is one of several opposition members who is very interested in conducting a lengthy inquiry into the pasts of people. I know they will do that, the legislative committee they have pursuing that.

We instead are focused on more substantive issues. That is why we have asked the Department of Foreign Affairs to look into the more serious questions arising out of this matter. We look forward to its report.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to see members join forces for a common cause and for the common good. As Phil Fontaine said yesterday in this House, "the significance of this day is not just about what has been but, equally important, what is to come."

Will the Prime Minister commit, from this day forward, to working with first nations as equals in order to foster true reconciliation?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is how the government always works with all Canadians.

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has guided us ably in this matter.

[English]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am specifically asking that water and schools be put on a higher priority footing by the government. The students in Attawapiskat, for example, have been told that there are 28 schools in worse conditions. I have seen their school and that is a horrific situation. They have been told that it could take up to five years. Over 100 aboriginal communities face water crises each summer.

Will the Prime Minister, in the spirit of what happened yesterday, accelerate the commitment of development funds in those two key sectors so these issues can be resolved?

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Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the government has been doing in aboriginal affairs since it took office is making new investments and trying to make them in a way that is transformative and that lead to much better results than in the past. The former minister of Indian affairs made water a priority when he took office and considerable progress has been made in a very short time.

In terms of education, we signed a historic agreement for a transformative change with the Government of British Columbia and are working with other governments in that regard. There has been a long period of neglect of vital services but the government is acting to get results for future generations of aboriginal Canadians.

* * *

• (1430)

NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has shown an appalling lack of judgment in the matter of Julie Couillard. Every day there are more questions. It is now clear that organized crime may have been trying to infiltrate the government. Late yesterday, the Privy Council Office denied that the RCMP ever told it about the risks she may have posed.

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians, if it were not the RCMP, which government agency informed his office or the PCO about the risk she posed to national security?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has a particular interest in the more interesting aspects of this matter. Yesterday he appeared on television talking about his concerns about the people who have been dating or who have been sleeping with Julie Couillard. He said that was what they needed to know, which is why they needed to have their legislative inquiry.

It is not the practice of this government to conduct inquiries into people's dating or sleeping practices. That is a Liberal policy.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that answer is from the House leader of the party that wants Ms. Couillard's hairdresser to come and testify before the committee.

The RCMP testified at committee this week that it is standard practice for the RCMP to alert the PCO of all security concerns. Surely the RCMP knew that organized crime was trying to infiltrate the government but the PCO is now claiming that it did not get information from the RCMP about this.

If the system failed, will the Prime Minister tell Canadians where it broke down?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have already indicated, the RCMP did not advise the Prime Minister's Office or the Privy Council Office of any security concerns. However, we know that is not really what the member is asking. What he is really asking is what he said yesterday on television when he said, "Ms. Couillard has relationships in Mr. Fortier's office, with [the member for Beauce]. Who else does she have relationships with? I'd like to know".

Apparently, it is all about sordid little inquiries into people's personal lives. That is where the Liberal Party has come to today.

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the RCMP, it is not private life, it is public interest.

We now learn that Ms. Couillard's attempts to infiltrate the Conservative government targeted not one, not two but three different government departments. She had access to secret foreign affairs documents. She dined with the public safety minister. She tried to influence real estate contracts at Public Works.

How many more departments did she try to infiltrate? Does the Prime Minister not realize that nothing short of a full public inquiry will reassure Canadians about his government's integrity?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Liberal Party made it clear what it was looking for in this inquiry when it said, "Who did she have relationships with? I'd like to know". This is all about finding sordid stories that make for good news for those who are into gossip and that sort of stuff. This is not about the important questions of public policy. The Liberals can dress it up however they want but that is not what they are after.

We are interested and concerned about those serious questions, which is why we have foreign affairs dealing with this matter in a professional and mature fashion.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Couillard affair remains a persistent grease spot. Every day, its stain spreads to the reputation of another department. Julie Couillard had access to secret Foreign Affairs documents, she had conversations with the Minister of Public Safety, and she tried to influence Public Works Canada's contracting process.

What more does the government need to launch a public inquiry into this affair? What more does the Prime Minister need to finally show proof of good judgment?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there was only one error in judgment in this matter and that was the error of the member for Beauce when he left classified documents in an unsecured location. He took responsibility for that error in judgment and tendered his resignation, which was accepted.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister offered an official apology to the victims of federal residential schools. This apology was necessary, but it is not enough. The next step is reconciliation with aboriginal peoples and, for that, tangible action is required. The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and Member for Nepean—Carleton may have offered an apology, but he failed to show respect for first nations.

Does the Prime Minister intend to act with respect towards the first nations and sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

• (1435)

[English]

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the issue of human rights, it is the same as the rest of the government's policies. We would like to see concrete progress here in Canada on things that really matter to first nations and aboriginal people. That is why we have moved ahead, for the first time in 30 years, to include first nations living on reserve under the Canadian Human Rights Act. That 30 year gap needed to be fixed.

More than that, we have also moved ahead with matrimonial real property rights. We are also moving ahead on specific claims, something for which first nations have been waiting for 60 years. It is time to get things right for aboriginal people.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will try again. Perhaps the interpretation was not complete. That was not my question.

True reconciliation requires putting words into action and should start with the signing of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as Beverley Jacobs, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada called for yesterday.

When will the government make up its mind to endorse this declaration, as all aboriginal peoples are asking it to do?

[English]

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, what Ms. Jacobs said yesterday to the Prime Minister here on the floor of the House is:

We have given thanks to you for your apology. I have to also give you credit for standing up. I did not see any other governments before today come forward and apologize, so I do thank you for that.

That is because we are taking concrete steps to make things better for aboriginal people, first nations people across this country.

It is not enough to have aspirational documents, documents that sound good in flowery phrases, aboriginal people, first nations people deserve concrete steps that make a difference in their lives today.

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec should realize that when he takes cheap shots at Quebec's Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade, he is attacking the Quebec nation's approach to economic development. This economic model, which includes non-profit organizations, has proven its effectiveness and has the support of elected representatives and stakeholders throughout Quebec.

Does the minister understand that he is the only person who does not recognize that the change he is proposing is actually nothing but a mistake, and will he restore funding for these organizations, which are vital to regional development in Quebec?

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 Bloc Québécois thinks that Ottawa should always say yes to every request, without ensuring that the budget allows it.

This same party wanted the federal government to get out of economic development and voted against the agency. Yet under the Constitution, regional economic development is an area of shared jurisdiction. The Bloc members should stop talking out of both sides of their mouths. I repeat, they should ask Quebec City to respect the federal government's jurisdiction.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is wrong when he criticizes Quebec's model as a defence of the status quo. This model is defended by the National Assembly of Quebec and the entire Quebec nation. The minister himself is defending the indefensible by advocating a return to the dark ages, the time of election goodies, at the expense of economic and regional development in Quebec.

Will the minister stop acting like a mini-Duplessis, wake up and restore funding for economic organizations?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our department has a budget envelope of approximately \$200 million. I want to remind the Bloc Québécois that our government has given \$1.6 billion more to the Government of Quebec in the past year. Out of this \$1.6 billion, the economic development minister in Quebec City has received an additional \$242 million, bringing his budget up to roughly \$800 million.

If Quebec wants to fund various organizations and cover their operating expenses and salaries, it can do so. It has full jurisdiction.

• (1440)

[English]

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the Couillard affair, there is an emergent and troubling pattern, a pattern of a government being infiltrated by people with connections to organized crime. First it was foreign affairs and now public works.

We also now know that the Minister of Public Safety had dinner with the ex-foreign affairs minister and Ms. Couillard.

My question is simple. Rather than just attacking to obfuscate, could the government answer as to whether there were any matters with respect to the Government of Canada discussed at that dinner?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is the hon. member for Ajax—Pickering speaking who earlier was critical of the Ontario Provincial Police when he claimed that it had been involved in political wrongdoing, and the Police Complaints Commissioner had to condemn his political interference in the police process. Now he is trying to suggest that the RCMP is not doing its job.

We will wait to see if there is any police force in this country that he has any respect for.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a minister who gets all the questions but knows how to do nothing but attack and denigrate.

A senior adviser for the Minister of Public Works was forced to resign—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Ajax—Pickering has the floor.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, as a government, maybe it can just try to answer a question.

A senior adviser to the Minister of Public Works was forced to resign because he was having a relationship with Ms. Couillard when negotiating a multi-million dollar land deal at the same time.

The government cannot hide behind a feeble defence of privacy. This involves someone with links to organized crime and national security.

Will the Prime Minister simply tell Canadians what sensitive information Ms. Couillard had access to in a critical land deal worth more than \$30 million?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member misspoke himself in his first sentence. He used the word minister to refer to himself. I think he is merely a member of Parliament at this stage.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like security expert Michel Juneau-Katsuya we believe the Julie Couillard affair was an attempt to infiltrate the government. In whose name? For

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whom? These are good questions. And to think that the Conservatives were ready to ask her to run in the next election.

After foreign affairs, she took a run at public works. No matter how well Michael Fortier can skate around the issue, no one believes his story that he did not meet Julie Couillard.

Infiltration? Cover up? Undue pressure? Perhaps blackmail? What is the Prime Minister waiting for to launch a public inquiry?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we need those legislative hearings now because he covered everything that they were going to say in them.

The reality is, dealing with just one of the many things he suggested there, Ms. Couillard is not a candidate and has never been a candidate for the Conservative Party. She is not even a member of the Conservative Party.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if it is private or public interest here.

Let us cut to the chase here. There were security breaches. There was ample warning and yet the government ignored every clue it got.

Given her connections to organized crime and biker gangs, did the government ever wonder whose ambition Ms. Couillard was serving? First, foreign affairs and now public works. What is the Prime Minister waiting for? When will he call a full public inquiry?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is responding in an appropriate fashion to the matters that have been raised here. The Department of Foreign Affairs is conducting a review into the one matter of concern that is legitimate here and that was the question of classified documents being left in an unsecured place. We look forward to it completing that work.

* * *

COPYRIGHT

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that copyright reform in Canada is long overdue. Canadian consumers need to have reasonable use of the latest technologies without fear of infringing copyright law. Under the current laws, Canadians run the risk of being sued for the everyday use of the products and services that they buy.

Could the Minister of Industry confirm to the House that the bill he tabled today ensures that Canadian consumers will no longer be treated like criminals for the everyday use of things like time shifting their television programs or copying CD music to their iPods?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as has been promised previously, this bill seeks to strike a balance between consumers and their rights on the one hand, and on the other hand those who are creators in our society. It is an important bill.

Oral Questions

I would point out that it has been well received. There is positive commentary that has been extensive at this point about the introduction of the bill. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Entertainment Software Association of Canada, the Business Software Alliance, ACTRA, the Canadian Film and Television Production Association, the Canadian Publishers' Council, the Canadian Intellectual Property Council have all welcomed the introduction of the bill.

* * *

• (1445)

OMAR KHADR

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Omar Khadr has been detained by U.S. officials for 2053 days. He has been interrogated countless times. The first charges did not stick, so the U.S. military created a new charge. His trial was cancelled, rescheduled, then the judge was replaced, all with evidence mounting that the United States simply is not telling the truth about the circumstances of Mr. Khadr's arrest.

I want an unequivocal answer from the government. Does it agree with the U.S. supreme court and others associated with the case that the Bush administration's Guantanamo Bay process is illegal?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not comment on the judicial process of another country, but what is important to understand is that Mr. Khadr faces some very serious charges regarding terrorism.

The Government of Canada strongly believes that the fight against terrorism must be carried out in compliance with international law including the established standards of human rights and due process.

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): That is repeated empty spin, Mr. Speaker.

Six French nationals were released by the U.S. to France in 2004 and 2005; British national Moazzam Begg was released in January 2005; Murat Kurnaz, a Turkish-German, was released in August, 2006; and Australian David Hicks was released in April, 2007. Omar Khadr is the only western detainee left. He must come home to Canada.

There are many recommendations on the way this can be done. The only question that remains is, when will the Prime Minister bring Omar Khadr home?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated on numerous occasions, Mr. Khadr faces very serious charges in relation to his capture in Afghanistan. Any questions regarding Mr. Khadr's return to Canada are premature and speculative, as the legal process and appeals are still going on.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this same point.

The United States supreme court today, in a five to four ruling, said clearly that habeas corpus applied in the United States and that

the detention of several of the detainees in Guantanamo Bay did not meet the standards of the United States constitution.

It is a very simple question for the government today. Just what is it going to take for the government to understand that Omar Khadr should face justice in Canada and not in Guantanamo Bay? That is what should happen.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not comment on any questions regarding another country's judicial process, but I would like to say to the former NDP leader of Ontario that he can ask his leader what was his government's policy because this policy was initiated when his leader was in the cabinet of the previous government.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today's decision by the U.S. Supreme Court is the court's third decision unequivocally stipulating that human rights must be respected. It is clear that Mr. Khadr's rights have been violated. He was 15 years old when he was arrested.

Now, we are sending a clear message to this government that Mr. Khadr must be tried under the Canadian justice system and Canadian laws, and not under an illegal procedure in the United States.

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada strongly believes that the fight against terrorism must be carried out in compliance with international law, including established standards of human rights and due process. That is the Government of Canada's position. Mr. Khadr faces very serious charges of terrorism.

However, let me just say the government is following the same policy that the previous government established in 2002.

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• (1450)

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec has not convinced us that his decision to cut funding to not for profit organizations was well founded. Neither his provincial counterpart nor Quebec's business community were dazzled by the wisdom of his decision. Perhaps we are not addressing the right person. The minister told us that it was his cabinet colleagues who forced his hand.

Could the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, the Prime Minister's Quebec lieutenant, tell us which organizations will be affected in his region, which is also my region?

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we have given \$1.6 billion to the Government of Quebec over the past year. That is even more money in the pockets of the Government of Quebec and we were the ones to give it to them. Of that money, \$242 million went to Quebec's Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade. We took that money out of our own coffers in order to give it to the Government of Quebec, and now that government is criticizing us.

We will continue to support economic organizations, but we will focus on one-off projects that have a start, a middle and an end.

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see that the Prime Minister's Quebec lieutenant is not defending his colleague who is responsible for economic development. It was the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec himself who suggested that we address his cabinet colleagues. He said that they had forced his hand to cut his budget in half and abandon the not for profit economic organizations.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages, who is responsible for the beautiful Quebec City region, tell us what PÔLE Québec Chaudière-Appalaches did to deserve this?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard all sorts of mistruths coming from the hon. member just now. I want to reiterate that we will continue to support economic organizations. They have a two-year transition period to get ready to fly on their own. What is more, if they have one-off projects, we will support them since that is what we want to do.

If the Government of Quebec, which shares this jurisdiction with us, wants to pay for other things, then it is free and has the full authority to do so.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in August, the 2008 Congrès mondial des jeunes Régénération will be held as part of the 400th anniversary celebrations of Quebec City. It is considered to be the largest gathering of young people in the world. Of the 1,100 people invited, more than 700 need a visa, and already half of those who have applied have been turned down. However, the minister has had the list of participants for over a year and a half.

Will the minister responsible for the Quebec City region speak to her colleague, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, to get these young people their visas?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I told the hon. member's colleague last week, we are trying to help organizations get their delegates to these conventions. We want to ensure they are successful.

However, each application must receive all due attention in order to protect the people who are already here. If the hon. member has details about specific cases, I would be happy to help her.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, also in the Quebec City region, the Valcartier base contaminated wells used by residents of Shannon. The tainted wells have simply been sealed, and the residents are getting their water from the water system at the Valcartier base.

The Minister of National Defence, who is responsible for this file, refuses to commit the \$12 million needed to supply clean water. Can the minister offer some reassurance to these people and commit now to making the necessary investments?

[English]

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the people of Shannon, the province of Quebec and the city of Quebec to make sure that clean water is available, not only for Valcartier but for the people of Shannon. There has been a great cooperative arrangement with Valcartier, Shannon, and Quebec.

We are investing everything we need to invest. We are going to continue to work with those bodies to make sure we get the job done in the future.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a new poll says the majority of Canadians expect a recession because the Conservatives have so mismanaged the economy. Their doubt in the government is well placed.

The IMF says it will lower Canada's growth forecast for the second time in less than three months. Factories are closing in Ontario, a place the finance minister says is the last place to invest.

Why are Tory times always tough times? Why are the Conservatives so disconnected from hard-working Canadians?

• (1455)

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote from another report of just yesterday.

The OECD recognized Canada's economic strengths, the opposite of what the hon. member is suggesting. It recognized that the direction our government is taking is the right one.

We are in an enviable position. Our economic fundamentals are strong. We have the best job market in a generation, but we certainly do not want to allow the Liberals to get back in place where they would put a punitive carbon tax on us and perhaps run us into a deficit position.

*Oral Questions***CHILD CARE**

Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Canadian Labour Congress had the audacity to criticize the government for its refusal to support the NDP child care bill. That is puzzling since the NDP has refused to debate its own child care bill in the House seven times now knowing that it has zero support from provinces and very little support from parents.

Our government will not cave in to the paternalistic demands of the NDP and a small group of union leaders who believe that government is better at raising children than Canadian parents.

Can the human resources minister please tell the House what the Conservative government is doing to ensure parents have the options they need with respect to raising their own children?

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the very hard-working MP and someone who understands better than most the challenges of raising children.

Not only does the CLC have its facts wrong, its philosophy is a disaster. This year our government's child care transfers to the provinces will be almost double what they have reported, but when it comes to philosophy, the CLC, the NDP, the Bloc, and the Liberals dismiss the role of parents in raising children.

In fact, not only would the Liberal leader make gasoline and home heating fuel more expensive, he would take away the universal child care benefit from Canadian families for reasons that elude me.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRICE OF CONSUMER GOODS

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian dollar achieved parity with the U.S. dollar eight months ago, yet prices on either side of the border still differ significantly. On average, Canadian consumers are paying at least 18¢ more than Americans for the same products. Some products cost 30% or 35% less in the United States.

Why is the Minister of Finance not taking the necessary measures to protect Canadians consumers?

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the strength of the Canadian dollar should actually be benefiting consumers. We think that it has in some cases.

In fact, the price of cars, books and clothing has come down, but the strong dollar is also followed along with the lowest inflation rate in this part of the world, in fact lower than the United States.

We would encourage our retailers to provide the lowest cost produce to Canadians that they can. We would also encourage consumers to force those prices to be as low as they can.

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary still has not explained why Canadians are getting ripped off for everything from Timbits to Toyotas. The fact is that the dollar is at par, prices are still going up in Canada, and our American neighbours get better deals than we do.

I live in a border region. Can the minister explain to the people of Victoria why the government is doing nothing to protect them from getting gouged on prices?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): In fact, Mr. Speaker, this government is doing an incredible amount to return Canadians' dollars back into their own pockets where they belong.

Last year in the fall economic statement, the finance minister returned \$60 billion to Canadians so they can choose where to spend their money. The NDP of course chose not to support that.

However, let us also warn this House about what the Liberals want to do by putting a punitive carbon tax on consumers, on everything that consumers buy.

* * *

● (1500)

FISHERIES

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries persists on giving our valuable turbot quota to southern interests, which by rights belong to Nunavut through adjacency.

Why does the adjacency principle apply to other parts of the country but does not get considered for Nunavut quotas?

Why does he not treat our fishermen with respect? Is it because the government has no real intention of helping the people who live there and only wants the rich resources of Nunavut?

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me first say that information is completely false. Nobody has done more for the people of Nunavut, certainly in relation to the fishery, than this government. We are the only ones who recognize that every extra pound of haddock, of quota, that was added since we became a government has gone to Nunavut.

We have put out money to build infrastructure there so Nunavut can use its own resources and not have them used by somebody else. I will give Nunavut every fish it deserves, but I will not take away fish from somebody else to give them to Nunavut or anybody else.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, Canada and France signed a joint action plan to enhance commercial relations. As we know, France is an important partner for Canada, not only because of our cultural and linguistic ties, but also because it is one of our largest trade partners. Last year, two-way merchandise trade between Canada and France achieved a record level of \$8.2 billion.

Could the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities tell us how this action plan will benefit Canada?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is yet another example of the success of our government's robust trade program, which saw us sign a free trade agreement with the European Free Trade Association at the beginning of the year, thus opening the doors for us to the European Union.

The benefits include many joint ventures, such as strengthening cooperation in various fields, including science and technology, and developing small- and medium-sized businesses.

We have taken an important step that will make it possible to further liberalize and open up trade and investments abroad, particularly in France.

[English]

The Speaker: That will draw to a conclusion today's question period.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville is rising on a point of order.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to read several stories yesterday about the Khadr report that the foreign affairs committee has under consideration. Since the newspaper quoted directly from the draft report, I can come to no other conclusion except that this report was leaked to the press by a member of the either the foreign affairs committee or the subcommittee.

Steven Edwards of the *Ottawa Citizen* wrote, and I will read only one line, "In a report marked confidential because it has yet to be officially released...".

In the *Toronto Star*, Tonda MacCharles lists the recommendations that the report includes.

This is a serious beach of the confidentiality of the committee. The subcommittee and the main committee have to be able to meet in confidentiality to debate what recommendations the committee wishes to make. If one member feels he or she has the right to break that confidentiality and leak what happens during in camera sessions, or the draft report that the committee looks at, then both the credibility of the committee and the significance of the report are attacked.

If members of the committee cannot keep a draft report secret until it is tabled, do we think any foreign diplomats who meet with us from time to time in camera would be able to trust that their comments would stay off the record? If the committee cannot be trusted to keep in camera confidentiality, when we ask for in camera briefings on matters such as the war in Afghanistan and other sensitive military or diplomatic issues, would the government be willing to cooperate? I think not.

In case members have forgotten or are simply ignorant of the rules, let me read from page 838 of Marleau and Montpetit:

Privilege

At in camera meetings, neither the public nor the media is permitted, and there is no broadcasting of any kind...Minutes of in camera meetings are publicly available, but certain information usually found in the minutes of committee meetings is not included... Divulging any part of the proceedings of an in camera committee meeting has been ruled by the Speaker to constitute a prima facie matter of privilege.

Page 884 of Marleau and Montpetit states in reference to committee reports:

Committee reports must be presented to the House before they can be released to the public. The majority of committee reports are discussed and adopted at in camera meetings. Even when a report is adopted in public session, the report itself is considered confidential until it has actually been presented in the House. In addition, where a committee report has been considered and approved during in camera committee meetings, any disclosure of the contents of a report prior to presentation, either by Members or non-Members, may be judged a breach of privilege. Speakers have ruled that questions of privilege concerning leaked reports will not be considered unless a specific charge is made against an individual, organization or group, and that the charge must be levelled not only against those outside the House who have made in camera material public, but must also identify the source of the leak within the House itself.

● (1505)

The Speaker: The Chair has received notice of a question of privilege on the same point from the hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. I will hear from him now since his was a question of privilege. I assumed the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville was rising on a point of order arising out of question period.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the privilege I feel was lost by the report being leaked in the manner that it has.

Yesterday in this place we saw the House rise to a special occasion. With the apologies to the first nations, we saw the very best that this place can be. At the same time, when I came to the House knowing that the report had been leaked, it troubled me deeply as I stood here. As I listened to the wonderful speeches, I was still troubled.

Canadians want the House to be what it was yesterday.

We can be so much more. We can do so much more. The leader of the NDP, the member for Toronto—Danforth, worked with the Prime Minister for over a year on that residential schools apology. That is what we can do when we are at our best. Canadians expect more than the 30 second clip that somebody might get by leaking this report.

I have very troubled emotions. In our committee, I was the person who moved the motion to study Khadr and I was proud of the work the committee did. We worked hard together.

As for that leaked report, I would suggest that perhaps all members of that committee had the opportunity, because I myself was asked by various media folks if I would give them a tidbit. I chose not to do that. I chose to stick to the principles, the rules and the order of the House.

It is not appropriate, as we have heard, for anybody to speak on an in camera report before it is tabled in the House.

Privilege

There is more to this, with the future of this young man, Omar Khadr, hanging perhaps to a great extent on the outcome of that report. A former child combatant is facing the wrath of the Pentagon and probably George Bush himself, for all we know.

It is tempting for anybody on the committee to try to do whatever they can to raise the issue, but violating the rules of this place and giving over to the urge to do that is incorrect.

Now we have on the public record the recommendations of the subcommittee, the recommendations on how to deal with Omar Khadr's future and the recommendations to end this affront to Canadians' very fundamental sense of what is just.

However, equally as important as the success within the committee is the failure in the process that has happened here, the disgrace that has happened here.

Our committee heard over a dozen witnesses, including David Crane, a prosecutor in Sierra Leone, who said to bring Omar Khadr home. Senator Roméo Dallaire, who was outraged by Guantanamo, said to bring Omar Khadr home. Craig Forcese, a professor of Canadian law, said we could deal with Omar Khadr within the Canadian system.

All of this material is on the public record from our committee. Witness after witness said to bring Omar Khadr home.

I always look to the good in people. When we work within our committees, I do that, and most often I find it. However, I do believe that whoever leaked the report did so to keep this story in the media. I believe the person did so probably to bring Omar Khadr home, and as much as I would like to see Omar Khadr home and I call for it every day that I can in this place, it is still wrong to violate the committees and the rules of this place.

Ultimately, the success of the in camera meetings depends upon their privacy. Their confidentiality must be respected by all involved. Without that respect, the work of all committees would be seriously imperilled, to the detriment of the House and all members.

This breach appears to be a contempt against the dignity of Parliament. I feel that it must be brought forward and investigated in a just and timely manner.

● (1510)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the question before you is extremely serious and deserves a thorough examination. It may seem as though there has been a breach of the rules and the Standing Orders. However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that this is the second time material from this subcommittee has been leaked to the media.

I would like to raise another point for your consideration. You know that such questions are usually referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for more thorough investigation. I have sat on that committee since 2000, but we are now in a situation where the government will not come up with a chair so that the committee can have a full complement again.

How can we deal with this question if the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs does not have a chair? The committee has been virtually shut down. In your ruling, we would like you to consider how this serious question can be investigated further.

[*English*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the House is serious about wanting to protect the security of documents, may I suggest that they not be sent by email to 15 or 20 people. The most dangerous button that we all have in our possession is the send button. If we follow the logic of the member who raised this question and both my colleagues who have spoken to this, then there are some very simple ways of providing security: number the documents; hand documents out at a meeting and take them back when the meeting is over; restrict access to documents; do not let staff see documents. There is a whole variety of ways to keep these documents off the email chain and that will dramatically increase the security of those documents.

Yes, of course, there is a privilege. I fully agree with the hon. member that the documents should not have been leaked. I deplore the leak. It is not a great thing for the House when it happens. However, I do say that if the House is serious about protecting the security of these documents, it needs to take some measures internally to deal with that question. Otherwise these documents are in the ether; they are on the Internet. They are in the air, and as soon as they are there, it only takes one person in a chain of 20 or 30 to send that document to any number of people on the outside. The House should take account of the world in which we are living if we are serious about wanting to protect the security of these documents.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am the chair of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights and the points raised by the last two speakers need to be addressed.

Let me address the point raised by the member for Toronto Centre. I would point out that this document, as it was dealt with in our subcommittee or at the point it left the subcommittee, was not in electronic form. It was always dealt with in paper form by the members. It could not have gotten out at that point.

● (1515)

Hon. Bob Rae: I got it.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I hear the member asking a further question about how it could have gotten out and the answer is it went on to the main committee.

I notice with regard to the reports that are cited, one of them is from Tonda MacCharles of the *Toronto Star*. At the time of our final meeting at which this matter was dealt with before it went on to the main committee, Tonda MacCharles approached me in a way which made it clear that she did not yet have the copy. She was eager to find a copy and seemed to be of the belief that there was a likelihood it would be leaked. Similarly, I was contacted by Susan Ormiston of CBC who asked me if it were leaked, would I be willing to comment on it. There was an expectation of a leak, but I can say that at the point it left the subcommittee, it had not been leaked. By the way, I do not fault either of these two journalists for looking for leaked documents. That is their job and it is never a good idea to criticize people who buy ink by the hundredweight.

However, I do want to say that it was at the point that it had left subcommittee. That does not mean a subcommittee member may not have leaked it. It also could have been a member of the main committee. I raise that in order to respond to the Bloc Québécois whip's comment about leaks having occurred from the subcommittee on two occasions. In fact, on this occasion there is a very high probability the leak occurred as a result of something that occurred at the main committee.

If I might suggest, Mr. Speaker, it has been done in the past that members of a committee where a leak has occurred have been asked essentially to swear an oath in committee that they were not the ones who made the leak. That might be appropriate in this case in order to establish where the leak occurred.

At the very least, it is important to defend the honour of the subcommittee process itself, which I note has been very consensual and free from much of the partisan wrangling that has entangled so many of our other committees, including the procedure and House affairs committee where, if I may say so, it was the actions of the Bloc Québécois whip himself that resulted in the very unjustified vote of non-confidence in the chair of that committee. If the member wants to lay blame for the fact the procedure and House affairs is not sitting, he need look no further than in the mirror.

The Speaker: I think I have heard enough on this point because, in my view, it is quite easily disposed of from the House at this stage.
[Translation]

I would like to thank the hon. members who made submissions on this point.

However, the issue here is a report from this committee, not a report that is before the House. We are talking about a report from this committee.

[English]

In my view, if there is a question of privilege here, it is one that has to be dealt with first in the committee whose subcommittee's report got leaked. The normal practice in these matters is to raise the matter in the committee. If there has been a breach of the privileges of the committee, or if some member has breached the privileges of the committee, the committee will do a report to the House. Then we can have a motion for concurrence in the report here in the House and a ruling from the Speaker can be sought as to whether the matter constitutes a question of privilege in the House when the report from the committee arrives.

In the meantime, we have not heard from the committee. The committee may not regard this as a breach of its privileges. Until the committee reports on that, since it was a subcommittee, I do not feel it is a matter for the Speaker to adjudicate upon, especially when the Speaker has not seen the report and cannot tell whether there has been a leak or whether this is something somebody has made up.

In the circumstances, I would suggest the hon. members who have this complaint raise the matter in the committee. If the committee finds there is a breach of privilege, we will hear about it in the House when the committee reports back. Until that time, I do not feel that it is a matter for a decision from the Chair. Accordingly, I feel there is no point of order or question of privilege arising out of the alleged, and I say "alleged" deliberately here, leak from the subcommittee.

Routine Proceedings

Accordingly, we will move on to orders of the day.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As a result of the votes we had this morning and then following them the concurrence motion, we were not able to return to routine proceedings.

There have been consultations among all parties and I would hope if you sought it, you would find unanimous consent to revert to routine proceedings to provide the government's answers to order paper Questions No. 259 and 260.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 259 and 260.

[Text]

Question No. 259—**Mr. Serge Ménard:**

With respect to the 23 recommendations in the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar entitled "Report of the Events Relating to Maher Arar: Analysis and Recommendations", released on September 18, 2006: (a) what steps has the government taken, to date, to implement each of the recommendations; (b) what steps remain to be taken to implement each of the recommendations; and (c) what is the timetable for implementing each of the recommendations?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to a) The Government of Canada has accepted all 23 recommendations in Justice O'Connor's report. Work on implementing these recommendations is largely complete.

Some examples of measures that have been taken in response to these recommendations include:

Our government has apologized and compensated Mr. Arar and his family. On January 26, 2007, the Prime Minister announced that the Government of Canada had concluded a settlement with Mr. Maher Arar regarding his legal actions. Compensation was determined upon completion of the mediation process;

We have registered a number of objections with the U.S. and Syria about the treatment of Mr. Arar;

We have established the Internal Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad Abou-Elmaati and Muayyed Nureddin;

Canadian agencies like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, are continuing to work in cooperation with domestic and international partners to ensure Canadians are safe; and

Government Orders

CSIS and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade have signed a memorandum of understanding on the roles and responsibilities for addressing issues that arise when a Canadian is detained abroad in connection with a national security or terrorism-related case.

In response to b) While most recommendations have been implemented, the Government of Canada continues to ensure that our law enforcement and security intelligence agencies operate efficiently and effectively with due respect for Canada's human rights obligations. The government continues to review and amend, as appropriate, national security policies and operational procedures, including the handling and sharing of information, training and ministerial directives.

In response to c) The Government of Canada is unwavering in its commitment to give our law enforcement and security intelligence agencies the tools they need to safeguard our national security and to ensure review mechanisms are effective and efficient.

Question No. 260—**Mr. Serge Ménard:**

—With respect to the 13 recommendations in the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar entitled “A New Review Mechanism for the RCMP's National Security Activities”, released on December 12, 2006: (a) what steps has the government taken, to date, to implement each of the recommendations; (b) what steps remain to be taken to implement each of the recommendations; and (c) what is the timetable for implementing each of the recommendations?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is unwavering in its commitment to give our law enforcement and security intelligence agencies the tools they need to safeguard our national security, and to ensure review mechanisms are both transparent and accountable.

There have been a number of calls for enhanced national security review in addition to Justice O'Connor's policy review. For example, the 2004 Interim Committee of Parliamentarians on National Security and the Senate and House of Commons reviews of the Anti-Terrorism Act, ATA, made recommendations to the government in that regard.

Furthermore, a number of independent reviews have examined the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP, CPC. In addition to Justice O'Connor, the Auditor General of Canada, the Senate Special Committee on the ATA, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP have all made recommendations to strengthen the powers of the CPC.

The Government of Canada is carefully examining all of these recommendations, as well as other proposals that have been put forward to enhance the accountability of the RCMP, and is working diligently to determine the most effective review model for Canada's national security activities generally, and the RCMP specifically.

[*English*]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I wish to table, in both official languages, a notice of a ways and means motion to amend the Customs Tariff and another act.

I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of this motion.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[*English*]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC) moved that Bill C-29, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (accountability with respect to loans), be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, funding of political campaigns has changed dramatically over the years. It is no longer acceptable for political bagmen to go cap in hand to wealthy individuals and powerful interests seeking contributions for a political campaign. Our government understood that this era was over. After hearing tales of bags of cash exchanging hands between Liberals during the Gomery inquiry into the sponsorship scandal, the Canadian public demanded action. They demanded that big money be eliminated from the political process.

Upon taking office, we delivered with the toughest anti-corruption legislation in Canadian history, the Federal Accountability Act.

[*Translation*]

The Federal Accountability Act limited individual political contributions to \$1,000—\$1,100 in 2008—and prohibited cash donations of more than \$20, secret trusts and corporate and union donations.

These changes applied to all types of political entities: political parties, registered associations, leadership candidates, local candidates and nomination contestants.

The Federal Accountability Act levelled the playing field. After it was passed and various amendments to campaign financing legislation took effect, the government believed that the era of political fundraisers was over and that rich and powerful interests could no longer unduly influence the political process.

[*English*]

Some people say that money in politics is like water on concrete: it finds every crack and every crevice through which to flow. Watching the Liberal leadership contest, Canadians found this out the hard way.

Government Orders

The Liberal Party, after relying for years on massive donations from huge corporations, found it difficult to operate in a system that relies on the contributions of ordinary, hard-working Canadian individuals. As a result, while the Federal Accountability Act was proceeding through the legislative process, Liberal leadership contestants discovered a loophole that allowed them to borrow unlimited amounts of money from corporations, unions and wealthy individuals. This loophole effectively allowed candidates to circumvent campaign contribution limits by accepting massive personal loans and resulted in Liberal leadership candidates mortgaging themselves to powerful, wealthy, vested interests.

The accidental Leader of the Liberal Party borrowed \$705,000. The accidental Canadian, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, borrowed \$570,000. The accidental Liberal, the member for Toronto Centre, borrowed \$845,000, and of that, \$720,000 came from his brother, John Rae, an executive with Power Corp. and a powerful Liberal insider.

In addition, Gerard Kennedy borrowed over \$450,000. The member for Vaughan borrowed over \$450,000. The member for York Centre borrowed \$300,000. The member for Eglinton—Lawrence borrowed over \$240,000. The member for Kings—Hants borrowed \$200,000. The member for Vancouver Centre borrowed over \$150,000. The member for Willowdale borrowed \$130,000. The member for St. Paul's borrowed nearly \$40,000.

Collectively, the Liberal leadership candidates borrowed millions of dollars to finance their campaigns. By exploiting the loophole in the Canada Elections Act, they were able to skirt campaign contribution limits that expressly sought to end this sort of undue influence by rich, powerful individuals.

In short, the Liberal leadership contestants showed Canadians that big money found a back door into the political process. More important, it also became clear there was a possibility that rich, wealthy individuals could write off a loan as uncollectable if it was consistent with their lending practices, even if they had no such established practices.

In effect, people could lend money to leadership campaigns and then after 18 months could say the debt was uncollectable and simply write it off. This could result in a massive contribution to a campaign which would far exceed someone's individual contribution limit. Under the current law, this could actually happen.

Now that the loophole and its potential consequences were clear, the government decided to act. The government was not going to sit by idly and allow the Liberal Party to undermine the Federal Accountability Act, especially after the Liberal leader was victorious in his leadership contest, financing nearly half of his campaign with massive personal loans from individuals.

In the first session of this Parliament, we introduced the accountability with respect to loans bill, which at that time was Bill C-54. After prorogation of the first session, that bill became Bill C-29 in this session of Parliament. My speech today opens debate on this bill at third reading.

While I have mentioned the various elements of the bill during previous speeches in this House, I will quickly run through the proposed changes once again.

● (1525)

[*Translation*]

First, in accordance with the Federal Accountability Act, it limits the amount that an individual can lend to or guarantee on behalf of a campaign to the contribution limit of an individual, or \$1,100 in 2008. In addition, the combined total of loans and gifts from an individual cannot exceed the contribution limit of \$1,100.

Second, it prohibits unions and corporations from lending money to political entities, which is also in keeping with the provisions of the Federal Accountability Act.

Third, it establishes a standard procedure for reporting loans, which applies to all political entities—associations, candidates and parties. This procedure will replace the provisions of the current act, which provides different rules for the various political entities.

Fourth, riding associations will automatically assume responsibility for the debt of local candidates should the latter be unable to repay their loans. Hence, candidates will no longer be able to evade their responsibilities.

[*English*]

Those are the four major changes originally in the bill. Further changes were made as the bill passed through the legislative process.

First, the time period for the repayment of loans was extended to three years from eighteen months. The government opposed this change at committee, but in the spirit of cooperation, we agreed to the amendment so that the bill could move forward.

Second, the bill was amended so that if an individual's loan was paid back within a given year, he or she could still donate up to the contribution limit.

Third, the bill was amended to require the Chief Electoral Officer to hear representations from affected interests before making a determination about a deemed contribution. This change, although technical in nature, would ensure certainty, uniformity and procedural fairness in dealings with Elections Canada.

Now that the bill is in its final form in the House, the first question we have to ask ourselves is this. Does this solve the identified problem and close the loophole? The answer is yes.

Under our bill, only accredited financial institutions would be able to lend money beyond the contribution limit and only at commercial rates with terms and conditions fully disclosed. No longer would leadership contestants be able to accept massive personal loans from friends, family and vested interests to finance their campaigns.

Government Orders

The bill would also prevent a situation from occurring where a lender could have the power of deciding whether a leadership candidate broke the law. Under the current law, one of the options for seeking an extension of a loan is to have a binding agreement to pay. As a result, the lender, by the fact that they can choose to sign the agreement or not, can decide whether a leadership contestant breaks the law. A loan is deemed to be a contribution after 18 months unless Elections Canada grants an extension.

Under our bill, this could no longer happen. Individuals could only lend or contribute a total of \$1,100. Therefore, if after 18 months, a loan had not been repaid and it was deemed to be a contribution, an individual's contribution limit would not be exceeded.

While our bill would improve accountability and increase transparency, recently there has been some criticism that it does not really change anything. That is simply not the case. The criticism is in fact misplaced.

I will point to the following. Under the current law, wealthy elites can exploit a loophole and land unlimited amounts of money to leadership contestants. Under our bill, that would no longer be possible. Individual loans would be limited to \$1,100.

Under the current law, unions and corporations, although prohibited from making contributions or donations to political parties, can, however, still participate by lending unlimited amounts of money to leadership contestants, candidates, parties and associations. Under our bill, that would no longer be possible. Unions and corporations would be banned from lending money to political entities in the same fashion as they would be already prohibited from making contributions.

Those are two significant changes to the way political campaigns are financed in our country.

The government understands that loans have a role to play in the financing of political parties, candidates and associations.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

The government is opposed to a situation where individuals, unions or corporations are able to provide loans in order to exercise undue influence on the political process.

If a leadership candidate, local candidate or major national party wants to collect more money than the amount set out in the act, it should go to an approved financial institution, borrow money at the commercial interest rate, then disclose in full the terms of the loan in an open and transparent way. This practice works well in a number of provinces. Why do this? Because it is the job of an approved financial institution to assess risk and lend money. It has established lending practices and is accountable to its shareholders for the loans it approves.

Furthermore, the government does not believe that political entities should be authorized to borrow hundreds of thousands of dollars from rich individuals, who do not usually lend money, who have no established lending practices and who are not accountable to anyone for the loans they make.

[*English*]

The government does not believe political entities should be allowed to borrow hundreds of thousands of dollars from multi-individuals who do not normally lend money, who have no established lending practices and who are accountable to no one but their own interests for the loans that they make.

In the last election Canadians sent us a message. They want to end the influence of big money in the political process in Canada. They want greater accountability, increased transparency and, most important, a level playing field.

Our accountability with respect to loans bill will achieve this by closing the loophole that gives rich, powerful interests an opportunity to exert undue influence in the political process.

Before I close, I want to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre for his considerable support and assistance in ensuring that the bill was able to make it through the process to this stage. I am hopeful and optimistic that when it reaches the Liberal dominated Senate, that it will respect the importance of a decision taken by the House of Commons with regard to elections for members to the House of Commons and the rules that govern them. I hope senators will not take the opportunity to obstruct and delay the bill in their party's partisan interests, but will in fact respect a decision of the House of Commons about how the House of Commons should be elected.

I urge all members of the House to work with the government to pass the bill and take another step toward eliminating the undue influence of big money from Canadian politics, and I hope that we will do that very soon.

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech about honouring the will of the House. He talked about when the bill was sent to the Senate, whether the members of the Senate would honour and help push it through.

Several bills have been passed by the House and have gone nowhere. The member and the Conservative Party said, during the election campaign, that they would honour the will of the House. That was very clear, yet we have several bills, for example, the veterans first motion, the seniors charter and other bills, that have been delayed. They have gone nowhere.

Would the member guarantee that the government will ensure that these motions and bills, because they were passed unanimously or by the majority of members of the House, are respected and passed also?

● (1535)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I share the hon. member's concerns about what happens to the business we send to the Senate. As the House knows, our government has a very complete program of modest, but important changes, to how the Senate operates, which we believe would help to democratize it, reform it, make it more accountable and make it more consistent with 21st century values that Canadians expect. Those include our provision that terms be limited to eight years in the Senate and our proposal that Canadians be consulted on who should represent them in the Senate.

Government Orders

The hon. member raises a very good point. One of those bills, the one relating to term limits, actually originated in the Senate, but it successfully delayed it for over a year before we finally introduced it on this side in the House because the Senate was not willing to deal with it.

We have seen the Senate on a number of other bills indicate an unwillingness to deal with matters for what are strictly partisan reasons or otherwise. There is a great concern about that in our system, where we are dealing with a body that, to say the least, lacks the full legitimacy of a democratically elected body such as the House of Commons.

This is why we want to see those changes brought into place. I would welcome the support of the hon. member and her party for both of those elements, term limits that we have proposed as well as the proposal that we consult with Canadians as to who should represent them in the Senate.

I believe if both of those were in place, we would see a body that would be more responsive in dealing with legislation that Canadians have expressed, through the House of Commons, they wish to see passed and of which we know Canadians are strongly in support.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-29, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (accountability with respect to loans).

I remind all those who are watching at home that the bill was originally introduced, as my colleague said, as Bill C-54 in the first session of the 39th Parliament.

The bill would create restrictions on the use of loans by political entities governed by the Canada Elections Act, rules that we all respect during elections. We continually strive to ensure that transparency and accountability is within all of our parties.

The bill would establish a uniform and transparent reporting regime for all loans to political entities, including mandatory disclosure of terms and the identity of all lenders and loan guarantors. Total loans, loan guarantees and contributions by individuals could not exceed the annual contribution limit for individuals established in the Canada Elections Act. Only financial institutions and other political entities could make loans beyond the annual contribution limit for individuals and only at commercial rates of interest. Unions and corporations would be unable to make loans and financial institutions could not lend money at rates of interest other than the market norm.

Rules for treatment of unpaid loans would be tightened to ensure that candidates could not walk away from unpaid loans. Riding associations would be held responsible for unpaid loans taken out by their candidates.

As I indicated before, my constituents and I welcome initiatives to improve accountability in the federal government, as I believe all would at all levels of government.

Bill C-29 is a continuation of the groundbreaking work done by the previous Liberal government. My government showed great integrity by reviewing the responsibilities and the accountability of ministers, senior officials, public servants and employees of crown corporations.

A wide variety of concrete measures were adopted to increase oversight in crown corporations and audit functions were strengthened across the board. It was time for us to bring in tighter legislation to ensure transparency and accountability. This was not invented two years ago. The Liberal government worked on this for a long period of time to ensure transparency and accountability. Does everybody follow it? Clearly some members did not and still do not.

From his first day in office, our former prime minister reformed government so that everyone in the public service would be held to account. It was the Liberal government that re-established the Office of the Comptroller General of Canada, very important for all of Canada and its citizens.

It was the Liberal government that strengthened the ethical guidelines for ministers and other public office-holders and established an independent Ethics Commissioner. They are extremely important guidelines. It is important to have an Ethics Commissioner who assists and guides members of Parliament to ensure that we do the best job we can and that we do not get into conflicts of interest.

Many of these things were long overdue, and I am pleased the previous Liberal government brought these issues forward.

It was also a Liberal government that introduced a publicly posted recusal process for members of cabinet, including the prime minister.

Much of the legislation that has been brought in with respect to transparency and accountability is modelled after what the Liberal government introduced.

The Liberal government also put forward legislation to encourage whistleblowers and to protect them from reprisal.

In February 2004 our Liberal government put forward an action plan on democratic reform to strengthen the role of parliamentarians. We heard a lot of debate about democratic reform and about allowing people to have more free votes and an opportunity to have more public and free debate and so on. It was clearly followed when the Liberals were the government of the day.

• (1540)

Referring more bills to the House committees before second reading gives all of us an opportunity to make significant changes in those bills. Otherwise, if they go to committee after second reading, which was the norm until those changes were made in February 2004, there was very little we could do. The principle of the bill was there and we could skirt around it but we could not do a whole to change it. That has made a significant difference in the work that we all do in committee. Again, that was work that we did so members of Parliament would have more opportunity to influence and shape legislation.

Government Orders

We also implemented a three line voting system to allow for more free votes. That was quite important because it was not here in the first five years I was a member of Parliament. We all voted as a bloc with our party. Having the three line and two line voting system gave all of us as MPs on our side of the House when we were in government much more freedom to express what we really felt about various issues.

That was important and it is unfortunate that we lost it. We still have a lot of freedom on this side compared to the government party certainly but having the three line voting system was starting to introduce more democracy to the House of Commons.

We have also pushed for the establishment of a committee of parliamentarians on national security. The Liberal government strengthened audit practices in the public sector through a comprehensive initiative that included the policy on internal audit and to strengthen and further professionalize the internal audit function throughout the government through higher professional standards, recruitment of additional skilled professionals, training and assessments.

In 2004, my government delivered on a commitment to proactive disclosure. Since April 2004, all travel and hospitality expenses of ministers, ministers of state, parliamentary secretaries, their political staff and other senior government officials have been posted online on a quarterly basis. That is accountability. That is being open and transparent so that anyone can go online to see just how much travel and hospitality expenses were, where they were incurred and who went where. That is opening the door in many ways to what goes on in government.

Government contracts worth more than \$10,000 are disclosed publicly and, again, posted online. Those were all initiatives by the Liberal government.

My government embraced transparency in key appointments, which was also very important. Through our action plan for democratic reform, parliamentary committees were empowered to review the appointments of the heads of crown corporations, something that should have been done a long time ago to ensure transparency and accountability to Canadians and taxpayers.

We brought increased transparency to the selection of Supreme Court justices and committed to expanding access to information. The Access to Information Act was extended to 10 key crown corporations that were previously exempt from this. We also presented a discussion paper to Parliament that proposes, among other measures, that the Access to Information Act be expanded to several federal institutions that are currently exempt. However, sadly, the Conservatives' secretive paranoia has led to the demise of access to information in this country, and that is a complaint we continually hear from citizens and the media on just how difficult it is now that has been closed down.

My government was the first to seriously limit both individual and corporate political contributions, as well as third party election spending. As my colleague attempts to take credit for all of the changes that were made, he needs to be reminded to look back because the real serious changes to the Elections Act came from the Liberals, not from the current government.

Our Bill C-24 was enacted in June, 2003 and came into effect on January 1, 2004, representing the most significant reform to Canada's electoral and campaign finance laws since 1974. It was well overdue, it was a good act and it made everything much tighter and more difficult but it was much needed. I am quite proud of the fact that our government did that. I am doubtful that the current government would have ever done it.

● (1545)

The act affected contribution limits, those eligible to make contributions, public funding at political parties, spending limits for nomination contestants and disclosure of financial information by riding associations, nomination contestants and leadership candidates.

The Liberal Party supports efforts to increase transparency and accountability in the electoral process. Our history has shown that and we will continue to support that.

We are the party that initially passed legislation limiting the role of corporations and unions in electoral financing and introduced the most dramatic lowering of contribution limits in Canadian history.

All of the Conservatives' accountability facades just build on the great success of the previous Liberal governments.

Candidates for the leadership of our party went beyond the requirements set out by Elections Canada in reporting loans to their campaigns. In contrast, the current Prime Minister still refuses to disclose the names of those who donated to his leadership campaign in 2002.

For ours, people can go online to see every cent that was donated, every cent that has been paid back, where it came from and what is still outstanding. We are not hiding anything, contrary to him.

Whatever it is, the Conservatives certainly do not want to talk about it so they have decided to spread misconceptions about this bill instead.

The Conservatives are misleading Canadians about the current state of the law concerning political financing. The Conservatives are suggesting that the current law allows loans to be made in secret and that Canadians are kept in the dark. That is not true.

The truth is that under the law that is currently in place, the details of all loans, including the amount of every loan and the name of every lender and every guarantor, must already be publicly disclosed.

In addition, the Conservatives are also suggesting that the current legislation allows for loans to be written off without consequence. Again, this is absolutely false. Under the current law, loans cannot be used to avoid donation limits and they cannot be written off without consequences. The proposed new law simply restates the existing rules.

Government Orders

The Conservatives seem to think that Canadians can be fooled into believing that this somehow constitutes a dramatic change but Canadians can see through their charade.

The government has been playing a game of delay and deflect, perhaps to draw attention from its recent troubles. By talking about political loans, clearly, the Conservatives are trying to make us all forget about their little visit from the RCMP at their own party headquarters, or perhaps they are happy to talk about political loans to distract from their latest disgrace, the former minister of foreign affairs' security breach and subsequent resignation, or maybe they are trying to distract from their constant politics of division, in which they specialize, by pitting one province against another.

However, let us get back to the bill that is before us today. The bill was significantly amended following hearings by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. However, now that the bill has been reintroduced in the House and will be debated at report stage, the government has made three motions to effectively strip portions of these amendments from the bill.

I do not have time to get into all of the details of the amendments that we had put forward to strengthen this bill but I can comment on the Conservatives' motions to undo our work at the committee level.

Government Motion No. 1 would delete the Liberal amendment to allow for annual contributions to a leadership candidate.

Government Motion No. 2 would make it necessary for loans to be repaid annually, rather than at the point when the loan becomes due. Effectively, this would prevent candidates from taking extended loan repayments.

Government Motion No. 3 would delete the Bloc amendment that removed liability from registered political parties for loans taken by candidates.

The government, again, is not respecting the committee process, which is a process that we all talk about how important it is and yet, if we turn around and undo the work of committee, it clearly questions what was the value of the time and effort put into that.

● (1550)

In closing, I want to say that Canadians must have faith in the integrity of government and in the people who administer it. My government worked very hard to be accountable to the citizens of this great country and I am committed to supporting measures to enhance our prior work of building accountability, transparency and the public trust.

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the very cogent and persuasive speech of my colleague from York West.

I just wonder if my understanding is correct, which is that each of the leadership candidates in the Liberal Party's leadership contest, which culminated in a terrific, exciting and most enjoyable convention in December 2006, has entirely and fully complied with the rules and regulations established by Elections Canada?

However, I understand that there are ongoing inquiries with respect to the Conservative candidates in the last election, dozens of Conservative candidates, as I understand it, whose habits, so to

speak, during the last election campaign are being scrutinized by Elections Canada.

I would like to ask the member if my understanding is in fact correct.

Hon. Judy Sgro: Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that the House affairs committee has been dealing with is the in and out issue that were pointed out by Elections Canada following the last election.

If my memory recalls it right, I believe 62 members in the Conservative Party were pointed out by Elections Canada as overspending their limits due to a so-called in and out scheme. Unfortunately, that got tied up in the procedure and House affairs committee and I believe, through the filibustering, absolutely nothing has happened to resolve that issue. Quite possibly we will be going into another election campaign. It is unfortunate for the 62 members because they will be going into an election campaign not having cleared off from the last one and, no doubt, could have additional problems as a result of that.

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak about the bill before us, Bill C-29.

First of all, I would like to say that the Bloc Québécois supports this bill, which seeks to prevent individuals from bypassing campaign financing rules. We believe that it is necessary to regulate loans in order to prevent people from getting around the financing limits. Remember that these limits were established after a long fight by the Bloc Québécois to put an end to corporate funding and to limit individual contributions, as Quebec did 30 years ago.

This bill corrects another problem in the Federal Accountability Act—formerly Bill C-2. As we were studying this bill, the Conservative government was more interested in quickly passing the bill than putting an end to ethical problems. The opposition parties, the media, and Democracy Watch pointed out the problem at that time, but the government refused to take action.

The current bill solves the problem of loans that made it possible to circumvent limits to political contributions. It must be said that several ethical difficulties were not addressed by Bill C-2, for instance, poor protection for whistleblowers and the failure to reform the Access to Information Act.

Bill C-29 incorporates the only change proposed by the Bloc Québécois when Bill C-54 was studied in committee. Remember that the Bloc Québécois was strongly against political parties being held responsible for debts incurred by their candidates, even though the political party is not named on the contract between the candidate and the bank. Remember also that the government listened to reason and reintroduced the Bloc Québécois amendment in Bill C-54.

Government Orders

The Conservatives introduced this bill, claiming that a number of Liberal candidates in the last leadership race took out large loans in order to circumvent the contribution limits. It may be true that some Liberal candidates did this, but let us not forget that the Prime Minister himself has not yet disclosed all the contributions he received during the 2002 leadership race.

The Conservative Party is not a bastion of transparency and ethics. Consider, for example, all the back and forth between political offices and lobbying firms, the contracts awarded to political friends, the use of public funds for partisan purposes, the many partisan appointments, the ideology-based appointments of judges and immigration commissioners, and the publication of a guide for Conservative committee chairs describing how to obstruct the work of committees.

Of course, we must prevent the law from being circumvented. The Bloc Québécois is in favour of this bill that, as I said, would prevent people from bypassing campaign financing rules.

At the time, Bill C-2 introduced new restrictions on campaign contributions, limiting any individual's annual contribution to a registered party or candidate to \$1,100. Furthermore, the amount a union or business could contribute annually to a registered party or candidate was reduced to \$0.

Unfortunately, it was still possible to circumvent these restrictions by taking out personal loans. We saw this when several candidates in the recent Liberal Party of Canada leadership race took out sizeable loans from individuals and financial institutions. The hon. member for Toronto Centre comes to mind, for example, who took out loans totaling \$705,000.

•(1600)

The Leader of the Opposition took out loans to the tune of \$655,000. Bill C-29 corrects other shortcomings that were in Bill C-2 at the time.

The bill before us is intended to correct another problem; that of government accountability. As I was saying earlier, during the study of Bill C-2, the Conservative government was more interested in passing the bill than in correcting ethical problems. At the time, organizations like Democracy Watch, the opposition parties and the media raised the issue of circumventing contribution ceilings and the government refused to do anything about it.

And yet, other ethical problems persist. Bill C-29 corrects the problem of loans that circumvent limits on political contributions. However, a number of ethical problems, such as protecting whistleblowers, were not resolved by Bill C-2. A number of Conservative election promises to protect whistleblowers did not make it all the way to the Federal Accountability Act.

The Conservatives said they wanted to “ensure that whistleblowers ... are provided with adequate legal counsel”. The Conservatives' bill provides just \$1,500 to cover legal fees, which is totally ridiculous. It is also worth mentioning that the Conservatives said that we need to “give the Public Service Integrity Commissioner the power to enforce compliance with the [whistleblower] act”. They said they also wanted to “ensure that all Canadians who report government wrongdoing are protected, not just public servants”. Finally, they planned to “remove the

government's ability to exempt crown corporations and other bodies from the [whistleblower] act”.

Allan Cutler, one of the original whistleblowers in the disclosure of the sponsorship scandal and a former candidate for the Conservative Party during the 2005 election, was somewhat critical of Bill C-2 at the time. He maintained that Bill C-2 was far from perfect and had some problems that needed fixing, especially with respect to the provisions for protecting whistleblowers. The government could have used Bill C-29 as an opportunity to fix the shortcomings of Bill C-2 with respect to whistleblowers. However, the government did not decide to make such amendments to the legislation.

Bill C-29 could have done something about reforming the Access to Information Act, an important aspect that Bill C-2 ignored.

On April 5, 2005, the Liberal government released a discussion paper on reforming access to information. This document met with general criticism. In addition to doubling the minimum administrative fees charged to the public, the Martin government's plan would have maintained all the exceptions provided for in the legislation. In fact, in 13 years, the Liberal Party never managed to introduce one valid reform of the Access to Information Act, which severely penalizes the opposition parties as well as citizens and media who use the system to get more information. Bill C-29 should have included significant amendments. Bill C-29 should have included reforms to the Access to Information Act.

We are still waiting for the Access to Information Act to be reformed. As it turns out, once in power, neither the Conservatives nor the Liberals are especially eager to reform the legislation. The Information Commissioner recently pointed out that all governments share this reluctance.

•(1605)

This is how he put it:

The reason that action, not more study, is required is that governments continue to distrust and resist the Access to Information Act and the oversight of the Information Commissioner.

That is what the Information Commissioner said in an earlier report.

With respect to election financing transparency, both the Liberals and the Conservatives are vying for the title. When the Conservatives introduced Bill C-29, they claimed that several Liberal candidates took out significant loans to bypass funding limits during the last leadership race. As I said just now, in December 2006, the Conservative Party and the Prime Minister admitted that they had failed to disclose receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Chief Electoral Officer. The money was collected in the form of “registration fees” paid by Conservative delegates to attend the Conservative Party of Canada's May 2005 convention.

Clearly, there is a lack of transparency. The government refuses to enforce the ethics and transparency rules. A few months into its mandate, the Conservative Party released a road map that demonstrates its lack of political will to follow the rules and to put an end to the political culture of entitlement.

Government Orders

This government reprimanded the Liberals for the comings and goings between political offices and lobbying firms. Yet, since taking power, the Prime Minister has appointed former lobbyist and current Minister of National Revenue as the head of National Defence, and he made lobbyist Sandra Buckler his director of communications.

This government also awards contracts to Conservative friends. The Prime Minister's government awarded a communications contract to Marie-Josée Lapointe, a former member of the Prime Minister's transition team. This contract goes against the spirit of the Federal Accountability Act, since political staff are not allowed to receive contracts from the government for 12 months after they have left. Believe it or not, the contract was cancelled halfway through.

This government also uses public funds for partisan purposes. In March 2006, the Conservative government awarded an \$85,000 contract to gauge public support for the Conservative Party's five electoral priorities. In July 2006, the Conservative government awarded a contract to Strategic Counsel in order to poll public opinion on various political issues. The very partisan report identified the environment as a very important issue for the government's re-election. It should be noted that Strategic Counsel is run by Allan Gregg, who was the Conservative Party's official pollster under Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell.

To sum up, the bill would establish a uniform and transparent reporting regime for all loans to political entities, including mandatory disclosure of loan terms and the identity of all lenders and guarantors. The bill would prohibit all unions and corporations not only from making contributions, in accordance with the Federal Accountability Act, but also from lending money.

Moreover, loans, loan guarantees and contributions from individuals could not exceed the limit set out in the Federal Accountability Act, which was \$1,100 for 2007.

Additionally, only financial institutions or other political entities would be able to lend money—at market interest rates—exceeding that amount. The rules for unpaid loans would be tightened so that candidates could not default on their obligations.

• (1610)

Loans not repaid within 18 months would be considered a political contribution. Riding associations, or where there are none, the parties themselves, would be held responsible for their candidates unpaid loans.

I would like to take this opportunity to make a small correction. Unfortunately, the government did not listen to reason and did not reintroduce the amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois. Sadly, that Bloc Québécois amendment was defeated at the report stage, by the NDP and the Conservatives, among others.

I just had to make that correction. Overall, however, I must say we are in favour of a bill that prevents individuals from circumventing the campaign financing rules.

[*English*]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I returned a little late from committee so I did not hear the entire

speech put forward from the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

However, I am following this debate, and I know that many Canadians are following this debate as well, especially in light of the energy and all the hype around the upcoming presidential race, the selection of the Democratic leader, that leadership process, and the vast amounts of dollars that are laid out within that process.

It just astounds me. I know that many Canadians watch Wolf Blitzer on *The Situation Room* every day and are awed by the amount of money that it takes to pursue that opportunity within the American system. It is considerably different in Canada.

I had the great privilege to work with former prime minister Chrétien when he brought forward the initial tranche of changes, with a different focus and approach as to how we go about funding political parties here in this country. It has evolved since the last election, bringing us to where we are today.

The member may have addressed this through his remarks, but I want to go back to the work of the committee. We know that committee recommendations are not binding on the House, in that they are brought forward as recommendations, but I wonder if he could comment on two in particular.

The first one, brought forward by the Conservative Party, allowed for loans and suretyships that are repaid in a calendar year not to count against donation limits for that year. That recommendation was supported by all parties.

The one that was put forward by the member's own party, supported by both the Liberals and the NDP, was an amendment that removed a section of the bill that forced registered political parties to assume the liability of an unpaid loan. It was thought that since candidates could conceivably secure loans without informing the central party of the status, then they could declare bankruptcy. But this would be without the approval of the national party.

The Conservatives opposed that, but as I said, it was a Bloc motion supported by the Liberals and the NDP. With the motions that are brought forward now by the government and the changes in this, it would gut both of these recommendations. Could the member could share with me why the thought is different now than it was when this piece of legislation came to committee? What has changed since then?

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, what was vital and remains vital is that we prevent them from doing indirectly what they cannot do directly. That was vital.

Government Orders

Bill C-29 contained amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois under former Bill C-54. One of the amendments was that the Bloc Québécois was strongly opposed to the political party being held responsible for the liabilities of its candidates, even though the political party was not a party to the contract between a candidate and the bank. Thus, at report stage, the Bloc Québécois—if I am not mistaken—introduced an amendment which, as the member said, was rejected by the Conservatives and the NDP. The attitude of those political parties with respect to this amendment is rather suspect because there had been a debate and it was a question of transparency. We must ensure—and I am going to the trouble of repeating it—that we cannot alter or get around the limits established by obtaining loans from individuals.

Thus, from this point forward, the law could guarantee that only financial institutions can enter into contracts with candidates. The intended purpose is to have a very transparent process. In Quebec, we are proud of the political party financing act, which resulted in greater transparency in our democracy.

[English]

Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments of the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie and his input to the debate.

I would ask for his insight on a situation whereby the Liberal Party proposed an amendment and the Bloc Québécois supported that amendment, one that would have allowed annual contributions to a leadership campaign debt until that debt had been repaid in full, and the government submitted a motion to revoke that amendment.

Could he provide the House with any compelling reason why the Liberal amendment should not proceed as worded?

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, this government is characterized by its culture of secrecy and entitlement.

Just as with Bills C-2 and C-54, it is clear that the government hopes to be able to get around the established rules and give itself an out with Bill C-29. We have a legislative process in place, and we must study Bill C-29. It was a golden opportunity to make these amendments. However, it is clear from the government's stubbornness that there is a lack of transparency on the other side of the House, and we think that is too bad. These amendments and changes should have been made in Bills C-2 and C-54. Bill C-29 gives us that opportunity, but unfortunately this government has missed the boat.

[English]

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 thank my colleague for indicating the Bloc's support for this very important piece of legislation.

One of my concerns is that many times before we have seen important government initiatives, particularly on the democratic reform side, make it through this place but then get stalled in the Senate.

I believe my hon. colleague understands the importance of getting royal assent for this legislation before the next federal election, whenever that may take place.

Does my colleague share my concern? If the legislation passes this place, does he fear, as I do, that the Liberal-dominated Senate may stall the bill to try to prevent the bill getting royal assent prior to the next federal election?

● (1620)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, if the governing party had carefully studied our proposed amendments to Bill C-29, we would not be here. I am thinking in particular of the amendment that the Conservatives and the NDP unfortunately defeated regarding political parties' responsibility for their candidates' debts. The governing party defeated the Bloc Québécois motion and the amendment to Bill C-29, unfortunately with the help of the NDP. If we had been able to get consensus on these issues, the Senate would very likely have discussed and studied the bill much more quickly.

I do not know what is going to happen in the Senate, but it is clear that when the House of Commons is missing opportunities and the NDP and Conservatives are joining together to defeat a motion supported by the Liberals and the Bloc—which I felt was a no-brainer—then it is inevitable that the Senate will have major debates on Bill C-29.

We do not know how the debate will go in the Senate, and we cannot speculate, but I hope that the Senate will consider the amendments that were introduced here by the Bloc Québécois but were unfortunately defeated by the members and the opposition party on the other side of the House.

[English]

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-29. I think I echo the sentiment of all members that the House desires, very emphatically, to have an election system that is more open, transparent and clear. That is why the Liberals supported the general principle of the bill, which was brought forward to improve accountability for candidates to report loans taken during election campaigns.

Unfortunately, that is not what we get with the bill as it is presently amended. We will end up with severe limitations on the number and types of people who can run due to the fact that, believe it or not, the banks will essentially have the greatest decision-making power on the amount of financial support any given candidate can receive for his or her campaign. This is on the basis that different people have different income levels, equity levels and capacities to borrow money from banks. It is a fact.

The government continues to repeat that Bill C-29 would finally stop the undue influence of wealthy contributors who were supposedly skirting Elections Act donation limits through the use of personal loans. The bill would disadvantage potential candidates not only of the Liberal Party but of all parties. It would limit access to participation in political leadership for many Canadians.

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As I have said once before when I spoke on this, we all want an electoral system that is more accountable, but what is really important is that this system of electoral accountability not limit access to different candidates who want to participate but have lower income status. The kind of accountability proposed by the government's amendments to the bill simply does not bridge accountability with equitable, fair and democratic accessibility.

Let us review the amendments proposed by the government and their impact.

First, the government wants to prohibit the possibility for individuals to make annual contributions to a leadership candidate. For a government that claims it wants Canadians to have more freedom in when and how they spend their money, this prohibition seems not to be consistent.

Second, the government proposes that all loans be repaid annually rather than at the point when the loan becomes due. Again, that does not seem to make sense since what we will end up with is an artificial limit on repayment. So much for the concept of freedom of contract.

Considering the fact that elections can be called at different times during the year and that leadership campaigns can last more than a year, it does not make sense to have someone pay off a loan before the time limit established by the loan contract. I am not sure if the government is aware that the amendments are inconsistent with the stated objectives of the legislation and will be viewed by many as narrowly inclusive, rigid and elitist.

Let us consider how much energy it would take for a successful candidate to work on repaying a loan at the end of the year rather than work on more broadly based repayment timeframes. It is totally unnecessary for anyone to have to focus on repaying by the end of a fiscal year if that was not the arrangement contracted with the lender.

Incidentally, the government wants to delete, as my colleague has said, the Bloc amendment that removed liability from registered political parties for loans taken by candidates. Again, I ask the House if it really makes sense to set up a system of responsibility for registered political parties and riding associations regardless of whether they are aware that the candidate has taken out a loan at the bank. I emphasize that making one entity answerable for the personal debt of an individual does not sound reasonable.

• (1625)

Let us review what we on this side have done to improve the electoral laws and what the Conservative Party has done by contrast.

Our party has shown good faith in bridging those principles that I mentioned. We have demonstrated that we want to improve electoral laws. After all, the Liberal Party was the party that passed a bill aimed at limiting the role of businesses and unions in the financing of elections, Bill C-24, in 2003.

In addition, during the last leadership campaign of the Liberal Party, all candidates stated publicly all loans received by their campaigns and they went beyond the requirements set by Elections Canada in this regard.

Recent difficulties faced by the government should dictate greater sensitivity as opposed to the kind of influence that seems to be drawn into the bill. The Prime Minister, for example, has found it difficult to report his leadership campaign contributions, going back to 2002, and there must be some legitimate reason for that.

While we are talking about the Conservative Party's record and following elections laws, let us not forget to mention the efforts of the MP for Nepean—Carleton to denounce Liberal leadership candidates. He has demonstrated, in my opinion, a really inconsistent understanding of the legislation that he is purporting and that the government is bringing forward. For example, he has been declaring that Elections Canada is not impartial.

The member said that the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartier and other Liberal Party members were acting illegally by actually following Elections Canada regulations with respect to loan repayment extension requests.

With all this grandstanding, one would think the government would have proposed limits on repayment that would reflect its convictions. Despite what the member for Nepean—Carleton might claim, members of his own party have been in hot water over loan repayments. That is why I am focusing on this, because there must be a problem with the loan repayment regime.

Elections Canada has records of five Conservative candidates with loans that remained unpaid 18 months after the 2006 election. I am not saying that because I am dumping on those candidates. I feel for them. There must be reasons why they cannot repay those loans within that period of time, and this legislation will not help. In three of those cases, the donations exceed the legal maximum of the \$5,400.

The government solution to its electoral rule breaking problems is to try to come up with new rules that are inconsistent with reasonable practice. The only thing that is clear is the government appears to be taking a “do as I say, not as I do” approach. How can Canadians believe in the legislation if it does not match and bridge its principles with the objectives to which I alluded?

The Liberal Party supports legislation that would make all candidates more accountable. Unfortunately Bill C-29 will limit campaign funding conditions so severely that many people, considering participating in the political process and representing their communities, will be excluded from this option.

Is that what we want to accomplish? Do we want to exclude people from all walks of life the opportunity to run for public office? The legislation, whether it means to or not, in fact will do that. Furthermore, do we want to put the power to determine one person's chance to participate in politics simply on the basis of his or equity positions, on income levels, and let the banks determine that? Do we want to give the banks that kind of power in our political process? I do not think so.

Government Orders

The Liberal Party supports measures to make Canadians more confident in their politicians by seeking to approve the accountability of the electoral process. The government put that forward as a first principle and we supported this going to committee because we agreed. However, we cannot support a bill that will end up limiting the opportunities of so many Canadians who may have and hopefully will have the desire to campaign and participate in our democratic process.

• (1630)

Therefore, I really would hope that the government would reflect on the restrictive nature of the reforms it is advocating and see that they are inconsistent with the objectives the government has put forward in terms of transparency and accountability. They do not guarantee more accessibility for a broader cross-section of Canadians to involve themselves in politics in our great country.

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 thought I was listening intently. If I did, I either misheard what the hon. member said or perhaps he misspoke.

I think the hon. member was complaining about the repayment regime being too strict because repayments had to be made yearly. In fact, the legislation quite explicitly states that repayment is due three years after polling day in the case of a candidate or three years after the leadership contest has concluded, and that is up from eighteen months.

An amendment was proposed that we opposed, but we accepted in the spirit of trying to get the legislation passed. To have a three year repayment regime, by anyone's definition, is more than generous.

Would my hon. colleague to respond that?

My second question deals with a point he made at the outset of his presentation, saying that the legislation would be somewhat restrictive inasmuch as it would penalize those of a lower income bracket by not allowing them to participate in elections or leadership contests, since they would be forced to seek financing from financial institutions.

The first premise that we have to establish is regardless of income levels, if anyone who seeks public office wants to borrow money, he or she should be compelled to repay that money. To suggest that those of lower incomes would not have access because they have to go through a bank and therefore may not be able to get money through a bank loan is simply nonsensical.

Whether it be through a private individual, as is currently the case, or whether it should be to a bank, the intent, surely to goodness, would be that the individual would ultimately repay the money. If individuals from any walk of life, from any income level, are unable to demonstrate their ability to repay a loan, then suggest perhaps they should not be granted that loan.

Would my hon. colleague address those two scenarios?

• (1635)

Mr. Alan Tonks: Mr. Speaker, I can tell from the manner in which the question has been put forward that the member does not share the

same experience as perhaps many Canadians have in terms of getting a loan from a bank.

Unless I have misunderstood him, he is suggesting that all Canadians are equal before the banks, but that is not the case. The banks do not particularly care whether in this sense the loan is related to the democratic pursuit of public office. If the member is suggesting that has any added value in the eyes of the banks, it may in the eyes of the bank manager who may have insights in his or her experience, but in terms of an institutional insight, I do not think that I would want to suggest that all Canadians will have that kind of equality.

If we take that line of reasoning, if someone has to get a loan, he or she is not going to have as much ability to do that depending on what the person's economic status is, if the person owns property, if the person has collateral. We cannot do that. We cannot even have someone put up his or her collateral in this instance.

Unless I am not understanding the bill, that is not a reasonable nor is it a fair or equitable position for us to put any Canadian in. If we are talking about bridging our principles with our desire to involve Canadians, it has been said that every private has a field marshal's baton in his knapsack. They all have the ability to stand for public office if they so desire, but at least we should guarantee the tools for them to do that.

In terms of the three years, I am saying it is not clear in the legislation that that can be contracted. If I am wrong on that, then there is one part of it that I feel an amendment has been made which accommodates that. However, that is not the understanding I have of the bill. The understanding I have of the bill is that if it is the bank and the bank wants to arbitrarily call the loan, then the loan will be called. Unless it is very clear and consistent with contract law, then there is a major inconsistency in this bill. I would suggest to the parliamentary secretary that that inconsistency has to be looked at.

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed the speech of the distinguished member for York South—Weston, and distinguished he is in this House and throughout his career in politics, including his many years in municipal politics. He is extremely well regarded in the Toronto area. Indeed he has brought those same qualities of class and dignity to the House of Commons over the last eight years. He truly knows a lot about integrity, about elections, about financing for elections and matters of that ilk.

My understanding of the legislation at this point is not as deep or as comprehensive as is his. I am not embarrassed in saying that, because he obviously knows this bill thoroughly. As I understand it, if a family member, a friend or an associate wants to lend to a candidate \$2,000 on some repayment terms, the legislation will preclude or prohibit the family member, friend or associate from making a loan in excess of \$1,100 per year.

I would like to ask the member for York South—Weston, is my understanding correct about that?

Mr. Alan Tonks: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his compliments.

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I had indicated to the parliamentary secretary that the breaks in the connectedness of people to even take out a loan beyond the bank is along the lines that have been suggested. In the past if one contracted for a loan, and if that is established under this legislation, it should not matter whom the loan is with as long as it is within the limits prescribed in the legislation.

The member is quite right that not only are there limits on the amounts, but there is a prohibition with respect to doing that. I have said that it is not only impractical, but it is inequitable.

The legislation tries to make it transparent that unions and businesses and so on should not be able to buy their way into the political process, but it applies the same principle to people who want to get behind people they support. As long as it is transparent and it is established in a contract and there is adjudication and transparent oversight, why should it matter whether it is someone within the limits because it has to be repaid? The bill talks about repayment. That is the issue. As long as the loan is paid back to those people as individual citizens, why should it matter? I just see it as very inconsistent, inequitable and unfair.

• (1640)

Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think every member in the House supports the idea of openness and transparency in election financing and a restriction on wealthy individuals or corporations that try to influence the political process by giving large sums of money to candidates.

We have agreed to extend the repayment period to three years, but I am still at a loss to understand why the government would oppose annual contributions to a maximum of \$1,100 for a candidate until his loan was paid.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Unfortunately the hon. member did not leave his colleague any time to respond, so we will move on.

Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Labrador, Aboriginal Affairs; the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Government Policies.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this bill, which deals with loans, financing and accountability.

To begin, it is important for us to go back to first principles and to look at what accountability is.

Early in its mandate, the Conservative government introduced the so-called Federal Accountability Act, but the bill had very little to do with true accountability. During our speeches I and my colleagues asked government members to define accountability in a general context. Nobody from the government could actually give a definition of what accountability is.

I will paraphrase an expert on this in Canada, Henry McCandless. Mr. McCandless was an assistant deputy minister in the Office of the Auditor General. He is a very learned person. He wrote a seminal

work on public accountability. Mr. McCandless would say that public accountability is the obligation on the part of elected officials, senior public office holders and senior public servants to explain what they are doing, why they are doing it, what it will cost, who will benefit and who will pay.

It would be sensible if the government were to put forth an accountability act that enshrined those principles for all public office holders. If we were to enshrine a true public accountability act, which could be fairly simple, the onus and the line of responsibility from those of us who are elected to those who are unelected members of the public service could be well defined. Most important, the public, the people who pay our salaries and fund this House, the taxpayers, are the individuals who would know very clearly what they could expect from all of us. It would be a liberating thing on the part of the government to introduce a bill such as that.

In defining accountability in this way, we could tell the public exactly what we were doing, why we were doing it, when we were doing it, who would pay for it and what it would cost. Members of the public, the taxpayers, could see when we did or did not do something. The line of responsibility and accountability would be there for all to see. What we were doing would be there for all to see. There would be nothing opaque about it. This is what should have happened with the Federal Accountability Act.

Rather than liberating the House, elected officials and the public service, the new Federal Accountability Act, which has nothing to do with public accountability, has added layer upon layer of responsibility and reporting. It has introduced levels of administration into the system of how the federal government works to such an extent that it is restricting the ability of the public service and the House and its members to work properly.

Why would anybody do this, some would ask. It could be a couple of things. One would be a lack of knowledge, a lack of understanding of what public accountability is. I would say that would be a less likely excuse. Rather, it is an effort to try to undermine the ability to have a strong central government in Canada.

This falls into a larger objective of the Prime Minister, who is a follower of Leo Strauss, an American political philosopher from the early 1900s. Many Canadians will not know that the Prime Minister is a follower of Professor Strauss in terms of his ideology and philosophy. It is the same ideology and philosophy followed by President Bush and Vice-President Cheney, as well as the former secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld.

It is important for people to understand that. In understanding what Professor Strauss was articulating is to understand what the Prime Minister is trying to do. It is to understand why we are not seeing the accountability that we ought to see. Instead we are seeing a truncating, restriction and weakening of the federal government.

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Professor Strauss believed that the best form of governance is when a very small number of people are predestined and to lead. Professor Strauss believed that was the best form of government and that small group of people could then tell everybody beneath them what to do, what to say and when to say it. Does that sound familiar? It is happening today in the Conservative government. It is a tragedy for all members, but most important, it is a tragedy for Canadian citizens.

• (1645)

However, I feel very sad for the members across the way who cannot do what they need to do to represent their constituents. They are told by the Prime Minister's Office, the half a dozen or so people around the Prime Minister who direct what is happening in the Government of Canada. They tell cabinet ministers what to do and what to say. They tell backbench MPs what to do, what to say and when to say it. As a result, the ability of individual MPs in the government to articulate what their constituents want is severely restricted.

This is very interesting because it flies in the face of the roots of the Conservative Party, which is the Reform Party. The Reform Party believed in something that was very different. It believed in the power of democracy. It believed in the power of the people. It believed that we could generate the best ideas from our populace and, as elected officials, bring those ideas to the floor of the House and represent the will of the people, the ideas of the people, for the betterment of our citizens. That is what the Reform Party stood for. Yet, what we have seen is a metamorphosis, a 180-degree change.

People do not wonder why our current Prime Minister left during his first term in office. He left because his views were diametrically opposed to that of the then leader, Preston Manning, who believed, as a populist, that the power of the people should be brought to the floor of the House.

When our current Prime Minister was elected, he, true to form, did what he said he was going to do. So, in a way, I guess, democracy exercised itself. But I think that many of our citizens do not really understand that. They do not really understand that the current view of our current Prime Minister is diametrically opposed to what the roots of the Reform Party were, which was to have and build our country from the grassroots, from our people, that the power of the people, the wisdom of the people, could be exercised in this House. That is a far cry from what we are seeing today.

In fact, Professor Ned Franks and Professor Donald Savoie, the chair of governance in Canada, have made some very strong statements. They have said that MPs are nobodies on the Hill. That is a play on the term that then Prime Minister Trudeau said years ago, that MPs were nobodies 50-feet off the Hill.

Now, Professor Franks and Professor Savoie have both said that the power of the individual MP, within the context of this House, has so been undermined by the central form of government, the Straussian philosophy, that it has completely changed the complexion of what we believe is a democracy in our country. We have a nominal democracy, and that is really a shame, because what the Prime Minister should be doing is enabling his members of Parliament to bring the best ideas to the floor of this House so that they can represent their constituents.

Disagreement in this House cannot be looked on as some form of weakness on the part of a leader, or on the part of a prime minister, or on the part of anybody in this House. Rather, differences of opinion merely reflect the differences of opinion that we have in our country. Our country is not a homogenous state. Our people are not homogenous. We have a heterogeneous populace with a wide array of ideas that should and ought to be brought to this House.

All of us understand, of course, the importance of a prime minister being able to say to the public, "These are the things that I want to do; these are the things that my party stands for; and these are the things we are going to do".

It is all well and true to have those as confidence motions. That is fine. But beyond those things that are true confidence motions, they are a very small bundle of policy ideas. Beyond that, members of Parliament should be able to express the wishes and the desires of their citizens in this House, even if it means being different from what the majority of their own party wants. There is nothing wrong with that.

In fact, many of the great ideas that we have seen in the world actually met with significant and sometimes violent resistance when they were put forward. Those have come to pass with time and history to be seen as wise ideas, but at the time that they were initially put forward, people sometimes opposed them strongly, or sometimes violently.

We have an opportunity, and certainly the Prime Minister has an opportunity, to change that. He has an opportunity to liberate our House, to liberate the members in his own caucus, to bring the best ideas to the forefront of our nation, and apply them for the betterment of our citizens.

• (1650)

What we are seeing now in this House bears little resemblance to the needs of the Canadian public. Most of us, and certainly all of us in my caucus, have many ideas as all party members do, but we are trying desperately in my party to bring those ideas to the forefront, to work with the government and offer those solutions that are not only important for our constituents in opposition but, I dare to say, they are important also to the constituents of members across the way.

No party has a hammerlock on good or bad ideas and there are fine ideas on all sides of this House. What the government and the Prime Minister should be doing if they were wise, would be to work with members from across party lines to put ideas forward for the public good. That is not what we are seeing. We are seeing a Prime Minister who is poisoned by partisanship and poisoned by the desire to have control. He is behaving as a control freak, if I can say that, and behaving in a way that is not in the public interest.

Take a look at what is happening in committees. Directives have come down to committee chairs and members of the government in those committees to filibuster. We get paid by taxpayers to serve the public. If the public were to take a look at what is happening in many committees today, they would be shocked and appalled. Witnesses come to those committees from across our land with good ideas and yet what they see—

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, as reticent as I was to interrupt my hon. colleague whose speeches I always enjoy listening to, I find it once again a common occurrence with the hon. member that the relevance of the topic seems to be lacking from the presentation. I know we are here to discuss Bill C-29 and I am wondering whether the hon. member could perhaps get back on topic. It would make his final comments much more enjoyable.

•(1655)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I would perhaps remind the hon. member that we are at third reading stage of Bill C-29, so if he could bring his remarks as closely as possible to the bill, recognizing that it is at third reading, I think the House would appreciate that.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. The relation between what I am talking about and the ties to accountability really does relate to this bill which is about loans, financing and accountability.

The reason why I am bringing this up is because it is quite heartbreaking, and I lamented that fact in the government's introduction of what it claimed was accountability, which is in the bill, that the accountability really does not have anything to do with true accountability.

I am trying to explain where that comes from going backward in time and backward to the origins and roots of why we are seeing the government not put bills forward with true accountability. Instead, it is putting bills forward that actually restrict and impede the ability of members in the House and the public service to work.

I want to get back to that principle and tie it in with my hon. friend, something that I know affects him and affects all of us. It is the issue of how these changes that the government has been implementing affect the public service. All of us are very privileged to work with public servants. They are some of the finest public servants found in the world. They are honourable, decent, honest, hard-working, and intelligent individuals. Members across all parties would agree that it has been a pure pleasure and a joy to work with them. We admire them for the work that they do, much of it completely unheralded.

Unfortunately, the government is actually undermining the public service, marginalizing it and not listening to it. We cannot have a strong democracy without a strong public service. Internationally, when we are dealing with developing countries, we say that one of the things that a developing country has to achieve is a strong public service. We try to help out. We could do more. But in our own House, we are actually undermining our public service and I will give a couple of examples.

A previous Liberal prime minister introduced the office of the science adviser to the Prime Minister's Office. This was a wise move because all of us here have, in some form, been involved in science, and many of my colleagues have some excellent ideas of the work in this area. We lament the fact that the government not only let go the science adviser, Dr. Arthur Carty, one of the finest scientists in our

country, but also removed the entire office of the science adviser to the prime minister.

This is in a place where science and research should have a much greater play in driving public policy. If we get the science and the facts right, they enable us to connect science and facts with some of the best researchers that we have here in Canada and around the world. If we connect that to the creation and building of strong public policy, then what we have is the strongest public policy that we could possibly have in our nation for the best interests of our citizens.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to interrupt my hon. colleague's presentation, but I am wondering, since we were talking about the relevance of Bill C-29 and in trying to get back to the topic of the bill we are supposed to be discussing, is the member trying to suggest that the science adviser, in some way, shape or form, has loaned the candidate some money? I just do not see the relevance. I cannot quite connect the dots, quite frankly, between what the member is speaking about and the bill we are supposed to be debating.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could assure me that the member will continue with his final comments and be specific to Bill C-29, the bill we are supposed to be debating here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Maybe it would help if I read the citation on relevance at third reading, which is from Marleau and Montpetit at page 533:

Debate on third reading is designed to review the legislative measure in its final form and is strictly confined to the contents of the bill.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca has about three minutes left so he could follow the good advice from the parliamentary handbook for the remaining minutes that he has.

•(1700)

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, we know that Bill C-29 is certainly aimed at dealing with how campaigns are financed and the borrowing of money. I would like to talk about that in the final moments of my speech.

All of us know very well and support the notion of ensuring that we have a situation where big money and deep pockets cannot affect public legislation and the production of legislation that we have in our country. It is something that all of us support.

In fact, we are thankful that in our country, unlike our friends south of the border and many of our citizens are aware of this, we do have limits on what we can actually spend in terms of an election, determined by the size of our ridings and the number of constituents that we have. We also have limits on what we can actually receive and what people can donate.

The problem is that the government has gone so far to one side on this particular issue that it is actually impeding the ability of ordinary citizens to donate moneys in a democratic environment and to provide financial resources that are required for people to run for public office.

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That is not healthy in a democracy. Individual citizens must have the ability to fund, in a reasonable way, people who have chosen to put their lives on the line to run for public office. Unfortunately, what has happened with respect to the government and this bill, and previous bills attached to it, is that the restrictions that have been placed have nothing really to do at all with the ability of trying to remove any kind of influence with respect to money and the development of legislation.

I have been in this House almost 15 years and I have yet to see one case in this House of anybody from any political party somehow profiteering from being in this House and using moneys that they have received to change or affect legislation in the public interest. I have never seen that, and I would venture to say that nobody else in the House here has ever seen it either.

The reason for that is that we already have good checks and balances. We already have, thankfully, good restrictions on the connection between campaign finances and the ability of individuals who are running for office to receive those moneys, and I hope that continues.

In closing, I can only warn and implore the government that if it goes too far in this way, it is doing nothing that deals with public accountability. It is actually restricting a fundamental right of individuals to fund people who are running for public office and restricting the ability of individuals who want to run for public office to do so.

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 congratulate my hon. colleague for giving it the old college try and trying to get back on point, even though he missed it by a few miles. I have a question for the hon. member.

One of the reasons the bill has been brought forward for debate in the House is the fact that, as my hon. colleague rightly pointed out, we want to get away from the situation where big money and wealthy individuals can influence government or candidates.

In the most recent Liberal leadership campaign, we saw where one individual contributed, in some cases, hundreds of thousands of dollars to candidates. We have also seen the situation most recently where some of the Liberal leadership candidates have not repaid their loans on time.

Currently, repayment terms are 18 months and that expired in early June. The legislation before the House would give candidates three years in which to repay loans, three years from either the polling day or the completion of the leadership campaign.

I would simply ask my hon. colleague two questions. First, does he agree that by restricting the ability for wealthy individuals to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to candidates, which, under the current legislation, could subsequently be written off, would be a good thing? Second, does he not agree that the three year repayment terms would make it more amenable for candidates and members to repay those loans?

• (1705)

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we already have a situation where deep pockets cannot affect legislation. We have a

situation where deep pockets cannot affect and control those who run and are successful in achieving public office. That is the principle of the matter that I think most fair-minded Canadians would adhere to.

Therefore, what the government is doing has nothing to do with trying to prevent deep pockets from affecting electoral success or government legislation down the line because the ultimate intent of providing those kinds of funds would be to have control over the person or persons who are elected.

The fact is that this is a picayune document that is intended to go after or imperil and penalize those in my party who have chosen, bravely, to run for the leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada. That is what this is all about. Anybody who can see this bill for what it is would know very clearly that it is nothing more than a callous and cynical political exercise that has nothing to do with true accountability or the removal of any kind of influence peddling on government legislation.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons refer to this assumed 18 month period for repayment of a loan. However, I must tell the House that I have read the statute. I have been an MP for about 20 years now and, with as much respect as I can cram into this, the parliamentary secretary is deluding himself and misleading the House and Canadians if he is saying that the current legislation requires loans in leadership contests to be repaid in 18 months.

The legislation refers to claims against the candidate that have to be made and paid within 18 months and there is a very clear provision that exempts loans from that class of financial transactions for which there is a written agreement to pay within a period of time that extends out beyond the 18 months.

It is really unfair that a person who stands in the House as a parliamentary secretary representing the government, and I have heard other colleagues of his say this, would suggest that somehow the leadership loans that he referred to were not paid on time, when it is an illusion created by the Conservative members and misleads all of us.

Would the member care to relate those remarks to Bill C-29 that we are debating now?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): In recognition of the fact that we are having a dialogue between two members of the same party, I would appreciate if the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca kept his comments short to allow other questions.

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I could not improve upon the comments of my colleague. He is truly an expert in this and I bow to his—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Questions and comments. The hon. for Cape Breton—Canso will also take into account the admonition that I just gave so it should be short.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

I very much enjoyed my colleague's comments, especially the ones specifically directed to this bill. They were well articulated.

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As a caucus, our leader is committed and focused on increasing the number of women who come into this place, especially the ones who come in under our banner. Our leader has made that commitment to the Canadian people.

What I have heard from some women in my caucus, colleagues who have much more experience than I federally, is that they believe the bill would further handcuff them by not allowing them to borrow from family. The only place one can borrow money is from a bank, which they believe would further handcuff them and restrict their ability to get into politics at the federal level.

Does my colleague believe that this could in fact go against where we are trying to go as a party to increase the number of women in the House?

• (1710)

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, that is an intriguing question. As a basic principle of what my colleague gave, we do not want to be in a situation where we impede high quality candidates from being able to run for public office.

I am a big fan for merit and I think people who come here are chosen by the public on the basis of merit, not on any particular personal characteristic they have outside of that. The best person in terms of the qualities of intelligence, compassion and skills that they possess should be able to come to this House.

However, what should not be a restriction is the amount of money that one has in one's pocket. One of the things all of us are very proud of is the fact that in our country someone from any socio-economic background can run for public office. That is not the case south of the border where, generally speaking, one needs to be rich to run in an election in the United States. In Canada, thankfully, which is something I am so proud of as a Canadian, someone from any walk of life can run, become elected and even become prime minister and it is not based on the amount of money one has in one's pocket.

If the government, as an outcome of this bill, restricts the ability of those with modest means to run, then we cannot allow that to happen. Every Canadian, regardless of the amount of money they have, should be able to run for public office in our great nation.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in the House today to Bill C-29, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, accountability with respect to loans. I think the title, "accountability with respect to loans", is something that is important to remind the House.

New Democrats will be supporting this legislation. I want to acknowledge the very good work that has been done by the member for Winnipeg Centre who, back in the early days of 2006 when the Conservative government introduced Bill C-2, the accountability act, attempted to have what we see in this bill as well as some other accountability measures introduced into that particular piece of legislation. At the time, however, the Conservative government did not see fit to include it.

However, some things have happened in the House over the last two years and the Conservatives now realize how important it is to talk about accountability with respect to political loans.

I want to put this a little bit into context. The former member from Ottawa Centre, Ed Broadbent, had put together a package back in 2005 called, "Cleaning Up Politics: Demanding Changes in Ethics and Accountability". In a preamble to the document, he said:

When they find themselves in the midst of wrongdoing those with a vivid sense of right and wrong have feelings of remorse. On the other hand the defining characteristic of corruption is that feelings of remorse have been replaced by the impulse to deny, perpetuate and cover-up. The Liberal party is losing its sense of remorse.

That was in the context of 2005 when we were in the midst of the ad scandal and the Gomery inquiry. The context has changed somewhat in that the Liberals are now in opposition.

He went on in the preliminary introduction on this under the heading, "Demanding Changes in Ethics and Accountability", to say:

Canadians are demanding changes in ethics and in accountability. They want a strong Canada resting on strong, ethically based institutions. They want honesty, fairness and transparency to be the rule, not the exception in political life.

In the context of the legislation before us, the legislation attempts, whether the attempt is real or unintended, to stop efforts to circumvent the very good rules that are currently in place in the Canada Elections Act to limit the amount of money that individuals can donate to a particular candidate.

Bill C-29 attempts to stop that circumvention of those rules by closing the loopholes that allowed businesses to loan money to political candidates and sometimes after a period of time those loans were forgiven.

I have heard members in the House talk about the fact that this legislation would damage women's opportunities to run for electoral office. I would argue that most women and men in this country want to ensure we are all playing by the same rules and part of those rules state that we do not get to circumvent the Canada Elections Act just because we happen to have a bunch of wealthy business people in our backyard, not that there is anything wrong with wealthy business people but we do not all have access to that kind of capital.

I would argue that Bill C-29 would level the playing field so that all candidates who run for either a nomination, leadership or political office, are all guided by the exact same rules. By closing this loophole to prevent candidates from either loaning themselves money or having businesses loan them money is a very good loophole to close.

We have had many instances in the House. I want to reference one example, in particular, by the member for Mississauga—Streetsville when he was a Liberal and his business donated nearly \$240,000 to his riding association.

By any measure, any of us who could actually loan ourselves \$240,000 or have a business friend loan our campaign \$240,000 and not have to account for it in the normal process just does not seem fair, reasonable, transparent or ethical.

I applaud the Conservative government for bringing forward this legislation, again, based on the very good work that the member for Winnipeg Centre did in the past.

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• (1715)

There are a couple of problems with the bill. The member for Winnipeg Centre has already talked about them, but it is important to highlight them.

One is that the bill is not retroactive and does not deal with the problems from previous loans that were made, like the Mississauga—Streetsville case that I talked about. Also, the bill would not be implemented until six months after it receives royal assent. In our current minority situation we could have an election at any time, so we would like to see that gap closed far more quickly.

One of the other problems we have talked about is with respect to accountability and ethics. I want to quote from a press release from July 5, 2006, issued by the member for Winnipeg Centre. He was talking about the fact that there was no age limitation. He was “urging senators to ignore Liberal appeals to amend the Federal Accountability Act by raising the age requirement for political donations to 18 years”.

In his release, he said:

This is not only a bad idea. It is a transparent attempt to divert attention away from the more serious problem with our election financing rules. We have seen Liberal leadership loans that look more like donations and the continued corporate sponsorship of leadership candidates.

The problem is not the age of donors so much as the source of the dough. It's already against the law to circumvent the donation limits by laundering money through someone else's bank account, whether that person is your grandson or your grandmother. The age issue is a red herring.

He went on to talk about the fact that he attempted to severely restrict political loans under the Federal Accountability Act. He said that “the current legislation is so vague it is evolving with every interpretation”. As only the member for Winnipeg Centre can say it, he said:

Those leadership loans are the equivalent of big money hijacking democracy. There's no collateral required, no repayment schedule registered, and the whole thing can be forgiven. How is that any different from a massive donation or corporate sponsorship?

The member for Winnipeg Centre clearly laid out some of the problems with the existing legislation and the attempts made in Bill C-29 to close those loopholes.

I also want to talk a bit more about changes in ethics and accountability. Again, because the bill is premised on the language around accountability with respect to loans, I think there are broader issues around accountability and ethics. We would welcome further changes to make sure that political candidates and political parties are all operating on the same level playing field that Canadians say is so important.

Ed Broadbent, the previous member for Ottawa Centre, made a number of suggestions in 2005. At that time, we thought we had agreement from the Liberal Party to move forward with some of those suggestions. However, as we were going into a process that would have had some broad public input across the country, the Liberal government of the day backed out of that agreement. I still think some of those proposals are relevant today.

Ethics and accountability cover every action of an elected representative. We are elected to this place as either an independent member or a member of a particular political party. We have a

responsibility to our voters to fulfill our obligations. We run under a particular political banner. Should members choose to cross the floor, we feel strongly that any such members should resign and run for their new political party.

Under “Democratic Accountability for MPs”, Ed Broadbent said:

Democratic accountability should mean no MP can ignore his/her voters and wheel and deal for personal gain: MPs should not be permitted to ignore their voters' wishes, change parties, cross the floor, and become a member of another party without first resigning their seats and running in a by-election.

Wherever we can, we must put an end to backroom opportunism in politics.

In the context of political loans, I would say that many people would view them as backroom opportunism in politics. Bill C-29 would provide us with an opportunity to close that backroom door so that all Canadians who choose to run for office play by the same rules.

Comments have been made back and forth on the floor about transparent leadership contests. Under “Transparent Leadership Contests”, Mr. Broadbent said that we should:

Set spending limits and transparency conditions on leadership contests within political parties: Parties are largely financed by the taxpayer and the same principles pertinent to the public good should apply to the internal affairs of parties as they do to electoral competition between parties.

• (1720)

Canada has laws and regulations regulating the financing of general elections. There are limits and there is transparency.

Canadians want to see limits and transparency. They want to know where candidates get their money. They want to know that the same rules apply to all candidates. That should include leadership contests.

With regard to electoral reform, we are one of the few western democracies left with a first past the post system. Many members have spoken about this in the House.

I heard a member on the opposite side talk about increasing the ability of women to participate in the electoral process. There have been many studies done on systems of proportional representation. They consistently have found that in a system of proportional representation the participation of women in the electoral process increases.

Again, we have a minority Parliament. There is a government in place that talks about accountability. If we want to be accountable to Canadian citizens, we need to ensure that the representation in the House reflects the population. Therefore, we need to increase the participation of women in the House.

I am very proud to be a New Democrat. When we were elected in 2006, 41% of our party was women. New Democrats are very proud to run on that record. If each and every party in the House brought that same philosophy forward, we would make far better policy decisions.

Under “Electoral Reform”, Mr. Broadbent said:

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—A major source of needed democratic reform is our outmoded first-past-the-post electoral system. There is a serious imbalance in the House of Commons in gender, ethnic, ideological, and regional voting preferences. Our present system does not reflect Canadian voters' intentions. Fairness means we need a mixed electoral system that combines individual constituency-based MPs with proportional representation. Most other commonwealth countries have already moved in that direction.

A major source of needed democratic reform is our outmoded first-past-the-post electoral system. In Canada every vote should matter. Ninety percent of the world's democracies, including Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Ireland and Wales have abandoned or significantly modified the pre-democratic British system that still prevails in Ottawa.

As we amend the Canada Elections Act and closely examine some of the other factors that influence how candidates become members of Parliament, I would urge the House to consider reviewing a system of proportional representation as well, to make the system more open, transparent and accountable.

As for “Ending Unregulated Lobbying”, as Mr. Broadbent said, in talking about accountability and transparency, unregulated lobbying is one factor that many Canadians feel very uncomfortable with. Unregulated lobbying is an elitist kind of approach to getting in the back door of government. Mr. Broadbent, the former member for Ottawa Centre, said:

Unregulated lobbying and political cronyism must end: We need tougher laws requiring disclosure of fees and expenditures of lobbyists. We also need to make illegal the acceptance of contingency or profit-based fees. The government must initiate reforms with tough sanctions applicable to wrongdoing in the public sector.

Of course, he wrote this paper in 2005 when there was a different government.

With regard to ethical appointments, again we want openness and transparency. There has been a lot of controversy in the House over some of the appointments, but Mr. Broadbent called for ethical government appointments. He said:

—Unfair and unethical patronage practice must stop in the appointment of thousands of officials to federal agencies, boards, commissions and Crown Corporations. The New Democratic Party proposes that the government develop skills and competence-related criteria for all government appointments, that these criteria be publicly released and that committees scrutinize appointments.

Again, in the name of openness, transparency and accountability, I am sure Canadians would welcome a less patronage-driven appointment process so that Canadians would truly feel that they were getting the best possible person in each and every one of those jobs.

In reference to access to information, in the last two years we have seen even less access to information than we saw under the previous Liberal government. If Canadians do not have the right to know how decisions are being made and what kinds of factors influence them, it puts into question the government's claim of wanting a transparent, open and accountable government.

● (1725)

With regard to access to information, again, I know that the member for Winnipeg Centre has pushed for more open access to information. I know that many members of Parliament have had difficulties in getting information. We have had to complain to the Information Commissioner because information has been unreasonably delayed and denied. We have had to take that further step.

If members of Parliament have so much trouble getting information out of the government, can we imagine what it is like for the general public?

Mr. Broadbent spoke about access to information. Again, in his case he was referring to the previous Liberal government, but we have only seen it getting worse. He said:

The government is backtracking on reforms leading to greater public access to information.

He then listed a number of ways to open up access to information, which included: extending the act to crown corporations and agencies previously excluded; making ministers of the Crown, their exempt staffers and officers of Parliament subject to the act; bringing cabinet confidences under the act; improving public access to government records pertaining to third party contracts and public opinion polling; requiring government records that are more than 30 years old to be automatically opened; and so on. There are a number of other elements that he outlined in his paper.

Although we welcome Bill C-29 and it moves forward toward making sure that we do have a level playing field, the New Democratic Party and I look forward to legislation that continues on that path of accountability around the Canada Elections Act.

I would like to close by saying that in recent years we have seen a drop in voter turnout. One of the things that turns voters off, that turns Canadian citizens off from participating in the democratic process, is that they do not feel their government or their elected representatives are truly representing them here. Every effort we can make to say to Canadians that we are engaged in an open, transparent and accountable process must be applauded.

In conclusion, New Democrats will be supporting Bill C-29. We welcome this as a step forward in that accountable process so we can assure Canadian citizens that all people who are engaged in the electoral process are on a level playing field. We look forward to further legislation that supports this end.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I recognize the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader for a very short question.

● (1730)

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 would just first point out that retroactivity was not an option in this bill because it would be a violation of the charter.

My quick question would be this. How important does the member feel it is that this legislation be given royal assent prior to the next federal election?

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree that this piece of legislation needs royal assent before the next election.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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When we return to the study of Bill C-29, there will be nine minutes left for questions and comments with the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT

The House resumed from April 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-513, An Act to amend the National Defence Act (foreign military mission), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to add my voice to this debate.

As the House knows, this is a government that is firmly committed to the principles of accountability, transparency and openness. We recognize the important role that Parliament plays in upholding these principles.

Parliamentarians, representing Canadians from coast to coast, form the fundamental building blocks of our democracy, which is why, from day one, the government recognized the value and importance of engaging the House.

Through rigorous debates and informed discussions, we have demonstrated our belief in Parliament's relevance. We have shown time and time again that we are committed to strengthening the role the House plays in decisions affecting Canada and Canadians.

However, the government is not prepared to support Bill C-513.

My colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, has already eloquently outlined the many negative implications that the bill would have on the relationship between government and the Parliament of Canada in important areas related to national defence and to our ability to act effectively and rapidly in Canada's interest abroad.

My colleague reminded us of the dangers that the bill would pose to the Crown's prerogative in vital areas of foreign policy and defence. He reminded us that the bill would severely diminish Canada's standing as a reliable ally. He reminded us that the bill would severely compromise Canada's capacity to play a leadership role on the world stage.

Perhaps none of this should surprise us. The Bloc is not in the business of putting Canada first. In contrast to the Bloc, which seems to try everything possible to weaken Canada, our government does everything possible to strengthen Canada. That is why we oppose the bill.

In addition to the countless glaring problems with the bill, which my colleague outlined during the first hour of debate, I will use this opportunity to discuss the technical flaws that plague the bill. In this respect, I wish to speak to three key technical problems.

First, Bill C-513 would require the Minister of National Defence to table the declaration of intention to place Canadian Forces on active service before the House of Commons and would require the minister to table the declaration to place the Canadian military on active service for a foreign mission, which might include an offensive facet.

In requiring a declaration of intention to place Canadian Forces on active services, the proposed legislation fails to recognize that an order in council already exists that places all deployed Canadian Forces personnel on active service.

By virtue of OIC, PS.1989-583, April 6, 1989, the regular force component of the Canadian Forces is already on active service in Canada and abroad and reserve armed forces serving abroad are on active service. Moreover, the Canadian Forces, its components, units, elements and members can be deployed internationally without being placed on active service. They can be placed on active service without being deployed abroad.

Indeed, the placement of Canadian Forces members on active service has consequences, though upon discipline and the Canadian Forces' ability to retain a member at the conclusion of their service engagement.

For the benefit of the member opposite, it may be helpful to explain what it means for a member of the Canadian Forces to be on active service.

Placing a Canadian Forces member on active service merely allows the Canadian Forces to retain members in the service, if required, and allows service tribunals to impose more severe sentences in respect of some service offences.

The second technical flaw in my colleague's bill is that she fails to define clearly what she means by an offensive facet. The reference "offensive facets" implicitly suggests that offensive and defensive facets can be easily distinguished. One again, the member opposite has it wrong. Bill C-513 has it wrong. To distinguish between offensive and defensive facets of a mission is artificial, meaningless and misleading.

In the complex security environment of the 21st century, to describe the military's role as either offensive or defensive is an unfortunate oversimplification.

While the Bloc member may prefer to divide the world into simple dichotomies, French/ English, separatist/federalist, some things defy strict categories. The role of the military in a mission is not always subject to quick and easy classification as offensive or defensive. The issue is not black or white. All Canadian Forces missions are conducted pursuant to a national defence mandate. Offensive actions may be required while in a defensive role.

● (1735)

The third technical shortcoming of the bill pertains to its failures to include a provision on what would happen if Parliament was not in session, what happen if Parliament had been prorogued and what would happen if Parliament had been dissolved for an election.

In any of these cases, there would be a clear delay in order to secure the kind of authorization for which the bill calls. Such deals for a vital emergency military deployment could be disastrous. It is not difficult to imagine the challenges that would have resulted had Bill C-513 been in place in the summer of 2006, when Canada took action to rescue people in southern Lebanon. Would the member's bill require Parliament to have passed a motion to deploy troops to this rescue operation?

Oftentimes in the course of a rescue mission, soldiers may have to resort to the use of protective fire. When this happens, do the forces in this rescue operation still play a defensive role, Or have their efforts become offensive?

When Canadians elect a government, they entrust the government with an exclusive right to deploy our armed forces. To support the bill would be to undermine that trust. The current framework and system by which decisions are taken to deploy forces abroad is not broken. Bill C-513 would take a well-functioning arrangement and would break it.

Canada's Parliament has a long and distinguished history of considering our military deployments. We take these deployments seriously and Parliament's views are sought. We have held debates to ensure that Parliament is kept fully abreast of the actions of the Canadian Forces as they seek to bring peace and order in conflict situations. Whether 50 years ago, when Canadians were deployed to the Suez as part of the United Nations Emergency Force, or today in Afghanistan, Parliament's views have been heard and have been respected by our government.

In conclusion, while we appreciate the principle behind the legislation, serious and fundamental technical flaws mar Bill C-513. In addition to the technical flaws that mar the bill, the proposed legislation fails to recognize existing levels of parliamentary oversight. It fails to appreciate the importance of the government's authority to act quickly and decisively. In so doing, it fails Canadians.

The famed English philosopher, Edmund Burke once stated, that, "Parliament is a deliberate assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole". I could not agree more. Here in this chamber we consider the business of all of Canada. As Canada's elected representatives, we carefully deliberate on every issue that will shape our collective future.

Today, we are continuing to build on a legacy that stretches back to the earliest days of our nation. I am proud to be a member of this government, a government that recognizes and honours this heritage. At all times, we have worked hard to advance the principles of accountability, transparency and openness.

However, we cannot support the bill. In attempting to fix a problem that, frankly, does not exist, it would risk undermining our government's very ability to carry out Canada's foreign and defence policy.

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-513.

In summary, this proposed enactment will amend the National Defence Act so when a foreign military mission include or might include an offensive facet, the minister must table a motion for

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ratification of the declaration of the intention to place our Canadian Forces on active service before the House of Commons.

The bill was introduced by my colleague from Ahuntsic with the best of intentions, a desire to include Canadians in one of the most important decisions that we, as elected officials, can make: the decision to call the Canadian Forces into action.

My riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is home to thousands of serving members, veterans and military families. They are the ones who bear the responsibility of carrying out the mission set out by the government. They do a tremendous job, and we all applaud their professionalism, their dedication and their courage.

A couple of weeks ago we had an opportunity to travel down to Bridgewater for a support the troops rally. Bridgewater is about an hour outside of Halifax. General Rick Hillier, the Minister of National Defence and a number of members of Parliament, including my colleagues from Cape Breton—Canso, Halifax West, Sydney—Victoria and Willowdale came down for the event. We were proud to stand with our Canadian Forces, with General Hillier, with the Minister of National Defence and with the many people who showed their support for the work they did.

My hearts goes out to the families and friends of Canadians who were lost during military service. They are the ones who feel first-hand the impact of choices made by government with regard to the deployment of troops.

For me, it hit home, on March 2, 2006, in a very personal way. In returning home from Ottawa that Friday morning, when I arrived in Halifax, we received word that Corporal Paul Davis had been killed in Afghanistan, one of the first Canadians to be killed in Afghanistan. His father Jim is a great friend of mine, and Jim and Sharon showed great courage through that whole time. They have continue to support the troops and insist that Paul's death was not in vain.

Listening to the concerns and feelings that Canadians have about the choices we make is very important. It is our job as MPs. We have been elected to represent our constituents.

With the best of intentions, I still do not feel that we can support the bill. I cannot support it and I will tell the House why.

The bill would require the Minister of National Defence to table a motion in the House to approve the deployment of troops overseas. If Parliament were in session, such a motion would be debated on the next sitting day of the House for three hours and then put to a vote. If introduced on a Friday, this would mean the vote would be delayed until the following Monday, again, that is precious time. Even worse, if Parliament were to be adjourned, prorogued or dissolved, it would be recalled within five days for debate and vote.

In terms of rapid response, a week can be a lifetime. Waiting for five days is sometimes simply not an option when we are talking about protecting innocent lives and doing the work that needs to be done. Canadians are justifiably proud of our DART team, which responds to humanitarian crises around the world in an astoundingly short period of time.

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Although the bill specifies that in order to be put to Parliament, the mission would have to include an “offensive facet”, that term is poorly defined. I am concerned the bill could unintentionally affect our humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts around the world.

I am also concerned that parliamentarians would be unable to make a fully informed decision on some occasions. Currently cabinet makes the decision whether to deploy Canadian troops. It has access to classified information that most members of Parliament do not, and I think that is important. Much of the information surrounding national security and defence, especially concerning military ops, alone or in cooperation with other countries is classified for the safety of military or other citizens abroad. We need to have access to all relevant information when making a decision of that magnitude.

I am concerned that the definitions in the bill are not complete. The bill specifies that it would only apply to foreign military missions containing an offensive facet, but the definitions of those terms are not clear. The nature of a mission may be different than originally thought when troops actually arrive on the ground or may change when it is in progress. These definitions do not reflect what actually happens in reality during a military mission and would be difficult to apply.

As we have seen in the case of the mission in Afghanistan, there was debate about whether to enter into the conflict. There was no debate in Parliament initially, but there have been two full debates since on the continuation of the mission and the role that the Canadian Forces play in Afghanistan.

• (1740)

There have also been many other debates on specific aspects of the mission as well as reports released by House of Commons committees. As we know, a special committee has now been set up to deal specifically with this mission.

Parliament does participate in these decisions by investigating the issues. There are important ways of bringing our constituents' voices forward, such as by studying these issues in committee and initiating debate in the House. I simply do not think it is practical or desirable to delay military missions that may require a quick and decisive start to be effective. I would suggest that guidelines for regular debate on continuing overseas military operations might be a better way to ensure that Parliament is getting sufficient input into these important decisions.

We could set a timeframe for a regular debate, for example, one or two years into a continuing mission, and mandate that there be a special joint committee of the House and Senate set up for any mission that lasts longer than a certain period of time. We could require that the appropriate ministers update the committee regularly on issues related to the mission.

Parliament has an important oversight role in terms of our military operations overseas. I think we all agree with that. I argued strongly that Parliament should debate the Afghanistan mission. Parliament has this oversight role and it is critical that we exercise it over Canada's military, but in my view, this bill just goes too far.

• (1745)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will speak very briefly. I had not planned to speak to this bill, but it has

been interesting to hear the debate. It has been a very core issue in this Parliament about whether or not members of Parliament and Parliament as a whole are involved in Canadian missions overseas. The NDP has been supporting this bill in principle. I would point out that the vote we are going to have on this bill is about whether or not we support it in principle and we certainly do.

The issues that were just raised by the member are relevant. There may be things that need to be looked at in terms of changes to the bill about timing and notification of votes and so on. Those are issues that could be dealt with at a committee. One reason we send a bill to committee is to look at that kind of stuff. In terms of the principle that is being put forward by the member, it is very important that Parliament as a whole be very involved in making decisions about where Canadian troops go. When we call on people to serve their country, when we call on our armed forces to put themselves in very dangerous situations, I believe there should be a vote in Parliament. It should be something that is debated here.

Since I have been a member of Parliament, members have had to fight tooth and nail even to get debates to take place. We have made some progress. Originally when the mission in Afghanistan began under the Liberal government, it was actually a take note debate. That is all it was. There was no vote. We have moved beyond that now. At least we have had some votes in terms of the extension of the mission in Afghanistan. Those have been very important moments in the debate and the history of this session and this Parliament.

The bill before us is taking that principle of what happened in Afghanistan and saying that Parliament has a right to be informed, Parliament has a right to exercise its decision on behalf of our constituents. This is something that is very fundamental to democratic practice. It is very fundamental to our being here and representing our constituents.

From that point of view we believe that this bill in principle is something that should be supported. We look forward to it going to committee so that we can have a much more detailed debate about how the provisions of this bill would actually work. Some of the concerns and the issues can be addressed there. That would really be the proper thing to do. We will certainly be supporting this bill at second reading.

[*Translation*]

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today to give my full support to the bill introduced by the hon. member for Ahuntsic.

My colleague has seen with her own two eyes what the expression “war zone” means. She went to Lebanon during the period following the Israeli attacks in the summer of 2006. I believe she knows exactly what she is talking about when speaking about the delicate situations facing our soldiers deployed abroad, especially in armed conflict zones.

I am very proud that my party introduced Bill C-513 and even more proud that it was my colleague who introduced it. In my time as a member of this House, we have had a number of opportunities to debate the relevance, importance and duration of Canadian military missions abroad.

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That is how it should be in a parliamentary democracy. In this House, sometimes—let us be honest—we clash on relatively minor issues and we hotly debate bills that involve very small amounts of money. However, it is possible in this country, in this great democracy of ours, to send young people to risk their lives in conflict zones, without any debate in Parliament.

The Bloc Québécois has always defended the interests and values of Quebecers, but we have always shown the utmost respect for Canadian institutions, starting with Parliament. I would like the government to show the same respect for Parliament and acknowledge that the House should vote on issues as important and challenges as fundamental as deploying our troops abroad.

We often hear that Canadian military missions abroad are geared toward peacekeeping and democracy building. Indeed, that is often the case, but we have to think about applying that rule at home. To do so, the decision whether or not to deploy troops in offensive missions must be made by the public and its representatives, in other words, the elected members.

Sometimes the public is not unanimous regarding its country's military involvement in a foreign mission. That is more often the rule than the exception. In a democracy, it is up to the public to decide on these issues that we cannot leave to the sole discretion of the government of the day.

Let us be clear: it is not a matter of allowing parliamentarians to interfere in the operational decisions of the Canadian Forces. Canada has people who are much more competent and more experienced than parliamentarians to make such decisions.

However, no decision is more important than the decision to deploy soldiers overseas, and that decision must be made by the House.

Soldiers from Quebec and Canada risk their lives to protect local people against attackers, defend our interests or restore and keep peace. We must carefully weigh all aspects of a situation and be sure to make the best, most informed choice possible before sending our young soldiers into harm's way.

We in the Bloc feel that it is important to amend section 32 of the National Defence Act when a foreign mission includes or might include an offensive facet.

Our current mission in Afghanistan is a telling example. Canada decided to join the mission because it is a member of NATO. The objective was to chase the Taliban out of Kabul and capture Osama bin Laden.

When the mission began to go on longer, the federal government began to subtly change what it was saying, implying that Canada was now in Afghanistan for humanitarian reasons. Today, seven years later, far more money is allocated to the military aspect than to the humanitarian aspect of Canada's mission, and Canada and its allies are at serious risk of getting stuck in Afghanistan.

• (1750)

Moreover, we cannot ignore the fact that we have unfortunately lost more than 80 soldiers in Afghanistan.

The House held a vote on whether to extend the mission. That is as it should be.

The Bloc voted against extending the mission. We felt and still feel that Canada has done more than its share and that it is another country's turn to take over in southern Afghanistan.

True to their recent form, the Liberals hummed and hawed, deliberated and split hairs until no one in this House or anywhere in Canada understood anything anymore about their confusing and shifting position.

When the dust had settled, Parliament had voted to keep our soldiers in Afghanistan until 2011.

We are talking about Canadian military involvement that is going to go on for at least a decade. That is longer than Canada's involvement in the first world war, the second world war, the Korean war and the Gulf war.

Moreover, that is one of the main conclusions that can be drawn from this Afghan adventure. We know when the mission begins, but we never know when and under what conditions it will end. That is one more reason Parliament should make the initial decision. It is sometimes more momentous than we might like to believe.

Remember the American intervention in Southeast Asia. When the Americans sent their first "military advisors" to Vietnam at the very beginning of the 1960s, they had not idea that the war would end 15 years later, in 1975, with the American embassy staff in Saigon being evacuated by helicopter.

War is a system, a system with its own inner mechanism that is not controlled by those who first set it in motion. History's lessons are clear on this.

My colleague's bill seeks to require that a motion be moved in the House before each foreign mission that includes or might include an offensive facet.

I would like to remind the House that during the two global conflicts Canada was involved in, the House was able to make its opinion known. It was not with a motion, as my colleague's bill proposes, but rather as part of the throne speech, which outlined the measures that the government wished to take.

So even when world political issues were looming large, Parliament took the time to consider the implications of offensive military action.

Despite these two historic votes, nothing obliged the governments at the time to call on Parliament.

Today the Bloc Québécois is using principles and precedence to argue that, for each foreign mission, the minister should table a motion for ratification of the declaration of intention to place the Canadian Forces on active service before the House of Commons.

I hope that all of my colleagues, from each of the parties represented in this House, will understand the important issue raised by this bill and that they will support it without hesitation.

Private Members' Business

•(1755)

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate today.

The bill before us proposes significant changes to the way cabinet exercises one of its most important responsibilities, which is deploying troops as part of foreign military missions.

I am opposed to Bill C-513. The fact remains that the process we currently use to deploy our troops internationally works well.

As the parliamentary secretary said earlier, the current process helps ensure parliamentary transparency and oversight. There is nothing worse than taking something that is working well and making meaningless changes.

Aside from the fact that the bill does not recognize the extensive parliamentary oversight that currently exists as part of the government's commitment to hold a debate in the House on deployments of the Canadian Forces, this bill is rife with serious technical problems.

The bill requires that the House be summoned after prorogation, or even when Parliament has been dissolved. If we take the example of Parliament being dissolved, the main technical problems with the bill become very evident. The bill does not clearly state whether to summon the Parliament that was dissolved or the newly elected Parliament.

Another problem is the issue of active service, which my colleague also raised. I cannot overstate how wrong it is to assume that the Canadian Forces have to be placed on active service in order to be deployed abroad. That incorrect hypothesis has been made in Bill C-513.

As my colleague pointed out, and now is a good time to repeat it, placing members of the Canadian Forces on active service enables the Canadian Forces to keep troops on service as needed and enables military tribunals to impose various sentences for a number of military offences. That is why we do not really understand why the opposition member has introduced a bill that ties an active service designation to Canada's participation in a foreign mission.

It is important to point out that the Canadian Forces' regular forces are on active service as per Order in Council 1989-583, April 6, 1989. In fact, all members of the reserves serving outside Canada are on active service.

Before continuing the debate, I want to remind the members of the House about the essential work that our troops are doing on overseas missions, on which they have been responsibly and appropriately deployed by the government, using the existing process.

The Canadian Forces are currently deployed to 16 foreign missions on four continents: Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. Over 2,900 soldiers, sailors and Canadian air force members are currently deployed to international operations. In addition to those already deployed, some 5,000 troops are preparing to participate in overseas missions or are on their way back here.

Our country has taken on an enormous commitment to support peace and security around the world and to promote Canadian

values, such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

If Bill C-513 were passed, it would diminish Canada's ability to be a world leader. Why? Because the bill would require us to determine each facet of the mission quickly and precisely. To know such things, one would have to have a crystal ball.

Our troops participate in all kinds of missions around the world, humanitarian aid missions, peacekeeping missions, combat missions, interdiction operations and state building missions.

When it comes right down to it, foreign missions in which the Canadian Forces participate sometimes defy such simple classification.

•(1800)

Current threats and concerns pertaining to security are often multifaceted and modern military missions dealing with them can be very complex. Often, they entail more than one type of operational activity at the same time. And most of the time, not only do they involve military personnel but they also require partnerships with military forces, governments and various organizations.

That is the case in Afghanistan, where Canada is taking part in a UN sanctioned mission under the direction of NATO and in collaboration with the democratically elected government of that country. The purpose of our mission is to help the Afghan people rebuild their country and establish a stable, democratic and self-sufficient society.

Consequently, the mission encompasses several types of operations. The country must be rebuilt. To attain this objective, our armed forces, in cooperation with allied forces in Afghanistan, help to provide the security needed to create an environment for reconstruction and progress.

The mission in Afghanistan also has a humanitarian component. It is helping to bring back five million refugees. It is making remarkable improvements in the physical health and the human rights of the Afghan people. It is helping them to build an infrastructure and an economy that were completely destroyed by the Taliban, leaving most Afghan citizens suffering from unimaginable poverty, hardship and suffering.

Canadian Forces personnel on the ground are working with our military allies to drive back those creating instability and violence and also with the departments and organizations of the Canadian government engaged in a whole-of-government approach.

This close cooperation between military and civilian institutions within Canada's mission and the entire NATO operation constitutes a new kind of mission. How would Bill C-513 classify that kind of mission? The answer is that this bill cannot classify this mission, because has been conceived in such a way as to meet the specific needs in Afghanistan and because it is constantly changing, for the same reason.

Bill C-513's attempt to define the offensive facets of military missions whose rules of engagement are not limited to the use of force for defence purposes, whether for the Canadian mission, the population or people placed under its protection, is gross oversimplification.

Some overseas missions in which Canadian Forces personnel are participating are of the same kind that became familiar to Canadians of the previous generation.

Some of them are what we could call classic peacekeeping operations, most of which have been going on for quite a long time. For instance, in the Sinai Peninsula, an Canadian air traffic control unit is contributing to the multinational mission to oversee the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, which was concluded decades ago.

And this is not the only example of the Canadian Forces contributing to the implementation of a major peace initiative. Elsewhere, in the Middle East, the Canadian Forces are participating in the UN's Operation GLADIUS, to oversee the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Syria, which was reached at the end of the Yom Kippur war.

In closing, the bill before us today does nothing to improve existing legislation. It takes a course of action that is working and tries to replace it in a futile, harmful way. It creates confusion and misunderstanding of the current system.

For all these reasons, I urge the House of Commons to vote against this bill.

• (1805)

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Compton—Stanstead for the wonderful speech she delivered earlier in favour of this bill. Once again, I invite all of my colleagues to reconsider their position—in particular, those who have declared that they will vote against the bill—to change their minds and vote in favour of this bill.

I believe that every person here is morally responsible any time our troops are sent abroad on an offensive mission. It is critical that the House be involved in making these decisions each time Canada wants to go to war. We cannot leave it up to the government's whim. We must entrench the government's obligation to obtain the consent of the House before deploying troops abroad in the National Defence Act. As I said, this applies to offensive missions only.

Unlike what my Conservative and Liberal colleagues said, if this bill is passed, the government will still be able to deploy troops in case of an emergency. It is not true that the government's hands are tied. This bill provides for some exemptions related to emergency situations. However, if some members still have concerns, I urge them to vote in favour of Bill C-513 anyway so that the bill can at least be amended in committee. It is very simple. The bill at least needs to be debated in committee.

War is not child's play. We are not playing with toy soldiers here. War is something serious, something fundamental in the life of a people. And I would like to say that in war, there are no winners. There is never a winner. There are only losers. The winner is usually considered to be the one who loses the least. So war is very important. It is not something minor. We are not voting on bills that,

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as my colleague mentioned, deal with small amounts of money. Aside from the fact that millions and millions of dollars are being invested—just look at Afghanistan—we have blood on our hands. We must never forget that.

When a government decides to go to war against another country, everyone in this House is responsible for the blood that will be shed there. Unfortunately, we cannot even decide on that, but we have the moral responsibility to bear that burden, and that is unacceptable.

In conclusion, Bill C-513 will enable Canada to show the world that democracy is not just a word; it is something that plays a role in all aspects of our institutions, as well as in the decision to go to war.

• (1810)

[*English*]

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): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 18, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am please to speak tonight following a question I asked some time ago.

The reason for my question is that there has been much comparison made between our Prime Minister and President George W. Bush. I understand and I share much of that concern.

However, it has occurred to me in the last little while that it is a different president that our Prime Minister most closely resembles and that president was Richard Nixon.

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Richard Nixon did some good things. He opened up relations with China, for example, but his reputation was clouded by a constant and gnawing paranoia, a belief that everybody was out to get him, political opponents, media, academics, peace activists. He became paralyzed by this arrogant need to shut them down. He created his famous enemies list, which included such dangerous people as Paul Newman and Mickey Mouse. He shut them down.

That is what I would suggest that our Prime Minister is doing today when we look at the people and the organizations that he cannot stomach and that he shuts down, fires or forces out. It is quite a list: Bernard Shapiro, the Ethics Commissioner; Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Chief Electoral Officer; John Reid, Information Commissioner; Yves Côté, ombudsman, National Defence; Art Carty, national science advisor; Linda Keen, president of the Nuclear Safety Commission; Adrian Measner, president of the Wheat Board; Johanne Gélinas, Environment Commissioner; Yves Le Bouthillier, president of the Law Commission; and even Mark Warner and Brent Barr, former Conservative candidates who did not tow the line and were forced out.

It is not just people. The first enemy on the Prime Minister's hit list was the truth. Not only does the Prime Minister get rid of any public servant who does not tow the Conservative Party line, he does whatever will benefit him politically, instead of acting in the best interests of Canadians.

He offered "financial incentives" to Chuck Cadman, his words. He orders parliamentary committees to be filibustered so they become non-functional. He refuses to admit that he made an error when he said that the recent affair of the former minister of foreign affairs was a private matter. He released paranoid attack ads on the Leader of the Opposition's yet to be released carbon shift plan.

That caught the attention of a number of people last week, not the least of whom was Dan Gardner who wrote in the paper, I think yesterday, about that. He says, among his other comments, "In pseudo-populism, every politician but the pseudo-populist", and that would be the Prime Minister, "is a liar, every expert a fool, every tax unfair. There are no trade-offs required, no sacrifice demanded".

He ends this line by saying, "The Prime Minister is Richard Nixon on a bad day".

• (1815)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member is sufficiently experienced in the House to know that he cannot do indirectly what he cannot do directly. Calling a specific member of the House what he did is unparliamentary and I will ask him to withdraw.

Mr. Michael Savage: I did not refer specifically to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. I was quoting "the pseudo populace" as opposed to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): You cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly.

Mr. Michael Savage: I will withdraw that comment, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for

Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it must be getting close to election time, because it seems that my hon. colleague and the rest of his colleagues on the opposition benches are reverting to a tried and true Liberal attack line of questioning. They try to equate anyone they oppose with particular U.S. presidents. We have seen that before. Time and time again they have tried to equate Conservative members, prime ministers, and opposition leaders when we were in opposition, with George Bush, Ronald Reagan or, in this case, the late Richard Nixon, in an attempt to stir up emotions and anti-Yankee sentiments among Canadians. I find that shameful. We should be talking about substantive issues, policy issues, like the Liberals' carbon tax. Do they do that? No, they revert to drive-by smear campaigns, innuendoes, unprecedented attacks on character. We have seen that both inside and outside of this place.

I want to speak just for a moment on why this Prime Minister is standing tall among not only colleagues in this House but among the memories of former prime ministers.

I would remind my hon. colleague that for the first time in over 100 years, a prime minister stood and apologized for the atrocities of the residential schools. The hon. member and his Liberal Party colleagues had 13 years in government. They knew the issues. They knew the problems, but did any of their prime ministers stand and apologize? Absolutely not. That speaks to the integrity this Prime Minister has and the concern that this Prime Minister has for not only average Canadians but for oppressed minorities.

I would also point out that it was this Prime Minister who apologized for the Chinese head tax. Once again, my colleague and the rest of his party had 13 long dark years in which they could have enacted the same apology. Did they do so? No.

When it comes to talking about integrity, honesty, accountability and transparency, this Prime Minister stands alone.

I would point out to the hon. member that it is this Prime Minister who brought the Federal Accountability Act to this Parliament.

I would also point out to my hon. colleague that it is this Prime Minister who engaged in a practice of reducing taxes for average Canadians rather than increasing taxes. In fact, it was this Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance who, last fall had the prescience to understand, with an impending global economic slowdown, that the proper course of action was to reduce taxes at both the personal and corporate levels to get ahead of the curve to avoid not only a slowdown but a recession, the type of which we see south of the border. Every economist in Canada and throughout the world applauded the Prime Minister for not only his corrective action but his timely action.

Once again I would suggest to my hon. colleagues that this Prime Minister is going to be the Prime Minister of Canada for a very long time and for very good reasons.

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Mr. Michael Savage: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary referred to the apology the Prime Minister made yesterday. We all shared in that. However, the Prime Minister of the country had a chance today to stand in his place and denounce the outrageous comments made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board. He refused to do this.

This is a prime minister who divides Canadians between an A list and a B list. The ones he likes, he takes care of. The ones that he does not like, although they may be independent, he gets rid of. It is documented. These are not attacks. This is a repetition of facts that all Canadians know about. In the next election, Canadians will have an opportunity to pass judgment on what kind of prime minister they want to have. They do not want another prime minister Nixon.

● (1820)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I have to admit it is almost laughable when I hear the hon. member say that our Prime Minister is one who responds to favourites, who curries favour. Let me point out the contradiction in the member's words.

It was the former Liberal administration that had the mother of all patronage programs, and it was called the sponsorship scandal. Friends of the Liberal Party were rewarded with millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, which finally resulted in the largest political scandal in Canadian parliamentary history. That is the essence of the Liberal Party. When it comes to rewarding friends, whether it be to appoint them to the Senate or whether it be to reward them financially through scandals like the sponsorship program, that member and all of his colleagues should really take a long, hard look in the mirror before they make any accusations.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 18, I asked the Minister of Indian Affairs why his government was not honouring the Kelowna accord. I also noted the government's broken promise, which the Prime Minister made himself, concerning the residential school at Île-à-la-Croise. The parliamentary secretary's response was not at all satisfactory.

The same can be said of the government's approach to aboriginal issues generally. Even yesterday, as the House had one of the most extraordinary sittings in the history of this Parliament, the member for Nepean—Carleton made truly regrettable remarks on the public airwaves. I recognize that he has apologized to the House and to all Canadians. Still, it is worrisome that old political attitudes on aboriginal issues are still around.

I mentioned the apology that was given yesterday, which was reinforced by all party leaders, and forcefully so by my own leader. It was graciously responded to by the leaders and elders assembled here yesterday.

At the same time, I think of the situation in my own riding, where there is now a class action lawsuit involving former dormitory schools. There is a real need for resolution on that issue by the institutions and government agencies involved.

In Labrador we still have outstanding land claims. The government has tried to muddy the waters by talking about specific claims, which are also important, but the fact remains that there are comprehensive claims still to be resolved.

The Labrador Métis Nation claim has still not been accepted, despite the findings of the royal commission almost two decades ago and despite important recent court victories.

The Innu Nation claim and self-government negotiations are still unresolved. There are overlapping claims in Labrador by the other umbrella organizations of the Innu and the question of Labrador aboriginal rights on the Quebec side. The situation is complicated, but it can find resolution.

It has been convenient for the Conservatives to coast on the progress made by the previous Liberal government, as they did on the Labrador Inuit agreement or the establishment of reserves for the Innu communities in Labrador. However, that side of the House has made no real progress of its own in Labrador.

We still have substantial social issues to tackle, such as health, housing, social services, and education. The Kelowna accord would have made a real difference if the Conservatives had not ripped it up.

I know the other side is fond of misleading the public and falsely claiming that Kelowna was nothing more than a press release. It was certainly more substantial than the defence plan, which no one has seen and which has been such a disappointment in Labrador and around the country.

In fact, Kelowna was a signed agreement with every province and territory, with aboriginal leaders on board. It was budgeted under our former Prime Minister, the member for LaSalle—Émard, whose commitment to aboriginal peoples should be doubted by no one, and then it was shamefully scrapped.

Kelowna would have made a real difference. It would have helped to implement the healing strategy to build on the residential schools apology. It would have made a real difference in Labrador and throughout northern and aboriginal Canada.

When is the government going to implement the Kelowna accord, which will come into law possibly this week, and build on the apology that was made in the House yesterday?

● (1825)

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member for Labrador, although I find it somewhat ironic in light of the fact that he states in his question that he felt my answer to him in the House of Commons, on which this adjournment proceeding is based, was inadequate. In fact, I do recall that answer. I spent the entire answer actually complimenting him for taking part in a sealing expedition in his riding. Therefore, I find it ironic that we would be having this proceeding on that answer in particular.

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However, I also must call into question some of the facts that he has put on the record or that he claims to be on the record. One was that every province in Canada signed the Kelowna accord. He knows that not to be true. I know that he knows this, because he sat on the aboriginal affairs committee with me for the last few years and it of course was not reality.

His party ran on the Kelowna proposal. Our party did not. We chose to go a different path, a path that is about innovation, improvement to the system and actually accomplishing tangible things, versus some of the esoteric promises that have been made by previous administrations.

Yesterday was a great example of a tangible thing that has happened under our government. The Prime Minister of Canada is the first prime minister in history to stand in the House and apologize for what we all agree was a shameful era in Canadian history.

Also, today another apology was made. I would hope that the member opposite would also accept that apology made by the member for Nepean—Carleton.

Mr. Todd Russell: Mr. Speaker, I have said in this House that I honour the words that were said at the formal apology but there is much more that must be done. It is not right or just, in my view, for the parliamentary secretary or his party to throw away and do away with all the work and all the commitments that Kelowna embodied. It was real, it was a plan and it would have put meat on the bones. It is more than just words, it is about actions.

If we are going to ensure that the apology is sincere, it must be met with action. Every aboriginal leader who spoke in response to the apology said that we must have action to close the gap, to talk about health care, education—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Mr. Speaker, one thing that the member and I can agree on is the fact that yesterday was an important historic moment in Canadian history where aboriginal leaders stood in this House and accepted a very heartfelt apology not only by the Prime Minister but by other leaders in this House.

Yesterday represents a true moment in Canadian history where we can work together, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. In fact, National Chief Phil Fontaine said it very well when he said that first nations people are an inextricable part of the Canadian identity. That statement really means a lot to me and I know all members in this House appreciated the words that he stated on the floor of the House of Commons.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:29 p.m.)

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