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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 25, 2009

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 25, 2009

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[*English*]

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

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, child pornography is a form of child abuse which has increased dramatically due to its growth on the Internet. This must not be tolerated.

Through several pieces of legislation, our Conservative government has demonstrated in the past that we are committed to protecting families and children, but more is needed.

Yesterday our justice minister stepped forward with an announcement that will make it mandatory for Internet providers to report to a designated agency any information they receive about the appearance of child pornography on the web. The present voluntary reporting has been helpful, but this legislation will make it mandatory to report any tips they receive on child pornography and the resulting sexual exploitation.

When it comes to protecting children and families, I am proud of the stand taken by the Prime Minister and this government. May God bless them.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MONTREAL IMPACT

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 17, 2009, the Montreal Impact defeated the Vancouver Whitecaps to win the United Soccer League Championship before a sold-out crowd at Saputo Stadium in Montreal.

[*English*]

Hosting an impressive lineup of international and local talent, such as captain Mauro Biello, the underdog Impact overcame incredible odds to go undefeated throughout the playoffs on their way to the championship.

[*Translation*]

By winning its third championship in franchise history, the Montreal Impact have proven to other professional franchises that their tireless efforts within our community through support for a variety of initiatives such as local youth programs and charities can help make a team better by strengthening its connection to the community.

[*English*]

In my name and as the member of Parliament for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, I wish to congratulate the entire Montreal Impact organization, beginning with its president, Joey Saputo, for its championship season.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Table de concertation Abus auprès des aînés de la Mauricie organized a press conference on Friday, November 20, 2009, to announce the results of a petition on the guaranteed income supplement.

The organizers took the opportunity to give me and my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé a petition that has nearly 5,000 signatures of people from the Mauricie region.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to make the following changes to the guaranteed income supplement: a \$110 monthly increase in benefits, a six-month compassion period for seniors who lose their spouses, full retroactivity for anyone entitled to the guaranteed income supplement, and automatic registration after an individual first applies for old age security.

I would like to congratulate the Table de concertation Abus auprès des aînés de la Mauricie and its partners, the Mauricie FADOQ and the Trois-Rivières AQDR, on this initiative. I will point out that they are here on the Hill today.

Statements by Members

•(1405)
[English]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP we recognize the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and call for an end to violence against women. In our communities, our homes and on our streets, too many women still live in fear, live without safe and secure housing or a safe place to turn in times of crisis.

In Vancouver's downtown east side and on B.C.'s Highway of Tears, women, mostly aboriginal women, are disappearing and dying in frightening numbers, but their courageous sisters are standing up and speaking out against this epidemic. We honour the women who are daring to speak out.

I recently hosted former Afghan MP Malalai Joya for her book launch in Vancouver. Ms. Joya is a woman who has dared to speak out, as her book notes. Ms. Joya faces death threats and suspension from Parliament for her outspoken criticism of the warlord-dominated government, yet she continues to raise her voice for women's rights and an independent and democratic Afghanistan.

We have the capacity and the resources to end violence against women everywhere. We call on the government to make doing so a political priority.

* * *

YEAR OF THE INUIT

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami declared 2010 to be the Year of the Inuit. I applaud this national organization and its president, Mary Simon, for launching this important initiative.

As chair of the government's aboriginal caucus, I welcome the year of the Inuit as a time for Canadians to celebrate the accomplishments of the Inuit. It will also be a chance to learn more about the challenges Inuit face in the future.

Canada's 2010 Winter Olympics feature the inukshuk, a proud symbol of the Inuit. The Inuit are proud to share this symbol with the world and want Canadians to see the Inuit in more than just symbolic terms. In doing so, we must work to improve Inuit living standards and address concerns such as their high education dropout rate.

Canada's Inuit population is young and growing in numbers. That makes initiatives like this one so necessary and valuable. I ask the House to join me in applauding the launch of the Year of the Inuit, and I welcome everyone to celebrate with them this year.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada will be on the world stage shortly and billions of people from nations large and small will have their eyes on our country. No, I am not talking about the Vancouver Olympics; I am talking about the climate change conference in Copenhagen.

For four long years, Canadians have consistently asked their government to take action on climate change. As the Conservative

government has already demonstrated in Nairobi, Bali and Bangkok, it is not willing to address Canadians' concerns but rather wants to block action on climate change.

International headlines this week acknowledge Quebec's decision to deflect from Canada's current "road to nowhere" climate policy and come up with its own. The international embarrassment continues.

With Copenhagen only weeks away, will the Conservatives choose to work with international leaders and address this urgent crisis, or will they maintain due course and drive Canada into a future of failure economically, environmentally and on the world stage?

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OTTAWA CITY COUNCILLORS

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I pay homage to four selfless servants. They are city councillors Michel Bellemare, Rainer Bloess, Rob Jellett and Bob Monette.

[Translation]

Deep down, they are all Liberals, yet they carry out their duties impartially.

[English]

Four years ago questions were raised about my ability to work with Liberal city councillors.

[Translation]

The fact that the transition went smoothly thanks to the impartial altruism of all elected members is proof that I can.

[English]

Together, we have worked on many important projects as part of Canada's economic action plan. Their support of these projects has made our community stronger.

[Translation]

Yet when one of them seeks the Liberal nomination for a federal election, the partisan assembly chooses a die-hard partisan instead.

[English]

So today, I pay tribute not only to my four selfless city councillors but also to their electors who have the good sense to recognize this superior quality.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

RIDING OF HOCHELAGA

Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking you for the warm welcome you gave me yesterday. I would also like to thank the people of Hochelaga, 51.2% of whom, a clear majority, voted on November 9 to put their trust in me. The people of Hochelaga have been showing their unfailing support for the Bloc Québécois since 1993.

During the election campaign, I made a number of promises to voters in the riding of Hochelaga and to Quebec, and I intend to keep those promises.

On November 29, 1994, 15 years ago, I joined the National Assembly of Quebec. Today, in the House of Commons, I am still motivated by the same desire and the same ideal: Quebec's independence.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 76 years ago one of the greatest crimes against humanity was committed against the people of Ukraine. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin and his communist regime created a man-made famine in 1932-33 called the Holodomor and starved millions of Ukrainians to death.

At its peak more than 25,000 Ukrainians died each day. Stalin and the Soviets did this, not as part of forced collectivization but as a genocide to kill Ukrainian nationalism.

In 2008, Parliament recognized Holodomor as genocide and designated the fourth Saturday of every November as Holodomor Memorial Day. This week there have been educational events, and I encourage all Canadians to attend Holodomor memorial services this Saturday.

This is our chance to remember the victims who perished. This is our chance to learn from Holodomor survivors how Stalin tried to stamp out Ukrainian nationalism.

This is our chance to educate one another and the world about this atrocity, the cover-up and the story of millions of Ukrainians who perished in one of the world's worst genocides. Their memory shall be eternal.

[Member spoke in Ukrainian as follows:]

Vichna Yim Pamyat.

[English]

* * *

YEAR OF THE INUIT

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to also rise in the House today to acknowledge that today the Inuit of Canada, represented by Mary Simon of ITK, declared 2010 the Year of the Inuit.

All Canadians should share in the accomplishments of the Inuit over the last 40 years.

As we host the Winter Olympic Games, we will be sharing the Inuit symbol with the world. We must celebrate this and ensure that we as Canadians see the Inuit as more than just symbolic figures.

There is still much work that needs to be done to ensure Inuit people have the same opportunities the rest of us have.

Today, on this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we must not ignore the calls from Inuit women to ensure that we give them the support and resources they need to ensure that they can move forward and stop the violence.

All Inuit and especially all Inuit women deserve to feel safe and to be equal participants in Canadian society.

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[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, the Bloc Québécois refused to defend the French language.

The Bloc adopted a motion allowing the committee to work with only English documents.

I am a francophone who works primarily in French, and yesterday, the Bloc refused my right to have federal government documents in French, my mother tongue.

I do not understand how a party that claims to defend the rights of Quebec francophones could do such a thing. The actions of the member for Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour and the member for Gatineau are insulting.

They are an insult to me, as well as to all Quebeckers. We have to wonder whether the Bloc really does defend the interests and values of the Quebec nation.

As a Quebecker and a francophone, I am completely stunned by the attitude of the Bloc Québécois.

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MARCEL PRUD'HOMME

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge today the retirement of the Hon. Marcel Prud'homme, whose Senate term ends on November 30. His leaving is a great loss not only to the Senate, but to Parliament as a whole.

He was a member of Parliament for the riding of Papineau, which was once called Saint-Denis, from 1964 to 1993, when he became a senator, and he has had a major impact on Canada's political life. Throughout his political career, Mr. Prud'homme has tirelessly defended the causes that are close to his heart: human rights and peacekeeping.

Statements by Members

Mr. Prud'homme's 45 years in politics make him a dean of Parliament, and all those who have had the pleasure of working with him can attest to his dedication and courage. I had the chance to work with Mr. Prud'homme in the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association, and I can tell you that he was a staunch defender of la Francophonie and was well liked by all the members of the committee here and in France.

On behalf of all the members of the New Democratic Party, I wish Mr. Prud'homme a happy retirement, a retirement—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ending violence against women—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1415)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou has the floor.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, ending violence against women is the responsibility of all governments, civil society and other partners. Our government is working hard to end violence against women here and abroad.

It is important to realize that violence against women takes many forms. Above all it is important to break the silence so that we can finally eradicate this violence.

That is why our government is introducing certain bills so that criminals, and not victims, pay for their crimes.

Let us take a moment to remember all those women who have lost their lives and all those who have lost their self-confidence, and let us give ourselves the tools to change things once and for all.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, let us think of our aboriginal sisters, more than 500 of whom have disappeared or been killed without any investigation.

Let us think of our 14 sisters from the École Polytechnique in Montreal who were killed with a shotgun. A number of people have insulted the families of these women by voting in favour of Bill C-391, which would repeal the Canadian firearms registry. These women were killed because they were women.

Let us think of all our sisters whose bodies are used, disrespected, violated and abused, and who are used as weapons of war in ongoing conflicts.

We must take action now. We must stop talking, researching, examining. We must take action. The government must open its eyes and its heart and put an end to its complacency. Let us find ways now to ensure that violence against women becomes a thing of the past.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the first of 16 days of solidarity.

[English]

The sexual health and safety of women are key components of the prevention of violence against women. Recently in Ethiopia I witnessed the good work that organizations like the International Planned Parenthood Federation are doing to educate women, young girls and young boys about relationships and respect for themselves.

[Translation]

In 1994, and again in 2009, Canada joined the fight to eliminate violence against women. But 15 years later, 500,000 women still die every year around the world because of inaction at the international level.

As chair of the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development, I invite all members of the House to honour this commitment by financially supporting organizations in Canada and around the world working to educate this generation and the next one about the importance of respect and preventing violence against their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.

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[English]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the 16 days of activism to end violence against women begin today, with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on December 10, Human Rights Day.

December 6 is Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of 14 young women who were murdered at École Polytechnique in Montreal.

Ending violence against women is the responsibility of all levels of government, including the police, the justice system, civil society and other stakeholders.

Our government has been working diligently to end violence against women at home and abroad. Canada has signed onto the UNIFEM campaign, "Say NO" to violence against women, and our government has introduced a number of justice reforms to protect our most vulnerable.

As we pause to commemorate the activism to end violence against women, it is important to recall that violence takes many forms and that all Canadians have a responsibility to stand against violence.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1420)

[English]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Scott Armstrong, member for the electoral district of Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Scott Armstrong, member for the electoral district of Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, introduced by the Right Hon. Stephen Harper and Hon. Peter MacKay.

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NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the house has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Fin Donnelly, member for the electoral district of New Westminster—Coquitlam.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Fin Donnelly, member for the electoral district of New Westminster—Coquitlam, introduced by the Hon. Jack Layton and Mr. Yvon Godin.

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[Translation]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Bernard Généreux, member for the electoral district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Bernard Généreux, member for the electoral district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, introduced by the Right Hon. Stephen Harper and the Hon. Christian Paradis.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, reports of torture reached the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's national security advisor. For 18 months, the Conservatives did nothing. They instead tried to hide the information. The moment of truth has arrived.

Oral Questions

When will the Prime Minister turn this evidence over to Parliament? When will he tell the truth?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, those reports do not prove that there was abuse. On the contrary, they are evaluations of the prison system in Afghanistan based on indirect observations and evidence. When our diplomats and our soldiers have received credible evidence of cases of abuse, our diplomats and our soldiers have taken action in those cases.

[English]

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, reports of torture reached the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's own national security adviser.

For 18 months, the government knew about torture in Afghan jails. For 18 months, it did not investigate. For 18 months, it did not stop it, and it has covered it up ever since. Why?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the reports that the hon. gentleman is talking about, by their own admission, are not credible evidence of torture of Canadian detained prisoners. They are simply evaluations of the Afghan prison system based on second-hand and third-hand evidence.

Whenever Canadian officials or soldiers have received credible reports of abuse, they have reacted and responded. There were systematic improvements to the detainee transfer arrangements over that period of time, culminating in a comprehensive new agreement that was signed over two and a half years ago.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, between January 2006 and May 2007, the government knew that torture was occurring in Afghan jails. It knew that it was transferring Afghans to those very jails, but the Prime Minister claims that no one transferred by Canadians was ever tortured.

How can he be so categorical when the government did nothing to investigate for 18 months? What kind of Canadian government does nothing to prevent torture?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, on the contrary, Canadian officials and soldiers have always acted when they have had credible evidence of abuse. That is absolutely clear.

The arrangements that were in place in a mission started by the Liberal government in 2002 began to be improved as soon as this government took office. They were comprehensively rewritten in early 2007.

That is the record. It is absolutely clear. Any such slander of soldiers and Canadian officials without evidence is without basis.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence wrongly says that there is not a "scintilla" of evidence regarding Afghan detainee torture, yet the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission reports that at least 98.5% of interviewed victims have been tortured.

Oral Questions

The minister wrongly says that Mr. Colvin's testimony is "not credible", though corroborated by reports from the commission, the UN and Foreign Affairs itself over the same period. The real problem is there is no scintilla of credibility in the government's position.

Will the government release the necessary documents in the pursuit of truth or will it continue to obstruct justice and obstruct the truth?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have indicated on a number of occasions, we are cooperating with respect to documents. We are cooperating with respect to the committee examining this situation.

With respect to evidence, what the hon. member is referring to are general conditions within the Afghan prison system. What we are seized with and what we are responsible for are prisoners transferred by Canadian Forces. That is the focus of the issue.

We all have concerns about the conditions of Afghan prisons, which is why we are investing in human rights and why we are investing in making improvements there. We have been doing that since 2006.

• (1430)

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government falsely claims that it stands for accountability and protection for whistleblowers, but the government's policy is that of the three Ds: denial of the evidence; disparaging of the witnesses; and dissembling of the truth.

Will the government establish an independent judicial commission of inquiry so as to shine the spotlight of truth on the unaccountable three-D government that intimidates whistleblowers, withholds testimony and obstructs justice?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have cooperated. We have invested heavily in improvements in human rights. We have invested in the training of prison officials, of justice officials, of police on the ground in Afghanistan.

Upon taking office, we improved upon the transfer arrangement to ensure that we could have more people go into the prison system to monitor situations where prisoners for whom we were responsible were transferred. We have acted substantially.

The reality is we inherited a bad situation left by the hon. member's government. When we took office, we took action.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a senior official at Foreign Affairs confirmed Richard Colvin's remarks. We now have extensive testimony all along the same lines: the government knew very well, from the fall of 2006, that there was a risk of torture when detainees were transferred to Afghan authorities. It nevertheless decided to turn a blind eye.

Is the Prime Minister continuing to refuse to release documents about this matter because he did not want to take responsibility for the Afghan detainees?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, when there was credible proof of abuse in Afghan prisons of Canadian-detained prisoners, the government, soldiers, Canadian Forces and the Department of Foreign Affairs took action.

In the end, we entered into a new agreement on transfers over two and a half years ago.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if that is true, why are they not releasing the documents? That would prove their story.

According to another government source, there was a meeting in December 2006 at the Privy Council Office regarding the involvement of the Governor of Kandahar in the torture of Afghan detainees. Since the Prime Minister likes to control everything, he must have been advised that this meeting was held within the offices of his own department.

Can the Prime Minister indicate whether or not said meeting was held by Privy Council Office?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has released thousands of pages of documents in this matter. Other public servants wish to testify before the parliamentary committee. If the Leader of the Bloc and the opposition parties truly wish to hear the facts, they can listen to these witnesses.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all of the parties must have access to the documents concerning the treatment of Afghan prisoners. That is a basic principle of justice. The Prime Minister's Office, the Privy Council, the generals and Mr. Mulroney all have access to those documents, including those signed by Richard Colvin, but the opposition parties do not. This government is trying to withhold information to hide the fact that it did not fulfill its responsibilities when it comes to torture. It is as simple as that.

Will the government release all the documents so that the opposition and the public can finally know what really happened?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is false. That is not correct. The government cooperated and did everything necessary. It heard from witnesses and studied the situations in Afghanistan.

[*English*]

We have cooperated in arm's-length investigations. We are cooperating with the parliamentary committee. We are turning over documents. We are allowing witnesses to give testimony with respect to this issue. We will hear from generals today. We will hear from other officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

This issue will receive a full airing, as it does each and every day.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what the minister said is true, but what he did not say is that we need the documents in order to know if everything we are hearing is true. That is what we are asking him.

Oral Questions

Today in *Le Devoir*, a senior official confirmed Richard Colvin's testimony regarding David Mulroney's censoring. If the allegations of torture could not be proven, the government insisted that they not appear in the written report.

Why did this government try to muzzle its diplomats on the ground, if not to hide its inability to fulfill its responsibilities under international conventions?

• (1435)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not correct. We continued cooperating in this matter.

[*English*]

We have in fact encouraged people to come forward. We are looking forward to, as I think Canadians are, hearing from David Mulroney, who was in a position to assess the situation in Afghanistan as a senior public servant at that time.

We will be hearing from generals and from other individuals involved in the extraordinary effort that Canada was making at that time to improve human rights in Afghanistan, to invest in its prison system, to train officials, to see that prisoners we were responsible for and transferred to Afghans were treated humanely.

This is the extraordinary effort that our country has made. We can be proud of it.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The YWCA has started its annual rose campaign, which calls on the government to ensure that women can seek shelter and that they do not have to be forced to choose between poverty or to go back to conditions of violence.

Over 100,000 women and children are having to seek shelter each year in our country, and aboriginal women are affected more than any other group.

Would the Prime Minister finally agree that with 500 aboriginal women missing, we are dealing with a public safety emergency in our country?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously violence against any Canadian citizen, violence against women, is unacceptable in our society. We all continue to be concerned about the level of violence we see against defenceless persons, including women in our society.

That is why this government has made a reform of the criminal justice system a major priority to protect innocent, law-abiding Canadian citizens.

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AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while we are waiting for the documents relating to the Afghan detainee situation, the government should stop doing everything it can to block the truth and simply start telling the truth.

Now that we know emails were sent directly to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, now that we know 400 torture cases were confirmed by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, now that we know our forces had to stop the transfer of prisoners on more occasions than we were told by the government, will the Prime Minister agree to put partisanship aside and call a public inquiry into this situation?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the evidence is absolutely clear. Members of the Government of Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Canadian Forces have always taken such matters seriously. When they have had credible evidence, they have acted up to and including comprehensively revising all transfer arrangements two and a half years ago and putting in place a whole series of mechanisms to improve both monitoring and performance in the Afghan prison system.

If the opposition is serious about being non-partisan in its inquiry, it will hear all witnesses who want to testify and not try to censor their testimony.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, *Le Devoir* is reporting that another senior official has said that Mr. Colvin's testimony shows the government did not take action, and instead turned a blind eye to cases of torture.

A report from a government official, Nicholas Gosselin, from November 2007, mentions a prisoner transferred by Canada, who was visited in prison and seen with visible marks. There was concrete proof: instruments of torture had been left behind.

Is the Prime Minister going to keep on denying that torture is going on?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when there is credible evidence of cases of abuse, Government of Canada officials have always acted responsibly. If the opposition truly wants to hear the testimony of the senior officials, there are people who want to speak, and I encourage the opposition to listen to them.

• (1440)

[*English*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have just learned that Mr. Colvin has advised members of the committee that he is not in a position to provide the committee with the documents that he undertook to provide them. He has been told by Department of Justice lawyers, through his employer, the Department of Foreign Affairs, not to disclose those documents to members of the committee.

How can the minister continue to stand in this place and talk with such piety about who is censoring what and who is restricting what, when it is very clear that the only party in the House that is restricting evidence coming before the committee and coming before the House of Commons is the Conservative Party of Canada and the Government of Canada?

Oral Questions

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the hon. member's righteous indignation, we have been cooperating with respect to the parliamentary inquiry. We have been turning over documents that are relevant to the investigation. We have cooperated with other impartial arm's-length investigations that are taking place.

The hon. member does not have a corner on virtue. We are cooperating in this regard and we will continue to do so. He can feign his outrage. This is a public exercise. We are hearing from witnesses. It is interesting to note that David Mulroney is prepared to testify but the member and his party do not seem anxious to hear from Mr. Mulroney.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is that the government is not willing to let the documents come out that will allow us to do our job. That is what is at stake.

Also, the current director general of DFAIT, with respect to the Afghan task force, said this about how they go about doing their business: "We don't investigate those allegations. We simply record them". He went on to say that having recorded them, they then passed them on to the Government of Afghanistan.

How can the Conservatives possibly hope to get to the bottom of any allegation if they take such a passive attitude to the information that is coming forward?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when officials at Foreign Affairs and officials at the Department of National Defence were in possession of credible allegations, they acted. Going back two and a half years the action began. The action began to clean up the mess that we had inherited from the party opposite. The action began to rewrite the transfer arrangement, to arrange for more prison visits and to train officials inside the prison.

What is interesting, when we hear the allegations of partisanship, is to note that the Liberal Party is now fundraising on the issue of Taliban transfers, trying to scare Canadians and further smear Canadian soldiers who are doing important work in Afghanistan.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in early 2006, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is now the Minister of National Defence, received a report on human rights in Afghanistan. When a heavily censored version of this report was made public, it said, "military, intelligence and police forces have been accused of... torture". We can only imagine what was kept secret.

Can the minister tell us why he waited 18 months to take action?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I and the Prime Minister have stated a number of times, we did act. We acted two and a half years ago. We acted when we had credible and substantial evidence that related to the transfer of prisoners taken by Canadian Forces.

These are very interesting issues that we should be concerned about in Afghanistan but these are general allegations and general

observations. These are reports that pertain broadly to the situation inside Afghanistan prisons.

We were concerned about it and we acted when we had credible evidence. We continue to act to improve the situation in Afghanistan. We can be proud of the actions of our diplomats and soldiers doing that job.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 5, 2007, a UN report stated that "in a significant proportion of cases...torture had been used to force confessions". These investigations were conducted jointly by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and the UN.

Did the minister pick up the phone and call anyone at the UN? Did he call Louise Arbour or did he choose to be wilfully blind and do nothing for over a year?

• (1445)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): No, we did more, Mr. Speaker, than read reports or pick up the phone. We got to work with our officials on the ground in Afghanistan to improve the transfer arrangement. We spoke with our diplomats serving in Afghanistan to see that the arrangement was improved and enhanced.

We got to work putting in place programs that would help train prison officials. We got to work ensuring we could have Canadians actually track the transfer of detainees by going inside the prisons. We invested in the physical surroundings of where prisoners were being held.

These are real actions, not phone calls, not reports and not pontification about what could be done. We took action. We can be proud of the work that was done in this instance.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House passed a very clear motion by the Bloc Québécois on the targets that Canada should advocate for in Copenhagen. A majority of parliamentarians want Canada to support an ambitious plan to limit global warming. We already know that the Minister of the Environment is not planning to advocate for either Quebec's position on the issues or the House's.

So my question is simple. Is the minister planning to do nothing more than defend the interests of folks in Calgary and oil companies whose main goal is to see Copenhagen fail?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's headlines were all about the American targets, and our position on the matter is very clear. We will harmonize our targets with those of the United States with respect to the regulatory system and a North American emissions trading system.

That is very clear. Today, President Obama is targeting a 17% reduction below 2005 levels by 2020, and the Government of Canada is aiming for a 20% reduction below 2006 levels by 2020. These two goals are almost the same. The Bloc Québécois should support our—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, it sounded as though the minister was speaking on Quebec's behalf. How can the minister claim to speak on Quebec's behalf in Copenhagen when everyone knows that Quebec's position on this issue is diametrically opposed to that of the minister and his government? The government has chosen to protect oil companies and work against Quebec's economic and environmental interests.

This government is not pro-environment, it is pro-oil company. That is—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not true. As we said, our government will harmonize its targets with those of the United States, as the president announced today.

Canada will continue to attach the same prerequisites to its targets, such as significant reductions in emerging economies like China and India, along with the introduction and passage of important energy and environment legislation in the United States and Canada.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MINT

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Canadian Mint has lost track of large quantities of gold and silver. Over \$15 million worth of precious metals vanished in 2008.

Deloitte & Touche is saying this is not an accounting error. The RCMP is saying it was not stolen. The mystery deepens the more it is investigated.

Can the minister tell us what happened to the Royal Canadian Mint gold, now that a year has gone by since it went missing?

[English]

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the missing or unaccounted for gold at the Mint, the external review that has been taking place over the last period of time has accounted for that unaccounted for gold, and it is in the hands of the Auditor General at the present time for validation of the numbers

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to say the least, the minister does not seem to be in a hurry to find the lost gold.

Back in June, Deloitte & Touche recommended that the Royal Canadian Mint review its technical processes in order to ensure that the gold was not simply thrown down the drain during the refinement process.

Can the minister tell us whether that lead produced any results?

[English]

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the external review that has been ongoing over the summer is nearing completion. It is in the hands of the Auditor General for

validation and we will have those actual numbers when the Auditor General is through.

* * *

● (1450)

AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the matter of torture in Afghanistan is now beyond who knew what and when. The facts show clearly that the government continued to transfer the detainees to a risk of torture. This is not an issue about our troops on the ground. This is about the Conservatives in Ottawa and their failure to uphold Canada's legal obligations with respect to torture.

Could the Prime Minister tell the House why he ignored, neglected and did not fulfill his legal obligations under domestic and international law with regard to torture?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs or the Department of National Defence had credible allegations we acted. We acted substantially and we acted quickly. We invested in the prison system, Afghan's justice system, \$132 million in fact. We went about improving the transfer arrangement left in place by the member's government. We went about ensuring that we could have Canadians monitor prisoners after transfer. That was a substantial improvement from the situation we inherited.

Those are things that Canadians can take pride in. We always put human rights first. We always ensure that we are acting in the best interests of our country. We can be very proud of the diplomats, soldiers and aid workers who continue that important work in Afghanistan today.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no court in the world that would accept ignorance or wilful blindness as a defence.

Information on the risk of torture in Afghanistan prisons was widespread and undeniable. Not acting has put our troops on the ground at risk. It has damaged Canada's reputation as a moral leader in the world.

Why has the Prime Minister and his ministers stuck their heads in the sand, violated international law and refused to protect our troops?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no court of law would take the evidence of one individual based on reports of second-hand and third-hand information and hearsay from Taliban.

As far as when I knew, as I said before, I was updated on a site visit from Foreign Affairs officials in June 2007 after the enhanced arrangement was put in place. We then, as previously stated, heard from a deputy minister who at that time had briefed me with respect to information he had received from sources on the ground in Afghanistan, and site visit information that came from both Ms. Bloodworth and Mr. Colvin. That was in June 2007 after the new enhanced arrangement was in place.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 10 days ago, the Prime Minister promised to take part in the Copenhagen conference on the condition that other heads of state confirm their attendance first. Well, 65 of them have. The United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Spain, Australia and Brazil will all be there. Not only is President Obama going, but so are his Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Energy and Secretary of Commerce.

Now that all the others have taken the first step, will the Prime Minister go to the conference in Copenhagen?

[English]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have always been clear. If there is a meeting of all major leaders involving climate change, I will of course attend.

I would just note that President Obama has not confirmed his attendance at the leaders' meeting in Copenhagen. In fact, I have discussed the matter with him directly.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in less than a year, the United States government has produced a comprehensive 1,428 page plan for climate change.

The White House announced today that in Copenhagen the U.S. will showcase its technologies, its investments and its know-how in order to "provide domestic and global leadership in the transition to a clean energy economy".

Why have the Conservatives given up on energy efficiency renewables and clean energy jobs? Why after four years and three ministers will we not only be missing in action in Copenhagen but negotiating off a blank page?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us discuss what the White House announced today.

Today the President of the United States indicated that conditional targets put forward in Copenhagen would be virtually identical to the targets that this government has put forward.

I have a question for the Liberal member. Yesterday he stood in the House, along with his party, and voted for European targets that would isolate this country, damage our economy and would not achieve environment outcomes. He said previously that they would never do this. How does he explain that?

* * *

● (1455)

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is the 10th anniversary of the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women.

This day also marks the beginning of the 16 days of activism against gender violence. Canada signed on to the UNIFEM "Say No - Unite to End Violence Against Women" campaign on behalf of the Government of Canada and we have also endorsed the Iqaluit

declaration which recognizes the need for sustained and coordinated action to reduce sexualized violence against aboriginal women.

Could the minister of state please update this House on what Canadians can do to end violence against women?

Hon. Helena Guergis (Minister of State (Status of Women), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Sarnia—Lambton for the work that she has done to end violence against women.

For Status of Women Canada, one of our key pillars is ending violence against women. We are in fact supporting hundreds of projects across the country that address the number of faces of violence against women and children.

We have also taken a number of initiatives. We have introduced and passed the Tackling Violent Crime Act. We have made significant investments in policing. We are supporting Sisters in Spirit. We also introduced most recently Bill C-42 to end house arrest and conditional sentences for violent sexual crimes. We hope the opposition will support us.

* * *

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health said she would not use a drop-side crib for her own family. She decided not to let Canadians know about the dangers of this product until yesterday.

These are the facts. There have been 43 incidents in Canada with 3 entrapments, going back several years. The government did not even look into it until August 20 when the United States came to it with information. The government decided not to even investigate for a voluntary recall until October 8. It did not put a notice out to Canadians and issue a voluntary recall until yesterday.

What if the Americans had not called? Why did the minister keep Canadian families and children in the dark?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government does not currently have the authority to order a mandatory recall.

We introduced the Canada consumer product safety act, Bill C-6. When passed, it will give us the tools needed to protect Canadian children.

I am hearing that the Liberal senators want to further delay this bill review by postponing a clause-by-clause review scheduled for tomorrow morning. I would continue to urge the Liberal senators to stop delaying the passage of these important safety measures that will protect Canadians and their children.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House also want to see Bill C-6 passed and we want mandatory recalls. However, that does not explain the fact that the government could have issued voluntary recalls, at least going back to August, when the Americans informed it.

So, my question is, why is the government not exercising the authority it has right now? Where was the follow-up to the complaints? What products were tested? Why were public warnings not issued? Why was there no hint of concern given to parents? Why should Canadians trust the government to proactively protect them under a new law when it has failed so miserably to protect them under the old one?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we introduced Bill C-6 to protect the health and safety of Canadians. We recognize that the current legislation is over 40 years old. It is outdated. That is why we are encouraging the Liberal senators to stop delaying the passage of that legislation, so that we can protect the health and safety of Canadians.

I found out about this yesterday, and yesterday we issued the release to protect the health and safety of Canadians. Current legislation does not give us a mandatory recall. It only gives us a voluntary recall. We have to work with the industry on any recalls. Also, we will continue to push the senators of the Liberal Party to pass—

The Speaker: Order, the hon. member for Gatineau.

* * *

[Translation]

VANCOUVER OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is 80 days until the opening of the Olympic Games in Vancouver, and French still seems to be nothing more than a foreign language among so many others to the federal government and the Olympic organizing committee. The indifference and bad faith of the officials have touched every aspect of the games, from the ceremony announcing the start of the Olympic countdown to the tourist information bureau where you can get bilingual flyers in English and Mandarin. French is absent.

How can the minister responsible for official languages accept such disdain for French?

• (1500)

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false. We have to look at the facts.

Our government has allocated the necessary funding to ensure that the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be completely respectful of both of Canada's official languages. We will have permanent signage at all the sites. We will have francophone artists there. The official languages have been well respected.

The 1988 Olympic Games were a vast improvement over the 1976 games. The 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a vast improvement over the 1988 games. We are delivering the goods when it comes to official languages.

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government, which is perpetuating the myth of institutional bilingualism, is in no position to teach a lesson to the local authorities. At the Vancouver International Airport, for example, flight announcements and passenger check-in for flights to Montreal are in English. This situation is being criticized today by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne.

Oral Questions

Could the Minister responsible for official languages at least ensure that the federal government respects French?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have kept the promise we made to Canadians in the last election campaign. We said we would make investments and protect both of Canada's official languages. Air Canada has responsibilities and it is the responsibility of Air Canada to deliver the goods.

We have allocated \$1.1 billion over five years to protect and celebrate Canada's official languages. Graham Fraser himself said, "The progress that has been made is impressive on many levels". Again, we are delivering the goods.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin recently made comments about abortion that insulted and denigrated women. The member made statements that are medically incorrect to support his moral ideology.

Will the Minister of Health repudiate her colleague's beliefs with respect to a woman's right to choose?

[English]

Hon. Helena Guergis (Minister of State (Status of Women), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note for the member that all members of Parliament in the House are required to have their own opinion. It does not mean it is the opinion of the government.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it looks like the muzzles are off. The Conservatives are sounding like Reform Party extremists.

The member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin's comments are completely degrading to women. He claims that abortion causes "a greater risk of breast cancer" and he asserts that abortion is "part of a male agenda to have women more sexually available". His comments show an odious attitude toward women.

Will the Minister of Justice stand up for women and denounce these vile comments?

Hon. Helena Guergis (Minister of State (Status of Women), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I again will note for the member that each member of the House is able to have his or her own opinion. It does not mean it represents that of the government.

What I will highlight is that this government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, has made significant investments in Status of Women Canada. We have three pillars of focus: economic security, violence against women, and women in leadership roles.

We also have the highest percentage of women in cabinet in Canada's history, and the highest level of funding at Status of Women Canada in Canada's history, with an increase in the number of grassroots organizations that are now able to receive funding to support the most vulnerable women in Canadian society.

*Oral Questions***TAX HARMONIZATION**

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just spent several months talking to seniors, students, families and small businesses. Their message was clear: tell the Conservative government that we do not want its HST. British Columbians, like all Canadians, are still trying to make their way through these tough economic times, but this unfair tax shift will make life more expensive for them.

The people of British Columbia are tired of hearing the government trying to pass the buck. Will the government start listening to them and cancel this tax increase?

• (1505)

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): First, Mr. Speaker, let me be the first to congratulate the member on his election in New Westminster—Coquitlam.

However, with respect, if he wanted to join a political party that believes in lower taxes for Canadians, he should have joined the Conservatives. It is the Conservative Party that campaigned on a promise to lower the GST and we delivered. We promised to lower income taxes and we delivered. We promised to lower taxes on students and we have delivered on that. We promised to help seniors with pension income splitting and we have delivered on that.

While I congratulate my friend on his election in the byelection, I suggest to him that if he wants to be consistent, he should vote with the Conservative Party in this Parliament.

* * *

SALMON FISHERY

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us hope the government's promises on west coast salmon do not ring as hollow.

Answering the call by New Democrats for an inquiry was a first good step, but we cannot just sit back and do nothing for the next 20 months. Problems with fish farms, sea lice and overfishing must be addressed. The government can and must take action to mitigate damage being done to the salmon fishery.

Will the minister tell the House what immediate actions, besides calling an inquiry, it plans to take to stop the decline of B.C. salmon?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House certainly welcome the judicial inquiry on the Fraser River sockeye and we are committed to cooperating fully with the proceedings.

We realize how important salmon is to British Columbia and British Columbians. It is a very important part of their economy. That is why the Prime Minister has made the commitment to this judicial inquiry.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent

the people of the riding of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, one of the most francophone ridings in Canada.

As elsewhere in Quebec, my fellow citizens expect their member of Parliament to defend and protect our French language.

Yesterday, Bloc members sitting on the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates denied a Conservative member the right to obtain documents in French.

I just wrapped up an election campaign and I can tell you that the people of my riding would never accept that.

The actions of the Bloc are totally unacceptable.

Can the Minister of Public Works —

The Speaker: I am sorry but the time for the question is up.

The hon. Minister of Public Works.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my colleague on his election and for his fine win against the Bloc.

As a francophone and Quebec nationalist, I am worried about the fact that the Bloc did not allow a unilingual francophone member to obtain documents in his own language in the parliamentary committee. That is unacceptable.

Is that how the Bloc intends to protect the French language?

For our part, we will always fight for the provision of services in French by all federal institutions for francophones. That is a fundamental right. Quebeckers and francophones can count on us, and not the Bloc Québécois, to deliver what they want.

* * *

[English]

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government either does not try to understand the struggles of Canadians in poverty or it makes it up as it goes.

Yesterday in QP the Minister of Human Resources misled the House when she suggested that child poverty had been cut in half under her watch. That is completely untrue. Comments like this add to the insult made yesterday by the member for South Shore—St. Margaret's when he attacked the unemployed in Halifax.

Poverty is not a Halifax problem; it is a Canadian problem. It requires political will to make a difference. When will the government stop insulting those in need and start working with them to reduce poverty in Canada?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will explain what I explained yesterday to the hon. member because he apparently did not understand, and since then has been defamatory and accusatory in a very unparliamentary way.

The facts are that, according to Statistics Canada's 2007 "Income in Canada" report, the low income rate for children in 1996, during the Liberal tenure, was 18.4%. In 2007, after our government had been in place for two years, it was 9.5%.

The Liberal member needs to withdraw his comments, apologize to Canadians, and apologize to this party as well.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of a number of people today.

We have in the gallery the winners of the 2009 Governor General's Literary Awards: Hervé Bouchard; Nicole Champeau; Kevin Loring; Jirina Marton; Julie Mazzieri; Hélène Monette; Janice Nadeau; Paule Noyart; Susan Ouriou; Caroline Pignat; Kate Pullinger; M.G. Vassanji; and David Zieroth.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Nancy Heppner, Minister of Environment for Saskatchewan.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Mary Simon, National Inuit Leader and President of the Inuit Taporiit Kanatami.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

● (1510)

POINTS OF ORDER

WITHDRAWAL OF REMARK

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday after question period I rose on a point of order. I was referencing an answer from the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development where she suggested incorrectly that poverty has been cut in half under her watch. I referred to her answer at that time as an absolute lie.

I know the rules of the House and I respect Parliament, and I know that I should not have used that word. I want to withdraw that remark and offer an unconditional apology to the minister and to the House.

In the spirit of conciliation, I am also prepared to table a report entitled "The 2009 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada", which the minister can reference to have the correct information in the future.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table this document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do accept the apology from the member opposite.

However, I do find it very unfortunate that a member of the House can make a slur against any other member of the House and then only retract the following day after damage has been done. I do find that unacceptable, especially as I was able to demonstrate to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the rest of the House today that what I did say was indeed factual.

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reference that has been made in the comparison between statistics in 1996 and 2009 is absolutely fraudulent. The comparison should be 2004 and 2006.

The Speaker: An argument on the facts is a matter that is beyond the control of the Chair and is not the subject of a point of order. We will consider the matter closed at this time.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made Friday, June 19, 2009, I have the honour to lay upon the table a proposed formula for the distribution of allotted days in each of the supply periods of 2010.

* * *

[*English*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Greg Thompson (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table, in both official languages, the 2008-09 annual report of the Veterans Ombudsman.

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● (1515)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 17 petitions.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament with respect to the supplementary estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Routine Proceedings

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled, “Recognizing Success: A Report on Improving Foreign Credential Recognition”.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding memberships of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 25th report later this day.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on International Trade entitled, “Promotional Funding for Beef Exports”.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier today, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

BILL C-36

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I present this motion on behalf of my colleague the chief government whip. There have been discussions between all parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, if the recorded division on the amendment to the third reading motion of Bill C-36, An Act to amend the Criminal Code is negatived, the Speaker shall immediately put the question on the third reading motion of Bill C-36 without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker: Does the hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the acceptance of the House on that last motion. Pursuant to Standing Order 66(2)(a), I would like to designate Thursday, November 26, which is tomorrow, as the day to continue the debate on the motion to concur in the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates presented on Wednesday, June 17, 2009.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That this House marks the 10th anniversary of the formal proclamation by the United Nations of November 25th as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The Speaker: The hon. member has proposed a motion. Does the hon. member for Laval have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons on a point of order.

[English]

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the mover, I wonder if I could hear the motion one more time.

● (1520)

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: With pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

That this House marks the 10th anniversary of the formal proclamation by the United Nations of November 25th as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: We are on motions, and I see the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London wants to try another motion.

Routine Proceedings

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): I will try again, Mr. Speaker. If the House gives its consent, I move that the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented earlier today be concurred in.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

CANADA POST

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present three petitions: one from Sainte-Sophie-de-Lévrard, one from Sainte-Marie-de-Blandford, and another from Sainte-Cécile-de-Lévrard.

These three petitions call on the government to maintain the moratorium on closing rural post offices. They also call on Canada Post to maintain, increase and improve postal services.

[English]

AVIATION SAFETY

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition calling for a commission of inquiry into aviation safety. This petition has been signed by numerous petitioners from across the country and represents a real desire to see that our aviation system is held in the highest degree of safety in the future as it was in the past.

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, municipality leaders in the riding of Berthier—Maskinongé are worried about the future of their post offices. Not only have several resolutions demanding that the post offices remain open been received from them, but petitions were circulated in Berthier—Maskinongé for citizens to sign and sent to me.

I am presenting today petitions signed by more than 1,800 residents of Saint-Alexis-des-Monts, Saint-Mathieu-du-Parc, Maskinongé and Yamachiche to make the federal government aware of the fact that they want this essential service to be maintained.

Therefore, these petitioners demand nothing less than for the federal government to confirm in no uncertain terms that the moratorium on closing post offices will be maintained and enhanced.

FUEL PRICES

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House, pursuant to Standing Order 36, a petition signed by over 300 constituents, many of them from my riding of Pickering—Scarborough East and some from as far away as the other side of Toronto, in Mississauga.

The petitioners are concerned about the costs and the effect of high fuel prices on Canadians and the economy in general. They note a serious lack of competition and transparency in the energy industry and that it has had a detrimental impact on the Canadian economy. They are concerned about the cost of fuel and, during a period of economic uncertainty, the effect this has on the entire economy. They wish to draw to the attention of Parliament that many countries around the world have an energy market monitoring agency and that energy superpowers like Canada should and ought to have one.

The petitioners therefore call upon the government to finally acknowledge that the high price of fuel is damaging the Canadian economy. They ask that the government immediately act to reinstate the office of petroleum price information, which was abolished by the government in 2006, as an energy market information service which, like the U.S. energy information agency, would provide weekly reports, including all Canadian energy supply and demand inventory and storage information.

They ask also that hearings be held in the energy sector to determine how the government can foster competition and provide transparency in the energy market and to eliminate the monopolistic efficiencies defence section 96 of the Competition Act.

FRASER RIVER SOCKEYE

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

The first petition urgently calls on the government to establish an independent judicial inquiry under the federal Inquiries Act that would fully explore all the facts, consult with scientists and stakeholders, determine what went wrong with this year's sockeye run and present a public report with binding solutions within six months.

We know of course a judicial inquiry has been called for, but as the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam pointed out today, we need action within the next 20 months. Thousands of people across the province of B.C. signed this petition, and New Democrats, of course, have called for an inquiry for a long time.

Routine Proceedings

●(1525)

AVIATION SAFETY

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the Government of Canada to initiate a commission of inquiry headed by a superior court judge to conduct a judicial review into Canada's state of national aviation safety and government oversight of the aviation industry, to be followed by further reviews at defined intervals. We recently read stories in the newspapers about pilot fatigue, so we are hopeful that the government will take these petitioners' concerns very seriously.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): With respect, Mr. Speaker, I will let the hon. member for Trois-Rivières go first. She has people waiting for her and a committee meeting to attend at 3:30 p.m. I will take my turn after.

GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by close to 5,000 citizens. The Table de concertation Abus auprès des aînés de la Mauricie, an issue table dealing with elder abuse, took upon itself to circulate the petition.

This petition calls for the terms of the GIS program to be improved, to include full retroactivity, a \$110 monthly increase in benefits and continued payments for a period of six months for a bereaved spouse. I applaud their initiative.

[English]

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

The first petition calls on the Government of Canada to expand the annual number of permanent immigrants and to decrease the number of temporary workers coming into Canada. It also calls on the government to provide a path for temporary workers to become permanent residents and for it to crack down on those who make huge profits by illegally exploiting workers with precarious status.

The petitioners worry that over 200,000 temporary foreign workers came to Canada last year and that an approximately equal number of residents are here without status. The latter are employed mostly in jobs that are not temporary in nature, such as live-in caregivers and in hospitality work and skilled trades.

The petitioners also note that Parliament has voted in favour of an NDP motion to place a moratorium on the deportation of undocumented workers pending a full review of the immigration system.

FRASER RIVER SOCKEYE

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the petitioners are asking for a judicial inquiry. They are concerned about the nine million sockeye salmon that have disappeared during this summer's migration to the Fraser River, the lowest return in 50 years.

They point out that this crisis is similar in magnitude to the collapse of the Atlantic cod stocks, which devastated the east coast.

They also note that a factor in the Atlantic cod collapse was government suppression of the scientific facts.

Therefore, they are demanding immediate action. Yes, there has been an inquiry announced, but there needs to be a public report with binding solutions within six months. The time to act is now.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who have been victims of violent crimes committed by young offenders. They are petitioning in support of the family of 15-year-old Baden Willcocks, who was murdered on June 19, 2009.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to implement the necessary changes to the Young Offenders Act for the benefit of victims' families, whose lives have been destroyed by violent crimes committed by young offenders.

FRASER RIVER SOCKEYE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition signed by several hundred residents of the B.C. coast, the Lower Mainland, Victoria, Qualicum Beach and Port Alberni right up to Quadra Island and the Sunshine Coast. They join their voices to the thousands upon thousands of British Columbians who have joined the NDP's push for a judicial inquiry on the Fraser River sockeye.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, we now have a judicial inquiry, but these petitioners are saying that we need immediate action on the salmon fishery as well.

On behalf of these many residents of British Columbia, I am happy to join my voice to those of many of my colleagues in presenting these hundreds of names on behalf of thousands of residents of British Columbia.

●(1530)

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of several dozens of citizens of the small community of Villebois, located in the northern part of my riding. This petition calls for the post office to remain open, which is extremely important to the local people. Should their post office close, they will have to go pick up their mail more than 70 kilometres away from Villebois. That means driving more than 140 kilometres every day.

[English]

AIR PASSENGERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my petition is a call to adopt Canada's first air passengers' bill of rights. The petitioners support Bill C-310, which includes compensation for overbooked flights, cancelled flights and unreasonable tarmac delays. The legislation is inspired by European Union law and, in fact, Air Canada is already operating under the European laws on its flights to Europe. Why should an Air Canada customer see better treatment in Europe than in Canada?

Routine Proceedings

The bill would ensure that passengers are kept informed of flight changes, weather delays or cancellations. The new rules will be posted in the airports and the airlines must inform passengers of their rights and the process to file for compensation. The bill also deals with late and misplaced baggage, and it requires all-inclusive pricing by airline companies in their advertising.

Bill C-310 is not meant to punish the airlines. If the airlines follow the rules, they will not have to pay a dime in compensation to passengers.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-310, which would introduce Canada's first air passengers' bill of rights.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 294, 462, 483, 529 and 558.

[Text]

Question No. 294—**Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regards to the employment insurance program two-week waiting period: (a) how many individuals who apply for employment insurance report finding a new job within the two week waiting period; (b) how much would it cost the government to eliminate the two-week waiting period for all claimants?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the waiting period, which is similar to the deductible portion in private insurance, was first introduced in 1940 when the unemployment insurance legislation was first founded. Since 1971, the waiting period has been fixed at two weeks.

The two-week waiting period serves a number of purposes. Namely, it allows for the time needed to verify and establish a claim, and eliminates the administrative burden created by very short claims made by people who find a job quickly. Consequently, it ensures that EI resources are focused on persons dealing with significant gaps in employment.

In response to (a), based on the 2008 employment insurance coverage survey, approximately 140,000 individuals were entitled to EI benefits, but did not collect them for a number of reasons. They indicated that, during the reference week of the survey, they had exhausted their benefits; their benefits were temporarily interrupted; they were waiting for benefits, they had made a claim but did not receive benefits; or they were eligible but did not claim.

In response to (b), eliminating the two-week waiting period for all claimants would cost over \$1 billion annually.

Question No. 462—**Ms. Megan Leslie:**

With regard to the Arts Presentation Canada program: (a) how much of the program funding is budgeted for applications from Nova Scotia; (b) when was the last time the funding was increased for Nova Scotian applicants and, if funding was increased, by how much; and (c) have there been funding increases to other regions in Canada and, if so, which regions benefited and when were these increases made?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on June 26, 2009, the government announced the renewal of funding for the arts.

It was also noted that the arts presentation Canada program will now be called the Canada arts presentation fund and that its funding will be kept at the current level for fiscal years 2010-11 to 2014-15.

More information can be found at <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/pac-apc/2007-2008-eng.cfm> and <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/pac-apc/2008-2009-eng.cfm>.

Question No. 483—**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:**

With respect to Employment Insurance claims made by residents of the constituency of Don Valley East: (a) what is the number of claims that have been made since January 2008, (i) broken down by month, (ii) in total; (b) what is the percentage of claims that have been approved since January 2008, (i) broken down by month, (ii) in total; (c) which claims have been denied since January 2008, (i) broken down by month, (ii) in total and what were the reasons for their denial; and (d) what has been the average period of time it has taken to process the claims that have been made since January 2008, (i) broken down by month, (ii) in total?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a) through (d), the department does not have the requested data at the Don Valley East level.

Question No. 529—**Mr. Michael Savage:**

With regard to securities purchased from banks as part of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation securities purchase program announced in the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009: (a) how much and what type of securities were purchased; (b) out of those mortgage securities, (i) how many defaulted, (ii) in what regions were the defaults most and least prevalent, (iii) what is the dollar value of the defaults; (c) how long does the government plan on holding these securities; (d) how much securities were purchased from each bank or entity, and for how much; (e) were any securities purchased from foreign banks or entities and, if so, (i) what is the percentage, based on the total of securities purchased, (ii) from which foreign banks or entities, indicating the total amount of securities purchased for each; (f) did any of the money to purchase the securities come from the Bank of Canada and, if so, how much; and (g) what are the names of those who sold their Bank of Canada stock to the government?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), through the insured mortgage purchase program, \$65.46 billion of National Housing Act mortgage backed securities have been purchased to date. National Housing Act mortgage backed securities are marketable securities comprised of pools of insured Canadian residential mortgages; the National Housing Act mortgage backed securities are guaranteed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation under the National Housing Act and hence carry the guarantee of the Government of Canada.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (b), there have been no defaults of the National Housing Act mortgage backed securities purchased under the insured mortgage purchase program. Since the securities purchased by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation already carry the guarantee of the Government of Canada through the insurance, there is no additional risk to the taxpayer. This activity also carries no fiscal cost to the taxpayer. In fact, since the National Housing Act mortgage backed securities purchased by the government pay a return generally in excess of the rate the government pays to raise the funds used to purchase the National Housing Act mortgage backed securities, the government expects to earn net revenue on the program.

In response to (c), it is expected that the National Housing Act mortgage backed securities purchased under the insured mortgage purchase program will be held until their maturity.

In response to (d), a summary of the results of each National Housing Act mortgage backed securities auction operation is available on Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's website, www.cmhc.ca, following each auction, and includes the highest accepted yield, the lowest accepted yield, and the average accepted yield. Due to the confidential nature of the information, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation does not release the identities of participating institutions or the level of their participation.

In response to (e), due to the confidential nature of the information, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation does not release the identities of participating institutions or the level of their participation. However, it is important to note that, as mentioned above, despite which organization they were purchased from, the National Housing Act mortgage backed securities are comprised entirely of insured Canadian residential mortgages.

In response to (f), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation borrows the funds to purchase the National Housing Act mortgage backed securities from the government which funds itself through Government of Canada bond and treasury bill auctions. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation borrows the funds at the same interest rate as the average auction rate which the National Housing Act mortgage backed securities are purchased from the financial institutions.

In response to (g), the Bank of Canada acts as a fiscal agent for the government in its debt management activities. The Bank of Canada does not issue on its own behalf market debt or stock to raise funds.

Question No. 558—**Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to the application for benefits under the Veteran's Independence Program (VIP) made by Mr. Edmund Rockburne of Perth, Ontario, on what basis was Mr. Rockburne found not to be eligible for benefits under the VIP program?

Hon. Greg Thompson (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Privacy Act prevents the government from disclosing personal information regarding specific individuals. Regarding the eligibility criteria for the veterans independence program, VIP, most clients who receive VIP are members or former members of the Canadian Forces or were civilians supporting the war effort during World War I or World War II.

These individuals may qualify for VIP if they have a health-related need for the services, and are: a client who needs VIP as a

result of a disability pension(s) or award(s) attributed to an injury incurred during service in the Canadian Forces; veterans or civilians who served in the war effort during World War I, World War II and Korea, who qualify due to low income and health care needs; overseas service veterans, theatre of war service, who require personal care assistance at home and are on a wait-list for a departmental facility or contract bed; totally disabled former prisoners of war; or an overseas service veteran who is at home on a wait-list for a priority access bed.

In 2002, the Department of Veterans Affairs agreed to assume full responsibility for the provision of health care benefits and services to retired regular pensioners, retired civilian pensioners, and still-serving members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP.

According to the agreement between Veterans Affairs Canada and the RCMP, only benefits and services required for the treatment of pensioned conditions can be provided. These benefits consist of any medical, surgical or dental treatment provided by a health professional; surgical or prosthetic devices or aids and any home adaptation that is required to accommodate the use of these devices or aids; and drugs.

This agreement does not encompass veterans independence program home care services.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 323 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: The questions enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

Is it agreed that Question No. 323 be made an order for return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 323—**Mrs. Carol Hughes:**

With regard to executive compensation at Atomic Energy of Canada Limited over each of the last five fiscal years: (a) what was the amount paid to each executive; (b) how was the compensation paid via bonuses, immediate and deferred rewards; (c) what was the amount to each executive by benefits; (d) what were the benchmarks used for bonuses paid; and (e) how did each executive meet the expected benchmarks?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders**[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.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motion for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***CHILD PROTECTION ACT (ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION)**

Hon. Helena Guergis (for the Minister of Justice) moved that Bill C-58, An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak in support of government Bill C-58, the child protection act.

I think everyone in this House would agree there is no greater duty for us as elected officials than to ensure the protection of children, the most precious and vulnerable members of our society.

The creation of the Internet, particularly the creation of the World Wide Web, has provided new means for offenders to distribute and consume child pornography, resulting in significant increases in the availability and volume of child pornography.

While Canada has one of the most comprehensive frameworks in the world to combat child pornography, we can and must do better in protecting children from sexual exploitation. This proposed new federal statute before us today would enhance Canada's capacity to better protect children from sexual exploitation by requiring suppliers of Internet services to report Internet child pornography.

Bill C-58 would strengthen Canada's ability to detect potential child pornography offences; help reduce the availability of online child sexual abuse; facilitate the identification, apprehension and prosecution of offenders; and, most importantly, help identify the victims so they may be rescued from sadistic pedophiles.

Less than a week ago, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection released a report that included an overview of the information received through reports to Cybertip.ca. Cybertip.ca is Canada's tipline for reporting online child sexual exploitation, in particular, child pornography, online luring, child exploitation through prostitution, travelling sex offenders and child trafficking.

I will quote from this report, which contains absolutely shocking information about the prevalence of online sexual assault and the distribution of these images:

The results of this assessment provide some disturbing data on the issue of child abuse images. Most concerning is the severity of abuse depicted, with over 35% of all images showing serious sexual assaults. Combined with the age ranges of the children in the images, we see that children under 8 years old are most likely to be abused through sexual assaults. Even more alarming is the extreme sexual assaults which occur against children under the age of 8 years. These statistics challenge the misconception that child pornography consists largely of innocent or harmless nude photographs of children.

The Cybertip.ca report reinforces similar findings revealed this past summer in the special report of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, "Every Image, Every Child".

This report, which provided an overview of the problem of Internet-facilitated child sexual abuse, revealed that the number of charges for production and distribution of child pornography increased 900% between 1998 and 2003. Moreover, between 2003 and 2007, the number of images of serious child abuse quadrupled. Additionally, the images are becoming more violent and the photos are featuring younger children.

Canadians would be appalled to know that 39% of those accessing child pornography were viewing images of children between the ages of three and five, and 19% were viewing images of infants under three years old.

Here are a few other facts from the report. Commercial child pornography is estimated to be a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide. There are over 750,000 pedophiles online at any given time. Thousands of new images or videos are put on the Internet every week, and hundreds of thousands of searches for child sexual abuse are performed daily. Offenders may have collections of over a million child sexual abuse images. An image of a four year old girl in diapers has been shared an estimated 800,000 times. Most child sexual abuse image producers are known to the victims.

The most disturbing revelation in the ombudsman's report comes in the form of a quote from Ontario Provincial Police detective inspector Angie Howe. When she appeared before a Senate committee in 2005, she said:

● (1535)

The images are getting more violent and the children in the photos are getting younger. As recently as one year ago, we did not see pictures with babies, where now it is normal to see babies in many collections that we find. There is even a highly sought-after series on the Internet of a newborn baby being violated. She still has her umbilical cord attached; she is that young.

We must do everything within our power to put a stop to this growing problem. That is why our government has introduced legislation to create a uniform mandatory reporting regime across Canada.

It is important to note that the measures proposed in Bill C-58 build upon our existing comprehensive measures to better protect all children against sexual exploitation through child pornography.

Government Orders

Canadian criminal laws against child pornography are among the most comprehensive in the world and apply to representations involving real and imaginary children. Section 163.1 of the Criminal Code prohibits all forms of making, distributing, transmitting, accessing, selling, advertising, exporting, importing and possessing child pornography. It broadly defines child pornography that includes visual, written and audio depictions of sexual abuse of a young person under the age of 18 years, that advocates or counsels such unlawful activity, or that has descriptions of such unlawful activity as its predominant focus.

All child pornography offences are punishable by significant penalties, including a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment upon indictment for the offences of making and distributing child pornography.

Since 2005, all child pornography offences impose a mandatory minimum sentence of imprisonment and, as a result, convicted child pornographers are not eligible to receive a conditional sentence, for example, house arrest.

As well, the commission of any child pornography offence with the intent to profit is an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes.

Also, since 2005, sentencing courts are required to give primary consideration to the sentencing objectives of denunciation and deterrence in sentencing for an offence involving the abuse of a child.

This government also recognizes that more is needed to combat this scourge than just strong criminal laws. That is why, in December 2008, we renewed the federal government's national strategy to protect children from sexual exploitation on the Internet. Initially launched in 2004, and under the lead of the Minister of Public Safety, this strategy is providing \$42.1 million over five years to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre to provide law enforcement with better tools and resources to address Internet-based child sexual exploitation, enhance public education and awareness, and support the national launch and ongoing operation of *Cybertip.ca* as a national 24/7 tipline for reporting the sexual exploitation of children on the Internet.

As announced in budget 2007 and rolled out in 2008, we have allocated an additional \$6 million per year to strengthen initiatives to combat the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. These funds are being used to augment the overall capacity of the NCECC, as well as to specifically enhance its ability to identify, and ultimately rescue, child victims through the analysis of images seized from sex offenders, captured on the Internet or received from international law enforcement agencies.

The international community has also recognized that the protection of our children is of paramount importance in the many treaties that address the issue. In particular, the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime seeks to standardize a definition of child pornography and offences related to child pornography in an attempt to foster international cooperation for crimes against the world's children. The legislation introduced in the House yesterday would further enhance our ability to cooperate with our international partners in the fight to eradicate this violence.

● (1540)

I would now like to describe how this piece of legislation will work.

First, the bill focuses on the Internet and those who supply Internet services to the public, because the widespread adoption of the Internet is largely responsible for the growth in child pornography crimes over the last 10 years or so. Because suppliers of Internet services are uniquely placed to discover child pornography crimes, because they provide Canadians with the Internet services through which child pornography crimes can be committed, the bill imposes upon them a duty to report or notify.

It should be noted that this act will cover more than just ISPs. The term ISP usually refers to those who provide access to the Internet, in other words, the wires that go into our homes or apartments. This bill applies to all persons who supply an Internet service to the public. While this includes ISPs, it also includes those who supply electronic mail services such as webmail, Internet content hosting, which would include web server farms and co-location facilities, and social networking sites on which the public can upload material to an Internet service.

Furthermore, the act would apply to those who provide complimentary Internet services to the public, such as cybercafés, hotels, restaurants and public libraries. This wide application will ensure that the act has as broad a scope as possible and will eliminate as many pedophile safe havens as possible.

Under this new federal statute, suppliers of an Internet service will have a duty to comply with a number of requirements.

First, they will be required to report to a designated agency whenever they are advised of any Internet addressing information relating to a website where child pornography may be found. To be clear, it is only the Internet addressing information that they will be required to report to the designated agency. No personal information will be sent to the designated agency.

This has to be done for two reasons. First, in order to perform the triage function of determining where this material resides, the designated agency does not need any additional information. Second and most importantly, since the designated agency does not need personal information to fulfill its duties, which will be articulated in the regulations, to protect the privacy of Canadians, no personal information will be passed on by the supplier of the Internet service to the designated agency.

Although the regulations have not yet been finalized, it is anticipated that the main role of the designated agency will be to, first, determine if the Internet addressing information actually leads to child pornography as defined by the Criminal Code, and second, to determine the actual geographic location of the web servers hosting the material. The designated agency would then refer the report on to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

The second duty proposed by Bill C-58 would require persons who supply Internet services to the public to notify police when they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child pornography offence has been committed using their Internet service.

Government Orders

For example, if an email provider, while conducting routine maintenance for its mail servers, found a user's mailbox filled with child pornography, it would then be required to notify police that it had grounds to believe that a child pornography offence had been committed. This duty, which falls under clause 4 of this proposed new federal statute, also comes with an additional duty to preserve this information for 21 days once the email provider had notified police.

In order to ensure that the privacy rights of Canadians would not be unduly impacted, the person who notified police would also be required to destroy any information that would not be retained in the ordinary course of business after the expiry of the 21 days, or continue to safeguard the information if a further court order were obtained in relation to that information. Any person who made a notification to police under this act would also be required not to disclose the fact that he or she had made such a notification.

Bill C-58 was also crafted with the following overarching principles in mind.

This legislation should not contribute to the consumption or further dissemination of child pornography. In accordance with this principle, among other things, the bill explicitly states that it does not require or authorize any person to seek out child pornography. In addition to this, the duties were crafted in a manner that would not require a person who supplies an Internet service to do any personal investigation.

● (1545)

They are not required to verify Internet addressing information when they must report to an agency, and they are required to notify police only when they become aware that a child pornography offence has been committed using their Internet service.

The last feature of the bill that I would like to talk about this afternoon is the offences and the penalties.

Any person who knowingly contravenes his or her duties under this act is liable on summary conviction to a graduated penalty scheme, starting with fines of up to \$1,000 for a first offence to \$5,000 for a second offence with the possibility of a \$10,000 fine and/or imprisonment for up to six months for a third and subsequent offence.

Increased penalties are available for corporations and these, in the same manner, are \$10,000, \$50,000 and \$100,000 respectively. The two-tier penalty scheme recognizes the diverse landscape of Canada's service provider community which ranges from large multi-national corporations to sole-proprietorships. While some might argue that these penalties are relatively minor, the government believes that they strike the balance between sending a message to suppliers of Internet services that they have a social, moral and now legal duty to report this heinous material when they encounter it and the real focus of the bill which is compliance.

This government wants to ensure that not only the major ISPs, that already voluntarily report and assist police, comply but that all suppliers of Internet services in Canada comply so that we can further the goal of better protecting our children.

I hope that all parties and all members of Parliament will provide support for Bill C-58.

● (1550)

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a timely bill.

I have a number of questions. The minister was absolutely correct in talking about the exponential growth in this heinous area of activity. However, as the bill targets those who permit child pornography to be distributed, and that in my view is as bad as creating child pornography, which is covered by the Criminal Code, I wonder why the government chose not to put these offences in the Criminal Code right next to section 163. They are very germane. We could look at doing so in committee as well.

The minister admitted that in 2005, the previous government widened the definition of child pornography, which was a good thing and also brought in the mandatory minimum sentence of one year, which was a good thing, but really I have only been here since January 2006 and there has been little done by the government on this file.

Why did it take so long? Why are we so far behind the EU and Germany in this regard?

Hon. Helena Guergis: Mr. Speaker, I know the member recognizes that the debate we are having today about this very important bill is significant and very important to all Canadians.

When it comes to combatting crime across the country or child pornography, ending violence against women, or ending house arrest for serious crimes like human trafficking, property damage and such, our government's position is strong. We have a strong record on combatting crime and criminal behaviour.

This is something I know this member and all members of the House, regardless of their political stripe, know that the Conservative Party has a strong record on.

Judging from the member's questions today, I know that he recognizes the significance of Bill C-58. It is my hope that he will be supporting it.

I think it is important to highlight for a moment how many cases of Internet child pornography actually are investigated and prosecuted in Canada each year and how many of those have been reported by an Internet service provider.

The latest statistical data we have relating to child pornography is from 2007. During that year there were over 1,400 police-reported child pornography incidents of which 440 resulted in charges.

Unfortunately we have no way of knowing if any of these cases were initiated by an ISP report. What we do know, however, is that the proliferation of images over the Internet is a growing problem. According to the special report of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, entitled "Every Image, Every Child", the number of images of serious child abuse quadrupled between 2003 and 2007 and the images are getting more violent and the children in the photos are getting even younger.

Government Orders

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly support the intent of the bill. While I did not hear the entire speech of the minister, I wholeheartedly agree with what I did hear. In addition, my Liberal colleague's comments were on the mark.

It seems to me that police resources are the key to this. Canada's police forces have been very effective in dealing with this issue. We feel they should be given more resources.

The minister mentioned that \$42.1 million is being given to the police over five years to provide law enforcement with more resources. Is the \$42.1 million announced today new money, or is this simply money that the police had before?

Hon. Helena Guergis: Mr. Speaker, I will have to get back to the member to give him a specific answer.

Another question asked was how much would it cost suppliers of Internet services to implement these new statutory requirements. It is anticipated that the bill would have a limited impact on the business practices of those ISPs that already voluntarily report cases of online child pornography.

The requirements in the bill were drafted in a manner that reflected, as closely as possible, the current practices of Canada's major ISPs.

• (1555)

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see the bill come forward and I certainly support the intent of it. If the government is as tough on crime as it says it is, I am curious to know the rationale for not putting this into the Criminal Code and instead leaving it on the civil side of things.

Hon. Helena Guergis: Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on combatting child pornography. This has been on the radar.

As the Minister of State for Status of Women, I have travelled across the country and have spoken with thousands of women and with organizations that combat violence against women and child pornography. They are very focused on women and children and ending that violence. On numerous occasions, they have highlighted to me that our government should proceed with this.

They assured me in all conversations that they knew all members in the House would be supportive of such an initiative. I take from the member's question that he is supportive of it.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-58, yet another bill destined for our already busy committee on justice and human rights.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to rise to address this issue. Such issues are just as important to the people of my riding of Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe as to those across the country.

• (1605)

[*English*]

Everyone is concerned about the exponential growth in the production and distribution of pornography and child pornography in particular. We also know, whether it is child pornography, or information in general or social networking, the Internet in particular

is the vehicle of the future for the dissemination of information, good and bad.

Countries around the world and provinces and territories across the country are moving to stop gaps. I think police forces and child protection agencies across the country are feeling that they are like the child putting the finger in the dike. We are just not keeping up.

As a preface before I get into the bill, I will state my overall view on the crime-fighting agenda of the government. I have only been here for three years, 10 months and a number of days. Since I have been here, the government has given great lip service to fighting crime. It has booked whatever TV studio wherever it could and created whatever press conference however it could to be seen as fighting crime.

That may have worked for a while. However, when we are sitting here almost four years after the government came to power and nothing has been done on issues regarding child pornography, one wonders why it was so eager to publicize its fighting crime agenda, but then not deliver the goods for four years. I will get into the nitty-gritty of whether Bill C-58 delivers the goods or not.

The reality is, in 2005, the mandatory minimum sentence of one year for an offence of possessing and creating child pornography was instituted by a Liberal government. The definition of child pornography was broadened by a Liberal government to include depictions, digital or otherwise, in order to trap more perpetrators of the crime. That took us up to late 2005.

Then we take the canvas over to January 23, 2006. I have sat through the justice committee meetings and read the literature since that time without interruption. I have not attended every meeting, but I have been there for the whole agenda. There has been nothing on child pornography in that time. If we are all united in Parliament to try to do some good and combat the ill effects of the web and child pornography exploitation in particular, we ought to say to each other that this is not good enough.

Speaking to the Canadian public between elections, some of which were called unnecessarily, and committee wrangling, some of which were instituted unnecessarily, there is enough blame to go all around. This is not partisan. However, the people sitting at home must wonder why child pornography has not been a priority for almost four years.

We will support sending the bill to committee. At committee, under the cold eye of revision and input, we may even make improvements upon the intent of the bill. That is always our intention when it goes to a committee. We might look at it at committee and ask a number of very searing questions. When he appears before the committee, the minister will be asked why it took so long to bring this forward.

We have a Criminal Code that keeps growing in size. Section 163.1 has a definition of child pornography and the sentences set out for the various offences involving making, possessing or accessing. That seems to be the triage or the flow. People can create child pornography. They can access or possess it. In doing that, they have committed a whole other group of possible offences, which might include enslavement, captivity, assaults and all those other related offences in the other part of the Code.

Government Orders

However, when we look at section 163, which starts out with creating the heinous images and it goes down to accessing child pornography, the bill we are speaking of could very well be inserted in the Criminal Code. To the outside world and to the criminal bar in particular, because the Criminal Code has a whole number of procedural safeguards enforcing the offences in there, it seems to me that the content of the bill could have been easily slipped into section 163.2 or something like that to make it a very copacetic law.

There might be some push-back with respect to this law, having made it only a separate law. I do not know, but we will hear from representatives of industry who might have resisted this. After all, the fines in the bill relate mostly to companies and individuals running services, which is in the realm of small business persons. If an individual supports an Internet service or works on websites and somehow has knowledge of pornographic material and does not report it, which is the essence of the bill, the person is subject to, on the first offence, a fine of \$1,000. If a company is guilty of a similar non-action, the first offence is \$10,000.

This is not the kind of tough on crime that the father of three daughters, like me, living in a middle-class neighbourhood in Moncton, New Brunswick, thinks is appropriate. I am sure people listening to the debate might wonder about this. People could knowingly ignore the pornographic images on a site that they manage, not report it, yet, if caught, they would only get \$1,000 fine under this law. It may not be strenuous enough. It is not in the Criminal Code, and it is almost four years late.

That does not go to the substance of the bill. We will take it to committee and hopefully we will buttress it. However, we want to make it clear to the government that the time is now over for the five o'clock newscasts during which Conservatives say that they will introduce another bill and deliver on promises, some here and some there, and that they will meet with the territorial and provincial attorneys general, but only act on their recommendations a year and a half later.

Some of these recommendations, which were to have come from a 2008 provincial and territorial attorneys general meeting, were submitted in June for a September meeting. We are talking almost a year and a half before implementation of what every, to my knowledge, attorney general across the country feels. It is no wonder, then, that provinces, in the realm of many areas of legislation that should be brought in by the Conservative government, are doing their own thing.

Since 2008, Ontario already has on the books a child pornography reporting act. I remind the House that the Conservative government came into power in 2006. I am not familiar necessarily with the Ontario legislative agenda, but it had to do its own thing. I believe Manitoba has done something similar.

Last week, and around the speech from the throne in my province, Attorney General Michael Murphy, and he is a relation, brought in the civil forfeiture act. It is a unique law in the country that maybe other provinces will emulate. In the case of convicted child pornographers, their property will be forfeited. The civil value of those properties will go into victims of crime pools of money to help the province with people who have been subject to this terrible type of crime. Not only that, pending trial by way of escrow or in trust,

the assets will be frozen and any proceeds from the assets will be held pending the outcome of a trial on charges like this.

It is the kind of thing that provinces had to do because, I would say, the Conservative government has had its concentration on publicizing the crimes they are bringing in rather than thinking about holistic changes to our criminal law in general.

Now to the bill. The bill itself deals with sole proprietors of corporations who fail to report child pornography on sites that they have a hand in managing. It certainly is timely. It is, however, as I mentioned, a civil bill, and it does not have as its consequences criminal in nature as we would expect.

Section 11 of the act has fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for offences by an individual, and from \$10,000 to \$100,000 for all other cases. The definition completely scripts what the Criminal Code says about child pornography, so that will not be challenged. It has already been tested by the courts.

Now what are the people, the stakeholders, saying about this crime? There are two reports here. One is from the *Cape Breton Post* which says:

This in itself won't make a big dent in the torrent of child porn still available worldwide but it will give police and anti-child porn agencies such as cybertip.ca some more chances to pick up the threads of networks and rings, and possibly even to rescue a few more children from horrific situations.

This is what I was trying to say earlier. The Internet has transformed modern life in many positive ways. The explosion of electronic child porn is the outstanding example of the cost of this. If some principles of privacy and freedom have to be qualified to reduce that cost to the children of the world, so be it.

Certainly, one of the questions I will be asking the minister and the Department of Justice officials is this. Is the concern for the privacy and the freedom of speech, is that the reason why this bill is not tougher? It is something we will have a debate in Parliament with respect to the balance between freedom of speech, any expectation of privacy, and the need to get serious about combating the Internet.

Let us be clear, the whip is not here and I should talk to the whip, but I do not want to criticize Cape Breton or the *Cape Breton Post* but I do not need the *Cape Breton Post* to make this statement, which is that the real problem here is not cracking down on reporting of known sites, the real problem here is to prevent those sites from being distributed in the first place.

We are almost attacking the people who see the sites or who are supposed to see the sites or who might see the sites, and we are attacking them if they do not report it. It seems to me that to get right to the core, we have to do as they have done in other countries and we have to take action with the industry to ensure that those sites are not distributed in the first place.

Government Orders

I am not suggesting we go to totalitarian regimes, and I will not name them, but I think we know that there are some countries where there is no Internet because the government wants to control the message and in those cases there is no message.

We cannot do that, but it does prove that if the small island of Cuba, and there, I have said it, can say, "There shall be no Internet at all", and that is not a terribly technologically advanced country, how is it that we cannot, in this world, in this country, one of the richest countries in the world, do better in stopping the source of these sites.

Again, going from east to west, the *Edmonton Sun* says, with respect to the recent study by the federal ombudsman:

The number of Internet images of 'serious child abuse' quadrupled between 2003 and 2007.

What it opines on this law is:

So while the new bill will indeed provide an additional tool, it is not the solution and it must not be regarded as such.

I spoke about other jurisdictions. The international conference, combating child pornography on the Internet, which took place in Vienna, Austria, also adds some elements that I hope the government is considering. The whole world, at this conference, concluded that we have to take steps to ensure that we can obtain the evidence necessary to identify child pornographers.

•(1610)

The minister spoke very briefly about how this bill will be used to do that. We hope that there is further evidence on that because we want this bill to be effective. It is not enough just to penalize people who do not report. We have to know, and we will get this from the law enforcement officials, that the reporting will lead to the finding of child pornographers.

Second, there must be a balance regarding the privacy laws with respect to the expectation of privacy.

The third point, however, and probably the most important one that cannot be really addressed in legislation but has to be out there on a justice agenda, is that we must work together: hotlines, law enforcement and private industry. We need to shield from civil liability those hotlines, ISPs and others in the industry that in good faith attempt to assist law enforcement in investigations of child pornography.

The minister was very correct in quoting the statistics from cybertip.ca. The facts are outstanding. They are horrifying. For instance, of the 4,110 unique images assessed by an analyst, 35 showed sexual assaults against children, and if we broke it down by age, 37.2% of them were against 8-year-olds and 83% of the images were of female children. It is despicable. It is horrible. It must be addressed.

The international situation is deplorable for Canada. We speak a lot in this chamber about the government turning away from international obligations, international colloquia, international conferences, and international discussions on things from climate change to financial institutions, to international standards on child care, to not signing the universal declaration of aboriginal rights.

The government has all the excuses for those aversions to talking to the international community, but probably one that it would never

think it has been absent on is the impression of its law enforcement standards across the world.

When we see these categories, I would think Conservatives who tout their anti-crime agenda would be embarrassed. Of the top five countries hosting websites with child sexual abuse images, we are third. Of the top five countries hosting images of child sexual abuse, we are second. And of the top five countries selling material on child sexual abuse websites, we are second.

The other countries involved are not countries we would like to be in line with. The United States has its commercial pre-eminence and its, until recently, overemphasis on freedom of speech and overemphasis on the right to be secure from privacy with Miranda and so forth, and not have incursions by the state into private life. Sadly, I think I hear echoes of this from the other side as being something that can be templated for Canada. I disagree. We are Canada, not the United States.

The United States comes first in all these categories. We do not want to go up in this category. We want to go down. One of the things that could be done, and has been done all around the world, and I would think that if there are opposition members suggesting being tougher on something, the government would want to, for instance, listen to or emulate Sweden.

In Sweden, the TeliaSonera launched child porn blocking services for ISPs, so the blocking is done at the source. In Brazil, the goal of the policy established there is to set up ethical rules for companies providing Internet services in Brazil, and for the users of these services. In Germany and the EU, probably the most advanced system, they are putting together systems to block access to websites containing child pornography.

In summary, we are just starting to get at this. It has been almost four years. With the goodwill in this House toward this unspeakable set of crimes, it probably could have been accomplished a lot sooner, so I guess the question we would all have is, why was it not done sooner?

Let us get at it. Let us improve this bill to emulate parts of the international community that the government normally, with respect to climate change and other items, does not want to be seen with, but for once maybe we will show the government, as we send this along to committee, that it is not bad to have friends internationally. It is not bad to emulate best practices around the world, and it is not bad to work with other parties.

Government Orders

• (1615)

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member named some positions that Canada was in compared with other countries. I would like to ask him whether, if this child pornography issue were put into the hands of the police, who are trained to identify child pornography, would that help in making Canada a safer place in eliminating child pornography?

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, the police will be very involved in this.

The one thing that I would agree with the minister on, in her comments, is the great network of intelligence gathering and execution of responsibilities we have in Canada. CSIS and other organizations are top-notch in this regard. However, like anything, hiring a carpenter or a surgeon, we have to give them the tools. This reporting mechanism will only go so far.

I would think that the police officers in question would be very happy if there was not any child pornography distributed across the country. They would also be interested in the government investing money in police officers to better investigate, in social workers, as well as in people in the community to help people understand, by way of education, the dangers of sexual abuse, which leads to child pornography in almost every case.

So, the member is right on in giving the police officers better resources and giving them better tools to combat the issue.

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my hon. colleague from Moncton. He will be familiar with the fact that his predecessor, Claudette Bradshaw, worked with members, as well as members from the other parties, on a very important initiative that took place back in April 2002.

One of the recommendations made was to not only provide a coordinating force within Canada but, in fact, several millions of dollars in order to provide an opportunity for police to become better trained and for Crown and other judges in this nation to better understand the implications of child exploitation.

I have had more updates since that time, and I take some pride in the fact that as a Parliament we have been able to work together on this. However, I wonder if the hon. member could perhaps hone down in his deliberations before the committee, speak to some of the experts, such as the Kids Internet Safety Alliance, which has done great work around the world, people like Paul Gillespie and David Butt, and many others.

They seem to be pointing out that there is a lot of initiative on behalf of the private sector willing to help and that the government simply is not there to create international centres in which we can sort of point out that Canada is putting its best foot forward. It looks like it is the private sector that is being sought for help when the government ought to be able to do it. We can have all the laws in the world we want. But I want to be more focused on the question of whether the hon. member would be able to precisely raise in committee the growing concern of many who are working on these issues about peer-to-peer file sharing, Internet file sharing.

We can talk about ISPs. We can talk about the Internet, probably about that big. However, when it really comes down to the tragedy in

Canada and around the world, it is the conundrum, it is the blockage which is occurring as a result of peer-to-peer file sharing that seems to be at the source of this.

I also know the RCMP suggested 65,000 Canadians in this country some years ago may have been involved with child pornography and its distribution and dissemination. Those numbers could in fact be much higher.

I wonder if we can get from the hon. member that he will pursue the government and pursue the answers that I think will give greater clarity and bring Parliament up to date with the ongoing tragedy, in the hope of being able to protect at least more children, not just in Canada, but around the world.

• (1620)

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, the names Paul Gillespie and David Butt were in fact on my preliminary list of witnesses. I am very familiar with their work.

The hon. member proved today that he knows about a lot more than just gas prices. He knows how to use the Internet and how it is used.

He is exactly right, that this is a huge issue. This is not just changing the criminal laws of Canada. This is not dealing with criminals who knock over a gas station or a corner store, with a gun. This is an international crime across borders and it is spread by technology.

So, it is certainly something that I think we all have to work together because we are not quite the Luddites that people may think we are but we are not equipped in this Parliament, necessarily, to be experts on how technology works in the evil way. We find out, with the gang-related and organized crime study at the justice committee, that organized crime is way ahead of the police forces, which makes it probably way ahead of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, I sit on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, where we too had discussions. I listened carefully to the end of the member's speech, the questions put to him and the answers he provided. It seems obvious to me that he is very familiar with the issue.

This bill provides ammunitions and would make reporting mandatory. I wonder, however, if there will be enough police officers or equipment to follow up on the reports. In an interview yesterday, a university professor said that great expectations were being created. Initially, there will be a large volume of reporting, but very few police officers to act on it.

Does my hon. colleague agree? Has he given this any thought? Clearly, this bill will be referred to committee for consideration. How should we address the question raised by this university professor?

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

Government Orders

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights always raises the same issue and always asks the same question: are we providing police forces with enough resources to enforce the new act? As always, we never get a real answer.

We asked the Department of Justice if more resources were to be given to police forces. Unfortunately, we were told that it is the Minister of Public Safety who should answer that question. That is one way of avoiding the issue. However, the government must address all issues raised by every new bill.

Will police forces be provided with enough money and resources? That has the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights a bit worried. Every time the government introduces a bill, we know for sure that there will not be enough resources to correctly enforce it.

As always, the member asked a good question.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was planning to ask the minister a follow-up question but I did not get up. She mentioned that \$42.1 million over five years would be provided to law enforcement to give law enforcement more resources, which I feel is an important part of this, but she could not tell us whether this was new money just being announced right now or whether this was just a re-announcement of existing money.

In addition, she said that in 2007 there were 1,400 police incidents and 440 charges but she could not tell us whether any one of those came from an ISP, and this legislation deals with ISPs.

Does the Liberal member think this legislation is really more about the six o'clock news? It has been on CTV around the clock for the last two days. The member mentioned that it should be in the Criminal Code. It has taken the government four years to bring this bill in—

The Deputy Speaker: I will stop the hon. member there to allow enough time for the member for Moncton to respond. He has 30 seconds left.

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I do not know. To hold the government to two speeches for the full layout of the bill, I do hope there is more to come. That is why we have committees. We will be asking those questions at committee.

However, it is passing strange that this bill is not in the Criminal Code and that the precise amount of allotment for this bill is not defined. For pornography, and child pornography in general, there might be an amount needed and it would be well spent of course, but we will find out.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Mississauga South, Natural Resources.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on behalf of my party to Bill C-58. I will say from the outset that the bill, on the surface, seems extremely interesting. We will support it in order that it may be sent to the

Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to be studied closely.

It is time for Canada, and Quebec in particular, to get with it when it comes to dealing with crime and to take measures to deal with crimes that are on the rise, namely child pornography and pedophilia. These are what I would call heinous crimes that are committed by people—and that is the problem with this type of crime, so I will choose my words carefully—in secret. In other words, an individual, sitting alone at his computer, can visit pornographic sites that post heinous material, namely pornography and pedophilia. These are things we never used to encounter.

This is the 21st century and no one could have anticipated these problems when the Criminal Code was first written. However, when the Criminal Code was amended recently, we started to take note of this new type of crime that has appeared in the past 10 or 15 years. It is a new form of insidious crime that is very difficult to get a handle on. We will nevertheless try to put a stop to it, but we need the means to do so.

This is a crime that is committed in solitude. The individual, in their secret hideaway, in their house, in their bedroom or even at their office—we know that some people have done this at work—visits pornographic sites.

I think it is important to provide a definition at this stage because we will do so with this bill. I am referring to section 163 of the Criminal Code, which will be clarified as follows:

“computer data” means representations, including signs, signals or symbols, that are in a form suitable for processing in a computer system.

With respect, this is truly a totally new area of law. We are wading into something completely new.

We are going to amend subsections 161.1, 161.2, 161.3 on the definition of pornography, the distribution of pornography, the possession of child pornography and accessing child pornography.

However, things get very interesting when we get into a new debate, a new area of law. It is very interesting. I will read clause 3 of the bill slowly to be sure that the interpreter can translate it well.

If a person is advised, in the course of providing an Internet service to the public, of an Internet Protocol address or a Uniform Resource Locator—

This is also known as a URL and is referred to as such in the French version of the legislation. I will continue.

—where child pornography may be available to the public, the person must report that address or Uniform Resource Locator to the organization designated by the regulations, as soon as feasible and in accordance with the regulations.

Quite honestly, I am somewhat concerned about all of this. It seems a little complicated to me. It is going to be implemented. I hope and pray that this will not turn into another gun registry because that would be catastrophic.

Clause 4 reads as follows:

If a person who provides an Internet service to the public has reasonable grounds to believe that their Internet service is being or has been used to commit a child pornography offence, the person must notify an officer, constable or other person employed for the preservation and maintenance of the public peace of that fact, as soon as feasible and in accordance with the regulations.

Government Orders

●(1630)

The system is based on reporting. In my opinion, there comes a point when we have to implement harsh measures. Child pornography is unacceptable, and nobody in the House will stand for it. Abusing kids who are just five, six or seven years old, or younger still, is unacceptable debasement.

As I said before, this form of debasement has been allowed to proliferate over the years because we have not had the means to stop it. I hope that this bill and the amendments to the Criminal Code will help us identify these users.

Increasing the likelihood of getting caught is a much greater deterrent than increasing punishments, which often seem remote and abstract. That is exactly what this bill will accomplish. We have to send a clear message to all pornographers. Words cannot describe the loathsome individuals who participate in child pornography. Their behaviour is unacceptable. We have to send them the message that from now on, chances are they will get caught.

Here is an analogy. Giving people a \$2,000 fine if they are caught driving while impaired will not stop people from driving their cars. The real deterrent is the risk of getting caught and dealing with the consequences of impaired driving. Imposing fines and minimum prison sentences is not that effective.

There has been a decrease in prison sentences and impaired driving cases, but it is the fear of getting caught that greatly encourages people to be careful and avoid drinking. Many people drink less and spend less time in bars. That is the objective of the bill. That is one of the reasons why the Bloc will support it. However, I have a few questions. Of course, I will ask them in committee. In fact, I hope that we will be able to study the bill very early in the new year.

The bill covers more than ISPs, or Internet service providers. That means that the bill covers more than Bell and Rogers. That is when things get interesting. The bill will cover anyone who offers Internet services to the public. That may include all small sized companies. That could include people who have servers in their basement. I will chose my words carefully. I do not mean to say that aboriginal communities have the kind of servers, but there are aboriginal communities that receive all poker games controlled from Kahnawake. If we include everybody who host Internet sites, we cover much more than Bell. That would include anyone who offers Internet services to the public, hence, anyone who hosts that kind of Internet sites.

●(1635)

This also includes Internet service providers, as well as those providing email services, host services and social networking sites on the Internet. Consider for example all the users of Twitter and Facebook around the world.

Let us use the example of the hon. member for Bourassa, who has I do not know how many friends on Facebook. Of course, I do not doubt his honesty. I am merely giving an example.

One of his Facebook friends could tell him to look at a particular site, because it has something interesting on it. We are not talking fiction here; we are not in a movie. This is real life. That is how these

networks work. Someone sends a message to someone else, telling him or her to go to a particular site. For example, someone who is looking for a \$4,000 bicycle might be told to try eBay.

Getting back to my example of the fine member for Bourassa, who has at least 7,000 Facebook friends, if one of those people recommends visiting a site of some interest, the fine member for Bourassa would be obligated to report it.

That is what is extremely important about this bill. That must stop. Such things can no longer be accepted. We must ensure that these people are not given special privileges, people who, under the pretext of helping someone, recommend sites. I hesitate to even use the word “help”. Child pornography, which victimizes children aged five, six, seven or eight years old, is completely unacceptable. It makes no sense and is unacceptable. Pornography in general is probably unacceptable for some, but child pornography is particularly offensive. And it is our duty to protect children and minors.

I would like to repeat what I said a few moments ago, to make sure I did not make any mistakes:

The Bloc Québécois believes that increasing the likelihood of getting caught is a much greater deterrent than increasing punishments, which often seem remote and abstract.

A lot of Canadians are connected to the Internet and visit websites like Facebook and Twitter. If they receive a message like I mentioned earlier, or if someone suggests that they visit a website of interest, it is clear that there will be an obligation to report. That is exactly what clause 4 of the bill states:

If a person who provides an Internet service to the public has reasonable grounds to believe that their Internet service is being or has been used to commit a child pornography offence, the person must notify... as soon as feasible—

Therefore, those responsible for these networks, the service providers, and I think, especially, the users will have to report. It is not illegal to visit Twitter, to have friends on Facebook, or to use Google. There is nothing illegal about that. With Bill C-58, what will become illegal will be visiting child pornography sites and encouraging others to visit them.

Even as a criminal lawyer, I can say that this is a good bill. It is about time. It is a good bill to amend the Criminal Code.

First the compliments, now the criticisms. It is all well and good to pass new laws, but we must also develop the means to enforce them.

●(1640)

That is of great concern to me. Something was brought to our attention in recent days when we learned that the bill was coming. A number of people began to wonder about our ability to deal with the information that will be reported, and thus to investigate and file charges. We have been told that, in Canada, no more than 300 police officers currently monitor Internet sites and carry out related duties. They answer inquiries, conduct investigations and, generally, lay charges. We have seen and continue to see this every day in different media when charges are laid against pedophiles.

Government Orders

We have been told that once the bill is in effect, in its first or second year, there will be so much information that is stored, or provided or sent to people such as the police that they will not be able to do the work and will run the risk of missing a number of pedophiles who visit these sites.

That is the fear of the Bloc Québécois and we will certainly be asking these questions when the minister or his representatives appear before us. We will probably also call the Solicitor General and the Minister of Public Safety before the committee. We have to give the legislation legs to stand on. It is all well and good to introduce a bill, to fight child pornography and to want to eradicate it, but we have to give police the means to deal with the needs and the complaints as well as the resulting summons. We only need to examine the requirements of the bill. I will read just section 5:

A person who makes a notification under section 4 must preserve...

Those who provide information have obligations. I will continue:

...must preserve all computer data related to the notification that is in their possession or control for 21 days after the day on which the notification is made.

It is beginning to pose a few difficulties. I will continue with subsection 5(2) of the bill:

The person must destroy the computer data that would not be retained in the ordinary course of business and any document that is prepared for the purpose of preserving computer data under subsection (1) as soon as feasible after the expiry of the 21-day period, unless the person is required to preserve the computer data by a judicial order made under any other Act of Parliament or the legislature of a province.

In plain English, it boils down to one thing: before we pass this bill, we must ensure that our police forces have what they need to enforce it. We cannot adopt this type of bill, implement it and then see how things go. We cannot and that is our main concern.

I will close by saying that when a bill responds to society's needs, the Bloc Québécois supports it. We believe that the bill responds to the needs of society, of Canada in general, and of Quebec in particular, and we will therefore support the bill.

• (1645)

[English]

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard reports of exponential growth in child pornography over the last four years. We have a government that sat around for four years and did not really do anything about this issue and now introduces a bill that some would question whether it should be part of the Criminal Code.

If this problem is increasing in exponential fashion, would the Bloc member not think that perhaps some of the solutions that some other countries are using might be relevant? The Liberal member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe mentioned that Sweden has a blocking of child pornography and that Brazil has set up ethical rules. However, in the European Union, he said that Germany had the best set of rules and that it blocked access to the sites. Perhaps that may be the answer here if this problem is really becoming out of control.

I would ask the member what he thinks about those ideas raised by the member for the Liberal Party?

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's suggestion is interesting. I did not hear what the hon. member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe said, but given that he sits on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, this proposal will obviously surface again. I do find it quite interesting.

Not only do I find it interesting, but I truly believe that it should be implemented at least at the outset. What I had suggested and what we will suggest, is that the bill be studied and, before it is passed, that a means to block these pornographic sites be put in place. As soon as this kind of site is detected, it must be blocked. When a site is detected that originates in Germany, England, New Zealand, Malaysia or elsewhere, it must be blocked. Then we will prosecute those who visit these sites.

I personally believe that we should establish a police unit from the outset. Child pornography units have been set up by a number of police forces. I think it would be of interest to start putting in place such units. Since the bill has already been introduced, it will go to committee in a few months. I feel that this bill should be studied rather quickly. The government should already be preparing to put in place a structure to enforce the legislation.

• (1650)

[English]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his analysis of the bill. It is clear that his expertise in criminal law really came through in his analysis.

He raised clause 5 and clause 5(2) talks about a 21 day period where an Internet service provider would need to report and that within 20 days, if there has not been an order for it to save the information it has, it would need to destroy it. The member talked about the problem this would pose for law enforcement, the problem of resources, and whether it could adequately investigate within this 21 day period.

I must admit that when I read this clause I felt like the government was saying that we would never get to it in 21 days so we need to have some kind of mechanism to deal with this information. It struck me as very odd. I would like to hear from the member some further thoughts on this particular clause and what the 21 day period is about.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Mr. Speaker, we do not want a company, for example, Bell, a service provider, to have to keep a high volume of documents or information on its hard drives or elsewhere. According to clause 4:

If a person who provides an Internet service...has reasonable grounds to believe... the person must notify an officer...as soon as feasible—

Clause 5 states:

A person who makes a notification under section 4 must preserve all computer data...for 21 days—

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It goes without saying that if the government is talking about a 21 day period, it must be expecting an increase in demands for investigation and analysis. That is why I am repeating that before we implement this bill, we must do everything we can to ensure we are able to meet that 21 day deadline.

I can assure my colleague that that is one of the questions I will ask when the minister appears before us. I would like to know where the 21 days came from, and what it actually means. If it is in the bill, that means that it becomes a prerogative. It cannot be ignored. It will allow companies to destroy these documents, as described in subclause 5(2).

After reading the bill, we feel that the reason for the famous 21 day period is to avoid overtaxing computer networks.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the presentation given by the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue. As we have seen with all the justice bills introduced by this government, there seems to be a gap between the legislation and the resources needed to achieve the objectives of said legislation. We have seen the cuts made by this government in the area of crime prevention, the cuts to police forces and compensation for police officers. In all those areas, the reality is that there is a difference between what the government is saying and what it is doing.

I think this bill really does correspond to a legitimate concern people have. It is unfortunate that Canada ranks second in the world when it comes to child abuse. We are not seeing any additional resources to follow through on this legislation.

Does the member believe that the government intends to allocate the resources needed to really tackle these crimes?

• (1655)

Mr. Marc Lemay: Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. The government needs to get serious. I suggest that my colleague take a look at clause 12 of the bill, which is very clear. I will read it:

A prosecution for an offence under this Act cannot be commenced more than two years after the time when the act or omission giving rise to the prosecution occurred.

This means that before implementing the bill, we need the necessary means in place to implement and enforce it. If not, then because of the two-year time limit, if we have not done the work properly or put the legislation together well, criminals will slip through the cracks.

It is clear that before implementing such a bill, we will urge the government to be extremely prudent and to ensure that all of the means are in place to enforce this legislation, or Canada will continue to be a laughingstock. Canada will not be able to enforce its own law. The government will amend section 163 of the Criminal Code, and nobody will be able to enforce it because police services will not be able to do what we are asking them to do.

I think that the government has to be prepared to take drastic action, because according to what we have been told, thousands of complaints could be filed over the next two years.

[*English*]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-58, An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of

Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service.

As we heard earlier today, the bill would force an Internet service provider to report an Internet protocol address or a uniform resource locator if the ISP, the Internet service provider, is aware that this address may be used for the purposes of committing a child pornography offence. It says that the ISP needs to report it as soon possible and that, following reporting, the ISP must preserve all computer data related to the notification for 21 days.

Criminal Code reform or any kind of reform dealing with law within the criminal realm, whether it is dealt with through regulations or civil law, calls for a fact based appraisal of the present situation, as well as a very careful assessment of whether proposed reforms will actually enhance the objectives of what we say is the realm of criminal law or the criminal justice system.

One needs to answer some very important questions, and there are three in particular that I will note: first, what are we trying to accomplish; second, are the proposed reforms likely to make our communities safer; and, third, do we actually need this legislative change?

I will begin with the first question. What are we trying to accomplish? This bill is trying to accomplish the protection of children from online sexual exploitation. This is very much a laudable goal. I would point out that this is something we stand behind and action on this issue in the House is a long time coming.

In fact, the NDP introduced a bill about Internet luring in 2006 in the 39th Parliament. My colleague, the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore, introduced the bill. The purpose of that bill, which was then Bill C-214, was to prevent the use of the Internet to unlawfully promote, display, describe or facilitate participation in unlawful sexual activity involving young persons. That was in 2006 and I congratulate my colleague from Sackville—Eastern Shore for introducing the bill and turning the attention of the House to this very important issue.

Here we are in 2009, on the doorstep of 2010, and this is the first time we are seeing a bill that would deal with Internet child pornography. I extend congratulations to the government for finally waking up to this serious issue, an issue that impacts the health and safety of all communities in Canada.

The next question I would like to address in our analysis of this bill is: Are the proposed reforms likely to make our communities safer? This is the crux of the issue and I believe the answer requires a bit of nuance thinking and real analysis.

First, let me be clear that action on child pornography is critical, and this cannot be stated enough. Child pornography is wrong, it is criminal and we must work to stop it. Is this the best way to approach Internet pornography? Is this the best way to stop the exploitation of children online? I believe there is some merit to this bill, no doubt, but I am really struck by what is not in the bill.

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The bill states that Internet service providers must report to police when their addresses are being used for child pornography. However, I think we also need to consider how we will deal with ISPs that do not co-operate with this mandate. I think we can go further when it comes to the duty and onus that is placed on ISPs.

ISPs have the information. This is how investigative officers can get information about the identities of people who are involved in putting child pornography online. I look forward to hearing from witnesses at committee about this aspect of the bill. What can we do to put an additional onus on ISPs that do not co-operate? What other provisions can be put in place?

What is obviously missing from this bill are the resources. What does it mean to report child pornography when there are no resources, human, financial or structural, to do anything about it? I had a discussion earlier with my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue. There is a provision in the bill to deal with a scenario of an ISP reporting online child pornography and then after 21 days having to dispose of the information if it has not been asked to protect it by judicial order. I imagine that this will be the case very frequently, that the 21 day period will pass with very little, if any, action in most cases because our police officers do not have the resources to deal with online child pornography. They know it is out there. We all know it is out there.

● (1700)

In doing research for this speech, I learned not to put online child porn in a search engine because I was assaulted with the findings. Police know it is out there. Communities know it is out there. Parents know it is out there. How do we investigate it when there is only one person, at best, per station who is charged with the task of actually investigating online child porn?

The bill needs resources. It needs a task force of investigators, a task force that can develop expertise in investigating, in pursuing and in prosecuting.

Earlier this year, the University of Toronto, which has a Centre for Innovation Law and Policy, held a symposium on online child exploitation. David Butt, a trial lawyer in Toronto who was mentioned in the House earlier in the debate, spoke about the issue of child pornography investigations. I would like to read from the abstract of his presentation because it sums up some of the issues facing us when we are considering online child porn. In the abstract, he wrote:

Traditionally, prosecutors and police conducting internet child exploitation cases worked at the practical intersection of many different fields of expertise: law, child-oriented social work, pedophilia as a psychiatric phenomenon, and of course criminal investigations. The recent explosion of internet related child exploitation has obliged prosecutors and police to draw as well from various technological disciplines, international commerce, international relations, and a host of disciplines that examine the social impact of the emerging cyber-world. This is a daunting task for prosecutors and police, and illustrates well the radical change in the face of child exploitation that the internet has wrought. We are not far along in adjusting to this radical change. Success in addressing internet child exploitation will arrive only through creative multi-faceted responses that mirror the multifaceted nature of the internet itself.

I think the most important part of that abstract is the statement:

Success in addressing Internet child exploitation will arrive only through creative multi-faceted responses that mirror the multifaceted nature of the internet itself.

We have an expert on this issue saying that we need a creative approach to this issue and yet the response in this House by the government is brief and empty, and I fear that it is truly meaningless. We need meaningful action on child pornography.

Reporting is absolutely key but it is only the first step. We need serious attention to resources in order to stop this terrible crime.

Earlier today I was talking about this bill with my colleagues and the member for Hamilton Centre raised a very good point. He said, and I agree with him, that he was sick and tired of bills like this that the government trots out in an attempt to make it look like it cares about children when yesterday we recognized that it was 20 years ago that this House made a commitment to end child poverty in Canada. Here we are 20 years later and we do not consider giving kids a safe place to live, enough food, early childhood education or any of the things that we need to actually ensure children are healthy and safe in this country.

The only thing the bill would do is introduce mandatory reporting. What about real action to ensure our kids are safe? We purport to do things like in 1989, the unanimous House of Commons vote to end child poverty; i the Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by federal, provincial and territorial governments in 1999; in 1997, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples set a target to close the economic gap by 50%; and in 2005, the first ministers meeting on aboriginal affairs in Kelowna.

● (1705)

Here we are though with very little to show for it. All we have are terrible statistics like those that follow.

Between 1989 and 2008, the number of children in Canada relying on food banks grew from 151,000 to 260,000. Children are disproportionately dependent on food banks.

The average low income family lives far below the poverty line. Low income, two parent families would, on average, need an extra \$9,400 a year to bring their incomes up to the poverty line, to the low income cutoff.

We have also completely abandoned aboriginal children when it comes to poverty, and also when it comes to sex crime issues. Somehow when we think about what is happening with aboriginal girls, we imagine them as being involved in the sex trade, but that is not right. They are not involved in the sex trade. It is sexual exploitation. It is child trafficking. It is the luring of aboriginal girls from their communities to cities where they are sexually exploited, and it happens because these girls are poor and forgotten.

This is a pretty sad legacy and it is part and parcel of the total lack of real action on online child pornography. It is my hope that we will have witnesses come to committee who will shed light on how we can take real action on Internet child pornography.

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Perhaps we will have some witnesses from the Canadian Professional Police Association, which has said time after time that the police lack the resources for effective and meaningful crime investigations. The association has stood up publicly and called the government on its renegeing on the promise for more officers and resources for police.

In a brief to the Standing Committee on Finance in 2008, the Canadian Professional Police Association spoke to this very issue of resources. I would like to read from that brief:

[The Prime Minister] launched the Conservative Party's Stand Up for Security plan during the 2006 Federal Election campaign, which included a promise to "negotiate with the provinces to create a new cost-shared program jointly with provincial and municipal governments, to put at least 2,500 more police on the beat in our cities and communities".

In April, 2006, [the Prime Minister] came to speak to our association, and promised our delegates that his government would put in place a new cost sharing program with the provinces and municipalities to increase the number of police officers in our communities....

Our member associations feel betrayed by the government's failure to deliver upon this key election promise. We are calling on Parliament to reinforce the program commitment and design in the 2009 Federal Budget, in order to address these shortcomings.

The association feels feel betrayed. These experts in policing say they do not have enough boots on the ground. I very much look forward to their testimony on this bill to see if they think that a mandatory reporting mechanism is enough. I also look forward to hearing from other experts on online child pornography issues.

We have looked at the questions of what we are trying to accomplish and whether the proposed reforms are likely to make our communities safer. The third question that we need to answer is, do we need this legislation? Well, maybe.

One thing I know for sure is that we need more than what this bill is providing, if we are actually going to address the issue of online child pornography.

• (1710)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the NDP for her remarks, which showed some of her reservations about this bill. That is all right. Sometimes when governments bring forward bills, the opposition tend to say, "Our job is to critique them", and we look forward to the NDP doing that.

It is a great day when we see legislation like this being brought forward. It reminds me of a number of years ago when, as the Speaker will remember, we had a large man in this House by the name of Myron Thompson from Wild Rose. His seat was just a little bit from mine. I remember he would stand to protect our children, which was a passion of his. He would stand and speak with the most eloquence and passion in defence of these young children, in many cases babies. Police forces, such as the Toronto Police Service, had brought forward the issue to him and he was an ambassador for the protection of children. Thus when we have a bill like this, I am certainly reminded of Myron Thompson.

The last statistical data we have in regard to child pornography are from 2007. During that year, there were over 1,400 reported child pornography incidents, of which 440 resulted in charges.

The government has always been bringing forward legislation that would protect the most vulnerable. In the remarks by the New Democratic member, she said she was not sure that mandatory reporting was enough. We can certainly look at more. However, time after time when we bring forward this legislation, we watch as the opposition votes against it, stalls it here, and stalls it in that other place. Therefore, I am encouraged when I hear something positive said about this bill.

She asked whether it was enough and if we needed it and responded, "Well, maybe". I do not think there should be any "Well, maybe" about this. We need these kinds of steps and I commend the justice minister for bringing this bill forward. If we do not need it when we have 1,400 incidents reported in a year, I ask my colleague how many incidents she wants to wait for before she knows that we need it.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague did say that "We need these kinds of steps", but the one problem with that statement was that it was plural. There are no steps here. There is one very tiny step toward mandatory reporting, and if we only have 440 charges, that is a very serious problem.

I would point out that the Centre for Innovation Law and Policy at the University of Toronto, which I referred to earlier, has a white paper entitled, "Staying safely connected: Updated strategies for protecting children and youth from exploitation online", and they have some really wonderful recommendations.

In particular, they have recommendations about policing. They talk about police training regarding online meeting crimes and child pornography. They talk about having special prosecutors with experience in prosecuting these crimes. That would be quite fantastic, would it not?

They are the ones who should be handling these cases to make sure that the evidence is very clear to judges, to the judiciary, because it is pretty technical. For instance, what is an ISP? We heard a lot about the member for Bourassa's Facebook friends, and I do not even know if any judges in my province are friends on Facebook.

The centre also suggests collaboration with industry.

These are some really sound suggestions coming from this law and policy group or centre, and these are really the steps, plural, that we should be taking.

• (1715)

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Halifax for outlining some of the good things in the bill, but some of the challenges as well. I want to touch on a couple of points the member mentioned.

She mentioned the fact that when we are talking about children in this context, often we are talking about prostitution or other aspects, and that we ignore the sexual exploitation of children. I know that in the other house, Senator Dallaire has an committee talking about sexual exploitation of aboriginal youth and that the committee is looking at how it is that despite law enforcement and prevention, young men and women end up being sexually exploited. That committee has been looking at some best practices across this country.

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The member also mentioned the fact that this bill, in and of itself, does not address some of the very serious issues that lead to young men and women being taken advantage of.

I wonder if the member could specifically talk about some of these other issues that need to be taken into consideration.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for mentioning the committee she is working on with Senator Dallaire.

It is very important to look at the youth who are actually being affected. To go back to the white paper, some of the recommendations in it are actually about education.

We think that educating youth is such a wishy-washy thing to be doing and that we need to really crack down on online sexual exploitation. However education of young people is absolutely key. Many children over 12 are actually complicit in some of their own exploitation. Therefore, we need to work with young people to understand what makes them susceptible to sexual relationships that actually end up online, and to work with teachers and technicians to figure out how to do this. We need to provide education to make sure that kids understand what sexual exploitation is and that they can report it. It has been shown that a lot of children who are involved with online sexual abuse actually experience sexual abuse within their own lives as well before this type of abuse actually gets online.

How can we capture that information? How can we make sure that children are self-reporting? I know it sounds like a very simple thing. The Kids Help Phone is a profound way in which we could start.

We need to work directly with young people and children.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's presentation was most informative.

One of the tragedies that we have to face in this place is that we are talking about this after the fact. We are talking about children who have been abused and exploited and have not heard very much about how to protect them and prevent the exploitation.

Not terribly long ago I was at an event sponsored by the Saint Leonard's Society, where there was talk about the crime rate. Generally speaking, no matter what the government says, the crime rate is going down. It is going down for violent crimes and it is in decline, except for one group. That group is young men aged 22 to 29.

That society connected the increase in crime and delinquency within that group and problems such as being susceptible to child pornography to the Mike Harris government, because of the lack of resources, the lack of affordable housing, the lack of child care and the lack of after school programs. Children need to be protected, warned and supported.

The government has said nothing about that, and I wonder if my hon. colleague would care to comment.

• (1720)

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from London—Fanshawe not just for her question but also for the incredible work she has done on issues in her own riding. I applaud her for that.

I also applaud her for her statement before the question, because that is exactly what we need to be talking about. Yes, violent crime has been going down, except within this one group. Why is it happening?

The depth of poverty in Canada is dramatic and is increasing. What it means is that poor families are poorer. They have access to fewer resources and fewer opportunities for their future.

I support what the member said and I think she is bang on.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Leeds—Grenville.

I am proud to rise in the House today to speak to this important piece of legislation which would enhance Canada's existing measures to better protect children against sexual exploitation through child pornography.

As the father of five children aged from six to 20 years of age, I can tell the House there is nothing more important to a parent than ensuring the safety of our children and protecting them from dangerous Internet predators. That is one of the top priorities for parents in this new digital era.

Bill C-58 would do so by creating a new national statutory requirement for providers of Internet services to report online child pornography to designated authorities. Ultimately, this new reporting requirement would improve the ability of law enforcement to detect potential child pornography offences, thereby helping to reduce the availability of online child pornography. It would facilitate the identification and rescue of child victims, and help identify offenders for the purpose of investigation and prosecution.

Although Canada's criminal law has specifically prohibited child pornography since 1993 and strengthened these prohibitions in 2002 and 2005, the full impact of the role of the Internet in facilitating the demand for and distribution of this material is really only now becoming better understood. The anonymity and instantaneous worldwide access to such despicable material offered by the Internet are real challenges.

Bill C-58 would apply to those who provide Internet services to the public, requiring them to report to a designated agency tips they receive regarding websites where child pornography may be available to the public. It would also require them to notify police and safeguard evidence if they believed that a child pornography offence had been committed using their Internet service.

Failure to comply with these duties would constitute an offence punishable by graduated fines up to \$1,000 for a first offence, \$5,000 for a second offence and for subsequent offences the possibility of a fine up to \$10,000 or six months' imprisonment or both, for individual offenders. If the offender were a corporation the graduated fines would be up to \$10,000, \$50,000 and \$100,000.

I would highlight that nothing in the legislation would either require or authorize any individual or company to actively seek out incidents of child pornography. In other words, providers of Internet services will not be required to monitor their networks for this type of material.

Our government recognizes the efforts of Canada's major Internet service providers, or ISPs, as they are known, in addressing this serious problem. Most Canadian ISPs have adopted acceptable use policies that outline the rules for using Internet accounts, the conditions for access privileges and the consequences for violating those rules and conditions. Most of these policies allow the ISPs to terminate accounts in cases of unacceptable online behaviour.

Organizations such as the Canadian Association of Internet Providers have also helped to develop standards for the industry, including a code of conduct. In 2003 some Canadian ISPs and police agencies formed the Canadian Coalition Against Internet Child Exploitation to assist law enforcement in addressing online child pornography. One important initiative to come out of such collaboration with ISPs is Project Cleanfeed Canada, which aims to block access to websites that host child pornography. Because the focus of Cleanfeed Canada is on limiting accidental exposure to such images, Cybertip.ca provides to participating ISPs a regularly updated list of Internet addresses associated with images of child sexual abuse.

Most of the major ISPs providing service to almost 90% of all Canadian Internet subscribers are participating in Cleanfeed Canada under a memorandum of understanding with Cybertip.ca. Efforts are being made to expand Cleanfeed Canada to the ISPs that service the other 10% of Canadians. Requiring all providers of Internet services to report child pornography websites will undoubtedly enhance the efficiency of the Cleanfeed Canada program.

Bill C-58 also ensures that all those who provide Internet services to the public are held to the same reporting standard when it comes to reporting online Internet child pornography.

I would highlight that we anticipate that this new legislation should have a limited impact on the business practices of providers of Internet services who already voluntarily report cases of online child pornography. Bill C-58 was drafted in a manner that closely reflects the current practices of Canada's major ISPs.

• (1725)

Bill C-58, however, covers more than just a typical ISP. The term ISP, or Internet service provider, usually refers to someone who provides access to the Internet. This act applies to all those who provide an Internet service to the public. While this does include access providers, it also includes those who provide electronic mail services such as webmail, Internet content hosting services and social networking sites.

This legislation complements our existing comprehensive strategy to combat child sexual exploitation in Canada. This strategy includes an impressive array of existing Criminal Code provisions as well as recent legislative initiatives currently before the House such as Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Competition Act and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, and Bill C-47, An Act regulating telecommunications facilities to support investigations.

If adopted, these proposed pieces of legislation would help ensure that law enforcement and national security agencies have the tools they need to fight crimes such as child pornography in today's high

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tech environment. This government also recognizes that more is needed to combat this scourge than just strong criminal laws.

That is why, in December 2008, we renewed the federal government's national strategy to protect children from sexual exploitation on the Internet. Initially launched in 2004, this national strategy is providing \$42.1 million over five years to the RCMP's National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre to provide law enforcement with better tools and resources to address Internet-based child sexual exploitation, enhance public education and awareness and support the 2005 national launch and ongoing operation of Cybertip.ca as a national 24/7 tipline for reporting the sexual exploitation of children on the Internet.

As announced in budget 2007 and rolled out in 2008, our Conservative government has allocated an additional \$6 million per year to strengthen initiatives to combat the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. These funds are being used to augment the overall capacity of the NCECC as well as to specifically enhance its ability to identify and ultimately rescue child victims through the analysis of images seized from sex offenders that are captured on the Internet or received from international law enforcement agencies.

I hope the House understands just how important this legislation is. Bill C-58 will further enhance collaboration between the Internet service industry and law enforcement, resulting in greater protection for our children from online sexual exploitation in today's technological environment. I urge the House to give this bill its full support.

The Deputy Speaker: We might have time for a very brief question before the bells ring. I will go to the member for Burnaby—New Westminster for a 30-second question.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have seen the government cut back on crime prevention funding and not keep its promise to fund the 2,500 police officer positions that were supposed to be funded. There are no resources going with this bill. We are all concerned about child abuse. Why is the government not investing so that the resources are available to follow this bill?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, toward the closing of my speech, I believe I identified funding that our government has identified toward ending child exploitation. I mentioned \$42.1 million over five years to the RCMP, for example, and \$6 million per year to strengthen initiatives to combat the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children.

When it comes to this specific bill, we are placing the responsibility on ISPs to report to a registered agency tips that they receive concerning child pornography through the use of their services.

* * *

• (1730)

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from November 24 consideration of the motion that Bill C-36, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

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The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment by the member for Windsor—Tecumseh to the motion at third reading of Bill C-36.

Call in the members.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 134)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Angus	Atamanenko
Bachand	Beaudin
Bellavance	Bevington
Bigras	Blais
Bonsant	Bouchard
Brunelle	Cardin
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Comartin
Crowder	Cullen
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dorion	Duceppe
Dufour	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Faillie	Freeman
Gagnon	Godin
Gravelle	Guay
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Julian	Laforest
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Layton
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Malo
Maloway	Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen	Nadeau
Ouellet	Paillé (Hochelaga)
Paillé (Louis-Hébert)	Paquette
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Rafferty	Roy
Siksay	St-Cyr
Stoffer	Szabo
Thi Lac	Thibeault
Vincent	Wasylycia-Leis— 70

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Bagnell
Bains	Baird
Bélangier	Benoit
Bernier	Bevilacqua
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Boughen
Braid	Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Byrne	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Carrie
Casson	Chong
Clement	Coady
Coderre	Cotler

Crombie	Cummins
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davidson	Day
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dion
Dosanjh	Dreeshen
Dryden	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fast	Finley
Flaherty	Fletcher
Folco	Galipeau
Gallant	Généreux
Goldring	Goodale
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guarnieri
Guergis	Hall Findlay
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hiebert
Hill	Hoback
Hoepfner	Holder
Jean	Jennings
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
Malhi	Mark
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayes
McCallum	McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
McTeague	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nicholson	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Pacetti
Paradis	Patry
Pearson	Petit
Poilievre	Preston
Proulx	Rac
Raiitt	Rajotte
Ratansi	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Richards	Richardson
Ritz	Rodriguez
Savage	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schellenberger	Sgro
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Silva
Simms	Smith
Sorenson	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Thompson	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Tweed
Uppal	Valeriote
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Volpe	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Wilfert
Wong	Woodworth
Wrzesnewskyj	Yelich
Young	Zarac— 188

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Breitkreuz
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Glover
MacKenzie

*Government Orders*Ménard
NorlockMourani
Stanton — 14

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I declare the amendment lost.

[*English*]

Pursuant to order made earlier today, the question is on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-36. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 135*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Aglukkaq
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambrose
Anderson
Armstrong
Bains
Bélanger
Bernier
Bezan
Blaney
Boucher
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Byrne
Calandra
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Casson
Clement
Coderre
Crombie
Cuzner
Davidson
Dechert
Devolin
Dosanjh
Dryden
Easter
Fast
Flaherty
Folco
Gallant
Goldring
Goodyear

Ablonczy
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Andrews
Bagnell
Baird
Benoit
Bevilacqua
Blackburn
Block
Boughen
Brisson
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Cadman
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Coady
Cotler
Cummins
D'Amours
Day
Del Mastro
Dion
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Eyking
Finley
Fletcher
Galipeau
Généreux
Goudale
Gourde

Grewal
Guergis
Harper
Hawn
Hill
Hoepfner
Jean
Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lemieux
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mark
Mayes
McGuinity
McLeod
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
O'Connor
Obhrai
Pacetti
Patry
Petit
Preston
Rae
Rajotte
Rathgeber
Reid
Richardson
Rodriguez
Saxton
Scheer
Sgro
Shipley
Silva
Smith
Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Tonks
Tweed
Valeriote
Van Loan
Verner
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Wilfert
Woodworth
Yelich
Zarac — 187

Guarnieri
Hall Findlay
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lee
Lobb
Lunn
MacAulay
Malhi
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague
Merrifield
Minna
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nicholson
O'Neill-Gordon
Oda
Paradis
Pearson
Poilievre
Proulx
Raitt
Ratansi
Regan
Richards
Ritz
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
Simms
Sorenson
Strahl
Thompson
Toews
Trost
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Volpe
Warawa
Watson
Wong
Wrzesnewskyj
Young

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Bachand
Bellavance
Bigras
Bonsant
Brunelle
Charlton
Christopherson
Crowder
Davies (Vancouver East)
Demers
Desnoyers
Dorion
Dufour
Faille
Gagnon
Gravelle
André
Atamanenko
Beaudin
Bevington
Blais
Bouchard
Cardin
Chow
Comartin
Cullen
DeBellefeuille
Deschamps
Dewar
Duceppe
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Freeman
Godin
Guay

Private Members' Business

Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
 Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)
 Julian
 Laframboise
 Lavallée
 Lemay
 Lessard
 Maloway
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 Mathysen
 Ouellet
 Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
 Plamondon
 Rafferty
 Siksay
 Stoffer
 Thibeault
 Wasylcia-Leis— 69

Laforest
 Lalonde
 Layton
 Leslie
 Malo
 Marston
 Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
 Nadeau
 Paillé (Hochelaga)
 Paquette
 Pomerleau
 Roy
 St-Cyr
 Thi Lac
 Vincent

Deschamps
 Dewar
 Dorion
 Dryden
 Dufour
 Easter
 Faïlle
 Foote
 Fry
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Guay
 Basques)
 Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)

Desnoyers
 Dion
 Dosanjh
 Duceppe
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Eyking
 Folco
 Freeman
 Gagnon
 Goodale
 Guarnieri
 Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les

PAIRED

Members

Ashfield
 Bourgeois
 Carrier
 Gaudet
 Lévesque
 Ménard
 Norlock

Asselin
 Breitreuz
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Glover
 MacKenzie
 Mourani
 Stanton— 14

Jennings
 Karygiannis
 Laforest
 Lalonde
 Layton
 Lee
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Malo
 Marston
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 Mathysen
 McGuinty
 McTeague
 Minna
 Murphy (Charlottetown)
 Nadeau
 Oliphant
 Pacetti
 Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
 Patry
 Plamondon
 Proulx
 Rafferty
 Regan
 Roy
 Scarpaleggja
 Siksay
 Simson
 Stoffer
 Thi Lac
 Tonks
 Valeriotte
 Volpe
 Wilfert
 Zarac— 133

Julian
 Kennedy
 Laframboise
 Lavallée
 LeBlanc
 Lemay
 Lessard
 Malhi
 Maloway
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Mendes
 Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
 Murray
 Neville
 Ouellet
 Paillé (Hochelaga)
 Paquette
 Pearson
 Pomerleau
 Rae
 Ratansi
 Rodriguez
 Savage
 Sgro
 Silva
 St-Cyr
 Szabo
 Thibeault
 Trudeau
 Vincent
 Wasylcia-Leis
 Wrzesnewskij

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

SEARCH AND RESCUE HELICOPTER

The House resumed from November 20 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 346 under private members' business.

• (1815)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 136)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Andrews
 Atamanenko
 Bagnell
 Beaudin
 Bellavance
 Bevington
 Blais
 Bouchard
 Brunelle
 Cardin
 Chow
 Coady
 Comartin
 Crombie
 Cullen
 D'Amours
 DeBellefeuille

André
 Angus
 Bachand
 Bains
 Bélanger
 Bevilacqua
 Bigras
 Bonsant
 Brison
 Byrne
 Charlton
 Christopherson
 Coderre
 Cotler
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Demers

Abbott
 Aglukkaq
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Baird
 Bernier
 Blackburn
 Block
 Boughen
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Brown (Barrie)
 Cadman
 Calkins
 Carrie
 Chong
 Cummins
 Day
 Del Mastro
 Dreeshen
 Fast
 Flaherty
 Galipeau
 Généreux
 Goodyear
 Grewal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hiebert

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
 Albrecht
 Allison
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Benoit
 Bezan
 Blaney
 Boucher
 Braid
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
 Casson
 Clement
 Davidson
 Dechert
 Devolin
 Dykstra
 Finley
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Goldring
 Gourde
 Guergis
 Hawn
 Hill

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 137)*

Hoback
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lemieux
Lukiwski
Lunney
Mark
McLeod
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Neill-Gordon
Oda
Petit
Preston
Rajotte
Reid
Richardson
Saxton
Schellenberger
Shiple
Smith
Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Trost
Uppal
Van Loan
Verner
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Woodworth
Young— 131

Hoepfner
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lobb
Lunn
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mayes
Menzies
Miller
O'Connor
Obhrai
Paradis
Poilievre
Raitt
Rathgeber
Richards
Ritz
Scheer
Shea
Shory
Sorenson
Strahl
Thompson
Toews
Tweed
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to

PAIRED

Members

Ashfield
Bourgeois
Carrier
Gaudet
Lévesque
Ménard
Norlock

Asselin
Breitkreuz
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Glover
MacKenzie
Mourani
Stanton— 14

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I declare the motion carried.

* * *

*[English]***SUPPORT MEASURES FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS**

The House resumed from November 24 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Order please. The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 386 under private members' business.

● (1825)

[Translation]

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

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Aglukkaq
Allen (Welland)
Allison
Anders
André
Angus
Atamanenko
Bagnell
Baird
Bélanger
Benoit
Bevilacqua
Bezan
Blackburn
Blaney
Bonsant
Boucher
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Brunelle
Cadman
Calkins
Cardin
Casson
Chong
Christopherson
Coady
Comartin
Crombie
Cullen
Cuzner
Davidson
Day
Dechert
Demers
Desnoyers
Dewar
Dorion
Dreeshen
Duceppe
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Faille
Finley
Fletcher
Freeman
Gagnon
Gallant
Godin
Goodale
Gourde
Grewal
Guay
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)
Hall Findlay
Hawn
Hill
Hoepfner
Jean
Julian
Karygiannis
Kennedy
Kent
Komarnicki
Laforest
Lake
Lauzon
Layton
LeBlanc
Lemay
Leslie
Lobb
Lunn
MacAulay
Malhi

Ablonczy
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambrose
Anderson
Andrews
Armstrong
Bachand
Bains
Beaudin
Bellavance
Bernier
Bevington
Bigras
Blais
Block
Bouchard
Boughen
Brison
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Byrne
Calandra
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie
Charlton
Chow
Clement
Coderre
Cotler
Crowder
Cummins
D'Amours
Davies (Vancouver East)
DeBellefeuille
Del Mastro
Deschamps
Devolin
Dion
Dosanjh
Dryden
Dufour
Dykstra
Eyking
Fast
Flaherty
Folco
Fry
Galipeau
Généreux
Goldring
Goodyear
Gravelle
Guarnieri
Guergis
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
Jennings
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laframboise
Lalonde
Lavallée
Lebel
Lee
Lemieux
Lessard
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Malo

Private Members' Business

Maloway	Mark
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Mathysen
Mayes	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLeod	McTeague
Mendes	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nadeau	Neville
Nicholson	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Oliphant
Ouellet	Pacetti
Paillé (Hochelaga)	Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
Paquette	Paradis
Patry	Pearson
Petit	Plamondon
Poillievre	Pomerleau
Preston	Proulx
Rae	Rafferty
Raitt	Rajotte
Ratansi	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Richards	Richardson
Ritz	Rodriguez
Roy	Savage
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schellenberger
Sgro	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Siksay	Silva
Simms	Simson
Smith	Sorenson
St-Cyr	Stoffer
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Szabo
Thi Lac	Thibeault
Thompson	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Trudeau
Twweed	Uppal
Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Vincent
Völpe	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Wasylycia-Leis	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	Wong
Weston (Saint John)	Wrzesnewskyj
Wilfert	Young
Woodworth	
Yelich	
Zarac— 263	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Ashfield	Asselin
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Carrier	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Gaudet	Glover
Lévesque	MacKenzie
Ménard	Mourani
Norlock	Stanton— 14

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I declare the motion carried.

It being 6:25 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

[*English*]

CANADIAN NORTHWEST PASSAGE

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today to Motion No. 387. I will take a moment to read the motion into the record. It states:

That, in the opinion of the House, as the various waterways known as the "Northwest Passage" are historic internal waters of Canada, the government should endeavour to refer to these waterways as the "Canadian Northwest Passage".

This is now the second hour of debate on this motion and I have had occasion to review some of the speeches of the members who have preceded me in this debate. As the Speaker knows, this particular motion is being supported by all parties in the House. In many ways, it is similar to Motion No. 465, the motion dealing with the air passenger bill of rights where all the parties managed to come to agreement that such an action should be taken and such a bill should be brought in, but when action has been taken we find a fracturing of the previously agreeable people.

It is the same principle involved in this motion. The motion is broad enough and certainly finds acceptance with all four parties in the House but when we start talking about specifics that is when we start coming up with differences of opinion.

The fact is that we are also being faced with a threat from outside here. We have, increasingly, the United States and Europe claiming that the Northwest Passage is an international waterway, while Canada's position is that it is an internal passage. We know that with global warming, with the temperature rising up north and with the ice receding, it is potentially possible that within a few years the route may become navigable on a more sustainable basis than it is right now and we will have the incursion of foreign countries, particularly the United States, wishing to consider it international waters, not only for the purposes of shipping but also for the exploration of minerals, oil and so on.

We do have that sort of international issue being dealt with more or less on a worldwide basis.

The north is a beautiful area of the country. I was up in Yukon. The member for Yukon is here tonight and I have read his comments.

At the beginning of September, I was in Yukon meeting with Air North and had the occasion to tour Yukon. It is certainly a beautiful part of the country but it is not unlike my own province of Manitoba where we have a northern port known as Churchill. Both of those areas are very susceptible to even minor amounts of climate change. The tundra is not that stable and in fact is very unstable.

We have a railway that runs up to Churchill and I have been up there many times on the railway. The members will likely know and agree with me that that particular railway requires huge amounts of money for its roadbed. It requires huge maintenance because of where it is running to. It has slow orders on it constantly. I do not think the train is even operating at 30 or 40 miles an hour. I think it is more like 15, if that. I think we could run as fast as the train in some cases. This is as a result of the instability of the tundra in those areas.

Private Members' Business

•(1830)

We have a railway, which needs a lot of maintenance, and we have the Port of Churchill, which we have been trying to promote as an inland port in order to draw some of the grain trade away from Thunder Bay and from British Columbia to allow our farmers to send their products up through Churchill. We have had occasions of ships, particularly from Russia, coming through and, depending on the year, we have had as many as half a dozen ships show up at the Port of Churchill for loading grain and other commodities and taking them away.

We have the pro development people very interested in the economic possibilities. The people in Haliburton and other companies that rummage around the globe looking for economic opportunities will see the area warming up and the ice melting as very positive and an opportunity to make money and, therefore, more potential for commerce, trade and oil exploration.

However, what people need to recognize is that when we have that warming, when we have a destabilization of the environment and the tundra becomes destabilized, how will people be able to navigate around that area? What we essentially will be doing is destroying the livelihood of the people who are there right now, the people who have been there for thousands of years and who make their livelihood in trapping and fishing enterprises. They have enough stresses on their lifestyle right now. As their environment continues to whittle away, they will not be able to continue their own activities.

In Churchill over the last few years, the polar bears have not been able to get back on the ice and their weights are reducing. This is changing the whole sort of ecology, in some ways, upside down. For those who think this will somehow be a big plus, I guess their plan would be to try to challenge the sovereignty of Canada through the Northwest Passage and try to be available when and if opportunities should arise as far as the resources are concerned.

The four parties in this House have taken the correct action here. I realize that the member for Yukon did introduce a motion in the previous Parliament, which proves the point that nothing is new around this place. When elections happen, the House must start from scratch and all the bills and motions need to be reintroduced. Sometimes it is not the same people who introduced them the first time who end up introducing them the second time. However, the member for Yukon has endorsed this motion and pointed out some of the advantages that will happen because of the warming.

However, the member for the Bloc has pointed out a lot of the disadvantages that we will see as a result of the warming and, in many respects, I think he is right. He talks about the whole process of global warming and about how the ice melting in the north will cause huge instabilities. It will not be an economic opportunity but actually a cost item for Canada.

•(1835)

We need to look at things like oil spills. We think that we will somehow develop, for example, oil exploration. If we are going to develop oil reserves in a certain area and build pipelines across the tundra and take the oil to market, at a certain point, whether we are doing it through the pipeline process or doing it through the shipping process, eventually, statistically, we will have a—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Order, please. Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I stand today in support of Motion No. 387. I will use my time to make a friendly amendment to the motion, which received overwhelming support from the House. Let me be clear on this point: Canada is an Arctic nation and an Arctic power and will continue to affirm its sovereignty.

The Canadian government clearly understands the potential of the north. The Arctic and the north are part of our national identity. They make up over 40% of our land mass. The north is home to more than 100,000 Canadians, many of whom are Inuit and first nations peoples who have inhabited these lands for thousands of years.

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Palliser:

That the motion be amended by adding after the words “Canadian Northwest Passage”, the following:

“; recognize the importance of the Northwest Passage to the Inuit; support the identification of an appropriate Inuktitut name for the whole Northwest Passage in co-operation with Inuit land claims organizations and territorial governments; and that this name be used in conjunction with the “Canadian Northwest Passage” when referring to internal Canadian waterways.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): It is my duty to inform hon. members that pursuant to Standing Order 93(3) no amendment may be proposed to a private member's bill or to the motion for second reading of a private member's bill unless the sponsor of the item indicates his or her consent. Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings if he consents to the amendment being moved.

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very thankful for the amendment, quite frankly. It does address a number of the concerns of our northern neighbours, the Inuit inhabitants. I very pleasantly and thankfully accept the amendment.

•(1840)

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as a proud Canadian and as a former proud northerner, I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 387 moved by the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings. I read with interest the speech that he gave to introduce the motion on October 5 as well as the speeches of other members in the House. I hope that I can add to the debate. I want to stress that I am not sure that there is all-party agreement for the motion at this time.

Let me state from the outset that the issue of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, at least a portion of the Arctic region that is undeniably Canadian territory, is not in question in this debate. All parties in the House recognize Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic. However, what we do with this sovereignty and what that sovereignty means are not universal in the House. While we may all recognize Canada's sovereignty, we apparently do not all equally recognize the responsibility that comes with that sovereignty. That responsibility means taking seriously the concerns, aspirations, dignity and responsibilities of the people of the north.

Private Members' Business

The motion, even in its proposed amended version, does not fully do this. It does not fully take into consideration the outcry of the people closest to the various waterways known as the Northwest Passage. Many of them have been deeply offended not only by the proposed renaming of the passage, but by the government's lack of consultation with the Inuit people on this issue and others.

This lack of consultation, this cultural insensitivity boldly reminds us that the Conservative government's northern strategy is seriously flawed and is certainly not a northern vision. It is a strategy based on southern principles and southern methods with little regard to the reality of the Canadian north as we know it. We repeatedly hear that the government has placed the Arctic on its list of priorities, having developed a so-called strategy designed to protect the environment, to promote economic and social development, to exercise sovereignty and to improve and devolve governance.

These are noble goals and I would like to heartily applaud them, but the government's true understanding of the north is sadly revealed in the remarks of the member for Prince Edward—Hastings when he introduced the motion. While he waxed eloquent about sovereignty issues, and I will say it was an admirable speech worthy of a PMO speech writer, he mentioned the people of Canada's north but once.

One can read his remarks over and over again, but will find no mention of Inuit organizations, their cultural aspirations, or their right to self-determination. Not once is there mention of the duly elected government of Nunavut, or for that matter, the Northwest Territories or Yukon which also have an interest in this issue. Not once is there mention of the right and responsibility of the Inuit to chart their own course and map their own destiny, even literally, using the names that they have used from generation to generation.

Ten years ago we celebrated the establishment of Nunavut as the third Canadian northern territory. I was living in Yukon at the time. I was deeply touched by the wisdom and the hope that were equally bound up in the decision to create a territory in which the majority of Inuit people would become masters of their own destiny. It was a proud day for all Canadians when we turned to the Inuit people and all the residents of the eastern Arctic to take responsibility for the land we now know as Nunavut. In case some hon. members do not know, Nunavut means "the land", but frankly, that also includes the waters and the waterways of the territory.

While I lived in Yukon for six years and have travelled many times to the western Arctic, my first visit to Nunavut was just a few weeks ago. Landing on Baffin Island was a never-to-be-forgotten moment for me. The quality of light and the quality and beauty of the land is surpassed only by the quality of the welcome I received and the beauty of the people, but we cannot romanticize that. The problems of Canada's newest territory are real and daunting. The recent report card on the territory highlighted a number of significant social problems, cultural challenges and serious environmental concerns. The first way to help Nunavut in its ambitious agenda is to respect its residents' ability to govern themselves and to be a full partner in Confederation.

If the goal of the government is to truly improve and devolve governance to the people of the north, then surely that means consulting with them and respecting them in the naming of their

significant places, and not as a parenthesis, not as an add-on, but as an integral part of what we do.

● (1845)

The government is well aware of the people of the north when it wants to promote a sovereignty agenda abroad. It regularly publicizes a Canadian human presence in the north as a way to appear to be sovereign. The government has no difficulty whatsoever in using people for sovereignty. What it is failing to do is use sovereignty for people.

National Inuit leader Mary Simon recently commented, "Ultimately, sovereignty begins at home. Sovereignty is apparent and implemented with healthy communities, not just military hardware. It involves establishing constructive partnerships with Inuit. Canada's position cannot be detached from full appreciation and respect for the rights, interests, and priorities of Inuit".

Sheila Watt-Cloutier makes the point that Inuit who are connected to the values, principles, traditions and wisdom of their traditional culture are best equipped to meet the challenges faced in and by the north and this important insight should be reflected in our public policies and programs toward the Arctic. That includes giving them the power and the respect to name places that are significant and important to them.

More consultation, more respect, more dignity needs to be afforded to the Inuit people before we hastily make decisions about naming important places in their past, in their present and in their future. It is not good enough to give them a second name. It is not good enough to consider them after the fact. It is not good enough to have ignored their desires, wisdom, hopes and aspirations.

Inuit are not a second thought in this chamber. Inuit are one of the first peoples of this country. Canada is bigger than that and Canada is better than that.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House as the member of Parliament for Crowfoot and also, with respect to this speech, as the chair of the foreign affairs and international development committee.

I want to commend the member for Prince Edward—Hastings for bringing this motion forward. I also commend the member for Newmarket—Aurora for the amendment that she has moved.

This friendly amendment to the motion will reflect how the Inuit have used and occupied the so-called Northwest Passage since time immemorial. It will be a constant reminder to the House of the importance of these waters to those Canadians who have long used its ice and waters for fishing, hunting and living. It will remind us that all Canadians have the obligation to protect this vast fragile place for the benefit of the Inuit, for the benefit of northerners and for the benefit of all Canadians.

To be clear, this motion asks the Government of Canada to endeavour to refer to the various waterways known as the Northwest Passage as the Canadian Northwest Passage. The motion does not propose an official name change and it imposes no legal obligations on the government or on Canada.

Private Members' Business

The various waterways of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago already have proud, colourful, historic names. The Amundsen Gulf, the M'Clintock Channel, Peel Sound, Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait are names that may not be familiar to all, but they are just a few of the official names already borne by the different waterways in our Arctic Archipelago.

Viewed as a whole, however, these waterways are commonly referred to as the Northwest Passage. It is not a legal name but rather a concept. It is this concept that we will endeavour to refer to as the Canadian Northwest Passage. There is no official name in English for it, just as there is no one Inuktitut word for this concept.

Endeavouring to refer to these waters as the Canadian Northwest Passage is without prejudice to our legal rights, and serves only to honour the fact that the Inuit made these waters Canadian long ago.

This is not an official change or an attempt to erase existing names, but endeavouring to refer to these waters as the Canadian Northwest Passage is a reminder to the House, to all Canadians and to others internationally that these waters are Canadian. It is a reminder to this government and all Canadians of our national responsibility for these vast, beautiful and fragile places. It is a responsibility conferred on us by our sovereignty.

It is important for all members of the House and for all Canadians to be aware that Canadian sovereignty over the various waterways known as the Northwest Passage is not contested. This is a point that bears repeating. The Northwest Passage is and remains Canadian, full stop. Canada enforces its laws and regulations in the Northwest Passage just as it does in all Canadian territory.

Canadian Inuit have used and occupied the Northwest Passage since time immemorial and it is important to note that the friendly amendment proposed today will reflect that fact. Proudly making the effort to use the term Canadian Northwest Passage is simply one more way for Canada to demonstrate its historic title over these waters.

No one disputes that the Northwest Passage is Canadian. Every country recognizes these waters belong to Canada. Canada's sovereignty over the lands and waters of the Canadian Arctic is long standing, well established and based on historic title. The country exercises its sovereign rights responsibly in the region. The issue is not one of ownership but one of transit.

The only dispute that exists about the waters of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago is with the United States over the legal status of these waters. The United States believes these waters comprise a strait used for international navigation. These waters are not a strait used for international navigation. The various waterways known as the Northwest Passage are internal waters of Canada by virtue of historic title, developed through Inuit use since time immemorial. The limited international navigation that takes place in them is done with Canadian permission and usually with our help. The dispute is well managed. Canada and the United States agreed in 1988 that the United States would request Canadian permission for its icebreakers to enter these waters.

Canada welcomes shipping through Canadian Arctic waters so long as it meets conditions related to security, the environment and Inuit interests. We exercise control over foreign shipping in our

Arctic waters. Navigation is taking place under Canadian regulation and control, like any other internal waters of Canada. That said, each year when the passage is navigable, the number of transits remains very low, under 20 yearly.

● (1850)

A second misconception is that the reduction of the ice that covers the waters of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago somehow impacts Canadian sovereignty over these waters. To be clear, the amount or type of ice that exists in the Arctic has no bearing on Canada's sovereignty, including over the various waterways known as the Northwest Passage. The impact of this reduction of ice is that it could make the Northwest Passage more attractive as a potential shipping route for commercial marine traffic.

However, as I have already noted, because the various waterways known as the Northwest Passage are internal waters of Canada by virtue of historic title, should the ice ever retreat sufficiently to make these waters a viable shipping route, Canada's sovereignty over them will not change. Our laws and regulations will remain in effect. Foreign state vessels will continue to be required at international law to seek our permission to enter these waters.

Our own Canadian Ice Service, however, believes that the various internal waterways known as the Northwest Passage will not likely be a reliable commercial shipping route for decades, owing to extreme ice variability. Canada, however, will continue to regulate shipping through the passage.

Too few Canadians realize that our Arctic is not a place of conflict, but rather an opportunity for co-operation. The importance of the Arctic in Canada's interest has never been greater. We work closely with our partners in the United States, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Finland, as well as regional indigenous organizations, to co-operate on a wide range of issues, including for example search and rescue, shipping safety and science and technology. We are also co-operating with the United States, Denmark and Russia on the scientific work required to delineate our continental shelf.

There is great interest from other countries in the potential found north of 60. With interest from other countries, including nations that are geographically far removed from the north, Canada's Arctic is increasingly becoming a focus of foreign and defence policy.

Without question, our government has taken deliberate and demonstrable actions to say to the world that it is our land, that we will continue to use it and that we will not waiver in our commitment to keeping Canada's Arctic the true north strong and free.

Our leadership in the north involves consultation, collaboration and, in some cases, the settlement of disputes or differences with our Arctic neighbours. All the Arctic states work closely together in the Arctic Council, which Canada and Canadians did so much to develop.

Private Members' Business

Make no mistake, however, when an issue of national importance is raised at the Arctic Council, our government does and always will stand up for our interest and ownership over the Arctic. This is why we react so strongly when other countries, like Russia, engage in exercises and other activities that appear to challenge our security in the north and undermine the co-operative relationships that we have built.

Many states and institutions that have historically not paid attention to the Arctic are now turning their attention there. We have seen various actions and initiatives that demonstrate a lack of sensitivity to the interests and perspectives of the Arctic people and states. Canada will continue to address these situations firmly.

Although there is no conventional military threat in the north, we are projecting the operational capability of the Canadian Forces northwards. This is being done by means of investment in offshore patrol ships and berthing and a refuelling station in Nanisivik on Baffin Island.

We are also increasing the number of and improving the equipment of our eyes and ears in the north, the Canadian Rangers, as well as establishing a primary reserve company in Yellowknife. There will also be a Canadian Forces Arctic training centre in Resolute Bay to ensure that our forces are able to co-operate in the most challenging climate in our country.

In short, the motion to endeavour to refer to the various waterways known as the Northwest Passage as the Canadian Northwest Passage will continue to help Canada affirm its sovereignty over its Arctic lands and waters.

● (1855)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a delight to again speak to this very important motion in a symbolic way. The Inuit leaders of the country are being hosted right next door in your the boardroom.

So the public knows what we are debating, the motion recommends that the Northwest Passage be renamed to the Canadian Northwest Passage. I give credit to the mover. I do not think anyone is against the spirit of the motion. However, the reason we cannot support it is the processes established for naming places in the Canadian Arctic have not been completed sufficiently to make such a symbolic change in someone's backyard.

For those people who are watching CPAC, I wonder how they would feel if a members of a first nation from the far north went to their subdivision in southern Ontario and said that they were going to change the name of their street. They would not have a say or any consultation. It does not make any sense. In the first hour of debate on this motion I said we could not make any changes unless we consulted with Inuit organizations because it was in their backyard.

As soon as the first hour debate was over we started an extensive consultation with NTI. I wrote to all the mayors along the Northwest Passage and tried to work out a process with them so we could have a name acceptable to the local inhabitants. All members of Parliaments would want to support these very precious Canadians who live in the Arctic, the indigenous peoples, and come up with a name that is agreeable to everyone, by working with the mover and the Inuit people.

Unfortunately, at this time we have been unable to come to a consensus among all of us in the House and the Inuit people. We have come up with a motion. I have tabled it. It was on the order paper a few weeks ago. That motion would be acceptable to us. It takes into account the spirit of the mover, talking about adding the word "Canadian" to Northwest Passage, but it also takes into account what the Inuit people have said to us in these consultations. One of the things they said was that there was already a name for the Northwest Passage. It has been used for generations. It is related to some tattoo markings on a rock as one enters the Northwest Passage.

First, since time immemorial, there is already a name. That name adds to our sovereignty claim, not detracts from it. Canadian Inuit have been using the passage, as the member from Toronto, the land the water and the ice since time immemorial, and that adds to our claim. The fact that the Northwest Passage has had an Inuit name for generations also adds to our claim.

The second point is the process. There is a legal, symbolic process in our land claims for approving such names. There is a board to consult with our Inuit land claims. There is also a Canadian board and, as the member said earlier, we would want to consult with the people of the three territories who also have an interest. In this short timeframe, unfortunately we have not had time to do that and come up with an acceptable name.

I give credit to the member on the amendment. In it he does refer to the Inuit, but the problem is, it appears to be an afterthought. The first part of the motion suggests referring to the Northwest Passage as the Canadian Northwest Passage. Once again, it has not gone through the legal process. It has not gone through the land claim process. It has not gone through the appropriate naming boards. It has not met with the agreement of the Inuit people with whom we have consulted. The second part of the motion says that could be done later, but I am sure the Inuit do not want to be an afterthought to this motion.

I was hoping all parties in the House could come to an agreement. Unfortunately, I have to recommend against voting for either the amendment or the motion for these reasons: the lack of consultation with the people whose backyard this is in; the lack of following the agreements that Canada has signed with the Inuit, the land claims agreement; and the lack of using the appropriate naming boards. In Canada we go through these processes.

● (1900)

In our discussions with the Inuit, we can easily come to agreement still, as can be seen in my motion on the order paper, which the government is welcome to use. In recognition of the spirit of what they are trying to accomplish and what all the parties in the House would like to accomplish, we need a symbolic name that reflects the interests of the Inuit people who have lived there since time immemorial, and the fact, as we all agree, it is Canadian passage. That is reflected in my motion. It also recognizes the boards that have to make these decisions and the Inuit organizations that have had consultations with their members and the various organizations we talked to.

The last member who spoke for the government went off on a tangent, talking about us protecting the Arctic. I cannot refrain from commenting on that, as he was also basically quoting what the Minister of Foreign Affairs said this week, that we would protect our Arctic. Unfortunately, the words are a bit hollow because of the number of broken promises the government has made about protecting our Arctic.

As the House will remember, the Prime Minister's first promise was to build three armed icebreakers. As we know, those are not going to be built.

He then suggested that perhaps we would build one icebreaker and some patrol boats. The patrol boats are now tied up in endless contracting. There are no patrol boats in the Arctic.

The government also promised ice-strengthened supply ships. Where are they?

The government promised search and rescue planes to revitalize the fleet. Fortunately, we just passed a motion related to that, but those are nowhere in existence. The Government of Canada agreed six years ago to replace that fleet. But new search and rescue planes are not there to protect northerners or for us to have a presence in the north.

The government talked about protecting Canada from other countries making incursions on our sovereignty. The only major economic incursion is the suggestion that the Alaskan government with its oil leases, and the American government with its fishing prohibitions, are making major economic incursions into the Canadian Beaufort Sea.

On November 9, in a 437 page document, the Alaskan government put out 20,000 square kilometres of oil leases in the Canadian Beaufort Sea. It is a huge area. What is the government's reaction? What has it told the Canadian public? It has said that it is going to protect our economic interest when another country impinges on Canada.

As we know, it was only a few months ago that the American government suggested a moratorium on fishing in what we believe is the Canadian part of the Beaufort Sea. Where is the government protecting our interests? I think there should be a process. The government should stand up publicly and say it is going to protect those interests. Not only that, but it should also then do something about it. It should sit down with the Americans and see if we can come to an agreement in these disputes.

In closing, I would like to support the speech of my colleague on this and say that we want to work in partnership with both the government, because we agree with the spirit of the motion, and also with the Inuit people whose land this has been since time immemorial. With the naming process that is set up, hopefully we can all come to agreement on something that will be acceptable to everyone.

• (1905)

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly thank the member for Yukon for his comments.

I am admittedly disappointed. I did not believe this to be a highly contentious issue and an issue of legal jurisdiction bordering on land

claims. This is not that. This is simply a reference. It does not have clear title, so it is really unfortunate that we have taken something that should be an obvious recognition and tribute to our northern people and the protection of Canadian sovereignty, and unfortunately it is now caught in this little political circus we have here.

The various waterways known as the Northwest Passage, clearly historic internal waters of Canada, have been used and occupied, as has been stated by many people, by the Inuit of Canada since time immemorial. Today, very simply with this motion we are seeking to refer to these waters as the Canadian Northwest Passage.

This really expresses our view as a people, as a nation, that the Arctic is a fundamental part of Canadian history. It is an expression of our deepest aspirations and it is central, really, to our national identity.

Canada's sovereignty over the various waterways known as the Northwest Passage is not contested by any nation. Our right to explore, conserve and utilize the resources in and under these waters is unchallenged. The different position that our friends in the United States take is really about the legal status of these waters regarding navigation rights and certainly not about ownership. The U.S. contends that although these waters are undeniably Canadian, a strait used for international navigation runs through them.

Correspondingly, we signed, in 1988, the Canada-United States Agreement on Arctic Cooperation, in which we agreed to disagree, and really this works well for both countries. However, Canada permits international navigation in and through these historic internal waters as long as the conditions established by Canada to protect safety, security, the environment and Inuit interests are met.

We have worked and we will continue to work with the Inuit to ensure that they can continue to use and enjoy their homeland, their hunting and fishing grounds, and their transportation network that has been established, as has been stated again, since time immemorial. Today, however, we are asking the Government of Canada simply to endorse the endeavour to refer to these waters as the Canadian Northwest Passage. We are not asking that the separate waterways be given an official name in English or in Inuktitut, but simply wish to remind ourselves that the Northwest Passage is and always will be Canadian.

This expresses our view that the Arctic is a fundamental part of Canada's history. Our government understands the history and the vast potential of the north. The Arctic and the north are part of our national identity. They make up almost half of our entire land mass. Canada is an Arctic nation and clearly an Arctic power, and will continue to affirm its sovereignty.

A number of other speakers have demonstrated the government's will and intent, so I will not belabour that point, but I am certainly pleased that our government has made this kind of commitment. We have committed to protecting our longstanding, uncontested sovereignty.

Adjournment Proceedings

To be clear, this motion simply asks us, those assembled here, the Government of Canada, to endeavour to refer to the various waterways known as the Northwest Passage as, simply, the Canadian Northwest Passage.

Let us be very clear. This motion does not propose an official name change and would impose no legal obligations on the government or on Canada. There is no official name in English for it, just as there is no one Inuktitut word for this concept.

Endeavouring to refer to these waters as the Canadian Northwest Passage is without prejudice to our legal rights and serves to honour the fact that Inuit made these waters Canadian long ago. This is a responsibility conferred on us by our sovereignty, and I trust the members of this House will seek to honour our historic title over these waters.

Let me close by thanking the constituents in my riding who first brought this issue to my attention, the staff of various departments who consulted widely with the Inuit and who assisted me in the research to protect this valuable resource.

This motion is clearly not of a partisan nature but one that respects our history and is central to our national identity. I trust this will find support from one and all in this House.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The time provided for debate has expired. Therefore, the question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): In my opinion, the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 2, 2009, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government has been stonewalling on issues I have raised about the ethical conduct of the Minister of Natural Resources and has been basically saying it is going to wait until the Ethics Commissioner reports. However, we all know that the Ethics Commissioner can only report with regard to the Conflict of interest Act.

It is solely the Prime Minister who can judge a minister's ethical performance under his guidelines for ministers. We used to have an ethics counsellor between the Prime Minister and the ministers themselves, but now it is totally the Prime Minister's call.

To remind members, we are talking about a Minister of Natural Resources who had a political fundraiser which utilized the resources of the Toronto Port Authority, a federal authority. It was confirmed in writing by the president and CEO of the Toronto Port Authority that, in fact, it happened and that it had taken corrective action. However, the board never responded and it has a responsibility here.

There is also the issue of the Minister of Natural Resources, as president and CEO at the time, signing an expense report, which is to be signed exclusively by the chair of the board, but the minister signed it herself. On the bottom it read, "Chair refused to sign", but she signed it anyway.

There were two other expense reports that were reimbursed but were not authorized by the chairman of the board. There was a \$9,000 lunch for 50 people, about \$180 per person. The most expensive meal on the entire menu at that restaurant is only \$80. After taking off the tip, it looks like half of the money was spent on alcohol.

The board is dysfunctional. It has demonstrated gross mismanagement of the authority. It doctored board minutes that were approved in December of 2008. The previous chair of the board has said publicly that it was illegal for the new chair of the board and the then board to doctor and alter the board minutes, which was clearly an attempt to eliminate information that would indicate there was government interference with the board.

I have called for the Auditor General to be mandated to come in. In a previous request from the board of directors itself, the Auditor General responded that her mandate did not permit her to do that, but she can, if the Prime Minister temporarily expands her mandate, go in and clean up the mess. There was no answer to that.

Now the chair of the board, Mark McQueen, of the Toronto Port Authority has himself called for the Auditor General to come in. I do not know what the answer is going to be about the Auditor General, but I doubt that it is going to change.

However, section 41.(1) of the Canada Marine Act authorizes the Minister of Transport to call for a special report of this to clean up the mess. He should do that because we need the answers to these questions. They are not forthcoming from the government.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

•(1915)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, allow me to begin by thanking the hon. member for Mississauga South, who is the chair of the ethics committee, for his intervention today.

Our government takes these allegations seriously. This government prides itself on accountability and ethics. That is why we have strengthened the powers and responsibilities of those arm's-length agencies that are charged to investigate such matters.

The Minister of Natural Resources continues to cooperate fully with the Ethics Commissioner. The ministry is following, and will continue to follow, the commissioner's rulings and advice.

The issue is still being examined by the Ethics Commissioner and, therefore, it would be inappropriate for me to comment.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Madam Speaker, that is unacceptable. The member knows that the Ethics Commissioner cannot deal with these alleged ethical wrongdoings.

The report from the Ethics Commissioner could take months. In the meantime, we have a dysfunctional board, gross mismanagement, and a gross cover-up of interference by the government in this.

The Conservative-appointed chair of the board of directors has called for someone, whether it be the Auditor General or someone else, to come in and clean up the mess now, before any further damage is done to this authority.

Adjournment Proceedings

The issue here is that timeliness is of the essence. If we do not get these matters addressed, if the government continues to stonewall, there will be further consequences.

This is a very important authority. It manages the Toronto Island airport and the port facilities. It has assets and resources. But because there are other authorities that appoint boards, we have a problem. It has to be fixed, and it has to be fixed now.

•(1920)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, our government takes these allegations very seriously. This government prides itself on accountability and ethics. That is why we strengthened the powers and responsibilities of those arm's-length agencies that are charged to investigate such matters.

The Minister of Natural Resources continues to cooperate fully with the Ethics Commissioner. The ministry is following, and will continue to follow, the commissioner's rulings and guidance.

This issue is still being examined by the Ethics Commissioner and, therefore, it would be inappropriate for me to comment.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:21 p.m.)

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