



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 146 • NUMBER 241 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, April 26, 2013

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 26, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

NOT CRIMINALLY RESPONSIBLE REFORM ACT

The House resumed from March 1, 2013, consideration of the motion that Bill C-54, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act (mental disorder), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today.

Bill C-54 aims to include a new policy in the legislation, and that policy, that ideological shift, forces us to take a step back and look at our country's history.

As soon as British rule was established, we enforced British laws. Criminal laws were set out in the aptly named Bloody Code. The number of crimes that resulted in a death sentence was unreasonable. Quite often, it was not just death by hanging. In Canada, it often involved torture.

The second important element of the British criminal code that we inherited is the jury. That is an important element, one that should not be ignored.

Individuals appearing before the jury were guilty. They had already been proven guilty. When the jury found out what kind of sentence was to be meted out, the jury members decided to declare the individuals innocent. The jury did not want to be complicit in enforcing an overly harsh and unreasonably cruel law. Luckily, the Bloody Code was amended and became the Criminal Code.

At the time, stealing cattle could lead to death by hanging. Household servants who stole something from the house could receive the death penalty. Those crimes were abolished because they were so unreasonable and the penalties were no longer being enforced. The jury refused to be complicit in imposing such harsh sentences.

This brings us back to the present situation. Juries can still refuse to enforce the Criminal Code in a more modern way. If jury members

really believe in all good conscience that enforcing the Criminal Code is unacceptable, they can reject it.

The last time this was clearly applied in recent times was in the Morgentaler case. Dr. Morgentaler performed abortions, which was strictly prohibited by the Criminal Code. He was prosecuted in a trial by jury. The evidence that he was indeed performing abortions was clear, but the jury refused to enforce the Criminal Code. The jury said it would not be complicit with the politicians who had passed the legislation, which they considered to be flawed and poorly drafted, legislation that punished a crime that was only in the politicians' heads. The jury said no. That is the danger with Bill C-54 and its whole underlying philosophy—that we are going to be tough on crime, scare people and impose extremely harsh minimum sentences to punish crime.

Judges will say to themselves that the cases are theirs, that they will keep a certain distance and that they are not puppets who are incapable of any independent thought. We saw this with the Firearms Act. Someone had gone to a friend's house, taken the friend's revolver and was playing with that illegal weapon. He committed a crime. However, the judge ruled that there had to be criminal intent and that the law, as it was written, was unacceptable. He struck down the law.

A judge can strike down a law, and so can a jury.

When it comes to crimes committed by people with mental health issues, it is important to understand that, when faced with the absolute horror of the crime, members of a jury always tend to say that an individual of sound mind would never have done such a thing. A good example of this is the case of Dr. Turcotte, who murdered his two children.

All the lawyers and prosecutors who are under the obligation to present proof beyond a reasonable doubt have encountered this problem in these types of cases: the jury cannot accept that a man of sound mind would do such a horrific thing to his children.

Dr. Turcotte took full advantage of this human reaction. That was the basis for his defence. It was a jury that decided his fate. It is easy to say that the judge should have done more, but there is always the risk that the jury will be unable to accept that a person of sound mind could commit such atrocities.

Government Orders

This risk hangs over every trial involving serial killers. That is why prosecutors must be well prepared. They must prove that the crime was premeditated. Often, if the prosecutor can prove that the crime was premeditated, the jury sees that it was not a moment of temporary insanity. The person planned, organized and committed the crime. In the case of Dr. Turcotte, the jury did not find that such was the case.

With the notion of “beyond a reasonable doubt”, only a glimmer of doubt is needed for the person to be proven innocent. This poses another problem: the use of media coverage of the amendment to the Criminal Code for political purposes. We must not kid ourselves. There is a party in the House with a “tough on crime” agenda. That is fine. However, it is a bit ridiculous for the government to say that it is going to be tough on criminals and then turn around and make cuts to police budgets. This is not the first time that this government has contradicted itself.

People who commit crimes must be punished. Our Criminal Code does just that. However, some changes had to be made. Parole after one-sixth of a sentence and the two-for-one credit for time served before sentencing did not make sense.

It is fine to pass a law, but the reality is that we have to enforce it. Whenever we express the slightest doubt, we are accused of supporting pedophiles or cyberpedophiles and being anti-law.

Legislation and the law are two different things. So are legislation and justice. In the House, we are committed to justice. We are being asked to pass bills whose only objective is to let the minister say that the government will prevent such and such an incident from happening. I am sorry, but in the case of Dr. Turcotte, it would not have changed anything. Furthermore, leaving a rope in Dr. Turcotte's cell will not solve the problem.

By the way, I would like to point out that counselling a person to commit suicide is a Criminal Code offence. The Conservatives might want to inform some senators of that. It would be useful sometimes if people would read the law, not just defend it. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse, especially for those in Parliament who claim to champion Criminal Code amendments.

• (1010)

This is obviously a sad case. I have very little time left, so to sum up: this law will not change anything because the jury still remains the judge of the facts.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to recognize that there is so much more that government can do in terms of working, in particular, with provincial counterparts to try to deal with some of the issues related to mental illness and the number of crimes that are being committed. One only needs to look at some of our institutions, particularly hospitals, to get a sense of the number of individuals where there is a correlation between mental illness and crimes being committed.

My question is related to the importance of providing resources for detecting mental illness and dealing with issues that ultimately lead to crimes being committed because we are giving short shrift to the needs of mental illness. If we dealt with mental illness in a more holistic approach, we would be able to prevent some of these crimes

from taking place in the first place. I am interested in the member's comments on that.

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, this law is problematic. Some individuals should not be able to plead insanity. We must identify the problem to prevent such crimes, since some people need health services while others, who are of perfectly sound mind, plead insanity. Those are two completely different things. Measures must be taken to provide support for mental health.

With deinstitutionalization, too many people were released from psychiatric hospitals and literally put on the street. These crimes were predictable. Quite often we are talking about petty theft. Others commit serious crimes, plead insanity and win their case. That is another problem. We must provide support for mental health care. Too many people are on the street who should not be there.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague was talking about the concept of justice. I would like to take a closer look at that concept, compared to the concept of vengeance. It sometimes seems as though bills introduced by this government focus more on vengeance than justice, but is justice not what victims of crime want?

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. We are looking for justice. We propose laws that should, in theory, be in the spirit of justice. Unfortunately, we sometimes miss the mark. However, in the tradition of the English criminal law system, we have judges and juries. Sometimes, these people say that the law does not reflect their vision of justice, in the sense that it seeks to revenge or too harshly punish a crime, when what they were looking for was justice.

This does not mean that we will support and protect criminals. We must find a balance. Does Bill C-54 provide that balance? We will support this bill, even though we are very uncomfortable with the philosophy behind it. However, we will search for justice. That is the duty of every single member who sits in this House.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-54, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act (mental disorder).

The key new measure provided for in this bill is a new power to designate a high-risk category of accused under both the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act.

The category of accused that has drawn considerable attention and loud calls for stricter punishment is exactly this category, particularly for more heinous acts where somebody is deemed to be not criminally responsible. In such cases, the accused is neither convicted nor acquitted. These cases are to be differentiated from an accused found unfit to stand trial. Once deemed fit, those accused may be tried for the offence and incarcerated. In both cases, the accused is normally incarcerated in the forensic unit of a mental hospital.

Government Orders

Current law obligates a court or review board to discharge an accused found not criminally responsible unless he or she poses a significant risk to public safety. In rendering the decision, they must give consideration to a number of factors: the need to protect the public from dangerous persons; the mental condition of the accused; reintegration of the accused into society; and other needs of the accused.

The proposed new law makes the safety of the public the paramount consideration. In other words, it means sidebarring the mental condition of the accused or any efforts made to eventually reintegrate the accused into society, which will happen eventually.

What has attracted the most public controversy are cases where the accused has committed violent acts, is deemed not criminally responsible, is detained in an institution and is then released. Some are complaining that these are unjust punishments and that they merit harsher responses and retribution. Concerns have been raised about the potential of continued endangerment of the community.

The fact that an accused may be found not criminally responsible absolutely does not diminish recognition of the heinous character of any violent act. It does not in any way diminish the impact of that act on the victims, their families or their communities.

Yet in law, an accused must be accorded his or her full rights under the law and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. To not do so means that the matter may be referred to the courts. This is particularly the case for NCR accused who are neither convicted nor acquitted of an offence. It is critical to the rule of law.

The challenge in addressing crimes arising from short-term or long-term mental disorders is determining the appropriate judicial and treatment response that addresses the mental state of the accused, the harm caused, the potential for reoffending, the deterrent effect, and the challenge of responding to crimes arising from short- or long-term mental disorders.

Bill C-54 proposes three key reforms for these accused.

The first is to put public safety first by making explicit that this is the paramount consideration for the court and the review boards. Again, that sets aside equal consideration of the mental state of the accused and the rehabilitation to enable them to return safely to community.

The second is to create a high-risk designation. It would empower the courts and the review boards to impose a high-risk designation for any accused found NCR of a serious personal injury offence and where there is a substantial likelihood of further violence that could endanger the public or where the acts were of such a brutal nature as to indicate significant threat of harm to the public. It is that second factor that a number of organizations, including the Canadian Bar Association, would like to have removed from the bill.

The third is to have “significant threat to the safety of the public” be defined in the code.

Such accused are to be denied any conditional or absolute discharges. The designations are only to be revoked by a court order, on the recommendation of a review board. Again, the Canadian Bar Association is objecting to that, saying that the more appropriate body to be deciding the mental state of the accused, vis-à-vis safety

to the community, is a review board in consultation with psychiatrists, not a court.

Also there would be stricter controls on community visits. Again, a number of associations, including the Psychiatric Association of Canada, have said that this is exactly the kind of measure, if appropriately accompanied, that could help to gradually rehabilitate people and bring them back into the community.

It would also give the power to the review board to extend the review period from one to three years. In other words, there is the potential to not allow the release of the person, even if he or she is then found to be mentally competent to go back to his or her community.

Access to treatment under the law is not to be affected.

The provision in the law that most support is being found for is the provision for enhanced involvement of the victim in the proceedings. There would be notice, upon request, when the accused is discharged. It would provide for orders of non-communication between the accused and the victim, and any decisions related to the accused would give due consideration to the safety of any victims.

● (1020)

The current law already requires courts and review boards to consider the need to protect the public from dangerous persons, the mental condition of any accused, reintegration into society and other needs of the accused. These reforms may, in some small way, appease some members of the public. However, would they have any appreciable effect on reducing the number of violent crimes perpetrated by persons with long-term or temporary mental conditions? Statistics suggest otherwise.

Recidivism rates for NCR accused range from 2.5% to 7.5%. That is to be compared with a 41% to 45% rate of recidivism for other offenders. Therefore, the NCR accused are the most highly unlikely to reoffend. How then can we rationalize detaining them for more extended periods? Can any extension ever satisfy those distressed by the crime? Eventually they will be released, so is increased incarceration in a forensic unit, with potentially limited psychiatric care, the answer? As has been pointed out by other members, are the courts the appropriate authority to be making a decision on the rehabilitation of the mentally disordered person? Should that not remain with the review boards and psychiatric care?

Is a better, or at least additional, solution to ensure more resources for Canadian mental health detention facilities, as the experts have called for? It is important to examine the case law and to hear from legal and medical experts, and as others have suggested, to examine whether each provincial or territorial jurisdiction has the appropriate facilities to detain these accused for extended time periods and to provide the necessary psychiatric support.

Government Orders

It will be helpful for the government to release its opinion on the potential charter challenges the bill may pose so that those matters may be addressed before any reforms are enacted. It will be important to hear testimony on the cost implications of the bill compared to other alternatives, as incarceration is normally the highest-cost alternative. An obvious question is whether the provinces and territories have been consulted, as these costs will most certainly be downloaded to them for extended periods of detention, the provision of psychiatric services and the duty to notify and track victims and the accused.

What have other medical and legal experts said so far about the proposed law? All have expressed concern that they have not been consulted in the development and drafting of this law. The Canadian Psychiatric Association recommends against the high-risk designation, as no evidence exists that these policies pose undue public risk. They also point out that the recidivism rate is very low for the NCR accused. They state that it would impose a substantial drain on already scarce forensic resources while delivering little increased public safety. They say that it merely reinforces punishment and retribution while removing valuable therapeutic tools. They also say that the unintended consequences of the high-risk designation contradicts campaigns, including by this House, to open dialogue on mental health, removing the stigma and enabling early treatment. They recommend the removal of brutality of the offence as a criterion, as does the Canadian Bar Association. They say that they should permit escorted passes and should remove the power to extend the review period.

The Schizophrenia Society endorses exactly what the Psychiatric Association has said. The John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society raise serious concerns about these proposals, except for the notice provisions.

The Canadian Bar Association National Criminal Justice Section opposes the high-risk designation as unconstitutional, so we can anticipate court challenges. If enacted, they recommend that the "brutal nature" of the act category of consideration be removed and that there be added a right of the accused to apply to the court to remove the high-risk designation. They also support the notice requirements.

As legislators, it is of utmost importance that in making any new laws, particularly criminal laws, we take the time to consult and consider the opinions and advice of informed and experienced experts. It is for that reason I will be supporting this bill at second reading. It is so wise counsel can finally be publicly revealed and considered.

• (1025)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all this bill would do is give judges a little more discretion. Whenever we want to reduce a judge's discretion to provide public protection and victim recognition, the New Democrats get up in arms and say that we cannot reduce judges' discretion and that we have to trust judges.

Why does this member not trust judges when they get discretion to protect the public? Is it not the fact that all she is really opposed to is the government's agenda of public protection?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I am left confused, because the hon. member seems to be speaking out of both sides of his mouth at once. The very concern raised by the criminal bar and by the Canadian Psychiatric Association is that we are fettering the discretion of the judges. Right now there are a series of criteria to be considered both by the review board and the courts. The intent of this law is to fetter that discretion more thoroughly.

As it stands right now, the law balances the need to protect the rights of the accused with the obligation to protect the public and to consider the interests of the victims. As I said before, everybody appears to be supporting the expanded duty to notify and consult.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too want to pick up on that last point. There is a great deal of support for the idea of non-communication with victims and of giving consideration to victims. It is an aspect of the legislation that would have support from all sides of the House and that I suspect would gain considerable support outside of the House, even from the different stakeholders she made reference to.

When government brings in legislation, there is often what is called a poison pill or something of this nature. Something is in the legislation that makes it difficult to support, even though there are aspects of the legislation that are encouraging or potentially positive.

Can the member provide further comment on what is currently in place that allows for special consideration being given to victims?

• (1030)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, there was a lot in that question.

On some occasions, the government actually allows for debate on bills. Fortunately, this is a government bill and we are having an extensive debate. However, it is regrettable that there was not sufficient advance consultation with those who could have advised on the drafting of the bill, including the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the Canadian Bar Association and even victims' organizations.

Indeed, as I have stated, as have many people who have commented on the bill, the law already provides a fair number of factors for the courts to consider. What we can hope is that the government might consider witness testimony and our suggestions for reform and that it would potentially accept the expanded notification requirements but take away the designation.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am interested in the notice requirements. Are these mandatory requirements, or can the victims choose not to be notified of any more events related to the incident they were involved with? In many cases, that may be what the victims would want. In cases where the acts of violence are completely random, the victims may not want to have this on their plates for any longer than the time it happened. What is the provision within the law in terms of notice?

Government Orders

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the intent is to provide that as optional. The victims of a crime would have the option of advising the government that they would like to be notified, and if so, they would be given notification. I am not sure how “victim” is being defined, but I am presuming that it also means the families of victims or anybody associated with the victims who may feel that they are at risk. I do not think anybody would object to that change being made.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in general we support this change to the Criminal Code. We support it at least going to second reading. It deals with the very real and perceived threats to the public that come from the not criminally responsible declaration by judges.

I say “perceived threats”, because part of what is driving this attempt to amend the law is to play upon the fears of Canadians. We think that should be left out of the debate. The other side is very good at playing upon Canadians' fear of crime, and fears generally. However, we need to look at this legislation in a clear and thoughtful way.

We need to look at this legislation and determine whether it is achieving a good public policy goal. Is it achieving it in a way that will not be a burden on the public or the provinces or the victims of crime? That is one of the very serious concerns we have about this legislation; it may in fact be a burden on portions of the criminal justice system, including the provinces.

As a review of what the system is now, there is a very small percentage of accused, and I am not saying criminals, who are actually found not criminally responsible in the course of their trial. We are told it is something like one in 100,000 individuals who are accused—not members of the public, but accused—and found not criminally responsible. That is an extremely tiny percentage. The Conservatives are spending a lot of time and effort in dealing with some perceived notions, some of which were created by recent events in the news and some of which are just general fears by Canadians. That very small percentage needs to be brought to the attention of both sides of the House.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time.

There are two basic definitions for individuals who are accused. Sometimes they are found unfit to stand trial, in which case we wait until they are fit to stand trial. Once they are at trial, if that individual was not criminally responsible by reason of a mental disorder at the time of committing the crime, that person can be, and sometimes is, declared not criminally responsible at the time of committing a crime. Therefore, rather than a prosecution, they are shifted into the mental health system.

The mental health system includes a review board. It includes judges. It includes mental health professionals. The mental health system, the review board and the judges determine when a person is not criminally responsible, at what point that individual is no longer a threat to society. If they are no longer a threat to society, at that point they can be given either a conditional or an actual discharge. They can also be sent to hospital, to be held and restrained in hospital, like a jail. We are aware of lots of them. It is those individuals the bill is attempting to deal with.

As I said, only one in 100,000 accused are actually not criminally responsible, and a smaller percentage are those individuals who end up in a hospital setting or in a mental health process.

The changes that are being proposed are by and large welcome, but they need discussion and analysis. We need the mental health and the criminal justice professionals in this country to advise us on whether these provisions would create unintended consequences or injustices in the system.

For example, one of the changes is that the review board must now move its analysis of not criminally responsible individuals and take public safety as their paramount consideration.

● (1035)

Is that a good thing, or is it now skewing, changing, or putting fetters, as the member for Edmonton—Strathcona said earlier, on the justice system? Is it in fact restricting the ability of an individual judge or the review board to consider matters fairly and reasonably?

We need more counsel. We need more advice from both the criminal justice system and the medical profession as to whether or not that is going to change the outcomes in a meaningful way that is more protective of the public. I do not know the answer to that question; it certainly sounds like it on the face of it, but maybe that change will in fact cause other problems.

The bigger change to this bill is the creation of a definition of “high risk”, which will now add to the panoply of definitions by which a significant threat to the safety of the public could be attached to an individual. Again, what is the purpose of this change? What is the end result of that change? It may be a good thing, but we need more advice, more counsel, and we need not to do it from a surfeit of fear.

We need to not take this new definition out of the context of what this law is attempting to provide in the first place. It is attempting to provide a system that not only protects the public generally but also provides the mechanisms and means to rehabilitate.

For criminals in the criminal justice system who are not found to be not criminally responsible—in other words, those who are criminally responsible—the purpose of the justice system is to make them into better citizens, but we find that the recidivism rate amongst those who are in that system is between 41% and 44%, so we are not doing a very good job of protecting the public with the regular criminal justice system.

In the not criminally responsible justice system, the recidivism rate is around 2.5% to 3%, so we are doing a good job there. We are finding that if individuals with a mental disorder are properly treated, those individuals can return to be productive members of Canadian society, which is what we ultimately want.

We need to examine both halves of the justice system, and whether or not we are actually doing a good job in it.

Government Orders

The third major part of this legislation is to indicate that victims are now to be a major part of the regime. The victims themselves have already suffered at the hands of the perpetrator, at the hands of the person not criminally responsible. With good intent, we are asking that the victims be notified when those individuals are discharged. The individuals who are being discharged could have a non-communication order attached to them if they are not allowed to deal with the victims. In addition, the safety of the victims needs to be taken into account when a decision is made about the release of an individual back into the public.

We think that portion of the bill needs a lot of attention. We agree that victims are by far the paramount consideration in any justice system legislation, but we do not spend enough time now looking after victims. I doubt that there is enough time, effort and money in the mental health resources of the provinces to give the victims of serious crime the help they need in getting over it. We should be looking at that as well.

We also understand that this is a very difficult issue for victims. What if victims do not want to have any reminders whatsoever of this individual? Do we put them in an awkward position of having to say “No, I do not want to be reminded”? They would actually have to be asked if they wanted to be reminded, and then they have to refuse to be reminded.

It is a very difficult position for the victims to be in. The victims would be in a position where they were not necessarily receiving the appropriate attention and help from the provincial medical system, but those victims would be asked for their opinion on this, and it might in fact be difficult for them.

● (1040)

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was listening intently to both the previous speaker from the NDP and the question from the member from the Northwest Territories, which was to the effect that somehow we are bothering or burdening victims by telling them the situation with regard to the person who aggrieved them.

After 30 years of policing and seven years as a member of Parliament listening to victims and working with victims and knowing how they feel, I do not know of one instance, not one in 37 years, in which a victim has said he or she really did not want to know what was going on. Maybe it has occurred, but I have never experienced it, nor do I know a fellow police officer who has. If I were to add up all of our experience, it would be hundreds of years, and a victim has never said that.

We hear the opposition say that victims should be paramount. All we are asking is for a judge in the criminal justice system to look at the situation once more before someone is released into society. It is sort of a double check, so to speak. For the trivial 2% of people who are re-victimized or where there is recidivism, those are huge numbers in their minds when they have a loved one who has been killed or seriously hurt.

I think the opposition is just looking for an excuse to vote down another criminal justice bill.

● (1045)

Mr. Mike Sullivan: Mr. Speaker, in fact we said we support this bill at second reading, so we are not looking for an excuse. All we want to do is make sure that we do not unintentionally create a problem by amending a bill in a way that actually re-victimizes individuals. That is all.

Perhaps there are victims in the world who would not want to be told, “By the way, the person who did something brutal to you or caused you to become a victim of a crime, a person who was found not criminally responsible, is being released. Do you want to know about it?” If it is six or 10 years later and the victim has forgotten all about it and there is a chance it will be harmful, we simply want that possibility to be taken into consideration. That is all.

I am not suggesting that victims are not paramount; they are, and the NDP believes they are. We simply want to make sure we craft this bill in a way that does not cause injury to any victims.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on the issue of mental illness. If the federal government were to work with the provinces and, between the two, invest in mental illness issues and provide the supports necessary, fewer crimes would be committed in our communities from coast to coast to coast in Canada.

In terms of priorities, would the member agree that the government needs to put a higher priority on that issue than on the many pieces of legislation, such as this, that it is bringing through, and that if more could be done on prevention in dealing with mental illness, it would make our streets safer across Canada?

Mr. Mike Sullivan: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. The NDP has said on a number of occasions, and will continue to say, that crime prevention should be the number one focus of any government. In fact, creating fewer victims in the first place is what we should be aiming for.

I have a private member's bill coming up that will deal with 85% of the street crime in my riding, which is the theft of cellphones, and the government has said it is opposed to it. I am trying to prevent the crime before it happens, and the government has indicated that it is not willing to prevent the crime before it happens.

Maybe it wants to fill up the jails it built; I do not know, but our job should be preventing crimes in the first place. If a robust and effective mental health care system in each of the provinces prevents even one crime, then we have all done justice to the system.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise in the House to speak on behalf of my constituents in Pontiac. Public safety is a rather major issue.

One of the objectives of Bill C-54 is to protect victims. The bill seeks to increase the safety of victims by providing them with more opportunities to participate in the Criminal Code mental disorder regime, by ensuring that they are notified on request when the accused is discharged, allowing non-communication orders between the accused and the victim and ensuring that the safety of victims is considered when decisions are being made about an accused person.

Government Orders

In addition, the proposed legislation would help ensure consistency in the interpretation and application of the law across the country. However, it is important to note that these reforms would not change the current eligibility criteria in the Criminal Code with respect to exemption from criminal responsibility on account of mental disorder.

The proposed reforms would also define the concept of significant threat to the safety of the public, which is a current test for determining whether a review board can maintain its jurisdiction and continue to supervise a mentally disordered accused.

The bill would clarify the fact that restrictions could be imposed on an accused who presents a public safety risk of a criminal nature, though not necessarily of a violent nature.

Protecting the public and victims of crime and violence is obviously a good thing. Everyone probably already knows this, but crime has its most direct impact on victims in every respect: physically, emotionally, spiritually and financially.

From a financial perspective alone, many researchers have attempted to estimate the intangible costs borne by victims of crime, but none of the studies are official. Still, most agree that the intangible costs are often the most onerous ones for victims.

Of the total estimated costs, \$14.3 billion was incurred as a direct result of crime for such items as medical attention, hospitalization, lost wages, missed school days and stolen or damaged property.

While crime has its most significant impact on victims, others around them suffer as well. In its 2008 report entitled "Costs of Crime in Canada", the Department of Justice estimated that intangible costs were about \$68.2 billion, which increased the total cost of crime to \$99.6 billion. That is astounding.

However, even though this bill is important and may help victims, we have to keep things in perspective. We have to act according to facts, not fear. For example, in Ontario, Canada's most populous province, only 0.001% of individuals accused of a Criminal Code offence were deemed not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder. The recidivism rate for these individuals is between 2.5% and 7.5%, while the recidivism rate for other federal offenders is between 41% and 44%.

Contrary to what the government would have Canadians believe, there is not necessarily a correlation between the seriousness of a crime and the likelihood that the offender will reoffend or his ability to improve his mental health and live a normal, happy life.

Some recent high-profile cases suggest that the current approach may not be effective. Like my NDP colleagues, I would like to know how we can help the victims in the process. To figure out the best approaches, we need to talk to mental health experts, victims and the provinces.

It is also important to avoid politicizing this issue. We have to study the merits of the policy, and that study must be properly financed by the federal government.

[English]

In such a study it seems to me that it would be important to ask some of the following questions, as did my hon. Liberal colleague from Mount Royal.

What studies, case law and theoretical sources did the government rely in drafting this bill? What statistics did the government collect on persons deemed not criminally responsible on account of mental disorders? For each of the past 10 years by province, territory and type of offence, how many people were deemed not criminally responsible? Which persons deemed not criminally responsible and discharged were found guilty of a subsequent offence? What was the nature of the subsequent offence? What persons deemed not criminally responsible and discharged were deemed not criminally responsible for a subsequent offence? What was the nature of that subsequent offence?

With good answers and data on these questions, we as legislatures would be far more informed to ensure that the legislation passed was well crafted and would do the job we needed it to do.

We in the official opposition, despite supporting the bill at second reading, still have a few unanswered questions, which we hope the government will attempt to answer in the months ahead.

We agree that public safety must come first, but we must also ensure proper compliance with the rule of law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are open to change, but we must also ensure that the way in which we handle cases involving mentally disordered accused persons is effective in terms of the treatment of mental disorders. To that end, we must ensure that the provinces have adequate financial resources since they are the ones ultimately managing the situation.

With regard to the charter, we must always be careful that in our zeal to protect our fellow citizens we do not harm hard-won civil rights. It would be helpful to know whether Bill C-54 was reviewed by the Department of Justice to ensure its compliance with the charter and what measures the government took to prevent charter challenges concerning persons deemed not criminally responsible. If there was indeed a review, what were the review's findings?

I also wonder, on the role of victims, if consideration has been given to the fact that some people are unable to confront criminals who have victimized them. I mentioned the enormous cost burden to victims earlier because I also wonder why there are no provisions being made in the bill for more resources for the victims who have to live with the consequences of these criminal acts.

Also, what about financial support to the provinces? Is this new policy not being developed on the backs of the provinces? A spokesperson for the Department of Justice stated that the provinces would not receive any additional funding to address these new measures, yet we know there will be costs involved.

Statements by Members

Despite these reservations, I agree that in order to protect our fellow citizens, there is a need for a mechanism by which certain individuals who are found not criminally responsible on account of a mental disorder may be declared high risk. I also agree that there should be an increase in the involvement of victims in this process. These are the reasons why I support the bill at second reading.

Truly, the voice of the voiceless should never be silenced, which is why I am happy again to support the bill at second reading.

●(1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the matter we are discussing today in connection with Bill C-54 is very sensitive, in light of all the issues raised in the House.

We are clearly talking about crimes committed. We are also talking about the criminal responsibility of people ultimately deemed to be not criminally responsible.

We have already said that we will vote in favour of this bill at second reading, because we believe that it deserves to be reviewed in committee. However, I heard a few questions from government members, and I am concerned about how this issue is being dealt with.

Of course, it is a sensitive issue and it has to be handled with great tact. However, I really feel that the government is behaving as if it wants to make the issue much more political than it ought to be, especially if we truly want to examine it with cool heads. The government has addressed the issue twice at news conferences, announcing the bill to the media and the public.

I would like to hear what the hon. member has to say about the need for careful, reasoned and rational consideration of this issue.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. It is a very important question, because it touches on the substance of the issue.

Any decision or piece of legislation needs to be based on facts and science. We are wondering whether a consultation with stakeholders has been held.

For instance, have Canadian associations of psychiatrists and psychologists been consulted? These are crime experts. Have professors, scientists, criminologists and lawyers been consulted? The list is—

The Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member because it is 11 a. m. and we must proceed with statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

BATTLE OF YORK

Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 200 years ago tomorrow, an American squadron of over a dozen vessels lay off the mouth of the Humber River. As the sun rose over Lake Ontario, it sent 1,700 American soldiers ashore in the first

amphibious landing in U.S. military history. They were opposed at first by aboriginal warriors, Mississaugas, Ojibwa, and Chippewa. Later they were charged with bayonets fixed by the Grenadier company of the 8th Regiment of Foot.

York and Toronto were lost that day to Britain and to Canada.

●(1100)

[*Translation*]

Almost 100 British Canadians and aboriginal warriors, as well as 50 Americans, died. A lot of properties, including the first designated provincial parliament buildings, were burnt.

[*English*]

The Town of York counted barely 700 souls in those days, but at the Battle of York, Toronto, like Moscow before it and Washington afterwards, became one of many cities around the world scorched by the fire of the Napoleonic Wars.

In defeat, Canadians found common cause. The fight for Canada forged a new nation. The last two centuries have given us the greatest bilateral economic partnership in history. I invite all members and all Canadians to join first nations and the regiments of Toronto in celebrating the Battle of York tomorrow.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PEOPLE OF SAINT-AMABLE

Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Saint-Amable, a thriving municipality in my riding.

I would like to congratulate the people of Saint-Amable for their perseverance. In 2006, when a parasite decimated potato crops—which have long been the economic mainstay of the municipality—the people did not give up. They rolled up their sleeves and got innovative. Now they grow asparagus and hemp, and there is even a vineyard.

As well, the municipality decided to use the infestation as an opportunity to create a research centre at one of the affected sites, in partnership with the Marguerite d'Youville local development centre and the Université de Sherbrooke.

Another example of this community's perseverance is Ms. Lamarche's company, Béké-Bobo, which has been making teddy bears and other products for infants and children since 1999. These organic products are made in Quebec. I would like to say hello to her daughter, Camillie, who is in the hospital. Get well soon.

To conclude, I would like to take a moment to honour my mother, Khédija Bouchnak, who passed away nearly two months ago. We miss her dearly. She was dignified and upright, an exceptional woman. Everything I am today, I am because of her.

May her soul rest in peace through the infinite mercy of God.

[*Member spoke in Arabic, as follows:*]

Allah yar7mek ommi la3ziza.

Statements by Members

[English]

CITIZEN CULTURE

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thanks to a federal investment of \$81,500, the London Arts Council and London Heritage Council are partnering to deliver a program designed to enable London's broader community to engage and explore in all of what London's arts and heritage organizations have to offer.

Citizen Culture encourages newcomers, new Canadians, Londoners, tourists, and students to engage in cultural experiences at 22 participating arts and heritage organizations in London. As the program develops, more arts and heritage organizations will be added.

Through Citizen Culture, the arts and heritage sector in London will encourage new community relationships, and increase visitor attendance, volunteer opportunities, and employment in the sector.

Our government is proud to support London's arts and culture. So far this year, I have been pleased to announce over \$245,000 in federal funding for arts and culture projects in London, Ontario. I invite all Canadians to join us in Canada's London and participate in our Citizen Culture program.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this being National Volunteer Week, I rise today in the House to salute the tremendous contribution that volunteers make in Canada. I cannot imagine the loss to society if we were deprived of the very generous gift of time. Volunteers devote a tremendous amount of time, in small increments of hard work worth its weight in gold, bringing comfort and hope to others.

I would like to acknowledge Centre d'action bénévole Bordeaux-Cartierville. This centre has been operating for 20 years and has just won the 2013 Hommage Bénévolat-Québec award, which is the highest distinction for volunteerism bestowed by the Government of Quebec.

Year after year, the 500-plus members of this team welcome people of all ages, especially newcomers from all over the world. They help these people's children in school, provide respite to mothers, offer courses in reading and knitting, and in short help each and every one of them to find their place in Canada.

Congratulations to the executive director, Marilena Huluban, and the past, present and future members of her team.

* * *

[English]

GEORGE BEVERLY SHEA

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's beloved gospel singer passed away last week at the age of 104. George Beverly Shea was born in Winchester, Ontario, 30 minutes south of Ottawa.

George Beverly Shea holds the world record for singing to the most people ever, over 22 million. Mr. Shea sang to more people than Elvis, the Beatles, Frank Sinatra, and the Rolling Stones combined.

George Beverly Shea was a great storyteller. A favourite story recounted how his mother left the words of a poem on the piano, where she knew her son would see it. The words of the poem, which have now become his signature song, *I'd rather have Jesus*, had a life-changing impact on that young man and he set the words to music and he sang them before millions of people.

This legacy song spoke of George Beverly Shea's desire to have Jesus rather than riches, power, men's applause, or worldwide fame. Those words have shaped my life as well.

George Beverly Shea had a deep passion that all would come to know his personal saviour, Jesus Christ, in whose presence he is now, singing his praises for all of eternity.

* * *

● (1105)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has finally admitted it misled Canadians when it said the cost of dealing with the over 270,000 tonnes of arsenic at Giant Mine was only \$449 million. The new figure is nearly \$1 billion and could go higher. Canada only received a little over \$400 million in 2002 dollars in royalties over the 60-year life of the mine, meaning Canadians are on the hook for around \$600 million.

While the Conservatives were hiding the massive cost to Canadians to clean up the environmental disaster at Giant, they were slashing environmental protections, particularly for the oil sands and the oil industry in general.

Considering the massive cost to Canadians for cleaning up one single mine, I have to wonder just how many billions of dollars our children and grandchildren will be paying because of the Conservatives' and the Liberals' failure to ensure the environment is protected in their rush to exploit the oil sands.

The cost of cleaning up the oil sands tailings ponds alone will be gigantic.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are getting troubling reports that the United States is considering imposing a fee on anybody who crosses its border by land. This is an appalling proposal. It would be a tax on trade and a tax on tourism between our two countries. We have a free trade deal with the United States to increase trade and tourism because we know this is good for the economies of both nations.

Statements by Members

For some communities this fee would be devastating. Consider Campobello Island: anybody living on this Canadian island cannot drive anywhere in the rest of Canada without first driving one hour through the state of Maine.

Earlier this week I was in Washington, D.C. with the foreign affairs committee. I used the opportunity to raise this issue and to let our American friends know what a bad idea this is. Our Canadian ambassador assured me that we will oppose this border crossing tax.

Because enacting this new fee would be so detrimental to Canadians, I have no doubt that all of my colleagues in the House will provide a unified voice in opposing this proposed tax.

* * *

CHERNOBYL

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April 26 marks the 27th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress will be holding a Chernobyl memorial service this evening at 6 p.m. at St. John the Theologian Ukrainian Catholic Church on Lakeshore Road in St. Catharines. I encourage those who can attend to be there to help remember the events of that tragic day.

The costs of the Chernobyl disaster went far beyond the immediate impact it had on the people who were there on that day in 1986. From first responders, like the firefighters who were exposed to life-threatening levels of radiation, to mere bystanders who lived in nearby towns, several thousand people lost their lives because of the accident.

Latent radiation has also caused abnormally high levels of cancer and birth defects in humans and animals for decades.

Our Canadian government has allocated resources and assistance to help finally contain the Chernobyl site by 2015. I am proud that we are taking much needed action. Ukrainian families have lived with the effects of Chernobyl for far too long.

The lessons of Chernobyl must not be forgotten, and our hearts go out to the families who are still affected by this disaster nearly three decades later.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SHELL ECO-MARATHON AND NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the mechanical engineering team at Laval University on winning the Shell Eco-marathon Americas, held in Houston from April 4 to 7. The team beat its own fuel efficiency record with 1,525 kilometres per litre.

I also want to talk about National Volunteer Week. Every year, 13.3 million Canadian volunteers give 2.1 billion hours. This year's theme is "Everywhere for everyone". In Quebec, there are 2.4 million volunteers who give 310 million hours. Fifty-four percent of people between the ages of 15 to 24 volunteer their time. On the evening of Saturday, April 6, at Laval University, in the middle of their exam period, I dropped the puck at a hockey-a-thon organized by medical students. Twelve teams played all night long, and one

brought home the ultimate prize. The following morning, these young people gave the money raised to the Fondation de l'autisme de Québec. We can only imagine what our community would be like if not for this generosity.

* * *

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly moved by this year's theme for National Victims of Crime Awareness Week: "We All Have a Role".

We are taking responsible, concrete action to support victims of crime.

That is why we support the private member's bill introduced by the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake, Bill C-478, Respecting Families of Murdered and Brutalized Persons Act.

As part of the awareness week, a symposium dedicated to victims of crime against the person will begin today in Quebec.

A number of guest speakers will join over a hundred victims who can draw on their personal experiences to help come up with solutions during the various workshops planned over the course of the weekend.

Canadians know they can count on our Conservative government to ensure their safety and peace of mind.

* * *

● (1110)

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' environmental rollbacks are not only putting our fisheries and waterways at risk, they are also impacting Canada's trade relations, its reputation, and its export markets.

Is there not a law against that? In fact, there is. NAFTA and newer trade deals forbid Canada to weaken its environmental laws for an economic advantage.

In exchange for expanded markets for Canada's goods and services, including oil sands crude, NAFTA commits us to improving levels of environmental protection. NAFTA's environmental side agreement commits Canada to "strengthen the development and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations" and strive to improve them through public engagement. However, NAFTA's investment chapter goes even further, declaring "...it is inappropriate to encourage investment by relaxing domestic health, safety or environmental measures".

*Statements by Members***BOSTON MARATHON BOMBINGS**

Make no mistake. This streamlining is about ending public scrutiny and redress of environmental harms from resource projects. It is about attracting and protecting foreign investments, a clear contravention of trade obligations to prevent backsliding. It offends commitments to public participation, due process, and effective environmental enforcement.

As the U.S. raises concerns about failed Canadian action to reduce oil sands carbon emissions, our export markets are put at risk.

If the government would commit—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca.

* * *

RETIRING RADIO TALK SHOW HOST

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour one of Alberta's own. Yesterday, Dave Rutherford announced that he was signing off radio for the very last time. For over 20 years, Dave Rutherford has been the voice of Albertan people, speaking to the people directly on the issues that matter to them the most.

I know we are unlikely to see another radio show like his any time soon. Whether he was hosting the Prime Minister of Canada or taking questions from listeners, Rutherford always had an uncanny tendency to know exactly what Albertans were thinking.

Hundreds of thousands of regular listeners will miss the pointed questions he asked and the information that he provided. The uniqueness of his talk show, which focused on issues instead of the long political rants that sometimes take place, can solely be credited to the thoughtfulness of this great man.

Even though he is gone from radio, we hope to continue to hear from him in one way or another for many years. We will miss him.

* * *

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, for the first time, a majority of Canadians believe that their children will be worse off than them.

Last June, the House passed my motion directing the finance committee to study the issue of income inequality and to recommend policies to improve equality of opportunity. This month, that study began, and a consensus is emerging about what governments can do.

So far, experts are telling us to strengthen the working income tax benefit and break down the welfare wall by reducing government clawbacks for low-income Canadians who are working; to make tax credits refundable so that low-income Canadians are not perversely excluded from programs like the family caregiver tax credit; and to invest in affordable early learning and child care so that children can get a good start, and the parents who want to work can afford proper early learning opportunities for their children.

Canadians work hard so that they and their children can get ahead. As parliamentarians, let us do more to strengthen the equality of opportunity in Canada. After all, it is the cornerstone on which all just societies are built.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday a small army of Liberal pseudo-intellectuals had a collective spasm after I said that terrorists are the cause of terrorism. The Liberal leader had touched off the debate when he said that the Boston bombings happened because someone “feels completely excluded”.

However, were the Tsarnaev brothers excluded? The United States included them by sheltering their family with formal asylum from war-torn Dagestan. The younger terrorist was included in a quality education at a state-of-the-art school, which boasts an amazing 11:1 student-to-teacher ratio, after which, the city gave him a \$2,500 scholarship. America also included the older terrorist, Tamerlan, with a taxpayer-funded welfare benefit that continued even after the main U.S. counterterrorism agency had added him to its watch list.

Excluding these facts is not the mark of a nuanced intellectual, but of an ideologue who is in over his head. Let us follow the facts, not Liberal ideology, and let us target the root cause of terrorism. They are called terrorists.

* * *

● (1115)

[*Translation*]

THE CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL PARTIES OF CANADA

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, we witnessed a sad spectacle in the House. Once again, the Liberals and the Conservatives joined forces to recycle an old, ineffective Liberal bill that attacks people's basic rights. Bill S-7 will not keep Canadians safer. It uses fear as an excuse to impose excessive measures, such as detention without charge and secret interrogations.

These measures conflict with Canadian values and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is strange. Many members of the old parties like to go on about the merits of the charter, but when the time comes to stand up for it, they just sit around doing nothing, and that is when they have the nerve to show up in the House to vote.

Oral Questions

Blue or red, they are all one and the same. They vote the same way on Bill S-7 and the trade agreement with China, and they will soon vote the same way on climate change. Canadians deserve better. The only progressive alternative for 2015 is the NDP.

* * *

[English]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past few years the leader of the NDP and his troglodytes have had one consistent message: the NDP will raise taxes.

In fact, the NDP's 2011 election platform planned to raise taxes by \$20 billion alone from their sneaky carbon scheme.

The NDP carbon tax grab would raise the price of everything, including gas, food and electricity, something northern Ontarians and Canadians alike reject.

It gets worse. On top of this job-killing carbon tax, the leader of the NDP wants to impose an additional \$56 billion in reckless spending.

I have heard loud and clear from my constituents in the great Kenora riding. They have asked me and this government to continue to fight against this \$20 billion job-killing carbon tax and oppose the \$56 billion reckless, unaccounted for, and numberless spending plan.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to Department of Public Safety emails, the Conservatives have implemented a policy requiring all meetings between MPs and members of the RCMP to be approved by the Minister of Public Safety.

These meetings “have to first be approved by the minister's office.”

Why is the Minister of Public Safety imposing this policy on the RCMP?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. The hon. member is mistaken.

The RCMP decides how it interacts with parliamentarians and the general public. It is up to the RCMP commissioner to decide how these communications will occur.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' interventionism and excessive control can be added to a long list of actions that serve only to undermine the public's trust in our political institutions.

After muzzling scientists and public servants and directly interfering with financial institutions, now the Conservatives are going after the police because they are concerned that there will be a negative impact on the government.

Will the Conservatives put an end to the political control over the RCMP's activities?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the hon. member is mistaken. There is no political interference in RCMP business.

Clearly, the RCMP is a police agency that is managed at arm's length from the government. The Minister of Public Safety is ultimately accountable to Parliament. These decisions are made by the RCMP commissioner.

[English]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. These leaked documents state that if RCMP officials are meeting or even having lunch with parliamentarians that these meetings “have to first be approved by the minister's office”.

This is not an internal matter for the RCMP; this is a question of political interference into the work of police. This is about the office of the Minister of Public Safety directing members of the RCMP.

Therefore, will the minister now ask the RCMP officials to reissue that memo but remove any mention of protecting the government?

● (1120)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me get this straight. The member does not want the government interfering with the RCMP, but now she wants the government directing the Commissioner of the RCMP to do something. That is again why no one really takes the NDP seriously on matters of public safety or policing.

The New Democratic Party, let us be clear, has been consistently against every single legislative reform proposed by this government to strengthen public security, to keep criminals behind bars and to empower our police forces to do their job to keep Canadians safe.

* * *

ETHICS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how about if the government takes this one seriously?

Disturbing information has come to light about developers giving substantial payments to the Manning Centre to support their pro-development candidates. Mayor Nenshi has blown the whistle. He said:

So it's very hard for [Manning Centre director] Chuck Strahl to say, “We had no idea the donors thought that's what they were doing...”

As Mr. Strahl is also chair of the Security Intelligence Review Committee and therefore banned from political activity, can the government confirm it is investigating this matter?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the member for Edmonton—Strathcona has concerns about municipal affairs in Calgary, she should raise those concerns with the appropriate Calgary authorities.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what we are concerned about is the activities of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. If the Conservatives are actually committed to this being non-partisan, they must take this seriously and not crack jokes. Chuck Strahl is obligated to remove himself from political activity, regardless of what it is.

Regarding the Manning Centre, Mayor Nenshi also said, “I’m sure that the Canada Revenue Agency is going to have a lot to say about this”. With these revelations, will the Conservatives agree to look into the political activities of the Manning Centre?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just a moment ago the New Democrats were asking the government to interfere in management decisions of the RCMP, and now the New Democrats are asking the government to interfere directly and instruct the Canada Revenue Agency to do particular investigations.

The New Democrats are trying to ask the government to launch witch hunts against particular organizations. That would be unlawful. It would be inappropriate. It is bizarre that the New Democrats would suggest it.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian students are out there looking for summer work, and they cannot find it. The youth employment rate today is six points worse than it was five years ago. In fact, last year’s summer job numbers were the worst since Stats Canada started tracking the data in the 1970s. With so many more young Canadians desperately looking for work this summer, why have the Conservatives cut by half the Canada summer jobs program?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, in the very first economic action plan we increased the amount of funds available to the Canada summer jobs program, and two years ago we made that increase permanent.

We want to help young Canadians get the experience they need for future jobs but also earn money to help them pay for post-secondary education.

This summer, some 36,000 students will benefit from the Canada summer jobs program, but in our budget 2013 we have also added funding for some several thousand internships to help students get the experience they need.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister just boasted about 36,000 summer jobs for students.

The fact is that back in 2006 that program created 113,000 summer jobs. Government support has gone down, according to the minister’s own figures. Government support for summer jobs has gone down under the government. Youth employment numbers are, again, six points worse than they were five years ago.

Why are the Conservatives cutting in half the summer jobs program when the situation is so much worse? Why are the Conservatives throwing a generation of young Canadians under the bus?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member’s numbers are totally and completely wrong.

The fact is that some 36,000 jobs will be created through the Canada summer jobs programs, but there are other programs within the government that will help young people get experience and get the funding they need for university. It is so important that we help them get both of those things for their future career success. That is why there will be an extra several thousand internships available through the career skills program.

If the Liberals are sincere in their desire to help young people, they should support the budget that has these efforts in it.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we cannot support the budget because it offers less, not more, than in 2006 to support youth summer jobs.

The minister did not answer the question. The problem now is that TD Economics estimates that high youth unemployment and low salaries will cost this generation of young Canadians, now at the beginning of their careers, some \$23 billion. You heard correctly, \$23 billion.

With our aging population and the challenges that will bring, why are the Conservatives abandoning the Canada of tomorrow?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are helping young Canadians prepare for and find jobs. In fact, the apprenticeship grants we introduced are just one example. Some 400,000 of these grants have gone to young Canadians to help them get the skills they need to work in skilled trades. This measure is very important to them and to our country.

* * *

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the Auditor General’s 2006 report we learned that the government was failing to collect \$18 billion in taxes.

Conservatives promised to fix the problem, but six years later they managed to actually make things worse. Now there is \$29 billion in uncollected federal taxes.

Oral Questions

Why are Conservatives clawing back danger pay for soldiers, cutting EI for seasonal workers, and raising taxes on everyday goods for Canadian families, while failing to collect \$29 billion in uncollected tax debt?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of Canadians pay their taxes on time.

In 2011-12, 94% paid their taxes. That was reported. The outstanding tax debt is an inventory of amounts that are known, undisputed and are under collection by Canada Revenue Agency.

We do take a balanced approach in terms of tax fairness for all Canadians, but not unnecessary hardships in terms of individuals' families. Last year, 2011-12, we collected \$40 billion in unpaid taxes.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we would think that after six years that number would be much higher.

[*Translation*]

The amount of outstanding tax debt under this government is huge and continues to grow. However, instead of giving CRA more authority, the Conservatives are making cuts. Over the next three years, they will cut 3,000 jobs and slash funding by \$3 million, yet this is the agency that is supposed to collect taxes. It makes no sense.

When will Conservative backbenchers start to ask questions about real—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Revenue Agency is not laying off tax evasion experts. These people are key to battling tax cheats and ensuring fairness for taxpayers.

We have moved some positions to allow better coordination between Canada Revenue Agency and the RCMP. People now file their taxes electronically, so we do not need as many data managers.

We have some very important measures in economic action plan 2013 to close tax loopholes, going over toward those who would evade taxes. I call on the NDP to support economic action plan 2013.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are making cuts left, right, and centre, yet they are letting \$29 billion slip away without a fight.

After the NDP pointed out the error in the 2013 budget, the Conservatives got rid of their tax on hockey helmets. However, the budget is still increasing taxes by \$7.8 billion.

Now that spring has sprung, Canadians will be shocked to learn that they will have to pay more to garden.

Will the government cancel these outrageous taxes and let Canadians enjoy the fine weather?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has reduced taxes for Canadian families for seven years now, over eight budgets and more than 150 tax reductions. Canadian families on average are paying about \$3,200 less in taxes than they were paying seven and a half years ago.

Now we have the NDP with the nerve, including here again this morning, asking for—

• (1130)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Welland.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance needs to read page 332 of his own budget and he will find \$333 million in additional tax increases.

Canadian families will be paying more to clean up their gardens this spring. Shovels, spades and saws are all more expensive. This tax hike comes as Canadians are grappling with record debt and a slowing economy.

Why are the Conservatives not making life more affordable for ordinary Canadians who are already having a tough time making ends meet?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the real question is why the NDP wants to give special tax breaks to Chinese companies and is opposed to creating jobs in Canada for Canadian workers, Canadian manufacturers, especially in the Hamilton and Niagara areas the hon. member represents. This is important. Of these tariff preferences, 80% are for China and Chinese companies. We want to prefer Canadian workers.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we still have no explanation from the Minister of National Defence about why soldiers in Mazar-e-Sharif receive less danger pay than soldiers posted in Kabul.

The minister is so determined to abdicate his responsibility for this fiasco that a press release was issued stating that the government is not to blame.

If I have understood correctly, the government is saying that a government decision is not the government's fault and it is quoting the government to prove it.

When will we get a real explanation?

Oral Questions

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to payments for our brave troops in Mazar-e-Sharif, the minister has told his department to take action to ensure that troops deployed there are not penalized because of an administrative error.

Why is the NDP taking an interest in Afghanistan now, after it voted against the mission at every step?

[*English*]

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so to be clear, the government is not to blame for a government decision and quotes government bureaucrats to prove it. The Conservatives are so embarrassed with respect to danger pay they are forcing DND to send out a press release saying that it is not the minister's fault. However, the reality is that not only is the minister abdicating his responsibility for his department, he is still refusing to reverse this unfair decision on danger pay.

When will the minister agree to reverse this decision and provide danger pay to all troops in Afghanistan?

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member should know, each mission's hardship and risk levels are set and reviewed at least every six months by an arm's-length committee composed of officials from the Canadian Armed Forces, with representation from the RCMP and the Treasury Board. He knows that the government is publicly asked that hardship and risk rates for deployed personnel be reviewed. The statement of the Chief of the Defence Staff is available in both official languages. I am happy to table it. It is on the website as well.

However, it is curious that the NDP only raises the question of Afghanistan at times when our officials have made a decision and it does not like it, and we do not like it either, after having voted against—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives substantially reduced EI without ever considering the impact. Even the premier of New Brunswick, a Conservative, is calling for a moratorium on these changes until a full impact study is done. This weekend, thousands of workers will be protesting across the country against these damaging changes to EI.

Will the minister listen to the provinces, listen to workers, listen to industry and reverse these cruel and ill-conceived cuts to EI?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the past, parts of the EI system actually discouraged people from working. That was not acceptable. It was not fair that individuals be punished for not working. Therefore, we have made changes that will ensure that whenever people work, they would be better off working than not. We also went further to help connect Canadians with the jobs available in their skill range, in their geographic area, by letting them know about the jobs that were there. If there are no appropriate jobs available for people, then EI will continue to be there for them as it always has been.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, instead of trying to convince herself that her reform is good, the minister should listen to the workers' heartfelt pleas.

People in the Atlantic provinces are not the only ones angry with the minister. In Quebec, cities and regions have had enough of the reform. Business people, mayors and workers are all fed up with the Conservatives' attacks.

Tomorrow, there will be a massive demonstration against the reform in Montreal. She should take this opportunity to finally conduct an impact study and consult people.

Will she listen to their demands?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we believe that the best way to help people is to help them find a job. That is what the EI reform will do.

We want to connect Canadians with available jobs in their field and in their region. They are better off when they are working. If there are no positions available in their region, employment insurance will continue to be there to be there for them.

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the minister understands the repercussions of her own reform. It is more than just a few people who are opposed to this ill-advised and devastating reform. Tomorrow, all of Quebec will descend on Montreal, from seasonal workers from my riding to business people from the city.

Propaganda letters from her department will not change the facts. Quebeckers know that she is dismantling the EI program and that she is targeting the lifestyle of many people. They say no to the reform.

Will she listen to them tomorrow or will she ignore our economic reality?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is mistaken.

What we are trying to do is recognize that there is a labour shortage in certain sectors and help people who have lost their jobs learn skills for available jobs.

That is why our budget 2013 invests in training these people so that they can learn the skills for available jobs.

Oral Questions

[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the latest example of Orwellian control by the paranoid government is the directive that no RCMP officer may meet with a member of Parliament without written permission from the minister. God forbid that MPs should actually be given the truth. Only in paranoid Conservative Canada should the police be forbidden from speaking with the people's representatives.

Will the minister choke down his paranoia and reverse this—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety.

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of the RCMP can meet with whomever he chooses to, when he chooses to. It is completely appropriate that he approve, or at least speak about, what future meetings his staff might have. I think all of us may even do the same thing with our staff.

If parliamentarians need to, or want to, meet with RCMP or other officials, the appropriate place for them to do that is in parliamentary committees. If that member has a concern about any RCMP member, the member can speak with me or the Minister of Public Safety.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Atlantic premiers have joined forces to call for a moratorium on the changes to employment insurance, because they know that those changes will have a negative impact on middle-class families in the Atlantic provinces. Conservative Premier Alward of New Brunswick is urging the Prime Minister to cancel the changes, because he knows they will be devastating.

Why is this Conservative government not listening to Premier Alward? Why is it going after families in Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are doing exactly the opposite. The changes to employment insurance have been made to help people find new jobs. Their families will be better off if they are working. In addition, we will help them find jobs and receive training to develop the skills they need for jobs in high demand.

● (1140)

[English]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Atlantic Canadian premiers are uniting on the need for a moratorium on employment insurance changes, which are devastating middle-class families in Atlantic Canada.

New Brunswick Conservative Premier Alward is urging the Prime Minister to put a stop to these changes because he knows they will be devastating.

Why is the Conservative government not listening to Premier Alward? Why is it attacking Atlantic Canadian families?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is just the opposite. Through budget 2013 and our changes to the EI system, we are actually working to help Canadians in all parts of our country identify and pursue the jobs in their area. If they do not have the skills for jobs in high demand, then there are things like the Canada job grant that will work with industry and the provinces to ensure that Canadians have the skills for the jobs that employers need to have filled.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's youth unemployment rate sits at 14.2%, which is double the national average. The average number of weeks that youth were unemployed has also doubled since 2006, from 7 to 14 weeks.

While the Conservatives have been congratulating themselves, Canada's young people have fallen further and further behind. Young Canadians are paying the price for Conservative mismanagement.

Will the Minister of Finance explain why he is ignoring the unemployment crisis facing young Canadians?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, Canada does have one of the lowest youth unemployment rates in the developed world. That being said, we want to do more. That is why this year's budget includes investments in things like the Canada job grant, which will help all Canadians, including young Canadians, get the skills they need for jobs that industry actually is looking to have filled. There are also funds in there for thousands of internships that will help young people who have graduated and have not been able to find a job get the experience they need for a long-term career.

The NDP should support our efforts to help young people get to work.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, we would never leave young people out of the recovery as the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development have.

[Translation]

Even though the minister is taking the matter lightly, young Canadians are facing a serious crisis. In September 2006, 1,900 young people were unemployed for over a year. Today, that number has gone up exponentially: 13,000 young people are now in the same situation.

Why does the minister continue to deny that there is a problem when all the evidence shows that young Canadians are going through a difficult economic crisis?

Oral Questions

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, some 400,000 apprenticeship grants have been issued since we formed the government. These grants are for skilled workers, who are in great demand across Canada. Unfortunately, the NDP has not supported any of our efforts to connect those young people with jobs that are in high demand. The NDP should support the budget if it really wants to help students.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that the Conservatives do not care about the future of young aboriginal Canadians, either.

There is nothing in budget 2013 to address the chronic underfunding of schools in aboriginal communities. Furthermore, the Conservatives are preventing post-secondary institutions from using the funds received under the Indian studies support program to provide quality education services.

Why is the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs coming down so hard on this program rather than providing aboriginal young people with the tools they need?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly the member is misinformed about the programs available to support aboriginal students across the country, and not just at the post-secondary level.

For example, we have also launched a major initiative to bring in federal legislation specifically to enable all first nations students to get results and school governance that will allow them to get the jobs they are looking for.

• (1145)

[English]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about a lack of information here but about a lack of will. The Conservatives are putting the Indian studies support program in jeopardy. They are telling institutions that they cannot use federal dollars to pay for day-to-day activities like rent or salaries, and this is with only three days' notice. It is simply unacceptable.

These programs have been one of the biggest success stories in providing indigenous students with the skills training they need to participate in our economy. Why is the government changing this program, when everyone agrees that indigenous education is a priority?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the change I suspect the member is referring to is the better targeting of financial resources to ensure that aboriginal youth in Canada are better connected with available jobs and that these youth can get the life skills and education they need to access those jobs. If NDP members oppose these measures, let them stand on it.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has always believed in sending a clear message: violence against women, wherever it occurs, cannot be tolerated.

However, women on reserves are being abused and victimized without the protections they need. Aboriginal women have also been kicked out of their homes with nowhere to go.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women please tell the House what our government is doing to protect thousands of aboriginal women on reserves?

Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hard-working member for Oxford for his very good question.

We have introduced matrimonial property rights legislation that will finally allow judges to enforce emergency protection orders that save lives and protect women from violence. Aboriginal women, and even the United Nations, have been calling for this for many years, but shockingly, the Liberal leader has instructed his caucus to vote against this protection. If he truly wanted to listen to the United Nations, he would support this bill. I am proud to say that our Conservative government continues to stand up for the rights of aboriginal women.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. H el ene Laverdi ere (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is extremely concerned about allegations that chemical weapons are being used in Syria.

If this is true, these actions would constitute a complete violation of international humanitarian law. The international community would be obligated to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Will the government abandon its usual rhetoric against the United Nations and join the rest of the world in calling for the United Nations to conduct an investigation into these allegations?

[English]

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as that member will know, our government is providing real leadership on this issue through a credit of up to \$2 million to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to conduct just such a study as the one she is referring to.

We are very concerned about these reports and remain in close contact with our allies. The use of chemical weapons on the people of Syria would be heinous and contrary to international law.

[Translation]

Ms. H el ene Laverdi ere (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is reassuring. The Conservatives too often tend to ignore the role of the United Nations as an important force for peace and international security.

Yesterday, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved a resolution with regard to a peacekeeping mission for Mali. The purpose of this mission is to support the political process in a friendly nation struggling with radicals, terrorism and ethnic divisions.

Will Canada participate in this peacekeeping mission or will it once again say no to the United Nations?

Oral Questions

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada was proud to support France's efforts to strengthen stability in the region so that Mali does not once again become a safe haven for terrorist organizations.

Our officials and the Canadian Armed Forces will continue to work with their French colleagues in this regard, and we will respond to any requests we receive. However, Canada has no plans for a military presence in Mali.

[English]

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is now the number one country rejecting the opportunity for supporting Mali. We are number 57 when it comes to supporting peacekeeping missions in the world. We really have to see the government being more serious when it comes to Mali and becoming more serious about peacekeeping.

Now that the UN has created a peacekeeping mission, focused primarily on overseeing the political process, we see the government dithering on its support for the United Nations. This is after the government said it would support political stability. How can the Conservatives explain these contradictions?

• (1150)

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as that member knows, our government has been dealing with our allies with respect to Mali. Canada supported the French troops with the provision of a C-17, which is still happening in Mali. We are monitoring the situation closely.

With respect to the UN, we are supporting the UN mission to investigate the question of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is irresponsible that the government is actually not engaging with the UN more. It seems to have an ideological objection to working with the UN.

The alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria amounts to a major violation of international and humanitarian laws. The government failed to join the rest of the world to unequivocally condemn the use of cluster munitions in Syria. It failed to deliver aid to Turkey, which is dealing with a refugee crisis, and it refuses to meet with the Syrian-Canadian community.

Why can the government not engage with the UN and our partners when it comes to the crisis in Syria?

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as that member knows well, and as I mentioned earlier, our government was among the first nations in the world to raise the issue of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and to speak out strongly against it.

In fact, our government went the extra mile to provide \$2 million to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to do an investigation, at the UN's request, in Syria. We met in the Netherlands two weeks ago with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on just that topic. We are supporting that mission. We hope it proceeds as soon as possible.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an internal letter on fleet separation from Conservative Senator Stephen Greene is absolutely shocking. The Conservative Senator says that fleet separation is responsible for a culture of dependence in Atlantic Canada and the acceptance of massive EI fraud as part and parcel of a way of life.

This is absolutely offensive to everyone involved in the fisheries and to all Atlantic Canadians. Will the Prime Minister apologize for his Senator's shameful statements?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague will know that our government has been very clear on this issue. We are in support of our program to preserve the independence of the inshore fishermen of Atlantic Canada, primarily through the owner-operator and fleet separation policies.

On September 21, the minister made it very clear that those policies are not going to change.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fleet separation provides over 30,000 jobs in the Atlantic inshore fishery and keeps hundreds of coastal communities alive. If Senator Greene got his way, these jobs would disappear, and we would be left with ghost towns all across Atlantic Canada. It would be a disaster for the east coast of this country.

I ask again, will the Prime Minister condemn, and apologize to Atlantic Canadians for, his Senator's shameful statements?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not always agree, this member and I, but we often do, and on this issue, we agree that these are important policies, and they are not going to change.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, communities across Canada are concerned about smuggled firearms that are fuelling daily violence. Instead of increasing border security, the Conservatives have cut hundreds of jobs at the Canada Border Services Agency. They are cutting the number of sniffer dog units and intelligence units responsible for monitoring organized crime.

Why are the Conservatives making cuts that jeopardize public safety? Is that their definition of being tough on crime?

[English]

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the opposition is completely wrong. They think if they keep repeating an inaccurate statement that it will stick. It is not true. In fact, our government has increased front-line border officers by 26% since we came into office.

*Oral Questions***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

As well, we are giving not only front-line officers at the border but those around the country the tools they need, whether it is to enhance RCMP accountability so that it can be modernized and have more funds or when, the other day, we supported and passed Bill S-7, which gives law enforcement the ability to fight terrorist activity. The NDP voted against every one of those initiatives.

• (1155)

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact is, last year's budget did cut our front-line agents at the border, and we are all paying the price in community safety. Last Sunday, armed robbers shot two people in a bank robbery in my riding. Last night, another man was killed by gunfire in Scarborough.

Seventy per cent of the guns Toronto police seize are smuggled in from the United States. When will the Conservatives realize that cutting border services and failing to address gun smuggling is putting public safety at risk?

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that member is wrong. We have increased front-line officers. We did cut the \$1 million slush fund the border security union had. That is something we are very proud of. We cut a million dollars.

When we have introduced legislation, whether it is to make it an offence to smuggle arms into this country or mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes or any tools we give the police and law enforcement, whether it is financial or legislative, the NDP have voted against it.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned about crime, particularly violent and brutal murders that involve sexual assault and kidnapping. The justice system should do all it can to specifically denounce society's worst crimes.

Yesterday, the member for Selkirk—Interlake received the government's support for his legislation, which would ensure that victims are not re-victimized by the justice system with repeat parole hearings. Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice please inform the House how Bill C-478, the respecting families of murdered and brutalized persons act, would further complement our government's support for victims?

Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, permit me to thank the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West for his great question and for his great contribution and work on the public safety committee.

This legislation will give the judges discretion to increase parole ineligibility periods for the most violent and brutal murders in Canada. We think judges should have this discretion. Unfortunately, the NDP do not. Last night, the NDP indicated that it would oppose this bill. This is very disappointing but not surprising. After all, this is the same party that voted against repealing the faint hope clause. We will vote in favour of this bill because it is the right thing to do for victims of these horrible crimes. The NDP should do the same.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, processing times for citizenship have been an absolute and total disaster under the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Having said that, we have been challenging the government and the minister to take action on this front. Finally, in committee yesterday, we got a commitment from the minister. He has now established the Liberal idea of a 12-month target in terms of processing citizenship.

Could the minister give us an indication as to when he is going to implement this good, sound Liberal idea of 12 months?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Winnipeg North, because the first question he has asked on immigration in weeks he managed to get in at the end of question period on a Friday. That just shows how much the Liberals regard immigration matters.

The Liberals never achieved a 12-month processing time for citizenship applications. They left behind a massive backlog, just like they left behind a backlog of nearly 900,000 applications for permanent residency—people were waiting for seven to eight years—just like they imposed a \$1,000 right-of-landing fee and froze settlement funding for newcomers. Their record was one of abysmal failure on immigration.

* * *

[Translation]

ONTARIO-QUEBEC CONTINENTAL GATEWAY AND TRADE CORRIDOR

Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to trade, we have no idea where this government is headed.

In 2007, the Conservatives signed a memorandum of understanding with the governments of Quebec and Ontario to develop a strategy for the Ontario-Quebec continental gateway and trade corridor.

Six years later, we are still waiting for this great strategy.

The Prime Minister was to make an announcement about it on a number of occasions, but each time he put it off.

How much longer will we have to wait before we find out what the Conservatives really have in mind? When will they ratify the agreement.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we would be happy to have support from the NDP on trade. We would be happy to have their support on any portion of our trade policy.

Our gateway policy has allowed for gateways in central Canada, on the west coast and on the east coast that are helping to pursue Canadian trade opportunities abroad. That member and that party vote against those opportunities every time.

* * *

• (1200)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all watched yesterday as the two opposition parties seemed to debate whose environmental policies were worse for our government and our country. The Liberals' plan actually increased GHG emissions by 30% over their 13 years in government, and the NDP plan of a \$21 billion carbon tax would actually ruin our economy.

Could the Minister of the Environment please tell the House just how many megatonnes of emissions these failed schemes would actually reduce?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Prince George—Peace River for an excellent question, and the answer is very simple: absolutely none, not a single megatonne of greenhouse gases.

He is quite right. The previous Liberal government paid mere lip service to climate change while greenhouse gases increased during their term by fully 30%. The only thing the NDP leader's plan would reduce is jobs and economic prosperity.

We are the first Canadian government to actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, immigration is an important issue for the vitality of our French-speaking and Acadian communities outside Quebec.

It is essential that the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism consult with those communities.

The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada has been trying to have a meeting with the minister for over a year, but the minister has put it off three times.

Can the Minister commit to meeting with the federation as soon as possible?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last February, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development refused to acknowledge the flaws in her employment insurance reform and simply said, “We’re going to monitor the progress of the program and if there is a need for changes, we will make adjustments.”

However, each time workers and employers have protested—in Sherbrooke, Rimouski, Saguenay, Trois-Rivières, Thetford Mines or elsewhere—no Conservative MP has shown up to take note of the devastating effects this reform is having on Quebec communities.

Will the minister attend tomorrow's protest in Montreal, or will she realize that her reform is in need of major, not minor, adjustments?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the changes made to the program are helping people find work. People are better off when they are working.

There is a shortage of workers in many parts of the country and in many sectors, even in regions with very high unemployment.

We are offering Canadians access to training so that they are qualified for jobs that are in high demand.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Mike Nixon, Minister of Justice, Minister of Tourism and Culture, and Attorney General for Yukon.

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. Daniel Shewchuk, Minister of Justice for Nunavut and Minister Responsible for Nunavut Arctic College.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

SEX SELECTION

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the petition notes that Canada is a nation that has long promoted the right to equal protection and equal benefits of the law and that preventing the birth of baby girls through sex-selective abortion is an affront to the dignity and equality of women and girls. They also note that sex-selective abortions have denied millions of girls in Canada and throughout the world the chance merely to be born because they are girls.

Routine Proceedings

SEX SELECTION

The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons and Parliament assembled to condemn discrimination against girls through sex-selective abortion and to do all it can to prevent sex-selective abortions being carried out in Canada.

OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table two petitions from residents of Edmonton, Sherwood Park and Devon.

The petitioners wish to draw to the attention of the House their concerns with the government's practice of introducing 400-page omnibus bills and through those bills fundamentally transforming Canadian life by cutting old age security and EI and health care funding and gutting environmental laws and so forth.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to halt this practice of introducing omnibus legislation to avoid democratic accountability to Canadians.

• (1205)

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ALFALFA

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from constituents who are concerned about herbicide-tolerant genetically modified alfalfa.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to impose a moratorium on the release of genetically modified alfalfa in order to allow a proper review of the impact on farmers in Canada.

2014 HEALTH ACCORD

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of people in Hamilton Mountain engaged in the fight to save public health care and to ensure access to high-quality health services wherever they live.

In particular, the petitioners are really concerned about needing a pan-Canadian prescription drug strategy, about the need for high-quality home and long-term care services, about the need for a pan-Canadian health human resources strategy, and of course the need for improved living conditions, including access to food, housing and a living wage.

As a result, the petitioners are calling on the government to fully co-operate with the provinces and territories to negotiate a new health accord by 2014 that improves health care services through stronger federal leadership, backed by long-term and stable health care funding.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today, all of them on issues relating to fundamental human rights.

The first is a petition from members of my riding calling on the Government of Canada to condemn the Chinese Communist regime's systematic murder of Falun Gong practitioners through forced live organ harvesting.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is from members of my riding and surrounding areas.

The petitioners are calling on the House to condemn discrimination against females occurring during sex-selective pregnancy termination, noting that millions of girls have been lost through sex-selective abortion, creating a global gender imbalance and causing girls to be trafficked into prostitution.

The third petition is to the same effect.

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I consider it a privilege to be able to present three petitions on behalf of my Pontiac constituents. They are opposed to this government's reckless and poorly thought-out employment insurance reforms, including the new definition of suitable employment and the deadlines to apply for benefits.

[*English*]

PRAIRIE SHELTERBELT PROGRAM

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions.

The first is with respect to the prairie shelterbelt program, which has planted 610 million trees since 1901 but is in great jeopardy because of the de-funding by the federal government.

The petitioners are calling on the government to re-fund that program so that the planting of millions of trees on the prairies can be continued.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ALFALFA

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the petitioners are calling on the government to continue the moratorium on GM alfalfa until we have done a study on the impacts to the farm community and to farmers, primarily organic farmers but including all farmers.

The petitioners are calling on the government to continue the moratorium until the impact study is completed.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition from some British Columbians.

The petitioners acknowledge that the current impaired driving laws are too lenient. In the interests of public safety, they want to see tougher laws and the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentencing for those persons convicted of impaired driving causing death.

The petitioners are also calling for the Criminal Code of Canada to be changed to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death to vehicular manslaughter.

Government Orders

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 Questions Nos. 1,220, 1,221 and 1,222 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1220—**Mr. Matthew Kellway:**

With regard to the Industrial and Regional Benefits program (IRB): (a) in how many instances has Industry Canada found companies non-compliant in carrying out their IRB obligations (i) from the beginning of the program until 2009, (ii) between 2009 and the present, (iii) what is the dollar amount of these outstanding IRB obligations; (b) in how many instances has Industry Canada imposed penalties for non-compliance with respect to IRB obligations (i) from the beginning of the program until 2009, (ii) from 2009 until the present, (iii) what is the dollar amount of these penalties; (c) what are the specific procurements that have been ruled non-compliant (i) from the beginning of the program until 2009, (ii) from 2009 to the present; (d) what is the full value of the IRBs recovered (i) between the beginning of the program and 2009, (ii) between 2009 and the present; (e) how is non-compliance in carrying out IRB obligations determined; (f) how often does Industry Canada audit IRB obligors' fulfillment of IRB obligations; (g) what percentage of IRB claims from IRB obligors are audited; (h) in what percentage of IRB claims from IRB obligors are irregularities found and what is the dollar value of these irregularities; (i) what are the penalties for failure to fulfill IRB obligations; (j) is there an appeals process for companies ruled by Industry Canada not to have complied with their IRB obligations; (k) according to the IRB policy, IRBs are mandatory for "certain projects greater than \$100 million...", (i) what is meant by "certain projects", (ii) what are the criteria for determining IRB obligations on contracts over \$100 million; (l) when IRBs are triggered, in which specific procurements have IRBs been mandatory (i) for both acquisition and in-service support, (ii) for acquisition only; (m) when IRBs are required for both acquisition and in-service support, (i) what is the IRB value for the in-service support contract, (ii) is in-service support applied to the IRB requirements for the acquisition contract; and (n) does Industry Canada maintain detailed records of outstanding IRB obligations which, according to the contracts with suppliers, should have already been completed and what is the outstanding dollar amount of these obligations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1221—**Mr. Matthew Kellway:**

With regard to the Industry Engagement Request released by the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat on March 3, 2013: (a) has the possibility of a further life extension to the CF-18 fleet been determined (i) if so, when was this determination made, (ii) how many enquiries have been made into the possibility of a further life extension to the CF-18 fleet, (iii) how far can the lifespan of the CF-18 be extended, (iv) have cost estimates been determined for a CF-18 fleet extension; (b) how were the threat characterizations referred to in the Industry Engagement Request identified, (i) what reports, analyses, and other evaluations are the threat characterizations for each time horizon based on, (ii) what are the implications of the threat assessment on the Statement of Requirements for the replacement of the CF-18s; (c) what comparable reports, analyses, and other evaluations is the "Canada First Defence Strategy" based on, (i) for the two time frames, 2020-2030 and 2030+, and their corresponding threat characterizations not appearing in the "Canada First Defence Strategy", what are the differences between the threat analyses that inform the "Canada First Defence Strategy" and the threat analyses that inform the specific threats outlined in the Industry Engagement Request, (ii) how were the two time horizons determined, (iii) why is "civilian aircraft" listed as a threat from 2020-2030 but not 2030+, (iv) for the first time period (2020-2030), is it expected that the aircraft acquired in 2020 will remain in service past 2030, (v) is the acquisition of different aircraft for different time periods being considered, (vi) how many aircraft are expected to be acquired by 2020, (vii) how many aircraft, including CF-18, are now expected to be in service by 2020, (viii) how many aircraft are expected to be in service during each of the two time horizons, (ix) could more than one type of aircraft be acquired within each time horizon, (x) is the possibility of a mixed fleet being considered, (xi) does the government still plan on acquiring 65 aircraft; and (d) has the term "next-generation fighter aircraft" been removed from the Statement of

Requirements, and is the term being used in evaluating aircraft during the analysis of options currently being conducted by the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1222—**Mr. Matthew Kellway:**

With regard to changes to the Industrial and Regional Benefits (IRB) program since 2009: (a) has there been an increase of spending of IRB funds for (i) public-private consortia, (ii) enhanced priority technology list, (iii) participation of Canadian companies in the global value chain; (b) if there has been an increase in spending in one or more of the above categories, (i) how many public-private consortia have been created, (ii) what technological innovations have been a product of public-private consortia and the focus on enhanced priority technologies, (iii) how many jobs are estimated to have been created as a result of the global value chain approach, (iv) what is the value of exports estimated to have been generated through a focus on the global value chain approach; (c) if there has not been an increase in spending in one or more of the above categories, what reasons have been identified for this outcome; and (d) following the introduction by Industry Canada on February 20, 2013, of an Investment Framework, (i) how were the three types of investments identified, (ii) how were the multiplier values determined?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1210)

[English]

NOT CRIMINALLY RESPONSIBLE REFORM ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-54, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act (mental disorder), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say first that I will be splitting my time in debate.

I will speak to Bill C-54, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act (mental disorder). I would say from the outset that we support investigating this topic and we will vote for this proposal to move the bill to committee for study.

Before moving along further, I would like to thank the MP for Gatineau for her work on this file, and on many other files. I know the public safety and justice committees are some of the busiest here in the House of Commons, and she does great work, along with my benchmate, on these topics.

Government Orders

From a broad perspective, this is a very difficult issue for victims, families and communities in general. It is probably one of the most difficult issues any community must face: what to do when a member of that community is accused of perpetrating a heinous act, but is found by professional evaluation not to be of right mind. What to do with these individuals is really what we are trying to come to grips with here.

The sad truth is that I do not think there is any way that we will ever make a perfect decision. What we really have to do is try to figure out how to manage this in the best way possible and ensure that we do not make things worse than they already are.

Of course, we have to think of the victims first. We have to think of public safety. We also have to think of the broader communities in these senses and ask what is the best thing we can do to ensure that the community itself comes out as well as it can when we are dealing with these types of sad issues.

There is one bright spot, if we can call it a bright spot on this awful topic, and it is that through our health and social scientists, our criminologists and psychologists and psychiatrists, we probably know more about this issue than we have ever known in the past. My mind drifts back to the asylums of the 19th century, when people who were of healthy mind and body were incarcerated along with those who were criminally insane. We have gone well past that, knowing more about the causes of these mental shortcomings in the perpetrators of these acts, and also what to do to help victims recover. Through the good research of our professionals in this area, we are probably better equipped to deal with this problem than we ever have been in the past. This wealth of information should be used to help us make the best possible decisions in this area.

We are supporting moving this bill to committee because we need to have a reasoned and rational discussion. We need to bring in many experts and try to stay away from some of the partisan witnesses that sometimes parties are guilty of bringing to the committees. We should probably resist that and try to bring in the best experts we can in this area in order to have a reasoned discussion about what we should do in these cases and to evaluate the proposals being made in this particular bill. Therefore, I urge the government to listen to a wide range of experts when this inevitably comes to committee and to take the time to get it right.

In addition to the psychologists, psychiatrists and criminologists, we should also take time to hear other witnesses. Often the people who are affected by these awful crimes are also from marginalized communities, so we should hear from these community leaders, including first nations. My mind is always drawn to the awful events of British Columbia, whether it is Clifford Robert Olson or perhaps Willie Pickton. Many members of the community were affected by these awful crimes perpetrated by people who were found to be mentally deficient, and mental deficiency was the reason these people were perpetrating or involved in these crimes. We should ensure we talk to the people in the communities who were most affected, because they are the ones who now have the experience of working through how to heal from these awful events.

When we go to committee, we also have to be mindful that our actions are bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms establishes clear boundaries within

which our laws must fall, so we should take care that we do not put new laws into place that would clearly violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

• (1215)

In addition to the criminologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and community members who come to committee, we should also make sure there is the due diligence to make sure the laws we are bringing in do not violate any aspects of the charter. From the NDP perspective, public safety must come first on this issue, and we need to help the victims as much as possible. However, we have to make sure we are abiding by our primary law.

The issue at hand is to consider what to do when an accused is discharged. Increasing notification to victims and their families would seem like a reasonable thing to consider. If review boards would be able to issue non-communication orders with victims, keeping as much distance between the accused or somebody considered not criminally responsible and thus giving victims as much time as possible to recover, that is worth consideration. Even if there is no contact between the individuals, the peace of mind this might bring to victims is in itself well worth considering.

The bill would also create a new category of high-risk accused, and the review boards would have the option of tripling the length of time between reviews, from 12 months to 36 months. It is moving away from mandatory decisions imposed on judges and allowing the legal system to consider these cases in great detail.

I was reading some statistics by Mr. Chris Summerville, the alliance facilitator and chief executive officer of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada, who stated, "In Canada's most populated province, Ontario, only .001% of individuals charged with Criminal Code violations were adjudicated [not criminally responsible for their actions]". This law will affect a very small number of people, so we have to make sure we are also taking that into consideration.

We should also take care that when we are considering these and other types of similar bills that we do not try to hype up this issue at all. As is well documented in Canada, crime rates have fallen dramatically. Both violent crimes and crimes against property have fallen over the past couple of decades. While it is important to get these laws right, we do not want this type of debate making the public think that crime is somehow spiralling out of control.

With regard to victims who are affected by current crimes, we really have to do as much as we can to help them through these things. However, as public opinion will show, Canadians are more concerned about the economy, for example, than spiralling crime rates. While it is good to get these things right through reasoned debate, it should not be used as an excuse to try to scare the public into thinking that crime is at a higher rate than it has been in previous decades, because it is not.

Government Orders

When this goes to committee, New Democrats want to discuss the idea that public safety must come first, but any laws that are changed must comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are open to change to ensure the way in which cases involving mentally disordered accused persons are handled is effective in terms of treatment. I note in the bill that this in no way should affect treatment. However, we have to make sure there is treatment in order to ensure the entire community is considered when we put these kinds of motions forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in theory, this legislation should help us support victims. The real question is whether or not resources will be made available.

That is a particularly important element. The bill has to be more than just words. We want this bill, which contains positive elements, to be a useful tool and not just empty words.

Could the member provide some information and assurances on that?

• (1220)

[*English*]

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. I thank my colleague for it and the other excellent questions he has asked in the House.

I think a full costing of the bill would be a perfect thing to consider on committee. However, it should not just say how much it would cost in total but who would bear the cost. There is some thought that the provincial governments would bear some of the cost of these changes. They should also be consulted and perhaps brought in to committee to discuss whether they are willing to go forward with this.

Again, in principle this is a good bill, but we need to get these details right.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important for us to recognize that many pieces of legislation we do pass in the House of Commons have cost ramifications on different levels of government. With this particular bill, we are dealing with two issues. One is on our institutions and the other on mental illness, both of which would have substantial costs for the provinces and their treasury boards.

There is the expectation that prior to bringing in legislation the government would have done some form of consultation with the stakeholders to get a better sense of those cost ramifications. My colleague from Mount Royal, in speaking earlier on this bill and bills of a similar nature, raised the fact that we need to get more information from the government on the preparatory work that is done in order to evaluate and make good decisions. Another colleague earlier made reference to the important issue of having the facts on the table.

Could the member provide comment in terms of how important it is that government, when it brings forward legislation, brings the statistics and facts so that politicians can make good decisions?

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, again, this is why we are supporting this bill going through at second reading.

It would be good if the government were more straightforward with costs, and we are finding deficiencies all over the place in that respect. In fact, I was on committee the other day asking about science budgets. I am finding that the information the government is providing does not actually reflect what is happening on that file.

It is a constant disappointment for us that we do not get costing upfront. Hopefully in this committee study the government will see fit to do this, or perhaps we could ask the Parliamentary Budget Officer to help out.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his speech. He raised some very interesting points.

Have the people in his riding spoken to him about this bill? What do they think? Do they think we should be supporting it?

[*English*]

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, crime in my riding, as in any community, is something that is talked about. I have had very good meetings with the RCMP in my riding—although I am not sure I am allowed to anymore—and we have talked about how to strengthen the community. However, what we are talking about here is an extraordinary circumstance. It is a very small segment of the population that this bill would impact.

We do talk about these horrific cases, but we have not had one in our community. The missing women inquiry did look at Burnaby to some extent because we had some traffic going from Vancouver to Coquitlam through my riding. However, luckily we have not had an issue other than that one to talk about.

Generally, we talk about it, and I am sure my community will support looking at this in a reasoned way.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-54, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act. This bill is about people found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder. Specifically, this bill would change the mental disorder regime relating to accused individuals found unfit to stand trial or not criminally responsible.

As such, the bill amends the mental disorder regime in the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act to specify that the paramount consideration in the decision-making process is the safety of the public. It creates a scheme for finding that certain persons who have been found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder are high-risk accused. It also enhances the involvement of victims in the regime and makes procedural and technical amendments.

This bill contains provisions to change how cases involving individuals who are not criminally responsible are dealt with.

Government Orders

Review boards have to consider public safety above all. Requirements to notify victims and their families when a not criminally responsible accused is discharged will be enhanced. Review boards will have the power to issue non-communications orders with victims. This bill enables the courts to designate an accused as high risk.

Review boards will have the option, not the obligation, to triple the length of time between reviews from 12 to 36 months. The bill will limit the number of community visits for high-risk accused and detail the release conditions.

Basically, there are three amendments: putting public safety first, creating a high-risk not criminally responsible accused designation, and enhancing victims' involvement.

With respect to putting public safety first, the legislative amendments in this bill would make public safety the paramount consideration in the courts and during the review boards' decision-making process relating to accused persons found to be not criminally responsible or unfit to stand trial.

This bill would amend the Criminal Code in order to create a scheme for finding that certain people who have been found not criminally responsible are high-risk accused. Under the scheme, the accused would be deemed to be high risk if he was found not criminally responsible of serious bodily harm and there is a strong possibility that he would commit other acts of violence that would endanger the public, or if the acts he committed were of such a brutal nature as to indicate a risk of grave harm to the public.

Those who would fall into this category would therefore be unable to get a conditional or absolute discharge, would not be authorized visit the community without an escort and would be extremely limited in their escorted absences. However, these people would have the right to treatment.

This would therefore be a way of explaining how an accused can have restrictions imposed on him when he poses a criminal threat to public safety even though it is not necessarily a violent threat.

The third component of the amendments in this bill deals with enhancing the involvement of victims. This part seeks to enhance the security of victims by offering them more opportunities to participate in the mental disorder regime in the Criminal Code. The victims would thereby have the possibility of being informed when the accused is discharged. The bill also provides for non-communication orders between the accused and the victim. Finally, the safety of victims would be taken into consideration in cases where decisions are to be made about the accused.

Although the provisions of the proposed bill would help to ensure that the law is interpreted and applied more consistently across the country, there is cause for concern about the impact this bill will have across the country. The provinces must not be forced to foot the bill for this policy.

As we saw in the main provisions of this bill, it is important to note that the bill addresses an issue that is very difficult for victims, families and communities.

We must ensure that protecting public safety is a priority while abiding by the rule of law and respecting the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

● (1225)

What matters most is knowing how we can help victims in this process. They are an integral part of all the questions raised by the bill and the changes included in it.

We will therefore support the bill so that we can examine it more thoroughly in committee. In order to shed some light on the bill, we will need to hear from mental health experts, some victims, as well as the provinces, in order to determine which approach would be best. This is not a question of playing political games, but rather properly studying the merits of the policy.

Considering the extensive media coverage that certain crimes receive, we must try to avoid fueling the public's fears and increasing the negative stigma attached to mental illness. This would be completely counterproductive because it would undermine the reintegration of these individuals and, at the same time, do absolutely nothing to enhance public safety. It would only make the situation worse.

As I said earlier, we must make public safety our top priority, while respecting the rule of law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That being said, in the context of this bill, it is critically important that we make sure that the cases of defendants with mental disorders are managed effectively and that their mental disorders are treated. This bill should be based on consultation and co-operation with mental health experts. Our justice system and our mental health system need to operate effectively. In that regard, we will have to rely a great deal on the advice of mental health experts, some of whom have already expressed their reservations about this bill.

Furthermore, the question of cost also needs to be considered. In Canada, the full cost that flows directly from criminal acts is already too much for the provinces to bear. We must not increase their financial burden without ensuring that they have the necessary resources, which is clearly not the case.

According to Chris Summerville, the chief executive officer of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada, in Ontario, only 0.001% of those charged with Criminal Code offences were deemed to be not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder. Furthermore, between 2.5% and 7.5% of them reoffend, compared to 41% to 44% of federal offenders. It is obvious that, contrary to what the Conservatives would have Canadians believe, the seriousness of a crime is not a gauge of the likelihood that these people will reoffend, or even their ability to improve their mental health and live a normal, healthy life.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, which would handle such cases in Ontario, currently has an occupancy rate of roughly 104%, which leads us back to the issue of the burden and the cost to the provinces. We must ensure that the provinces have proper funding because they will be managing these cases. The federal government is responsible for properly funding this policy.

Government Orders

To summarize, we agree with the spirit of this bill, but we do not want the government to try to use this issue to score political points. On the contrary, this bill needs to be studied carefully because of what is at stake.

Understandably, this is a very difficult issue for victims, families and the community. Naturally, public safety comes first. We also have to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. No matter what we have to say about mental health, we must be careful that we do not exacerbate or heighten the stigma of mental illness.

We know that we could meet with mental health experts, but we should also consult victims living in the provinces.

• (1230)

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague gave a wonderful speech, particularly in terms of advocating for victims. Unfortunately, all too often we forget those people who suffer tremendously.

We also forget that mental illness is a burden for those living with it. Mental illnesses are not something people want.

Could my distinguished colleague perhaps explain how this bill—with some amendments—will ensure that people who suffer from those illnesses receive real support in order to prevent irrational actions?

• (1235)

Ms. Manon Perreault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

We must bear in mind a number of things. Mental illnesses are not only difficult for those suffering from them, but also for their families and friends.

It would probably be a good idea to consult with experts who can provide us with their insight. Perhaps we could even consult with the victims, as I said earlier.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the more we dig into it, the more we find things about the bill that are not that easy to deal with.

Right now most people who are found not criminally responsible are not subject to a trial as a result of agreements that are made between the courts and the lawyers. With defendants now facing three years in confinement before being eligible for a hearing, they may just simply decide to go to trial and be put in jail if found guilty as there is a likelihood of that happening.

The recidivism rate for people with mental disorders who commit crimes who go to jail is some exponential figure that is higher than those who are treated outside of jail.

How do you think this will play out in the long term? Will this work in our favour with respect to costs and the ability to protect society with such a high rate of recidivism among those who actually go to jail?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before I go to the member for Montcalm, I would just remind all hon. members to

direct their comments and questions to the Chair rather than to their colleagues.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I said earlier, in cases dealing with mental health issues, the recidivism rate is still very low. We must be careful not to jump to conclusions. Our actions must not create even more prejudices against those people. There is always room for a little respect in life. Those people are already suffering a great deal.

I would like to see an approach that would make it possible to invite and consult with experts and victims to ensure that no mistakes are made in rulings.

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague who works very hard in her riding. I congratulate her. Her speech was very enlightening.

I would like to focus on the burden this will place on the provinces. If we are talking about making the process more complicated, the provinces are the ones that will end up footing a large part of the bill.

How can the provinces participate? We will support this bill for the time being so that it can go to committee, so that it can be debated and so that we can hear from witnesses.

Would the provinces be able to testify in committee so we can hear what they think about their potential new responsibilities?

Ms. Manon Perreault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

If we want to put this burden on the provinces, we will have to first find out whether the provinces have the financial means to support it. The best way to do so would be to meet with each province and with the experts who can answer that question.

[*English*]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have wanted to speak to the bill for a little while now. It is really important to me and the folks at home in Halifax because of an incident that happened not too long ago in my community.

Last April, Halifax was shaken to its core with the news of a death in our community. I was at home listening to the radio that morning and heard that a man had been murdered on Gottingen Street in the early morning hours, just steps away from my community office.

I went to work that morning and saw the police tape, and do not know exactly I hoped for. What do we hope? Do we hope it is not someone we know? Does that make it better somehow? Do we hope there is not more bad news? I do not know what I was hoping for, but I was certainly hopeful that morning. Then I received a phone call from my friend Scott with the worst possible news, that the victim was our friend Raymond Taavel.

Government Orders

Raymond had left a bar across the street in the early morning hours, and right across the street was a fight between two men. Raymond tried to intervene in that fight, and one of the men beat Raymond to death.

Raymond Taavel was a community activist and he was an advocate. He worked on a range of issues to make our community better and stronger. He was very active in Fair Vote Canada. He really believed in democracy, but he also believed that our parliamentary democracy could be improved. He was very passionate about things like proportional representation, for example. He made sure people voted.

He grew up in Sault Ste. Marie and even in high school, he was a member of the model parliament. He was so passionate about our democracy. He was a queer rights activist. He wrote for *Wayves*, which is I think how I met Raymond. He would do a lot of articles for *Wayves*, which is our Nova Scotia queer issues magazine. He would cover all kinds of different things in that magazine and showed what was happening in our community related to the broader issues in the rainbow community and vice versa, quite frankly.

He worked with *Shambhala Sun* magazine, a Buddhist magazine that is created in Halifax. He was at everything. Some people lead by being at the podium and having a megaphone in their hand. Other people lead by being there, by helping to pass out the flyers, by pointing to our friends and community members and telling them that they should go to a certain event, that it was important and that they needed to be there. He was incredibly special.

Raymond was a big pain in my backside, a lot. He wrote me emails. Even though he was a big fan of mine and supported me in the election, he wrote me emails when I did things he did not agree with and he took me to task on all kinds of stuff. He would tell me there was an action happening, or a rally or gathering that was important and that I should be there. He was there for us in our community.

Raymond intervened in a fight, and he was murdered. The news came out and we did not know what had gone on, but then we found out that a man named Andre Noel Denny had been charged.

Andre Noel Denny is a very troubled man who has had a troubling past. He had been charged with many crimes, such as aggravated sexual assault, property destruction and charges having to do with cruelty to animals, and was found not criminally responsible.

● (1240)

The judge, at the time, ruled that the best thing for Mr. Denny was to have treatment at the East Coast Forensic Hospital, in Dartmouth. He went there and, eventually, was fit to stand trial, but then was found not criminally responsible for all those charges against him.

During his time at the East Coast Forensic Hospital, on April 16, he was given a leave, a pass, I think it was a two-hour pass, to leave the hospital. He did leave the hospital, was out in our community and did not come back that evening. That is the night that Raymond was murdered.

This issue is so real in our community right now. On the evening after Raymond's murder, our whole community came out to Gottingen Street. There was a beautiful rally, with everybody there,

and beautiful speeches. I am so proud of my community because nobody came forward with their pitchforks. No one came forward with a rallying cry of "We've gotta get this guy" or "We've gotta hang him high". My community came forward in a peaceful way, in a loving way, in a sad but thoughtful way, in a really thoughtful way. I do not know if I can describe how important that has been to us as a community to heal and to take this issue on. People are taking this issue on in an incredibly thoughtful way.

It is interesting. Some of the media actually got out of the gates. It was quite sensational. The community clamped down and said, "No. That's not acceptable. This isn't sensational. This is a tragedy." It is extremely complicated because while we lost our friend Raymond that night, while Halifax lost an incredible community activist, Andre Noel Denny is a real person; he is a real person who is troubled. He has multiple mental illness diagnoses. He comes from a community that, let us be frank, failed him. My community of Halifax felt compassion. Maybe we felt compassion because of Raymond Taavel. Maybe we felt that compassion because that actually is what Raymond would have said about his murderer. Maybe we shone and were the best that we could be and the most compassionate that we could be because it was Raymond and because we knew how he would have reacted, even to his own murderer.

There has been a tremendous community response. It has been positive and, like I said, very thoughtful. It has really brought us together in a way that I could never have imagined such a tragedy could have brought us together.

As a result, anything to do with changing legislation around the issue of being not criminally responsible hits home for us in Halifax.

I have read the bill with great interest, with a keen eye to what it means for us, to what it could have meant for Raymond, what it might continue to mean for Mr. Denny. I think it is important to go through what the bill would actually do. I know folks at home will want to know what this means. I was contacted by Raymond's partner very recently who said, "Hey, what do you think, Megan? What does this bill do?"

Let us start there.

The bill would look at changing the way that cases that involve not criminally responsible accused are examined. This is a small number of people, which is important to note. I am very wary of making policy because of one or two cases. However, we do need to review these cases when they occur.

● (1245)

It says that review boards would have to consider public safety first and foremost and that when the accused is discharged there would be an increase in this obligation to notify victims and their families. It would also allow review boards to have the power to issue non-communications orders with victims. It interestingly creates a new category called "high-risk accused" that can be designated by the court. I think we need to explore that new category.

Government Orders

I am going to support the bill at second reading. I want to hear from people at committee. I do want to explore this entire bill, but in particular this new category of high-risk accused. I am not sure it will do what we need it to do, but it is a conversation worth having.

If people are designated high-risk accused, review boards would have the option—and I think it is important to say they would not have the obligation, but the option—to triple the length of time between reviews from 12 months to 36 months. It would limit the number of community visits for high-risk accused and detail the release conditions.

Section 672.54 of the Criminal Code says that courts or review boards have to take into consideration “the need to protect the public from dangerous persons, the mental condition of the accused, the reintegration of the accused into society and the other needs of the accused”.

The bill comes to us because of a number of high-profile incidents that serve as the basis for the bill. These kinds of incidents, whether it is Raymond Taavel's situation or other situations, are highlighted by intense media coverage and it makes it easy to stoke public opinion and get people inflamed about issues. It makes it easy to think that this is widespread, that everywhere we go, around each corner, there is going to be another not criminally responsible threat waiting and lurking, but the reality is that very few people who are charged with the Criminal Code violations are deemed not criminally responsible.

For example, in Ontario, the rate is only .001%. Reoffending rates for not criminally responsible individuals range from 2.5% to 7.5%. These numbers are far lower than those of federal offenders in the regular justice system at the rate of 41% to 44%, so that needs to be taken into consideration. That is the context that we actually have to examine the provisions of Bill C-54. We have to examine closely whether it is necessary to introduce this law and make these changes or if it would even be effective in increasing public safety.

As I said, I am going to support the bill. I am open to change, but we have to ensure that the way in which we handle cases involving mentally disordered accused persons is effective in terms of the treatment of mental disorders. If we do not look carefully at the implications of the bill, these changes could unnecessarily heighten the public's fears, they could increase the stigma around mental illness and ultimately undermine the reintegration of not criminally responsible individuals without actually increasing public safety, which is the policy goal here.

With high-risk accused it is very important for this category to be very clearly defined. Also, obviously, it needs to ensure the implementation of that category would comply with both the rule of law and with the charter. The first proposed amendment to the mental disorder regime concerns public safety. It would explicitly make public safety the paramount consideration in the court and the review board decision-making process relating to accused persons found to be not criminally responsible or unfit to stand trial.

• (1250)

I was talking about section 672.54 of the Criminal Code and it states that, “the need to protect the public from dangerous persons, the mental condition of the accused, the reintegration of the accused

into society and the other needs of the accused” are all considerations that the review board has to look at.

If that is the backdrop then what would be the difference between this legislation and the current regime? Do the courts and review boards not already take public safety considerations into their decisions? Does the Criminal Code not already adequately address the scope of issues concerning not criminally responsible people within our justice system?

This is a difficult issue for victims, families and communities. I am probably living proof of that. We want to know how we can help victims through this process. Would this legislation actually have the desired impact of supporting victims, of protecting victims from re-victimization?

This legislation could enhance the safety of victims and provide them with opportunities for greater involvement in the Criminal Code mental disorder regime by ensuring that they are notified when the accused is discharged, allowing those non-communication orders between the accused and the victim, and ensuring that the safety of victims is considered when decisions are being made about an accused person. We do have to examine those implications because, like I said, this could have positive impacts on those victims, but the key word is “could”.

There are a lot of incredible people doing amazing work on mental disability law. I think of Archie Kaiser at Dalhousie law school in particular who was one of my professors. At committee we could ask him what it means, what the implications would be, and whether there are implications we have not thought of. We have to look at those implications and the logistics. We have to look at the legality of changes. We also have to keep in mind that those who are found not criminally responsible are neither acquitted nor convicted.

I do want to talk a bit about the financial impact of crime borne by victims. The total estimated cost of \$14.3 billion was incurred as a direct result of crime for such items as medical attention, hospitalization, lost wages, missed school days or stolen and damaged property. This does not include the intangible costs borne by victims, which is estimated to be tens of billions of dollars. Bill C-54 ought to also address the financial needs of victims, and that is something that we do not see play out in our communities.

We want to make sure that the bill is based on substantive evidence and not just impulsive cosmetic changes.

We want to talk to mental health experts, victims and the provinces to find out what they believe is the best approach. It would be wise to talk to the Province of Nova Scotia because it is doing its own review of what happened in the Raymond Taavel case to see where those gaps are, not just in legislation but also in supports.

Sometimes it is not just about the law; sometimes it is not just about the Criminal Code. Sometimes it is about what is happening in our forensic hospitals; sometimes it is about support for victims, financial support and other kinds of support.

The key thing is that none of us in any party should play political games with this file. We really do need to focus on the policy merits of the bill.

Government Orders

Our justice critic has done some really good work already speaking to different experts around this issue. I was going to read some of the quotes from conversations that she has already had, but perhaps there will be more time to get that information out at committee when we call some of those people to testify.

People in Halifax are sad. It has been a sad year. We just marked the one-year anniversary of Raymond Taavel's death recently by hanging pride flags in our windows across the city. We are sad, but we know that we can come together and work together as a community to figure out what the solutions are for our community. If any community can do it, it is Halifax. I am looking forward to hearing at committee whether or not this piece of legislation would be a part of that.

• (1255)

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech from my hon. friend and neighbour from the riding of Halifax. I particularly appreciated her comments about the late Raymond Taavel. It was a tragedy that was felt throughout Nova Scotia and beyond, and I am glad she spoke about that. I know she spoke about it in a very heartfelt way.

I also know that, as a lawyer, she would have dealt with issues of criminal intent. As we learn at law school, in order for someone to be found guilty of a crime, he or she must have what is called *mens rea*. That is a Latin phrase which means that the person has to have the frame of mind or the criminal intent to commit a crime. I suppose in every criminal case that issue is normally dealt with.

I wonder if the member has had any cases that dealt with criminal responsibility and what her experience was in that regard. What does she think the Government of Canada can do to improve our mental health system so there are supports that can deal more effectively with these issues? At the same time, how do we protect the public?

I share the concerns about this legislation, and I also see that we have to figure out what can happen in the mental health system, et cetera, to make sure the public is protected.

• (1300)

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Halifax West for his question. He is a member of the Halifax community. He was there, and he knows how important this is to the folks at home.

I cannot answer his first question about my experience because I am not a lawyer. Everybody forgets that. I have a law degree and I worked as a community legal worker at Dalhousie Legal Aid, but I did not practise criminal law, so I cannot share any experiences of *mens rea*.

However, it certainly is a big topic in the study of law, whether or not a person actually knows what they are doing and has that awareness. That is the key thing when a person is found to be not criminally responsible. If a person did not know what they were doing, how could they take responsibility?

If we look at the criminal law, what is the purpose of it? It is to deter, to punish and to send the message to communities that this is what is acceptable and not acceptable. However, if we have someone whose mental health is in a state where they are barely even cognizant of being a member of that community, and they do not

understand what is right and wrong, or even what they are doing, how do we address that? That is a mental health issue. I think we could certainly put more resources into that system.

Raymond Taavel did not have to die. That is a failure of our community, on lots of levels. I am not saying it was the failure of the East Coast Forensic Hospital, but it is a failure of our community and our mental health system overall.

Raymond's death could have been prevented if we could have had the political will to look the issue in the eye.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her very heartfelt presentation. It is very difficult, when it is close to home, to stand back and take an objective view of legislation. At the same time, it is really important that we consider the very emotional aspects of this. Many of us have probably been touched by similar situations.

Before speaking to the bill, I took the time to talk to some of the organizations and entities that might be concerned about the legislation. I spoke with Elizabeth Fry Society and I spoke with a psychiatric association. Everyone I spoke to, and all the briefs I have looked at, said the same thing, that they are deeply frustrated that they were not consulted before the legislation was brought to the House. They also said they were hoping they would be brought forward as witnesses.

I wonder if the member for Halifax could speak to what kind of process she thinks is appropriate for the review of this legislation and who she thinks should be brought in. I presume she would support the idea that the government should be open to amendments as a result of the testimony of experts, and victims and their families, who come forward.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. She raises a very good point about what we do here, how we consult, and what we expect.

First of all, I expect that Bill C-54 will take time. We need to spend time with it. We do not want to have closure. We do not want to have time allocation. We do not want to shut down debate on this. This is really complicated stuff. We should give this bill the respect it deserves by bringing in witnesses who may have different points of view. That is okay.

If we bring in victims organizations, organizations like the Elizabeth Fry Society, as my colleague mentioned, or the John Howard Society that works with offenders, or people who are mental health experts, they are probably not all going to agree.

However, with open discussion where we put aside those differences, I think we could come up something together. I do not think it has to be an either or, a partisan thing, or the Conservatives' "with us or against us" stand.

I think we should have a thoughtful adult discussion at committee about this. I hope we consult broadly. I know the NDP will be suggesting witnesses at committee. Hopefully we get to hear from all the witnesses we put forward.

This will take time. I think that most importantly we need to give this bill the respect it deserves at committee.

Government Orders

• (1305)

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all thank my colleague for her comments, and frankly for her amazing tribute to Raymond Taavel. I also want to thank her for the amazing tribute to her community of Halifax, the resilience of her community, the love for her community, the strength of her community, all of which we do not celebrate enough in this House when we talk about issues within our own riding boundaries.

I want her to know that the tragic death of Raymond Taavel was felt not just in Halifax, but indeed right across the country. I remember reading the story in the *Hamilton Spectator*. It touched a nerve. It left all of us feeling the loss, but also feeling the need to take concrete action.

I have to admit we were perhaps a little helpless in knowing exactly what needed to be done. I think there is an opportunity before us now to take that action. However, I think my colleague from Halifax is absolutely right; we cannot take that action in haste.

This is not an easy problem. It is a complex one. As my colleague from Edmonton—Strathcona has pointed out, we do need to hear from organizations like the Elizabeth Fry Society, and we need to hear from the John Howard Society. I would suggest that we also need to hear from our provincial partners. All too often in this House we march on as if the federal government were the only government that mattered. Consultation with our provincial partners, and in some instances municipal partners, seems to have become a bad thing somehow.

I think we would move forward in a much more positive way if we were to work collaboratively with other orders of government, and if we work together, in this case, with health experts.

I wonder whether my colleague could comment on whether she thinks the Nova Scotia government in particular might not have some very important things to say, as we continue collectively to want to pay tribute by doing the right thing now. They too shared the tragic loss of Raymond.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hamilton Mountain for her question, but also for her tribute in this House.

I know this story did go across the country, and it touched many of us because it was an important story to be told.

The Nova Scotia government is doing a good job right now of taking this issue very seriously. It has acted swiftly, but not like these guys across the House who act swiftly and hit something over the head with a hammer. They have acted swiftly to figure this out.

There was a strong message sent by government to say, “We will look at what happened. We will take it seriously. We will come up recommendations. We will figure out how we do this differently, better, and how to prevent deaths in the future.”

I suspect this is my last time up, so with the little time I have left, I want to share with this House that Raymond Taavel received a Diamond Jubilee medal this year. He was nominated by many members of our community for the incredible work he did as an activist in our community.

I was very proud this fall to go to Sault Ste. Marie to visit Raymond's family and present the medal to them. They are 100% on board with this. They are proud of Raymond. They are sad because they have lost their brother, their son. However, they also understand that this is complicated, that it does take time, and we do have to be thoughtful when we are coming up with solutions. I have the greatest respect for Raymond's family. They have been really incredible throughout this whole process, and they are a model to look to.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me first thank my colleague from Halifax for her extremely poignant speech, not from the perspective of a technical aspect of a bill but the reality of what it is like to live in a community where a crime that we are talking about, and on which this legislation would have an impact, occurred, and what it means to the community beyond the immediate family of a loved one who lost his or her life. In a very clear way, she has articulated what many of us feel when it comes to mental health, because mental health is such a difficult issue.

In a broader societal context, mental health, for far too long, was something that was pushed into a corner. No one wanted to say out loud that perhaps a loved one, a sister, brother, aunt, uncle, grandparent or parent, may have been suffering from mental illness. It was always the great taboo, “Don't say anything. Say nothing.” There was a stigma attached to it and a great embarrassment for families. As we look at this legislation, we have come a great distance from the day when we did not talk about loved ones who suffered from mental health issues.

No one on this side is suggesting that these acts are not of a magnitude that would horrify us all. All of us would agree that is absolutely true. It is not about saying that if a person is not criminally responsible because of a mental disorder, it would lessen the act. They are horrific acts. For the families of victims who lost their lives, reliving the horrific incident seems to go on and on in some cases. We need to be conscious about how we craft the legislation as it is for only a few people. These acts, thank goodness, rarely occur. Because they occur so rarely, it is that much more difficult to find the balance of how to approach it in law.

I knew a young man many years ago who was schizophrenic. Folks always talk about schizophrenics hearing voices. One day I told him people talked about that. This young man lived in housing with other schizophrenics, where there was support from counsellors and case workers to make sure they took their medications. I knew the young man had suffered from delusions and one day I asked, “When you hear those voices, what do you hear?” Amazingly enough, and I have heard it from other folks because I have been involved with the schizophrenia association for a long time, he said, “It's like 1,000 people standing on the edge of my ear, all screaming at the same time”. He never heard an instruction to do anything, he just heard 1,000 people on the edge of his ear screaming. The only time he got relief was when he slept.

For me, it was a very poignant moment, trying to understand exactly what was happening to that young man. He was about 21 or 22 years old. He does not hear those voices any more. He took his life when he was 23 because those voices would never go away for the rest of his life, and he knew that. He suffered from chronic schizophrenia and he was going to be suffering his entire life. For him, violence was not part of his life, but suffering was.

Government Orders

When we think about this legislation, we should word it in a way that understands schizophrenia because quite often many of the folks who are charged are suffering from it, but we do not then, in turn, point a finger, as the schizophrenia association has said, at all schizophrenics and think that we should avoid them, that they should be put somewhere because they may be a danger to us. We know the reality is that a person would more likely get run over by a bus than be attacked by someone who is schizophrenic.

● (1310)

That is how things might happen to a person, which should never take away from the fact that we are looking at a heinous act and that someone's life is lost.

That is why members have heard from this side, and I hope the Conservatives have heard, that this is a really complicated issue. It is not simplistic. It is about opening a door not knowing what is on the other side and having to deal with it, because it is multi-faceted and multi-layered. The science of mental disorders is ongoing. As therapies and treatments progress and we come to a greater understanding of the diagnosis, we can help folks not get to the place where some of these crimes are perpetrated.

My colleague from Halifax talked about the case just over a year ago. My colleague from British Columbia talked about Pickton and some other cases of a magnitude and scope that is, to use a term I have never used here before, gut-wrenching. When we hear about those cases or read about them in the news, the first thing we feel is ill. It is almost a tangible physical reaction. An individual might be thousands of kilometres away, as many of us were during the incident that happened in the Prairies when the young man was attacked on the bus, or the incident in Halifax a year ago. We may be across the country and not have actual knowledge of the victims or their families, but when we hear about it, we feel our stomachs turn upside down. That is a normal reaction. That is a fair reaction to have initially. However, for us as policy makers, we have to find a way to step back from that first reaction and deal with it. Too often, if we rush in, we may end up with a simplistic response, and there are no simple answers in mental health.

I have had a sense of how mental health works, partly because of some personal experiences around family and from knowing folks who work in it. Members of my family have been psychiatric nurses for a long time. I have been engaged with folks who have mental illnesses for probably going on 40 years now, when I think about my own personal family situation. How do we deal with this very troubling issue that gets pushed aside from time to time, especially in the public health field, which grapples with having enough funding to help the folks who need help? Is there a preventive piece? I am not sure if psychiatrists know if we could have prevented one or two of these incidents from happening through early diagnosis and treatment, constant monitoring, counselling and having a case-worker. We do not know that. Psychiatrists are uncertain as to whether that would happen. Because of that, I would look to the government to say that since we did not do all of that work in advance, this needs to go to committee.

● (1315)

As my colleagues have said earlier, and I know the government heard this, we intend to support the bill to get to second reading,

because we want a comprehensive piece that speaks about the victims. They and their families should be paramount in our minds. On this side, we have no less a sense of what happens to the victims than anyone else in this House. No one has a lock on understanding victims. We all get this. I think this is one of those times in the House when we all understand the severity of these situations and what it means to families. However, we want to see legislation coming out of this process that will enable us to do things better than we are doing them now and to do them right.

We should not simply say that we should incarcerate someone because that will be a deterrent. I hate to say it, but someone who is suffering from mental illness would not understand what a deterrent is. Therefore, a longer sentence would not deter anyone. I understand that in sentencing those who have the ability to understand the crimes they have committed, we have sentencing that could perhaps deter. Criminologists can have that debate. I am not a criminologist. I will leave it for those experts to decide. However, I think we can all agree that those who would be found not criminally responsible would never know that there was a deterrent. In fact, the reason they are not criminally responsible is that they do not actually know that they have committed a crime and would therefore hardly see the deterrent as something in the way of their committing a crime.

We need to sit down and take the time. If the bill needs to be extended in committee, I think this House would agree to extend the time to study it. The bill needs to be looked at in a holistic way, from many perspectives. Good amendments should be welcomed by the government. This is a piece of legislation we should get right. When it is enacted, we should all feel good that we have done the right thing and have helped victims, because that is part of what I think this legislation should do.

This legislation should enable victims to understand that we as individuals have a great outpouring of emotion toward them. We cannot understand their anguish and hurt, because we have not suffered as such ourselves. As my colleague for Halifax quite clearly articulated, a whole community can grieve in a profound way because of the victims. We can all feel that and have a sense of standing with them and helping them rebuild after what has happened to a family member. At the same time, we understand our obligation to the broader society when it comes to the law, which is never easy to do, and I do not pretend that it is.

I know that we and the other side from time to time go back and forth about who is tougher. This is not an issue of who is tougher but of whether we can get the legislation right because of the complexity of someone being declared not criminally responsible because of a mental disorder. It is such a difficult issue. We all need to understand and be supportive, otherwise, when it comes to the broader community, there will be those who will say that the legislation either goes too far one way or does not support victims on the other side. I am hearing from all my colleagues here that this is not what we want to have happen. What we want is legislation that tells victims that we understand how they feel.

Private Members' Business

●(1320)

At the same time, in a legal way, we have to get it right when it comes to persons being tried and not convicted, because the reality is that they would neither be convicted nor acquitted; they would be found not criminally responsible. For those of us who are not lawyers, what does that mean exactly? Does it mean that they are neither here nor there, because they are deemed to be not criminally responsible? That is why this needs to be looked at so clearly.

We have talked about what the numbers are. The Schizophrenia Society of Canada has told us that 0.001% of those who have been charged with Criminal Code violations are deemed not criminally responsible by way of mental disorder. By now writing a law for such a small number, are we casting the net too wide? This number has been put out there a couple of times.

When people are deemed to be not criminally responsible, and they then receive a great deal of treatment while still under some form of incarceration, the rate of recidivism is much lower than it is for the general population in the criminal system in this country. It is anywhere from 2.5% to 7.5%, whereas the rate for the criminals in the regular system is 41% to 44%, which points out that those who are treated with the appropriate treatment are less likely to reoffend.

This week, when the Canadian Police Association was in town, I had the great joy of talking to a number of officers from my region. One of them was talking to me about mental health and what happens when officers come in contact with folks who have mental health issues. They have not committed or perpetrated crimes like this. Quite often it is public disorderliness. They may be in the middle of the street holding up traffic. Usually they have had a psychotic episode and they are off their meds for a while and need to be taken to the hospital. The officer was saying that the police need professionals to deal with those folks, because the officers are not the appropriate people. There has to be a level of expertise from professionals to help with folks who are more of a danger to themselves than to anyone else. What he pointed out to me was that it is not necessarily the police department that should have a major involvement inside the mental health system. It should be mental health professionals.

That is where the link has to be. I do not think we see that in this legislation. When we talk about the justice system, policing, mental health professionals and the health system, where do they intersect to help prevent these crimes in the first place? We need to find a way to work on that system to determine how we then deal with those folks in an appropriate manner. I was grateful for that conversation, because in my mind, it really crystallized for me where it is we should head with this piece of legislation.

We need to look to all of those folks who are already telling us that they want to work with the committee. They want to come forward and help by offering good, sound advice. They do not want to tear the legislation apart and throw it away; they want to help improve it and make it a good piece of legislation that truly works. If at committee the government would look for those answers and advice from those folks, even if they may not always have the answers people are looking for, it may find that when we are finished writing this legislation, we will be able to say that we have done the right thing for the victims, who are first and foremost in our minds.

●(1325)

As my colleague from Halifax pointed out, a year later the victim, through his community and his family, is still reaching out saying that we need to find a sound solution to the problem, not rush to any sort of judgment that ends up with legislation that would not help but might hinder.

I am not saying the legislation in its present form would, but we certainly want to ensure it works for all parties involved and actually gets through the justice system in a way that would make it a better place for it to do the work it needs to do.

As I said at the very beginning, ultimately the victims have to be paramount in minds of members. I know they are in ours.

●(1330)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP) moved that Bill C-480, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (funeral arrangements), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce my bill, Bill C-480, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (funeral arrangements). I wish to thank my hon. colleague from Louis-Hébert for seconding it.

Before I explain the details of this bill, I would first like to give a brief summary and explain where the idea for the bill came from.

In 2011, a woman named Fotini Theodossiades came into my office and told me that her guaranteed income supplement payments had decreased, but no one ever told her why.

After some of my staff did a little digging, we learned that her payments had been cut back because she had withdrawn some money from her RRSPs to pay for funeral arrangements in advance, so that everything would be taken care of when she passed away. What happened to her was totally unacceptable, although it was completely legal.

Canadians who receive the guaranteed income supplement qualify for this program because they are unable to make ends meet with just their pension. Cutting the GIS payments of one of my constituents just because she had the misfortune of having to take money out of her RRSPs to pay for funeral arrangements in advance is really unacceptable.

During the 2011 election campaign, our late leader, Jack Layton, made tackling poverty among Canadian seniors one of the main focuses of his platform.

Private Members' Business

This bill will therefore ensure that recipients of the guaranteed income supplement who have RRSPs will be able to withdraw an amount of up to \$2,500 in order to pay for funeral arrangements in advance. This amount would continue to be taxable. However, it would not be included in the calculation of the GIS for the following year. This will ensure that the GIS of these recipients will not decrease the year after they pay for their advance funeral arrangements, as is the case now.

That is what gave me the idea for the bill before us today. This also shows how serious the NDP is about solving the problems that our constituents deal with every day. We are doing our best to resolve them.

Some may say that \$2,500 is not a lot of money, and that is true. However, I used the minimum amount so that my bill would not be rejected on the pretext that it was too expensive. I say “minimum amount” because, right now, according to Statistics Canada, the average cost of cremation is about \$1,800. If we do the math, \$2,500 minus taxes leaves enough for the minimum.

I would now like to talk about some of the details of my bill. As I mentioned earlier, this bill would allow seniors who receive the guaranteed income supplement to withdraw a taxable amount of up to \$2,500 from their RRSPs in order to pay for funeral arrangements in advance. However, this amount of \$2,500 would not be included in the calculation of the GIS for the following year, and so recipients would not receive lower GIS payments.

In practical terms, Bill C-480 does a lot for seniors and their families. First, this bill gives seniors greater peace of mind and financial security by providing an additional incentive to help them pay for their funeral arrangements in advance.

In addition to helping families absorb the cost, with the help of the \$2,500 GIS exemption, it also gives them peace of mind and removes the burden of making funeral arrangements while grieving a loved one.

Bill C-480 would also allow seniors receiving the GIS, who are the most financially vulnerable in our society, to be in a decent financial situation and to make ends meet each month. It is unbelievable that seniors such as Ms. Theodossiadis could find themselves in a precarious financial situation simply because they want to save their children from the financial burden of funeral arrangements.

The NDP is committed to fighting poverty among seniors. It was a cause championed by Jack Layton.

• (1335)

Bill C-480 aims to do just that, and it will help make our seniors more financially stable.

Richard Allaire, a community organizer in Laval who supports my bill, shared this thought with me. It is very relevant and, sadly, very true. He said that we always think about seniors in terms of their past and that this bill is the first one that has focused on building them a better future. That is exactly what I am trying to do with this bill, and that is what my NDP colleagues want as well.

For the past few days, I have been hearing government members ask how much this would cost the government, which indicates that they have some interest in Bill C-480, but they are concerned about how much it might cost. I personally feel that no price is too high when it comes to our seniors. However, I have some good news for my colleagues.

The Library of Parliament has determined that the cost to the government of this measure that will help scores of Canadians will be a mere \$132,400 a year. In order to reduce the poverty of our seniors, the government would have to spend less than an MP's salary.

On this side of the House, we believe that tackling seniors' poverty with an amount that is less than an average MP's salary is a no-brainer.

During the election campaign, the NDP had a great slogan: “Working together”. This bill provides a perfect opportunity for all of us, no matter what our political affiliation, to prove to the Canadians who elected us that we can work together and address the pressing social problem of reducing seniors' poverty.

To those who might point out that the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan already have a benefit that covers funeral costs, I would say this. In the case of the CPP, the benefit is only available to those who worked full-time for much of their lives. They have to meet certain criteria to be eligible. Seniors receiving the guaranteed income supplement do so because they cannot make ends meet with their pension. The people who would benefit from Bill C-480 have little or no access to CPP benefits.

Furthermore, the amount paid by the CPP can only be used to pay for funerals and not to prearrange funerals. In that regard, Janet Gray, a certified financial planner and elder planning counsellor, said that everyone wants to help financially vulnerable seniors and that Bill C-480 is a good way to do it.

She adds that today's seniors, especially older ones, are less likely to have worked full time for most of their career. According to her, they may not qualify for CPP. She also says that the measure in Bill C-480 does not compete with existing measures. On the contrary, it is meant to complement CPP and the Quebec pension plan.

The bill we have before us today seeks to send a strong message to our seniors and the Canadian public at large. Bill C-480 gives us an opportunity to deal in part with the serious problem of seniors' poverty.

Private Members' Business

We have an opportunity to show the most financially vulnerable people in our country that Parliament is ready to help them. We have an opportunity to show all Canadians that we are prepared to work together to solve the problems facing them. We have an opportunity, in some small way, to put an end to people's cynical attitude toward politics and politicians, by showing that we can sometimes set aside partisanship and live up to the expectations of Canada and Canadians.

• (1340)

Today we have an opportunity to take a step, a first step to make this country fairer for all.

[English]

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member opposite could explain to me and to other members in the House exactly what the cost of the bill would ultimately be to Canadians.

My understanding is that it is approximately \$100 million as of 2014 if all GIS beneficiaries use this exemption. It is a significantly high cost to Canadian taxpayers.

I would just like to know what the member's cost estimates were with respect to the bill.

[Translation]

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where my colleague got her numbers from, but mine came directly from the Library of Parliament and are based on Statistics Canada data.

Approximately 11% of retired Canadians make funeral arrangements in advance, and 47% of them use their RRSPs to do so. According to figures published by Statistics Canada and to the Library's calculations, this would cost a total of \$132,400 a year.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is important to note here is that the seniors we are talking about are low-income seniors. That is the point that really needs to be emphasized.

At the end of the day, there is a serious issue with regard to poverty in our country. Our seniors are on a fixed income. Affording the opportunity for a senior to be able to get into RSPs and to be able to do some planning for the future with regard to their ultimate passing is a responsible way of dealing with legislation. I commend the member for the effort. I will have the opportunity to speak a little bit more on it shortly.

My question is this: to what degree is the member prepared to accept amendments? Does he feel that there might be some amendments if the bill were to pass, or does he feel confident that the bill is adequate to go all the way through?

[Translation]

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I set the amount at \$2,500 because that is an amount I am comfortable with. I think that with \$132,400 a year it will work. However, if some people want to propose amendments to increase

the limit, I am have no problem with that. I am prepared to accept amendments. All I want is for our least fortunate seniors to be able to have a peaceful retirement.

[English]

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague from Laval—Les Îles for this excellent bill. Seniors who are already at the poverty line have come to me in my riding with the same issue. The issue is that their income in a following year is affected by their decisions in the previous year. They do not know that this is going to happen until the following year, so they cannot plan for it.

This is a simple but effective change that would change the lives of many seniors, and I wish to commend the member for his foresight in this bill.

It is a very small cost to any treasury. It is less than the cost of one senator per year.

• (1345)

[Translation]

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

This woman came to my office. Receiving even just a few dollars a month through the guaranteed income supplement makes all the difference. It makes all the difference between being able to buy a pint of milk or drinking nothing for a day or two. These people primarily do this for their children. They do not even do it for themselves; they do it to avoid problems for their children. I have lost my parents, but if they had had access to this and could have made funeral arrangements in advance, I think it would have made things easier on the whole family.

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being invited to participate in this debate regarding Bill C-480.

[English]

If adopted, the bill would allow guaranteed income supplement recipients to withdraw up to \$2,500 from a registered retirement savings plan or RRIF in order to pay for funeral arrangements in advance without having their GIS reduced.

Let me start by saying that I can understand the good intentions behind the member's idea for moving this legislation. However, I find the proposed legislation has some serious shortcomings.

All members on both sides of the House want to ensure that Canadian seniors obtain financial security. In fact, our government has done a great deal to help our seniors prosper in their retirement years.

[Translation]

As the members of the House are likely aware, the most important financial support we provide to seniors is through our public pensions. Canada's public pensions are highly regarded internationally, and for good reason. They are credited with playing a very significant role in reducing low-income rates among seniors.

Private Members' Business

[English]

Let us just look at a telling indicator. The incidence of poverty among seniors in Canada has dropped from a rate of 21.4% in 1980 to 5.3% in 2010.

Now let us look more closely at the sources of retirement income, which generally have three components.

The first is old age security. This includes the allowance for the survivor and the guaranteed income supplement, the GIS, which provides additional money on top of the old age security pension to low-income seniors living in Canada.

The Canadian pension plan, or CPP, is a second component for those who have worked and made contributions.

The third pillar consists of personal savings, including employer pension plans, registered retirement savings plans and tax-free saving accounts, as well as other savings and investments.

Together, OAS and CPP are designated to provide a modest base upon which to build additional retirement income. This year, Canadians will receive over \$76 billion in benefits through the Canada pension plan, old age security and the GIS.

[Translation]

As I said earlier, the guaranteed income supplement provides extra support to seniors with little or no income and has been a great success in reducing poverty among seniors.

[English]

In 2008, we increased the GIS earnings exceptions from \$500 to \$3,500. This enables low-income working seniors to keep more money in their hands. In 2011, we provided the largest GIS increase in 25 years to the most vulnerable seniors. This measure is helping to lift Canada's lowest-income seniors out of poverty.

More than 680,000 low-income seniors are benefiting from this increase. These seniors are now receiving additional GIS, up to \$614 for single seniors and \$859 for couples. This year we are providing more tax relief for seniors and pensioners, saving them \$2.5 billion.

[Translation]

This measure and all of the others that I have outlined demonstrate that the Government of Canada is taking concrete steps to support seniors.

[English]

We are actively helping Canadians prepare for and achieve financial security in their later years. That is why seniors' poverty is at an all-time low in Canada.

As I mentioned earlier, there are some issues with the bill. Currently the calculation of income to determine GIS eligibility is determined in accordance with the Income Tax Act. The proposed exemption for income used for funeral arrangements would introduce a new concept of calculations of income for the calculation of the GIS. This likely would create calls for similar exemptions on other compassionate grounds. This would create a precedent for more costly measures that are not affordable under the current fiscal climate.

It would also raise equity issues for seniors, as this exemption would only benefit those seniors who use RRSPs or RRIFs to cover their funeral expenses and would do nothing for seniors who have no savings. It would only benefit the 10% of GIS recipients who have planned for retirement by saving and would not help the poorest of seniors, who are the ones who benefit the most from the GIS.

• (1350)

Let us be clear on this point. The bill would not be helping the most vulnerable of seniors, but rather those who actually have investments in banks.

The Office of the Chief Actuary estimates that the additional program cost associated with this proposed amendment could be as high as \$81 million in the first year, if all GIS beneficiaries with RRSPs and RRIFs used this exemption. The bill would also generate additional administrative costs. It is estimated there would be an administrative cost of up to \$12 million each year. This is a total cost of almost \$100 million in an era of fiscal restraint.

The guaranteed income supplement is paid 100% by taxpayers dollars. I would just ask where the NDP members are in proposing this \$100 million tax increase. I think we know the answer to that: from the pockets of hard-working Canadians. I find it astounding that again and again proposals are brought forward by the NDP, but all they do is increase the taxes on hard-working Canadians.

Lastly, the bill would duplicate allowances for funeral expenses in other jurisdictions. The CPP and Quebec pension plan, for example, provide one-time death benefits of up to \$2,500, or on behalf of the estate of a deceased contributor. In addition, some provinces, territories and municipalities also offer subsidies for funeral arrangements for low-income individuals. British Columbia, for examples, offers assistance of up to \$3,000 for low-income residents who have little or no assets.

Similar benefits are available in Alberta, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., and for first nations living on reserve. As well, some municipalities, like Toronto, offer similar assistance to cover funeral expenses. In light of these programs, this proposed bill would be doubling the efforts made at all those levels.

Given the considerable cost, the fact that it would fail to provide equity benefits for seniors, and that the assistance would not be targeted to the seniors who are in need of it most, our government will not be supporting Bill C-480. While I understand the good intentions of the member opposite, I would encourage all members of this House to join me in voting against the bill.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and address this piece of legislation. We need to deal with issues surrounding poverty and assist those individuals who are on fixed income. These are important issues.

Private Members' Business

I listened to the parliamentary secretary's response to the bill and I am somewhat disappointed. There is no doubt that she is doing a bit of cherry-picking when she says that the bill would only cater to those individuals who have registered plans or RRIF plans. A significant number of seniors live in poverty who do not have access to these types of plans.

I would suggest to the member that this legislation is much like the pooled registered pension plan legislation. That legislation was brought in by the government and we supported it in principle because we saw it as a tool for many seniors. It will not resolve all pension-related issues, but it is an important tool for seniors able to put money aside in some form of pooled pension plan.

The Liberal Party brought suggestions to the floor of the House with respect to what the government could have done to improve the plan. Unfortunately, the Conservatives did not accept the amendments but still in principle we supported what the government was doing.

Now we have a private member's bill before the House. It would do two different things. It would be yet another tool that could be used by a good number of seniors in Canada who have had the good fortune to build up a nest egg through RRSPs, for example, but are still dependent on an income supplement. If they qualified for the income supplement that means they need additional resources. There is a good chance that they are living below the poverty line.

When I look at the bill being proposed by the member, I see a bill that would address an important issue facing many seniors. It is a tool that could be used to alleviate many of their concerns. To be able to use an RRSP to prepay for funeral arrangements would be a good thing.

The Liberal Party has been very supportive of initiatives that derive benefits for our seniors and in particular get them out of poverty.

During an election campaign we all have the opportunity to knock on doors. I have heard a lot of disheartening stories from seniors on fixed incomes. They may receive the OAS and the income supplement but that is just not enough. I have had seniors tell me, and I suspect others in the chamber have had seniors tell them the same thing, that they have to figure out the best way to spend a limited amount of money. They have to decide between taking a grandchild out for a snack, getting required medicine, or cutting back on their already small and limited food budget.

● (1355)

We have far too many seniors across our land who have been put in this position where they have to make these types of decisions. I think it is very important for us to reflect on what we provide our seniors and how we might assist them in making decisions.

For a good number of seniors, the issue of their passing is something that is there. In many cases they want to make pre-arrangements. What we have is a progressive idea on which seniors will be able to capitalize.

I question the numbers the parliamentary secretary has brought to floor. I do not believe them, quite frankly. She is presenting an extreme to the House. Whatever that dollar value is, I still want to

highlight, as I did in the question, that we are not talking about the wealthiest of our society. We are talking about seniors who in many ways are in a poverty type situation by national average standards.

It behooves us, and it is our responsibility, at the very least, to see the bill go to committee. We support the bill. We want to see it go to committee. We look to the Conservative backbenchers in particular to recognize the value of what has been suggested and allow it to go to committee.

Quite often we are afforded the opportunity on private members' bills to vote without party discipline. It does not take many to recognize the value of a bill and at the very least allow it to go to committee where we can hear from some of the different stakeholders. Maybe we could even get to the bottom of what some of these potential costs might actually be, which could address some of the concerns as to why many of the Conservatives or others might not necessarily want to support the bill. There is a great deal of merit to it.

I want to emphasize that we not overlook the importance of our seniors and pensions. I had a general mailer that went out to my constituents, something I do, like others, on a regular basis. One of the things I thought said so much was around the issue of pensions. As members will recall, over a year ago when while in Europe the Prime Minister made the decision that he wanted to cut back on OAS. When I say cut back, I mean he wanted to increase the age of retirement from 65 to 67.

Like many members of Parliament, we went to our constituents and asked what they had to say. I have one small piece of paper in the form of petition. The person who sent it back to me signed it. It literally attached numerous pieces of paper. I do not want to use it as a demonstration, but I want to emphasize there are some issues that really touch the population such as why not or why we are doing this.

In this case, I would suggest for the government and all members of the House, why not? This bill shows some compassion to our seniors. It is an area I believe could receive support from all political parties. At the very least, members should acknowledge it as a bill that should go to the committee stage to allow more facts to come out.

I am relatively comfortable believing that if this bill passes, it will meet the needs and ultimately through committee, we will find that it has the support to go all the way through. We have very little to lose in allowing that to happen.

I would encourage members to reflect on the message, on the principle of the bill and what it attempts to do and on past initiatives.

● (1400)

We have seen ideas flow from members of all political parties on ways we can improve the living standards of those individuals who are in the low income bracket in many different forms, but especially in regard to the old age supplement and the guaranteed income supplement. Therefore, I really encourage members to reflect on the value of contributing where we can to changes that could really make a difference.

Private Members' Business

We talked at great length about expanding employment insurance program benefits to others, whether someone was caring for an elderly family member or a during a family tragedy. There are all sorts of changes we have seen to social financial support programs over the last two decades. I see this as yet another of a number that could have a very positive impact.

I appreciate the member for bringing forward the bill. We will have to hope that maybe we can get members from all sides of the House supporting it. My understanding is that members of the Liberal caucus will be supporting it.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in support of this bill put forward by the member for Laval—Les Îles, who has obviously put together something that will be very helpful to a lot of the poorest of Canadians.

That is part of what the NDP has pledged to do in all of its years of existence: to ensure that the poorest of Canadians are looked after, that we are not placing wrongful burdens on people in our society, and that we are dealing with the poorest citizens and, in particular, the poorest seniors in a way that is humane, thoughtful and reasonable. That is what this bill is.

Being poor in Canada ought not to be a crime, but sometimes poor people are penalized for things most Canadians take for granted. It could be something as simple as prepaying funeral expenses as part of looking after themselves and their families in the future.

We sometimes forget the daily constraints faced by poor people, the three million or so Canadians who live below Canada's poverty line. That is one of the worst records in the G7. Finding enough money after paying the rent is a daily challenge. Too often they do not have enough money to feed their children or to look after their health or their future. It is a sad reality that in a country as rich as ours, hundreds of thousands of people need help putting food on the table and have to rely on food banks. This is a shame and a travesty.

It is said that the inevitable things in life are death and taxes. I will not talk about the tax increases in the last federal budget, which will hurt poor people more than most, but there is a cost to dealing with the practicalities of death, which are funeral expenses. The most prudent way to deal with these expenses is through a prepaid funeral plan. Death comes to poor people as it does to anyone else, but why should the poor be penalized for enlisting in a prepaid funeral expense plan? That is exactly what the government does to elderly people who, because of their poverty, qualify for the guaranteed income supplement as part of old age security.

Let us understand this. For a single senior to qualify for GIS, income must be below \$16,500 a year, and for a couple, it must be below \$21,888 a year. Let us face it: at those income levels, people are poor. Why, then, does the government penalize those same seniors when they withdraw a bit of money from their RRSPs to pay for the inevitable, their funerals, by cutting their GIS benefit? That is what the current law does, and that is simply penalizing the poor. The irony is astounding.

This bill would allow those same seniors to prepay their funeral expenses with money from an RRSP. This makes sense. It does absolutely nothing to change the living conditions of seniors. This is,

in fact, a prudent course of action, a humane, rational, reasonable and emotional course of action to protect their families in the future from having to deal with part of the tragedy of their deaths. Some of the expenses and emotional turmoil will have been taken care of by the seniors themselves. Who better could decide how to do that?

Having an RRSP is not a crime in this country. Some seniors have RRSPs. The government encourages savings through RRSPs, and 47% of seniors on OAS have an RRSP. Surely being poor and dying, as we all do, is not a crime. Using a modest sum of \$2,500, a very small amount of money in the grand scheme of things, to pay for funeral expenses should never be considered income in the hands of a senior, but that is what the government is suggesting it is and that is, in fact, the case now. If seniors withdraw \$2,500 to prepay funeral expenses, that withdrawal becomes income in that year.

Did they themselves receive a benefit from that \$2,500? Did they go out and buy a new TV or an old clunker of a car? Did they do anything to improve their lot in life? No. They are protecting their loved ones from the problems that will face them with when those individuals pass away, and that is not something that should be counted as income. That is what this bill proposes in the calculation of the future GIS.

Luckily, I am not the only one who sees the irony. A single senior with an annual income of \$16,000 a year could not afford this any other way. Nobody is going to be able to afford to prepay funeral expenses without dipping into their RRSPs.

● (1405)

The bill stands on its own merits. It is a clear example of a commitment we in the NDP have made to reduce poverty among seniors. I need not remind the government that the NDP, in fact, voted against the budget in 2011 because it did not actually take all seniors out of poverty. Jack Layton and the NDP had suggested to the government, in 2010, in 2009, in 2008, that we needed to deal with that. The government only did a half-measure, which was to raise the level of the GIS, but it was nowhere near enough to get all seniors out of poverty. Then the next year, it took all the money back by telling seniors they could not retire until they are 67 anyway, and actually take more than that money back. We have a government that gives with one hand and takes back with the other.

The irony of this situation is that these seniors are the poorest of the poor in the seniors' world, yet the government will, as the parliamentary secretary has already said, vote against the bill on the basis of some fabricated cost. Some of the government members will anyway. It is a private member's bill and the vote is up to each individual member.

Private Members' Business

In fact, only those seniors who have an RRSP and only those seniors who decide to do this will benefit, but they will not actually benefit. What will happen is the government will continue to pay them what it has paid them already. Therefore, we are not talking about a cost. We are talking about a reduction in tax savings that the government is taking from these seniors. It is taking money out of the pockets of seniors who do this in the year following their use of this money to prepay their funeral expenses. That is what the government is currently doing. It is taking money out of the pockets of seniors.

We are suggesting that these are the poorest of seniors to begin with. We should not be taking money out of their pockets in subsequent years. The minister has suggested this is an outrageous and exorbitant amount of money. Our calculations are about 1,000 times less than the minister's own calculations. I feel our calculations are much more accurate and more closely reflect what it would mean when it stopped taking money out of the pockets of seniors.

We are not suggesting this money should not be taxable. If a seniors withdraw money from their RRSPs, none of those rules would change. There is no huge administrative expense to this. There is no enormous burden. This is a simple and effective way to allow seniors to plan their death. This is something all seniors should be able to do with dignity, just as the rest of Canadians do.

We firmly believe this is part of an overall policy of ensuring that the people who built this great country, our seniors, are in fact looked after in the best and most humane way. We have been unsuccessful in convincing the government to lift them all out of poverty and we have been unsuccessful so far, however, in 2015 we will change that, in convincing the government to back off on making them wait until they are 67 before they get any of this money. That two-year wait will cause untold harm on a number of seniors in our country.

However, we can, and should, take this simple and straightforward approach and this simple and straightforward forward measure of ensuring that seniors who want to plan their death have the ability to do so without it costing them out of pocket the following year as the government takes the money back.

•(1410)

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-480.

The bill would amend the Old Age Security Act to exclude from the calculation of income for the purpose of guaranteed income supplement, GIS, the lesser of the amount of benefits received from a registered retirement savings plan, RRSP, or a registered retirement income fund, RRIF, and the amount not exceeding \$2,500 paid to or under an eligible funeral arrangement.

To simplify this, it means that seniors receiving GIS would be able to withdraw up to \$2,500 from their RRSP or RRIF to pre-arrange their funeral without having that money be part of the calculation as to whether or not they qualify for GIS.

The hon. member for Laval—Les Îles maintains that this would be a step toward reducing poverty among our seniors. On the surface, this seems like a very compassionate action to take. However, I cannot support the bill.

Let me explain a few things about federal income programs for Canadians over 65. The old age security pension is a monthly payment available to most seniors age 65 and older who meet the legal status and resident requirements. If individuals meet these requirements, they can receive the OAS pension, even if they are still working or have never worked.

The OAS is financed from taxes collected by the Government of Canada, which means that increases and benefits immediately affect the balance of the budget.

The Canadian pension plan, on the other hand, is a contributory program that people pay into when they work. The CPP provides a range of benefits to contributors and their families, including retirement, post-retirement, disability, survivor and death benefits. This is a savings program where Canadians save a portion of their income, which is then used to pay their benefits in their later years.

The OAS program and the CPP combined with Canadians' personal retirement savings, investments and private pension plans provide Canadians with one of the best retirement income systems in the world.

In addition to the OAS pension benefit, the OAS program has three types of benefits that provide additional support to seniors who have low incomes: the guaranteed income supplement, the allowance, and the allowance for the survivor. To use the technical term, these three benefits are income tested. That term is important. The amount of GIS individuals are entitled to receive is based on their income. If their income in retirement is below a certain threshold, they can receive the GIS. If their income rises above that threshold, they cannot.

The Old Age Security Act defines income in the same way the Income Tax Act does. In the Income Tax Act, withdrawals from RRSPs and RRIFs are considered income, and therefore, they are also considered income for the purposes of the GIS.

Let me provide a hypothetical case. Martin is retired and receiving the OAS. Even with the OAS, his monthly income is only \$1,000. Because his income is so low, he is eligible for additional support immediately through a monthly GIS benefit. Martin has \$30,000 in an RRSP, but as long as it stays in the plan, it is irrelevant to his receiving the GIS.

However, let us say that he makes the decision to withdraw \$10,000 from the RRSP. His income for the year has now gone over the GIS threshold, and his benefit would be cut back.

The Old Age Security Act currently does not allow expense-related exemptions, other than the ones already provided under the Income Tax Act. Rather, the existing exemptions under the Old Age Security Act generally relate to earnings and receipt of provincial or territorial social assistance.

Private Members' Business

The amendment proposed by my hon. colleague would create an exemption for money withdrawn for funeral expenses. Of course, these expenses would have to be documented and forms submitted to the GIS authority for review. This would increase the paperwork that the government would have to do and raise the cost of administering the program by \$81 million, as estimated by the Chief Actuary. It is also estimated that the administrative cost of the program could be up to \$12 million in addition, almost \$100 million in cost.

Additionally, the proposed legislation would also raise issues of fairness, as it would only benefit the seniors who have RRSPs and RRIFs, and it would do nothing for seniors who have no savings or use different savings vehicles.

The legislation would not be helping the poorest of seniors. It would be helping those who still have savings in various registered investments.

● (1415)

I would also point out that the Canada pension plan already provides a one-time death benefit of up to \$2,500 to the estate of a deceased contributor. That money can be used for funeral expenses. For people who receive the CPP, the proposed amendment would duplicate public assistance for the same expense.

The hon. member for Laval wants to reduce poverty among seniors, and so do we. Our government is committed to financial security for older Canadians, and we have done a lot to help since we formed the government. Together, the CPP, the OAS and the GIS have contributed to reducing the rate of poverty among Canadian seniors to one of the lowest levels in the world. In fact, poverty among seniors is lower than that of the general population.

In 2011, we provided the largest GIS increase in 25 years to the most vulnerable of seniors. This measure is helping to lift Canada's lowest-income seniors out of poverty. More than 680,000 low-income seniors are benefiting from that increase. These seniors are now receiving an additional GIS, up to \$614 a month for individuals and up to \$859 for couples.

This year, we are providing more tax relief for seniors on pensions, saving them more than \$2.5 billion. This is in addition to creating pension splitting for seniors, allowing couples to significantly reduce their tax burden in many cases. Since we have formed government, we have also taken 380,000 seniors off the tax rolls completely.

I can appreciate the good intentions of the member in moving this legislation. However, we cannot support the cost and the equity of this legislation. We are living in a time of fiscal restraint. Our government has acted to help the poorest of seniors, those who need the most help. Poverty among seniors is now at an all-time low, thanks to the investments this government has made.

For these reasons, I encourage all members of the House to vote against this legislation.

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Montcalm has nine minutes.

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to the bill introduced by my colleague from Laval—Les Îles, Bill C-480, which would help reduce poverty among seniors.

My NDP colleague has a huge heart, but he is also a man of action. This bill before us proves it, because he is trying to fix a problem that primarily affects our seniors. I commend him for trying to bring in a measure to reduce poverty among seniors.

This bill would amend the Old Age Security Act with respect to funeral arrangements. Old age security recipients who have an RRSP could withdraw the taxable amount of \$2,500 from their RRSP to make funeral arrangements in advance. This amount would be excluded from their income for their guaranteed income supplement calculation the following year. As a result, their guaranteed income supplement benefits would not be cut or decreased the following year.

All members know that many Canadian families are struggling to make ends meet, and having to cope with funeral costs only makes their existing financial burden worse. This is a tangible measure to combat poverty among seniors and improve their financial security.

We know that low-income seniors typically spend 60% of their monthly budget on housing and food. Their already tight budgets are further consumed by health care necessities, such as medication. They often have to go without essential care because they cannot afford it, and then on top of that, they have to cope with the cost of funeral arrangements, which is a considerable expense for these families.

This bill is in line with our social democratic values and our dedication to social justice. We believe that all seniors should have the right to a comfortable retirement. We want to reduce poverty among seniors, and this bill is part of the philosophy that inspires us as New Democrats. We should enable our seniors to grow old with dignity, and we should guarantee them financial and moral peace of mind. That is the goal of this bill. Seniors should not have to put themselves in a difficult financial position to pay for funeral arrangements in advance.

This bill would take care of that because the guaranteed income supplement would not be affected during the following fiscal year. It is unacceptable that families should have to bear such a huge financial and moral burden alone. Why give them another problem to deal with when they are already grieving the loss of a loved one? This measure will help our neediest seniors, those who receive the guaranteed income supplement.

Private Members' Business

We are working hard to fight poverty among seniors, but the Conservatives are doing just the opposite with their reforms. We know that two-thirds of the population does not have a private retirement fund and has to depend on public money after the age of 65. Need I remind the House that state support for seniors is minimal indeed?

Unfortunately, the Conservative government is not coming up with any concrete solutions to address poverty among seniors. On the contrary, it is proposing delaying access to old age security for two years. Raising the legal retirement age from 65 to 67 will only increase poverty for many people. It will only add to the number of seniors already living below the poverty line in Canada. According to a recent study by the Center for Interuniversity Research and Analysis of Organizations, or CIRANO, this increase will raise the proportion of people aged 65 and 66 living under the low income cutoff from 6% to 17%.

This bill proposes the exact opposite. It would help those who are the least fortunate in our society, and more specifically, it would help reduce poverty among our seniors. By supporting this bill, we can eliminate a huge financial burden for our seniors and their families. Fighting poverty among seniors was one of our campaign promises, and clearly, we are keeping our word.

We want to come up with real solutions to the problems facing Canadians, instead of making irresponsible cuts to old age security. The government should not be going after Canadian workers like this.

We in the NDP are committed to lifting seniors out of poverty and guaranteeing a comfortable retirement for all Canadians. We want to reduce social inequality and help those less fortunate so they can live in better conditions.

● (1425)

My colleague's bill has the support of many stakeholders. According to Janet Gray, certified financial planner and elder planning counsellor, everyone wants to help needy seniors. This bill is a good way to do that.

The Canada pension plan provides \$2,500 to cover funeral expenses. However, Ms. Gray believes that today's seniors, especially older seniors, are less likely to have worked full time for most of their career and therefore may not be eligible for CPP. She also noted that the CPP benefit cannot be used to pay for funeral arrangements in advance. It can only be used to pay for funeral arrangements made after the death of the beneficiary.

It is true that the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan have similar benefits. However, the purpose of this bill is to establish a complementary measure not a competing one. It will help those most in need, our seniors who receive the guaranteed income supplement.

This bill shows that we are listening to our constituents and that, as MPs, resolving their problems should be our priority.

However, that is not all. This bill will also boost sales for co-operatives and stimulate the local economy. It will serve as an added incentive for people who are thinking about making funeral arrangements in advance. In the end, the sales of funeral co-operatives will increase, which will in turn stimulate the local economy.

That is the essence of this bill. It seeks to implement a practical measure to reduce poverty among seniors while allowing them to continue to have a respectable financial situation after paying for funeral arrangements in advance. Their guaranteed income supplement will not be affected in the following fiscal year. They will therefore have peace of mind and financial security, knowing that they will not be leaving their family with the burden of paying for their funeral.

It is high time we provided financial help to the most vulnerable members of our society. This bill does just that.

Given that the income gap between the rich and the poor has only grown over the years, it is time to take action. The income gap is the biggest it has been in 30 years. Given that financial status is one of the primary determinants of health, poverty should not be taken lightly.

Socio-economic inequalities are getting worse every day. This has a significant impact on people's health and on a growing number of older people, many of whom have barely enough money to house and feed themselves adequately, let alone pay for other essential resources.

Poverty is costly, and we have to do something about it. That goes double for vulnerable people. Seniors, who are at greater risk of living in poverty, are among those most vulnerable.

According to a study by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économique, the number of low-income seniors climbed dramatically from 4.6% in 1996 to 12.3% in 2008.

We must take steps to improve our seniors' financial health. That is why I am asking all members to support this bill at second reading.

I would like to add that this is not about money. Those who support this bill will demonstrate good will, empathy and humanity. I urge them to listen to their hearts and realize that, because they cannot be against what is right, they cannot be against this bill.

● (1430)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time provided for consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

[English]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. JOE COMARTIN

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BRUCE STANTON

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

MR. NATHAN CULLEN

MS. JUDY FOOTE

HON. ROB MERRIFIELD

HON. GORDON O'CONNOR

MS. NYCOLE TURMEL

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	Ontario	CPC
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council	Nunavut	Nunavut	CPC
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	Ontario	NDP
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	CPC
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Armstrong, Scott	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Fredericton	New Brunswick	CPC
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	NDP
Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	Québec	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	NDP
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	NDP
Bergen, Candice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	Québec	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister for La Francophonie.....	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Boivin, Françoise.....	Gatineau	Québec	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	NDP
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Boulerice, Alexandre.....	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie....	Québec	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine.....	Hochelaga	Québec	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik.....	Saint-Jean.....	Québec	NDP
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen.....	Berthier—Maskinongé.....	Québec	NDP
Brown, Gordon.....	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora.....	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South.....	Manitoba	CPC
Butt, Brad.....	Mississauga—Streetsville.....	Ontario	CPC
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	Lib.
Calandra, Paul , Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Hon. Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Carmichael, John.....	Don Valley West	Ontario	CPC
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	NDP
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health....	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island....	Lib.
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	Ontario	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant..	Québec	NDP
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu.....	Pickering—Scarborough East ..	Ontario	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Choquette, François	Drummond	Québec	NDP
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clarke, Rob.....	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.....	Saskatchewan	CPC
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe, The Deputy Speaker	Windsor—Tecumseh.....	Ontario	NDP
Côté, Raymond.....	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin.....	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crockatt, Joan	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	Ontario	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	NDP
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	NDP
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	NDP
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	Québec	NDP
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Minister of International Cooperation	Vaughan	Ontario	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Findlay, Hon. Kerry-Lynne D., Associate Minister of National Defence	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Transport)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	Québec	NDP
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	Québec	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	Québec	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	NDP
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	Ind. Cons.
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	Ontario	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Groguhé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	Québec	NDP
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	NDP
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	NDP
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	Ontario	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	Ontario	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	Ind.
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	NDP
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	Ontario	NDP
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	Ontario	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	Alberta	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	Lib.
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	Québec	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent	Québec	NDP
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Québec	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hélène	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	NDP
Leef, Ryan	Yukon	Yukon	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	Ontario	CPC
Liu, Laurin	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Québec	NDP
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Mai, Hoang	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	NDP
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathyssen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	NDP
May, Elizabeth	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	GP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Ontario	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	Ontario	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Ontario	Lib.
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Menegakis, Costas	Richmond Hill	Ontario	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance)	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Michaud, Éline	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Québec	NDP
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	NDP
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Hon. Rob	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick	CPC
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	NDP
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Mulcair, Hon. Thomas, Leader of the Opposition	Outremont	Québec	NDP
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	NDP
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	Québec	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval	Québec	NDP
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	New Brunswick	CPC
Oritz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	CPC
O'Toole, Erin	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Québec	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	Québec	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	BQ
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Péclet, Ève	La Pointe-de-l'Île	Québec	NDP
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm	Québec	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	CPC
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	NDP
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Rankin, Murray	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	Alberta	CPC
Ravnat, Mathieu	Pontiac	Québec	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	Ontario	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	Québec	NDP
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	British Columbia	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CPC
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Scott, Craig	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	Ontario	CPC
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	NDP
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	CPC
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	NDP
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	Lib.
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Mark	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	Ontario	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	Ontario	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Public Safety	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix— Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	NDP
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	CPC
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Québec	Lib.
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	Ontario	CPC
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	NDP
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	British Columbia	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
VACANCY	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Crockatt, Joan	Calgary Centre	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	CPC
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Ind. Cons.
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance)	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Cannan, Hon. Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	CPC
Findlay, Hon. Kerry-Lynne D., Associate Minister of National Defence	Delta—Richmond East	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
May, Elizabeth	Saanich—Gulf Islands	GP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Rankin, Murray	Victoria	NDP
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification	North Vancouver	CPC
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	NDP
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Mark	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
MANITOBA (14)		
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	NDP
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	CPC
Bergen, Candice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Transport)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Saint Boniface	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Lib.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Public Safety	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	CPC
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Fredericton	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Hon. Rob	Fundy Royal	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Madawaska—Restigouche	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (6)		
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	NDP
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	NDP
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls— Windsor	Lib.
VACANCY	Labrador	
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Armstrong, Scott	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence	Central Nova	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
NUNAVUT (1)		
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council	Nunavut	CPC
ONTARIO (106)		
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga—Brampton South	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Ajax—Pickering	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	NDP
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	CPC
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	CPC
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	CPC
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe, The Deputy Speaker	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Minister of International Cooperation	Vaughan	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	NDP
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	NDP
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ind.
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	NDP
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	CPC
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	CPC
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
Menegakis, Costas	Richmond Hill	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	CPC
O'Toole, Erin	Durham	CPC
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	CPC
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Scott, Craig	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	NDP
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	CPC
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	CPC
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Egmont	CPC
QUÉBEC (75)		
Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	NDP
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Beauce	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister for La Francophonie	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	NDP
Boulerice, Alexandre	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine	Hochelaga	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik	Saint-Jean	NDP
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen	Berthier—Maskinongé	NDP
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	NDP
Choquette, François	Drummond	NDP
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Côté, Raymond	Beauport—Limoilou	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	NDP
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	NDP
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	NDP
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	NDP
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	NDP
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Groguhé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	NDP
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	NDP
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	NDP
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent	NDP
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
LeBlanc, Hélène	LaSalle—Émard	NDP
Liu, Laurin	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	NDP
Mai, Hoang	Brossard—La Prairie	NDP
Michaud, Élane	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	NDP
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	NDP
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	NDP
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Mulcair, Hon. Thomas, Leader of the Opposition	Outremont	NDP
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	NDP
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval	NDP
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	BQ
Pécelet, Ève	La Pointe-de-l'Île	NDP
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	NDP
Ravignat, Mathieu	Pontiac	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	NDP
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	NDP
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Lib.
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	NDP
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Lib.
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	NDP
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Lib.
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Leef, Ryan	Yukon	CPC

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of April 26, 2013 — 1st Session, 41st Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:	Chris Warkentin	Vice-Chairs:	Carolyn Bennett Jean Crowder
Stella Ambler Dennis Bevington Ray Boughen	Rob Clarke Jonathan Genest-Jourdain	Carol Hughes Brent Rathgeber	Greg Rickford Kyle Seeback

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Associate Members

Eve Adams	Michael Chong	Daryl Kramp	Blake Richards
Mark Adler	Joan Crockatt	Mike Lake	Romeo Saganash
Dan Albas	Nathan Cullen	Kevin Lamoureux	Andrew Saxton
Harold Albrecht	Joe Daniel	Guy Lauzon	Gary Schellenberger
Chris Alexander	Patricia Davidson	Ryan Leef	Bev Shipley
Mike Allen	Bob Dechert	Kellie Leitch	Devinder Shory
Dean Allison	Dean Del Mastro	Pierre Lemieux	Joy Smith
Rob Anders	Earl Dreshen	Chungsen Leung	Robert Sopuck
David Anderson	Rick Dykstra	Wladyslaw Lizon	Kevin Sorenson
Charlie Angus	Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay	Ben Lobb	Brian Storseth
Scott Armstrong	Hedy Fry	Tom Lukiwski	Mark Strahl
Niki Ashton	Royal Galipeau	James Lunney	David Sweet
Jay Aspin	Cheryl Gallant	Dave MacKenzie	David Tilson
Joyce Bateman	Parm Gill	Colin Mayes	Lawrence Toet
Leon Benoit	Shelly Glover	Phil McColeman	Brad Trost
Tyrone Benskin	Robert Goguen	Cathy McLeod	Bernard Trottier
Candice Bergen	Jacques Gourde	Costas Menegakis	Susan Truppe
James Bezan	Nina Grewal	Rob Merrifield	Merv Tweed
Kelly Block	Richard Harris	Larry Miller	Dave Van Kesteren
Peter Braid	Laurie Hawn	Rob Moore	Maurice Vellacott
Garry Breitkreuz	Bryan Hayes	Rick Norlock	Mike Wallace
Gordon Brown	Russ Hiebert	Deepak Obhrai	Mark Warawa
Lois Brown	Jim Hillyer	Tilly O'Neill Gordon	Jeff Watson
Patrick Brown	Randy Hoback	Ted Opitz	John Weston
Rod Bruinooge	Ed Holder	Erin O'Toole	Rodney Weston
Brad Butt	Roxanne James	LaVar Payne	David Wilks
Paul Calandra	Brian Jean	Pierre Poilievre	John Williamson
Blaine Calkins	Peter Julian	Joe Preston	Stephen Woodworth
Ron Cannan	Randy Kamp	James Rajotte	Terence Young
John Carmichael	Gerald Keddy	Mathieu Ravignat	Wai Young
Colin Carrie	Greg Kerr	Scott Reid	Bob Zimmer
Corneliu Chisu	Ed Komarnicki	Michelle Rempel	

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

Pierre-Luc Dusseault

Vice-Chairs:Scott Andrews
Patricia DavidsonCharlie Angus
Charmaine Borg
Alexandre BoulericeBrad Butt
Blaine CalkinsJohn Carmichael
Dean Del MastroEarl Dreshen
Colin Mayes

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Associate Members

Eve Adams	Rob Clarke	Ryan Leef	Gary Schellenberger
Mark Adler	Joan Crockatt	Kellie Leitch	Kyle Seeback
Dan Albas	Joe Daniel	Pierre Lemieux	Bev Shipley
Harold Albrecht	Bob Dechert	Chungsen Leung	Devinder Shory
Chris Alexander	Rick Dykstra	Wladyslaw Lizon	Joy Smith
Mike Allen	Wayne Easter	Ben Lobb	Robert Sopuck
Dean Allison	Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay	Tom Lukiwski	Kevin Sorenson
Stella Ambler	Royal Galipeau	James Lunney	Brian Storseth
Rob Anders	Cheryl Gallant	Dave MacKenzie	Mark Strahl
David Anderson	Parm Gill	Phil McColeman	David Sweet
Scott Armstrong	Shelly Glover	Cathy McLeod	David Tilson
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