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Friday, February 20, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 20, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)

[*English*]

VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC) moved that Bill C-32, An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be here with my colleagues this cold February day to speak about Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights act, and to enact this bill, which I believe will truly be transformative in improving rights for victims within our criminal justice system. This will be a quantum leap forward for victims and their families and the justice system at large.

Many individuals in this place have worked tirelessly in our justice system. This is probably, in my estimation, one of the most non-partisan bills we will see in the life of this Parliament. I am particularly proud to see the amount of effort that has been put forward in the drafting and preparation of the bill. I had the good pleasure to work with many people in my own justice department and across the country and to, most personally, hear from victims, to hear their stories, which have very much informed the bill.

It has been a top priority of our government to put victims at the very epicentre of our justice system. I left the crown prosecution service of Nova Scotia almost 18 years ago. It is a particularly proud moment to see the bill come to fruition after a great deal of effort and input from many within our justice system. The contributions of those individuals is reflected in this system that will benefit greatly from their insights.

Since 2006 our government has designated more than \$120 million to give victims a more effective voice and role in our justice and correctional systems. We understand the importance of this investment and the difference it can make in the lives of many, as will this legislation.

[*Translation*]

However, we also understand that the time has come to take a different approach to meeting the needs of victims of crime in Canada—an approach that recognizes victims' needs through clearly defined and enforceable rights. Last year, we promised to do just that by entrenching victims' rights into a single law at the federal level. Now we are delivering on that promise with Bill C-32.

[*English*]

I cannot overstate the significance of this piece of legislation. The Canadian victims bill of rights would explicitly enshrine victims rights in federal legislation for the first time in our country's history. Victims would enjoy rights to information, protection, participation, and in many cases, restitution. All of those rights would be enforceable through a remedy scheme. This is the first thing Bill C-32 would accomplish.

The bill would also amend other legislation, such as the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, and bring victims' rights to life. This is indeed a watershed moment for Canadian victims of crime.

I am not only proud of what we have included in the victims bill of rights but of the way the bill was developed. When we promised to entrench rights for victims of crime, we knew that we would hear directly from victims to ensure that the bill would truly respond to their concerns.

After being given the honour to serve as the federal Minister of Justice, within weeks I set out, in that first year, to travel to every province and territory to hear directly from Canadians and participants in our justice system.

During the in-person consultations and the online consultations, we heard from more than 500 individuals and organizations. It was instructive, informative, and also emotional at times to hear the personal pain that had been endured by many in our country.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights also heard meaningful evidence from victims of crime, advocates, provincial and territorial officials, and those who work on the front lines of our justice system. In particular, the honest and open accounts from victims of crime about their difficulties and the heartbreak they have endured in our system was particularly poignant.

Lianna McDonald, the executive director of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, who I saw just last week in Winnipeg, summed up these accounts from victims when she said:

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What we heard loud and clear is that every victim needs a voice and every victim needs to count. We see this bill as an important step towards ensuring that victims not only obtain the information and support they need but also are able to participate in the justice system in a meaningful way that respects their dignity throughout the process.

[*Translation*]

Our government believes that every victim deserves to be supported.

For that reason, the Canadian victims bill of rights would include a broad definition of victim that includes an individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss as a result of the commission or alleged commission of an offence.

This definition recognizes that a person may be a victim even when an offence has not been committed against them personally.

The bill would also enable individuals to act on behalf of victims who are deceased or incapable of exercising their rights.

[*English*]

The bill would extend rights to victims of crime at every stage of our criminal justice process: during the investigation and prosecution of an offence, during the corrections process, during the conditional release process or parole, and in proceedings in the courts or before review boards for an accused found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder or who is unfit to stand trial. However, the bill would also provide that those rights could not be applied so as to interfere with police or prosecutorial discretion and would have to be reasonable in the circumstances.

There is very much an emphasis here to strike a balance to ensure that we are giving victims a voice and a role but are not creating delays or adding to the cost of the criminal justice process. This would be counterintuitive, and many victims, I recall, emphasized in their submissions that this was the last thing they wanted to see happen. Further delay, I would suggest, would further victimize individuals in many cases.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights heard evidence about the importance of keeping victims well informed and about the need to ensure that basic information is provided to victims and their loved ones. This was identified as being of utmost importance. One can understand that these processes and the information needed that impacts directly on people's lives sometimes, unwittingly, does not make it into their hands at the proper time. Victims of crime are often looking for this general information about the process, and therefore their role in the process. Nothing is more fundamental, I would suggest. Nothing impacts them more directly than being able to have that information to make decisions for themselves and their loved ones. However, what they really want is specific information about their case and the decisions made by justice professionals as the case moves forward. Unfortunately, all too often, victims are left disappointed with the information made available to them. This is something Bill C-32 seeks to correct.

The information that is needed and the right to information about the justice system, the programs and services available to them, and the complaint procedures available to them if these rights are denied or infringed is deeply enconced in the bill. It would give victims

access to more specific information about the criminal investigation process, and often the accused.

I note that several witnesses appeared before the standing committee on the issue of information about plea arrangements. Under Bill C-32, judges would be required to specifically ask a prosecutor if reasonable steps had been taken to inform the victim of a plea arrangement in prosecutions involving murder or serious bodily harm or where the victim so requested it in prosecutions of indictable offences where the penalty was five years or more.

I believe that we have found the right balance with this provision that would allow victims to be informed of the agreement at a critical moment without unduly burdening crown prosecutors and without compromising the accused's right to freely enter into a plea arrangement.

Victim safety was also mentioned extensively throughout the process of consultation. We heard testimony before the standing committee that victims of sexual assault, in particular, and victims of human trafficking expressed particular concern about their physical safety during the criminal justice process.

I know that my friend and colleague from Winnipeg, who has made this her life's work, also expressed serious concerns about the physical safety of witnesses throughout the process. My friend, the former minister of veterans affairs and now the Associate Minister of National Defence, spent his entire working life as a police officer prior coming here. I had the good fortune of having his counsel in the preparation of this bill as well.

It is important to keep that information flowing from the time of investigation to trial or preliminary to sentencing and often to parole hearings. This contact, often afforded by the police and the prosecution services, has also been greatly improved by victims services in our country. I must say that this has been one of the single greatest insertions of individuals and professionals dedicated solely to supporting victims in the process.

● (1010)

I want to say firmly, on the record, that this bill does not in any way suggest that these many professionals in our country working in the justice system are not doing their job. This is simply an effort to codify and bring about common practices across the country, in provinces and territories, to buttress our commitment to supporting victims and to see that we are transferring, in some cases, best practices through this bill by enconcing these rights for victims.

[*Translation*]

This bill recognizes the importance of protecting victims from further harm, while they participate in the justice system. It would provide victims with the right to have their privacy and security considered by the appropriate authorities in the criminal justice system and the right to protection from intimidation and retaliation, including the right to apply for testimonial aids and to have their identity protected from public disclosure.

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•(1015)

[English]

Currently there are a number of provisions in criminal law to prevent or to respond directly to the harms suffered by victims. The creation of these new rights would build on a strong foundation and on Canada's positive international reputation for the treatment of vulnerable persons, including their treatment in courtrooms.

Specifically, I am aware of some of the expressed concerns with respect to proposed section 486.31 of the Criminal Code. This section would add another tool to the inventory of testimonial aids and other protections for victims and witnesses that currently exist in the Criminal Code. This new tool in proposed section 486.31 would create discretionary schemes to allow or require a judge to determine that an order made under this section was in the interest of the proper administration of justice. The judge would then consider a number of factors when considering whether to make such an order, such as a fair trial, the interests of the witness in question, and societal interests related to the proper functioning of our justice system. What this would mean, in essence, would be greater access to those testimonial aids.

Just to edify this issue, it could be a screen that is sometimes used for a child witness or an individual who feels particularly vulnerable to cross-examination. Sometimes there are situations where a person is unrepresented and he or she is in a position to come face to face with a victim who feels absolutely overwhelmed. We now also use video testimony from time to time.

I would come back to the point of improvements we have seen well in advance of what we hope to accomplish through this bill, such as child and youth advocacy centres, such as the one in Toronto known as Boost, the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary, and 24 others now functioning, with plans for more to come. There are outstanding improvements in the wraparound service, protection, and support of young victims and witnesses who wind up in our criminal justice system.

Something as basic as allowing children to take a pet into the courtroom or the interview process to calm that experience and allow them to feel that they are in a safe place are leaps and bounds in the area of the compassionate type of support we are now offering young victims and witnesses in our system. This is in keeping with some of these improvements.

Never losing sight of the right to a fair trial that the accused must have, and the fundamental components that exist in our process in that regard, the courts have said, and I agree, that these rights are not absolute. A criminal trial must acknowledge and accommodate, to the greatest extent possible, other important societal interests, such as protecting those who agree to testify as witnesses.

I would pause here to mention that in the new anti-terrorism bill, there are provisions as well recognizing the need to protect witnesses, in some cases, because of special circumstances. We see this in organized crime trials and trials where spouses find themselves particularly vulnerable to violence or threats of violence. These protective elements are extremely important, without upsetting that right to a fair and free trial.

Coming back to some of the consultations, we heard from many people about the importance of finding ways for victims to be more meaningfully involved in the process. Some stakeholders expressed concerns that increasing the involvement of victims had the potential to reduce effectiveness and efficiencies of the process, that it would create delays or increased cost. These are important considerations, to be sure. However, the standing committee heard from several witnesses who explained very eloquently how important it is to be meaningfully considered in the decisions made by police, prosecutors, and other criminal law professionals. This breeds confidence in our system; it breeds participation, and a willingness to participate.

We are having trouble sometimes even assembling a panel of jurors because of a disconnect that some are feeling from our justice system. We have to be very conscious of that. The bill, I believe, answers some of those questions when it comes to increased public confidence.

Victims clearly indicated that they are not seeking a veto. I remember some years ago, while in opposition, there was a joint report created by the justice committee, called "Victims' Rights: A Voice, Not a Veto". We drew heavily from that report, going back into the annals of this place and looking at some of the previous recommendations.

Victims simply want to know that a decision was made with clear understanding of their perspective as a victim, and that they had the opportunity to explain their position to important decision-makers. As Minister of Justice, I have no doubt that the many professionals in our justice system already meet, and continue to meet every day, those requirements and requests for accountability and transparency from victims.

The reforms proposed in Bill C-32 recognize the impact of crime on the lives of victims and are a clear effort to give them a voice in what is often a complicated, difficult, and stressful process. Victims of crime have told us that they are overwhelmingly supportive of the improvements to the victim and community impact statement provisions found in the Criminal Code. One such improvement is the creation of mandatory victim and community impact statement forms, again, to bring about a uniform approach across the country.

Through this process, we have also had the opportunity to ensure that victims are able to speak directly to the judiciary, to the court, and ensure that they have a true understanding of the impact that crime has had on them and their families. The bill also aims to give victims more choice and control over their involvement in the process, which can be stressful and certainly emotional. Participation and choice, I would suggest, are rights that have to be respected and rights that do exist, whether the victim chooses to exercise them or not. Choice equals respect in the bill.

The proposed right to participation also seeks to strengthen approaches that provide opportunities for victims to actively participate, to be more effective in their ability to relay their wishes, their concerns, to police, crown prosecutors, and judges, and to give victims this effective voice to let them know that their voice matters, that it is heard, that it is meaningful.

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During consultations, and in the evidence before the standing committee, victims spoke of the financial impact of crime. This can include economic costs, loss of employment, costs of treatment, and mental and physical health costs. Victims are very concerned about the financial burden that results from victimization and that places them in real hardship.

Following a traumatic event, victims are often unable to work, unable to deal with the daily grind that is all around them, and yet they face significant expenses to continue attending court proceedings or receive counselling.

It may surprise some, and I certainly was taken aback by this figure, that the Justice Department estimates that the tangible and intangible social and economic costs of Criminal Code offences in Canada are approaching approximately \$100 billion annually, of which 85% of the costs are borne by victims alone.

The bill aims specifically at helping to alleviate the financial burden of crime when it comes to the load that is carried by our victims in the system. The proposal would enshrine a victim's right to have the court consider making a restitution order, in every case, rather than creating an absolute right to a restitution order.

Once again, I believe that we have found a measured and balanced response to the needs for victims with respect to the fundamental principles that underpin our justice system.

The courts are not often the appropriate forum for awarding damage for pain and suffering or for determining complicated issues regarding the outcome of an award, but restitution can be made and ordered when the value of the loss or damage is easily calculable. This is not in dispute. On the other hand, we are clarifying that the offender's ability to pay is only one factor to be considered when a judge is determining whether a restitution order should be made.

● (1020)

In conclusion, I want to thank the many individuals who have put in tremendous time and effort in the preparation and drafting of this bill. They are people like Carole Morency, of the Department of Justice; Dale Sutherland, and many other victims whom we heard from throughout our consultations, and there were many. There were individuals like Priscilla de Villiers, who has made this her life's work, and people from MADD Canada. I mentioned Sheldon Kennedy earlier, and those who work in the child advocacy centres.

I believe that this is a leap forward, and something that all members can and should support. I am grateful to the members of the justice committee, who have also embraced this important task of improving the lives of victims and easing their burden. I would urge all members to support this important legislation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Justice for his speech on Bill C-32. It was one of too few speeches we will hear in the House about this bill because of the time allocation motion.

I am very glad that he mentioned the costs to victims. I have seen the harm, both physical and psychological, that these people have endured. It is mind-boggling. This is one of the issues that the bill only partly addresses. I am therefore very glad to see that the

minister is aware of it, and I hope he will realize that we need to come up with some funding, not just lip service.

One of the concerns that I still have about this bill is that the provinces and territories will be on the hook for implementing the Canadian victims bill of rights. When we studied this in committee, it seemed as though they were not very interested in that. The provinces were not particularly enthusiastic about coming to tell us what they thought of the bill of rights. Two provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta, sent representatives. The provinces' justice ministers told us that the federal government would have to give them time to take a closer look and implement it. They asked the government to extend the implementation period, but the government refused.

Is the minister concerned that this could end up being forgotten or simply stalling along the way? Is he concerned that not much is likely to happen if the provinces are not committed to the process?

● (1025)

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for participating in this debate and this process. She has put forward constructive ideas and some very positive comments.

[*English*]

I take her comments very much to heart, and I know that she has been an active participant in the process of getting it right for the sake of victims.

She makes a very important point about resources. There is no question that the administration of justice, including the impact of this bill, falls to the provinces. It will fall specifically to agencies, police forces, prosecutorial services, and our entire justice system.

This is why we put in place a victims fund prior to the drafting and implementation of this bill. There are also funds that would attach and flow with the implementation of this legislation and a coming into force period.

The member makes the valid point that we would have to transition to this process where victims are in a better place. It will undoubtedly take a tremendous amount of effort. It will call for further collaboration between the participants and the justice system. It will call for efforts on the part of some provinces to raise their game. Having been through this process, I am convinced that there is a tremendous desire for that to happen.

This bill will include new funding, and there will be grants and contributions available to provinces and territories, particularly with regard to the restitution programs and helping victims to collect it. As the member knows, we also have a victims ombudsman, as a result of that office being opened by this government in the last number of years.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think history would reflect that there has been fairly good support from all sides of the House in dealing with this type of legislation. We have seen that over the years.

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I want to pick up on the point that the NDP critic has raised. This is an issue that we have also raised, both in committee and in previous discussions. It is with regard to the expectation that judges, in their considerations, will give additional thought to where the victim is at, for example, in terms of whether the crown has consulted with the victims and whether they are being kept informed on process and so forth.

One of the most concerning issues is the scarcity of resources. As we move forward, we should ensure that there are financial resources that follow. Our crowns, for example, have a fairly full plate, and now there will be an additional responsibility or expectation, meaning that there is a need for additional financial resources.

To what degree has the minister taken action to ensure that those financial resources will follow so that we do not have increased backlogs, which is a concern?

• (1030)

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for the question, and I agree with him. I think there has been quite an extraordinary and exemplary effort on the part all parties to bring this legislation forward. In fact, we have seen amendments that I think will further enhance the bill and speak to the dignity of victims.

With regard to resources, I mentioned the victims fund and accompanying resources for programming. With regard to the provinces and the administration of justice, I would remind my friend, as he is probably aware, that we have seen a significant increase in transfer payments that go directly to provinces for the administration of their health and social transfers. These enhanced programs allow provinces to make decisions and adjustments in regard to their justice systems in their areas of jurisdiction.

I want to come back as well to the issue of how victims fit into this process. This Canadian victims bill of rights would be a quasi-constitutional statute. It would protect extremely important values and incorporate certain goals that are basically associated with the justice system.

Clauses 21 and 22 of the bill would provide that the Canadian Bill of Rights would prevail over other federal statutes, with the exception of other quasi-constitutional statutes within the system, including the Official Languages Act, the Privacy Act, and, of course, the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the hon. minister for his work, and the team's work, with respect to the background and consultations. I was present with the minister at one of these consultation processes in my own area, where we had educators, parents, and police officers. The overwhelming support that came forward, I believe, has certainly been reflected in the construct of this bill.

Drawing on my own experience over some 40 years in law enforcement, I can say with all honesty that this bill has been a long time in the making. The whole issue of victims' rights has been neglected over many years. The overwhelming majority of effort over the years has been in the area of the victimizers, the accused, the kinds of rights and entitlements to which the accused are given from the beginning to end of their involvement in the system.

I would also like to indicate that the bill is nothing new; it is something that the system has been trying to do. However, what is new is the mandated codification, if you will, of processes, regards, and concerns about the plight of victims and their role in the judicial system.

I would like to ask the hon. minister if he could briefly highlight the degree of consultation and involvement of partners in the criminal justice system that has enabled him and his people to deliver what I believe is a timely, long-awaited, and badly needed address of our victims' plight in the system.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Vaughan, the Associate Minister of National Defence, for his 40 years of wearing the badge and the uniform and the leadership he has demonstrated in our justice system.

He and many others bring to bear the very essence of this bill, an effort to bring about a process that delivers more for victims in a way that is consistent with their perspective, that builds and breeds confidence, and respects and truly includes them in a meaningful way. That is not to suggest for a moment that we have not come a very long way from where we were just a few short years ago. I mentioned victims' services and child advocacy centres, but also, most importantly, the incredible sensitivity that has evolved throughout with the police, the prosecution, judges, and court workers. There is an acute understanding of the need to do more for victims.

This bill would help to bring about uniformity and the codification that he mentioned. We heard repeatedly about this desire to learn, because of the breadth and width of this country and how it is being done in different parts of the country. We know there are specific needs in the north, in particular, that have to be addressed. We know that in remote parts of the country this poses challenges, and we are using technology more to respond to those needs.

I look forward to this bill proceeding to the Senate, with the latter's watchful eye and insight and its opportunity to give its stamp of approval. I know that Senators Boisvenu and Batters and others bring a great deal of understanding through their experience, which is how our process works best: when people participate fully. Again, I thank the members of the justice committee for their intelligent insights and constructive suggestions in this process.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is important for me to rise in the House today to participate in this shortened debate on Bill C-32, the Victims Bill of Rights Act. I agree with the minister that this is an extremely important concept and bill. The devil is often in the details, but this bill also represents a first step.

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I would like to begin by thanking the minister for his openness during the examination of this bill, if nothing else. I am less satisfied with the way that this is happening here in the House, because we are being given only two or two and a half hours to debate at third reading a bill that includes many extremely important provisions. What is said in the House at the various stages of a bill is often very important for the courts and for Canadians, because the debate often provides indications as to how the legislation should be interpreted. The speeches are therefore important. What we say in the House becomes important because it often explains the intent of the legislation.

I would also like to thank the NDP members who sit with me on the committee that examined this bill. They are the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, the deputy justice critic, and my colleague from the House leader's office, the deputy House leader and member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. They did a remarkable job of supporting me on this file. Our priority throughout the process was to try to understand the bill of course, but also to ensure that the bill did what the minister said it was supposed to during the countless press conferences he held, accompanied by victims. As I have often said, whether at second reading, during speeches, at committee stage or at report stage here in the House, we try to properly assess the legislation. If there is one thing that horrifies me, it is when people say they are doing one thing when they are actually doing another.

It is very interesting. We heard from many witnesses. I counted about 40 witnesses who appeared before the committee. In fact, there were 42, to be precise. I cannot say that the witnesses were on one side or the other. What mattered most to all of the witnesses was putting victims at the centre of the debate. I think that is the most positive thing that stood out about the victims bill of rights. That was the most common remark I heard. Although people were not entirely reassured that the victims bill of rights will in fact give them what they have been asking for for such a long time—for it has its limitations—they were extremely happy to see that we were talking about them. They were also happy that we were listening to them. It was much more about listening to them, rather than talking about them. The minister said earlier that he was taken aback by the scope of the harms suffered by victims and the costs they bear. Whether physical, psychological or material, the costs to victims are huge. The very notion of “victim” is being broadened as well. We do not always know who the victim of a crime is. Indeed, the victim's family and friends all suffer with that individual.

When we add all of that up and realize that according to the numbers we were given, victims bear 83% of the costs incurred, that is troubling. The government is saying that the law will ensure that there is some sort of restitution, but we have to take that with a grain of salt. That is really the problem I have with this bill of rights, but I will try to remain positive today. There are no guarantees. Since this comes from a government that is so bent on mandatory minimums, huge maximums and suppressing certain rights, I understand why the minister made a point of talking about a “measured and balanced system” in his pro-victim speech.

● (1040)

He understands the potential limitations of this bill of rights within a criminal justice system that is based on the presumption of

innocence and a charter of rights that also imposes limitations on how things are done. The trial still has to be fair and balanced for the accused. It is not easy to strike a balance between focusing on victims and applying the fundamental principles of our criminal justice system with regard to the rights of the accused.

That is why I often say that we have to be mindful of what we say in public. We should not give the impression that we are going to solve all the problems, when that is not necessarily what is going to happen.

We had good meetings at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We were able to raise certain problems for both victims and legal experts. Legal experts tend to see the downside of legal provisions, which can sometimes be misinterpreted. They could hamper the criminal justice system and undermine values such as the presumption of innocence, which is part of a fair and balanced trial. In that context, one might assume that the two parties would have diverging opinions, yet they were both somewhat dissatisfied with the bill of rights.

Representatives from victims' associations entered the committee room with their eyes wide open. They knew that even though the government claims that this bill will solve the world's problems, it would do nothing to change the fact that roughly 80% of the costs are borne by victims and their family and friends. Nonetheless, they were happy to find out that we had recognized certain rights, including the right to information. However, we are still not going far enough.

I proposed some very reasonable amendments to the victims bill of rights. If someone has the right to information, they should not have to ask for it. However, under the victims bill of rights, the victim will have to request information. The victim will still have to beg for rights that should have been fully recognized a long time ago.

Let us take a look at clause 6 in the bill:

Every victim has the right, on request, to information about

(a) the criminal justice system and the role of victims in it;

(b) the services and programs available to them as a victim, including restorative justice programs; and

(c) their right to file a complaint for an infringement or denial of any of their rights under this Act.

If the idea is to give victims a right that they have been calling for for a long time, we should simply say that they have that right. However, in committee, the government members rejected my amendment, which would have benefited victims. It would have made this bill of rights stronger for victims. This would have made the bill of rights extremely respectful of victims and would not have created an additional burden. Even if this did create an additional burden, which would not penalize the offender, who is presumed innocent until proven guilty, what would be the problem?

It is because this would have required resources. We would have to provide the services required by an automatic system. In this case, I suppose we will just cross our fingers and hope that victims will not make too many requests.

I will quote clause 7:

Every victim has the right, on request, to information about

- (a) the status and outcome of the investigation into the offence; and
- (b) the location of proceedings in relation to the offence, when they will take place and their progress and outcome.

When I proposed an amendment to ensure that victims did not have to ask for this right, once again, members on the government benches refused, even though it would have benefited victims.

• (1045)

It seems to me that it was what victims had asked for, at the very least, and we could have given them that.

Later, clause 8 states:

8. Every victim has the right, on request, to information about

- (a) reviews under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* relating to the offender's conditional release and the timing and conditions of that release; and
- (b) hearings held for the purpose of making dispositions, as defined in subsection 672.1(1) of the *Criminal Code*, in relation to the accused, if the accused is found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder or unfit to stand trial, and the dispositions made at those hearings.

That seems evident to me.

I have said this before, but I am going to say it again. When I worked as a lawyer in my riding and I went to the courthouse, we knew who the victim in a certain case was when we walked down the hall: it was the person who seemed to be asking themselves what they were doing there, what was happening and who had absolutely no idea what was going on.

I regularly follow what the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime has to say. Sue O'Sullivan does an extraordinary job. She is passionate about her work and cares deeply about the well-being of victims. She tries to help them in any way she can. The biggest problem is the right to information. Victims are not involved in the proceedings. I think that there were limitations because of our criminal justice system. I am not calling that system into question. In fact, I fundamentally believe in the principle of the presumption of innocence. That should not be changed. Doing so would certainly change Canadian society. Of course, we want to be sensible about this and do not want to bog down the court proceedings.

Then again, I do not understand the problem with giving out this information. The devil is often in the details, so much so that the entire system is then called into question.

There is the concept of mandatory minimum sentences. When I speak to a victim or a member of a victims' support group, it is obvious that the problem is not the concept of sentence minimums. They do not have a problem with minimum sentences. More often than not, they want maximum sentences. However, as I often tell them, they will not truly be satisfied with any sentence, and with good reason.

I worked mainly in the area of labour law, and when a person was unlawfully dismissed, even though I sought the absolutely best possible outcome, it was still not satisfying. Why? Because no amount of money was going to make that person forget that moment. I would always tell my clients this. There is no such thing as a satisfying ruling. It is the same thing in criminal law.

As a society, how can we think that a sentence, even a life sentence, will make the victim less of a victim? How can we ensure

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that victims will not relive that moment for the rest of their lives and that they will not be psychologically scarred by it? Come on. Let us stop messing around when it comes to such important concepts and stop minimizing the issue by giving the impression that a law is going to change everything.

I often have a problem when the Conservatives use the expression "put your money where your mouth is". This government passes strong laws but cuts resources. It passes tougher legislation but reduces the number of police officers. They are saying one thing and doing another. The Canadian victims bill of rights gives victims a so-called right, but that is it. They still have to ask for the information.

With respect to restitution, victims told the committee that it was wonderful to know there would be restitution in criminal cases, in court-ordered criminal proceedings. That is interesting because not only do these victims have to go through the criminal trial, appear as victims and witnesses, and go through the whole process that makes them relive what they already went through, but if they want restitution, they have to file a civil suit against a person who, in many cases, does not have the money to pay them. What kind of a system is that? They spend more money and pay more lawyers and end up with nothing or not a lot.

Including provisions for restitution in a bill of rights is interesting, but once again, it is just potential.

• (1050)

It is not automatic even if the person can prove that there was physical harm. We know that psychological harm is often harder to prove. Those who have practised civil law are well aware that the notion of moral and psychological harm is probably the hardest thing to determine. In some cases, people cannot do it right away. It is an ongoing process.

In this context, the victims believe that once Bill C-32 is passed, everything will work out because they can just ask the court. The clause says that the court will consider it; it is not automatic.

There is something I especially agree with, although not everyone agrees. Some legal experts are worried about certain provisions dealing with how victims will give evidence and whether or not witnesses will be identified. Clearly, as a lawyer myself, I also have some concerns. We always have to ask how this will be applied by the courts. That being said, when we have confidence in the legal system, which I do, barring proof to the contrary, our judges, crown prosecutors and defence attorneys are doing their job. What I always find interesting is examining the provisions. An application does not have to be granted automatically when a victim asks to give evidence without being identified, seen or heard, or even giving his or her name. A procedure exists; there must be a hearing that meets stated criteria.

That eases my concerns somewhat, but it is important that the courts dealing with these kinds of applications treat them with caution, bearing in mind that a trial is public by definition, and it is important to put that on the record. This is really quite particular, and there are specific cases where the victim or their family could be in danger, for example.

Statements by Members

Obviously, when it comes to minors, it is a different situation altogether. However, that is not exactly what is set out in the victims bill of rights, which applies to all kinds of victims, not just children. That is one of the problems.

I mentioned the other problem in my question to the minister. I did not get the sense that the provinces and territories were very enthusiastic about this. In response to a question, Quebec's justice minister said that her province already has a victims bill of rights. I spoke to many crown prosecutors who were a little insulted. They felt as though they were being told they were not doing this already. Many speak to victims and keep them informed. People must not think that this is not already being done. Unfortunately, it is not done everywhere.

Again, let us talk about resources. All these fine bills are nice, but there are no resources. Crown prosecutors are doing their best. They arrive in court—I have seen this because I practised law—with a big pile of files; they have to talk to each victim, inform them, ask them if this suits them, if they are happy and whether they know that such-and-such a thing is going to happen at this time on that day. Even crown prosecutors told us in committee that this could be pretty tough without more resources, more crown prosecutors and more judges to hear certain cases.

The biggest problem for victims—and I say this often—is that the legal system is too slow. I quite like the Canadian legal system, but speed is not its strong suit. A trial that takes too long leaves the impression that justice is not being served. These are other things to consider.

There is a terrible deficit and imbalance in the justice system. This is becoming a big problem. It is often overlooked at budget time. Let us think about that on this World Day of Social Justice. I do not want to preach about this, but the need is great. We have a law-and-order government and there is nothing wrong with that, but it has to go about things the right way. It has to give resources to the people who need it. Given the cool reception of the provinces and territories, a number of discussions will have to be organized between Justice Canada and its provincial and territorial partners, in order to ensure that this bill of rights does not go by the wayside and become one more Conservative file that the NDP will have to fix after the fact.

• (1055)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reinforce a question I posed for the minister responsible for the legislation. The member for Gatineau made reference to it.

We recognize the value of this legislation. I think all political parties recognize the need to do what we can to allow victims to achieve some form of additional justice. We all recognize the need to support them, as we should. In good part, the legislation is a step in the right direction.

One of the largest concerns we hear is about the financial resources. We can pass whatever legislation we want in the House, but if we do not have a direct connection to financial resources to ensure our system is improved, then in essence it has fallen somewhat short.

Maybe the member could comment the importance of additional financial resources to ensure the legislation accomplishes what it is meant to do.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, without the resources, the charter of victims rights is just paper. If it comes down to that, it would be sad. I am not talking about a few million dollars. The Conservatives like to depict us as big spenders, but that is not the case. They have to put their money where their mouth is if they want to help victims. The minister talked about close to \$100 billion of which 80% of that would be borne by the government.

The Conservatives can laugh all they want, but victims associations have told us they have no funding so they cannot help people. They count on the generosity of the public, with little dollars here and there, to help people who live in hell because of crimes.

I will take no lessons from the laughing Conservatives. They are great at writing papers but do nothing afterward, and that is sad. This legislation will not succeed without the resources.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): If she wishes, the hon. member for Gatineau will have seven minutes to answer questions when the House resumes debate on this motion

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has always had a laissez-faire attitude towards genetically modified foods, and the recent decision by the U.S. department of agriculture is reviving Quebec consumers' and producers' concerns.

The Americans have just approved two varieties of genetically modified apples that will be put on the market within five years and whose main characteristic is that they do not turn brown. Some conventional apples already have this characteristic. According to a survey of 1,500 Canadians, 69% are opposed to the sale of genetically modified apples in Canada. Furthermore, 91% are calling for mandatory labelling of GM foods. The Fédération des producteurs de pommes du Québec is:

...concerned and still opposes the introduction of a genetically modified apple on the market, because it believes that consumers are skeptical and this could have a negative impact on the consumption and sales of apples in Canada.

The government must take a firm stand, prohibit the sale of genetically modified apples and make labelling of GM foods mandatory, as Canadians and producers themselves are calling for.

• (1100)

[English]

LEGION OF HONOUR

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I wish to recognize Ewart Wannamaker, a young 92-year-old and a native of Carlow Township who is now a knight in the National Order of the Legion of Honour of France.

At a ceremony at the Bancroft Legion, he received his medal and certificate from Lieutenant Colonel Roger Vandomme, deputy defence attaché at the French embassy. In his presentation Lieutenant Colonel Vandomme spoke of the French nation's desire to honour young Canadians who left their homes and careers to bring freedom to France. "The medal is but a small token of our continuing gratitude to those Canadians", he declared.

When joining the Canadian army in 1942 as a corporal craftsman with the Royal Canadian Electrical Mechanical Engineers, he help liberate France, Belgium, and Holland from the Nazis. Wannamaker was in the advance recovery unit, salvaging damaged vehicles so they could be repaired and returned to action or destroyed. He is still a member of the Bancroft Legion, and for his work he has received both a Certificate of Merit and a national Meritorious Service Medal.

To his family and friends, we honour Corporal Wannamaker, now a French knight as well as a beloved native son.

* * *

[Translation]

WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, the UN invites us to commemorate the World Day of Social Justice. Oh, how social justice has suffered for decades in Canada at the hands of both Liberal and Conservative governments. The middle class ends up paying the price, as inflation erodes its purchasing power and the federal government keeps cutting services.

A lifetime ago, one prime minister even promised Canadians a just society. When he was unable to deliver on his promise, a journalist asked him what happened. The elder Trudeau replied, "Ask Jesus Christ. He promised it first." How cynical.

Liberal and Conservative governments lower standards, violate the public's trust and then send them the bill. What they forget is that the erosion they cause will inevitably be their downfall. As the saying goes, "You reap what you sow."

Social justice should be a priority for every government. It is one of the NDP's key principles, and we will never back away from our plan to create greater social justice for all.

* * *

HOOKED ON SCHOOL DAYS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week Quebec marked Hooked on School Days with events across the province. It was an opportunity to raise awareness and rally the public to encourage our young people throughout their school days. The purpose of the week is to increase

Statements by Members

not only the number of students who stay in school, but also the number of students who pursue a higher education.

As a member of Parliament, it is always a privilege for me to see the pride and enthusiasm in the students whom I congratulate every year at graduation. Today's young people are tomorrow's workforce. Whatever we can do to help as individuals or a community goes a long way.

I would like to acknowledge the exceptional work of all the organizations in Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière and all the partner organizations in Quebec that held countless activities to encourage our young people to stay in school, succeed and keep believing that they can achieve their full potential.

* * *

[English]

ANTI-SEMITISM

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently I addressed the first-ever United Nations General Assembly meeting on anti-Semitism, which took place, symbolically and significantly, on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. It was also the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the most brutal extermination camp of the 20th century, reminding us of horrors too terrible to be believed but not too terrible to have happened.

At Auschwitz 1.3 million people were murdered, and 1.1 million of them were Jews. Let there be no mistake about it: Jews died at Auschwitz because of anti-Semitism, but anti-Semitism did not die. Indeed, we have been witness to an escalation and intensification of this oldest, most enduring, and particularly toxic hatred, reminding us that while it begins with Jews, it may not end with Jews, that anti-Semitism is the canary in the mineshaft of evil.

I am pleased, therefore, that in response to the UN appeal to member parliaments, we will be holding a take-note debate on anti-Semitism on Tuesday evening. It is timely, necessary, and urgent that we sound the parliamentary alarm on this global evil.

* * *

TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, freedom of religion is a value that Canadians hold dear. Sadly, there are some people, businesses, and even law societies that are opposing this value. Citing Trinity Western University's student code of conduct, they say that either Trinity should not be allowed to have a law school or that Trinity graduates should not be allowed to practise law.

The Supreme Court of Canada has already ruled that the Trinity student code of conduct does not constitute discrimination. Thankfully, a ruling by the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia has brought some common sense to this most recent debate. Last month, Justice Jamie Campbell dismissed a decision by the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society to deny future Trinity law school graduates the right to practise law.

Statements by Members

I call on all opponents of Trinity Western University's future law school to withdraw their opposition and support the important Canadian value of freedom of religion.

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• (1105)

[*Translation*]

LAVAL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to talk about an anniversary that is very special to the people of Laval: the City of Laval's 50th anniversary. In 1965, the 14 municipalities of Île Jésus decided to merge, creating the City of Laval. Fifty years later, Quebec's third-largest city is a diversified and prosperous economic centre, as well as a city of choice for young families and seniors.

Throughout the year, there will be all kinds of celebrations for everyone. In addition to major concerts, a number of citizen-led projects will highlight the unique heritage of each neighbourhood. Programming details are available at www.50ans.laval.ca.

I tip my hat to the Corporation des célébrations 2015 à Laval, the mayor of Laval, municipal elected representatives and individuals who proposed projects. Their dedication to celebrating Laval's 50th anniversary shows that together, we can accomplish great things. I wish everyone in Laval a happy 50th anniversary.

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[*English*]

SEX EDUCATION

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I recently attended a town hall meeting in Brampton, where parents were outraged by the Liberal Party policies that attack our family values.

The Liberals want to legalize marijuana, making it more accessible to our children. They want to legalize prostitution in our streets and in our neighbourhoods. Now the Liberals are determined to introduce a new sex-ed curriculum in Ontario with graphic and explicit sex education for children starting in grade 1.

As a father of three, I share the concerns of many of my constituents that these policies are dangerous, expose young children to sexually explicit behaviour, and teach concepts and practices that parents consider offensive and morally questionable.

The Liberals need to stop attacking our family values and instead focus on teaching our kids a curriculum that reflects the beliefs of parents.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring attention to issues that affect people worldwide: clean water and proper sanitation. Currently, 2.5 billion people lack access to toilets, something that is hard for many of us here to even imagine.

Last September I met with India's Prime Minister Modi when I took part in the Global Citizen Festival, hosted by the Global Poverty Project. Prime Minister Modi spoke passionately about the great effort his country is making to ensure that all Indians have access to proper sanitation, made famous by his "toilets before temples" campaign.

Increasing access to and usage of toilets will not only reduce the daily death toll of some 2,000 young lives worldwide caused by sanitation-related diseases, but will also make schools a more welcoming place for girls, many of whom do not attend for this very reason. For every dollar invested in safe drinking water and sanitation, there is about \$4 saved in work time, productivity, and health care costs in developing countries.

Let us work together toward sustainable development goals for the health and safety of all people worldwide.

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[*Translation*]

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the entire month of February is Black History Month. It is a history that is marked by pain, but also by courage, hope and resilience.

Black people have helped build this continent and this country, which we share thanks to their blood and the sweat of their brows. They had to stand up and fight against discrimination and untold violations of their rights. Great strides have been made, but a lot of work remains to be done. Exclusion is unfortunately very much a reality in our society and indeed in many unexpected spheres.

I am proud to give a voice to the minorities in my riding, Laval, and to commend their economic, political and socio-cultural contributions.

I also want to pay tribute to the late Althea Joseph-Charles Seaman of the Black Community Association. She was an amazing woman who passed away in the fall of 2013. I also want to thank Dr. Alix Rey, who took over this important work.

Let us celebrate the 24th edition of Black History Month in Laval, and let us "stand for something".

* * *

[*English*]

UKRAINE

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one year ago today in the Maidan in Kiev, a peaceful protest was turned into a massacre. Over three days, up to 100 people were shot dead by then-president Yanukovich's security forces. Yanukovich later fled the country and his government collapsed, but that was only the beginning.

Since then, Russia has stoked conflict in the eastern Ukraine. This conflict has claimed more than 5,000 lives. Our government stands firmly behind the people of Ukraine. We have stated clearly, loudly, and often that this conflict will only end when Russia halts its invasion, withdraws its armed forces, and stops supporting these so-called rebels.

Statements by Members

This is why we have made significant military contributions to NATO's Ukrainian reassurance measures, why our economic sanctions regime against powerful Russian individuals is the strongest in the world, and why we have announced over \$515 million in assistance since the killing of protesters took place over one year ago.

On behalf of my constituents in Etobicoke—Lakeshore, I want to be clear to the Ukrainian people on this anniversary that they have a friend in Canada.

* * *

•(1110)

[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, SMEs are the foundation of our economy. In my riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry, 89% of businesses are SMEs. That means that over 2,000 businesses are creating jobs and generating wealth locally.

Whether it is in the manufacturing, agricultural, food processing, chemical, computer, restaurant, retail or tourism sectors, our business people are taking risks. They are innovating and they are exporting their products. Above all, they are providing jobs for people locally and are getting involved in their communities.

Why not support them? Why has the federal government abandoned the manufacturing and retail industries to provide subsidies to oil multinationals? The government has put all its eggs in the same basket. This disastrous economic management has been harmful to our businesses. Companies in Valleyfield, Beauharnois, Ormstown and Jardins-de-Napierville have had to close their doors. It is time for that to stop.

The next government—an NDP government—will provide better support for SMEs. We will make our local business people a priority by providing an innovation tax credit and lowering taxes from 11% to 9%.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their government to create jobs and grow the economy. Canada is blessed with an immense amount of natural resources, which provide opportunities from coast to coast to coast. Our government's responsible resource development plan has led to action on Canada's already impressive world-class safety systems for the transportation of our energy products.

While our government makes decisions based on independent, science-based review, the Liberal Party is opposing resource development before the regulatory review has even been completed. Why did the leader of the Liberal Party insist on putting ideology before science and facts, when he said the energy east oil pipeline is not socially acceptable? That statement is unacceptable.

Our message is clear. We will stand up for Canadians' interests at home as well as abroad and continue to create jobs, growth, and opportunity for all Canadians.

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MARY HARKER

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the extraordinary Mary Harker, who was tireless in her commitment to helping others, making the world a better place, and welcoming everyone with open arms.

Mary was legendary in Etobicoke, having worked with mayors, MPPs, and MPs. She started the Nightgown Brigade and would rush to help women escaping violent situations no matter what time of night. She served on Albion Neighbourhood Services and with Youth Without Shelter, helped found Ernestine's Women's Shelter, gave four decades to the Rexdale legal clinic, and served for decades on the Community Police Liaison Committee.

The community loved Mary and recognized her thousands of hours of volunteer services with numerous awards.

Mary is now with her beloved husband Ron, and leaves behind daughters Kathy and Wendy, their partners Scott and Peter, and her grandchildren Matthew, Cameron, and Madeline. We thank them for sharing her with us. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

* * *

TAXATION

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the New Democrats want to impose a job-killing carbon tax and the Liberal leader encourages his provincial comrades to do the same, the Conservative government is delivering the largest tax break in Canadian history.

Under this plan, 100% of families with children would have more money in their pockets to spend on their priorities as a family. In my riding of London North Centre, families are excited about this. Through all the new tax breaks, the average benefit to each of these families would be more than \$1,100.

We assured Canadians that we would lower taxes and put more of their hard-earned money back in their pockets. That is exactly what we are doing and what we will continue to do.

* * *

•(1115)

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives surprised many when they sent out a fundraising email saying that they oppose the wearing of a hijab at a citizenship ceremony.

It is bad enough that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is waging a war against Muslim women who cover their faces, but it is beyond belief that he is mixing up the terms hijab, niqab and burka for the sole purpose of confusing people and instilling fear.

Oral Questions

He could have simply said that he had used the wrong term, but no, he chose to say that the hijab is not allowed, even though the hijab is allowed at citizenship ceremonies. He would rather create more division and fear for political gain.

The Conservatives are doing the same with Bill C-51. They are taking advantage of current circumstances to mislead the public by claiming that Bill C-51 does not give law enforcement agencies more powers.

Canadians deserve better. Canadians deserve leaders who tell the truth and do not exploit divisions for political gain.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thanks to our new family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit, 100% of families with children will be better off. The average family with children in Canada will now receive just under \$2,000 per child.

The difference between our priorities and those of the opposition are very clear: while we are giving back to Canadian families, the opposition would take money away from families. While we are cutting taxes, the Liberal leader would raise taxes. While our plan helps out 100% of Canadian families with kids, the NDP plan would help only 10% of families. Our family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit will help every family in Canada with children. That is over four million families.

Only this Conservative government can be trusted to put more money back into the pockets of each and every family with children in Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, five former Supreme Court justices, seven former federal ministers and four former prime ministers, including one Conservative, are all worried about the harm that Bill C-51 could cause.

This bill could undermine public safety and human rights. It does not provide for an effective oversight mechanism for CSIS.

Why are the minister and the Liberal leader not heeding this wise advice?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there is in fact oversight.

There is already oversight with SIRC. This bill is also very cognizant of the fact that judicial oversight is necessary for acting upon some of the intelligence that will be gathered by our security agencies. There is oversight with respect to the bill itself as it makes

its way through the parliamentary process. There will be expert evidence heard, I am sure, at committee.

We look forward to the further participation in this important debate aimed specifically at addressing security needs in our country in this elevated environment.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister should listen to the advice of these former prime ministers and Supreme Court justices, because they warn that "...experience has shown that serious human rights abuses can occur in the name of maintaining national security". They recognize that our current oversight regime is wholly inadequate. In fact, our oversight is so lacking that it is uniting former Liberal and Conservative prime ministers.

Why are Conservatives turning a deaf ear to such reasonable concerns?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the one individual the member is referencing kind of united with himself a long time ago.

Oversight with respect to judges is something that I think all members present would be quick to embrace. The fact is that these powers, extraordinary though they might be, are necessary in the current threat environment. The judicial oversight that comes at the front end of the process, as opposed to political oversight after the fact, which is what is being suggested by the members opposite, we think is preferable.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in short, the minister is dismissing reasonable concerns for no reason at all.

No one should face profiling or live under a cloud of suspicion because of their faith, yet the Prime Minister and the Conservatives have repeatedly targeted Muslims. They are creating anger and are feeding division. In contrast, American President Barack Obama is reaching out to Muslims. He is looking to them as partners in the fight against radicalization.

Will the Prime Minister apologize for his offensive comments toward Muslim Canadians?

• (1120)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is so completely untrue and completely offensive and completely far off base when it comes to what we are attempting to do as a government through this legislation, to enhance safety, protection, and security for all Canadians.

Security does not discriminate. We are attempting to elevate the security of our country from a very real and evolving threat. The member opposite decides, throughout this debate, to somehow scare people about what the security forces are doing rather than what the terrorists are posing as a threat to our country.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we learned this morning that the Conservatives' blind cuts and their misplaced priorities are hindering the fight against child pornography.

Oral Questions

Although the number of sordid cases is increasing, the Conservatives tried to save \$10 million at the expense of victims. Every year, 40,000 tips are received, but the RCMP does not have the resources it needs to investigate all these cases.

Why did the minister appropriate \$10 million allocated to the fight against sexual predators and child pornography?

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false. That member should not let the CBC do the research for her.

Let me be clear, no funding for the protection of children from sexual predators has been cut. The RCMP did not spend the full budget allocated to the National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre due to human resource challenges stemming from the nature of work, and I think members can imagine the nature of the work involved here, and high qualification standards.

That member's remark was absolutely false.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, child pornography investigations are not the only thing suffering as a result of the Conservatives' surreptitious cuts.

According to a new report, for the past eight years, 20% of the funding allocated to the RCMP has been returned to the consolidated revenue fund. The RCMP commissioner admitted that those cuts are affecting the fight against organized crime in particular.

How can the Conservatives claim that keeping Canadians safe is a priority when they are diverting funds intended for the RCMP?

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that question by the member just shows how the opposition cannot be trusted with this country's finances. In fact, the previous Liberal government lapsed over \$3 billion from this agency. The member opposite is simply trying to play politics over an accounting issue.

The truth of all of this is that seven times our Conservative government brought forward new resources to fight terrorism, and seven times the NDP and the Liberals voted against these resources.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, experts' forecasts regarding GDP growth are dropping every month. Job creation is stagnating, and we have two provinces that are headed towards a recession.

The Conservatives respond by cutting the infrastructure program by 90%, even though that program guarantees job creation and future prosperity. Worse still, the minister is postponing the budget until May and says that no immediate action is needed.

Why are the Conservatives being so irresponsible with our economy?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has a low-tax plan for jobs and growth for all sectors of the Canadian economy that is working and will return Canada to a balanced budget this year.

While we are focused on creating jobs, the Liberal leader has the old Liberal high-tax, high-debt agenda that would threaten jobs and set working families back.

We are proud of our plan that is lowering taxes and providing benefits directly to families for them to reinvest in the Canadian economy. In contrast, the Liberal leader is looking at reversing our doubling of the children's fitness tax credit, and has even said that he would convince Canadians to accept a tax hike.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government just drives by all the worries of Canada's middle class and all those who are working so hard just to get there. Their earnings are stagnant, but their debt has ballooned to 164% of disposable income. Three-quarters do not have a pension, and in 40% of empty nester households their adult children have moved back home. Their expectations of progress, of upward mobility from one generation to the next, are frustrated.

Why is the government's only priority an income splitting tax break that would pay the most to those earning \$233,000?

• (1125)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member's question is absolutely false.

To quote a headline right out of the *New York Times*, "Canadian median incomes among the highest in the world". That was the same report in which they found that, for the first time, the Canadian middle class is actually wealthier than the American middle class, a situation that was reversed under the previous Liberal government.

Our low-tax plan for families will help 100% of families with kids, providing on average of \$1,000 per household. The only plan the Liberal Party has is to raise taxes on middle-class families, which will drive jobs down and poverty up.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the *New York Times* story said that the situation was that the U.S. economy had fallen back, not that the Canadian economy had moved forward.

The late Jim Flaherty said that income splitting was too expensive and would cost \$12 billion over the planning cycle. He also said that it would be unfair, because 86% of Canadians would never qualify.

It worsens inequality; it does nothing for growth. Will the government at least use this budget hiatus to do two things: recycle that \$12 billion into the pockets of real middle-class families, not those earning \$233,000; and invest in municipal infrastructure to drive jobs and growth?

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the family tax cuts apply to families at all income levels, and the Liberal plan to reverse it would raise taxes on working and low-income families. That would kill jobs. It would imperil our economy and it would drive up poverty.

The fact is that under the low tax plan we introduced, 180,000 children were lifted out of poverty during the recession, according to UNICEF. That shows that when we put our dollars directly into the pockets of mum and dad, they always do the right thing. They always lift themselves up and bring their children with them.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is now clear that the Conservatives never had any real intention of debating Bill C-51. No sooner did debate begin than it was shut down. There were just a few hours of debate on an issue as important as Canadians' basic rights and freedoms. That is ridiculous.

Why is the government trying to sweep this under the rug? What is with the steamroller approach? What is the government trying to hide from Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us look at this in the current context of things. This bill is aimed specifically at protecting Canadians from the evolving threat of terrorism. One only needs to turn on the nightly news to see what is happening around the world, and what has in fact happened in our own country.

We will have debate in the House. The bill will move before a committee where we will hear from experts on the subject of terrorism. However, we want, on behalf of Canadians, to put more tools in the hands of our police forces to allow them to protect our country with proper oversight.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the irony is that Conservatives would actually benefit the most from more debate on the bill since there seems to be so much confusion among their ministers about what is actually in it.

The Minister of National Defence claims that Bill C-51 “doesn't give new powers to police or intelligence agencies”. Now if he has not read the bill, I can assure him that Bill C-51 dramatically expands the powers of CSIS and that CSIS decides whether any judicial approval is ever needed.

Does the government understand the consequences of the bill it has tabled and why are Conservatives trying to ram through a bill that they obviously do not understand?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we understand full well that over 80% of Canadians support these new measures. We understand full well that these are practical, common sense measures designed to give police greater ability to protect Canadians in our communities through measures that are thoroughly requiring judicial oversight,

through measures that will be given ample opportunity to be reviewed by Parliament.

However, the reality is that we have a pressing need to bring forward these measures. There will be debate in the House. There will be scrutiny at committee. There will be testimony of expert witnesses to give their perspective on this important bill, but we need the bill now.

• (1130)

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's focus on terrorism has sidelined other critical public safety priorities. Shockingly, even child pornography investigations are being systematically underfunded. Over the last five years, the RCMP withheld \$10 million in funds from child exploitation projects. Why? Conservatives say it is to reduce the deficit.

Does the minister find it acceptable to balance the books by cutting back on resources set aside to stop child sexual exploitation?

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is absolutely false. I will say it one more time to be perfectly clear. Perhaps the opposition members should hear it this time. No funding for protecting children from sexual predators has been cut.

I will quote something from the report, because we talk about the importance of finding qualified people to deal in this area with regard to child pornography and sexual exploitation. It is a very difficult field and very difficult on the law enforcement people who get involved. This is one of the reasons why. Basically in the report it speaks of “online child exploitation” in particular “is a psychologically demanding field of law enforcement specialization”.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be serious. The tip line gets over 40,000 calls per year. These are cases of children being sexually exploited. We cannot ignore those tips. Investigators have to follow up and get those children out of those terrible situations as quickly as possible.

What is the minister's plan to keep all of our children safe?

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give an example of the good work that the National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre does. In 2014, in a coordinated project, five children were removed from harm and 150 individuals were arrested. This investigation involved the seizure of over two million images. Imagine the impact this has on the people who work in this area. These videos were seized from several hundred different computers.

It is remarkable that these types of questions come from the New Democrats when they actually voted against creating tough new sentences for child exploitation and also against tougher penalties for the child predators act. Shameful.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we always support those bills when they are stand-alone bills, not when they are in omnibus bills.

Oral Questions

[*Translation*]

The government is about to dramatically increase the powers wielded by CSIS and the RCMP, but both organizations are in financially tenuous positions.

The government can pass all the new laws it wants, but they are not worth the paper they are printed on without the staff and resources to enforce them.

Can the minister explain why \$1.7 billion of the RCMP's budget went unspent over the past eight years?

[*English*]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we have increased funding for our security agencies since we took office in 2006. Unfortunately, when it comes to protecting our citizens, the opposition parties have voted against every increase in resources.

As I stated earlier as well, the previous Liberal government lapsed over \$3 billion from these agencies.

This is a normal practice, and I wish the opposition would stop playing political games with such an important issue.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Political games, Mr. Speaker, is another expression that those members have no idea what the definition means.

One would think that the government would at least listen to its own friends. As former Ottawa police chief and—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The hon. member for Gatineau has the floor. I am sure hon. members will want to hear the question. We need to recognize that when hon. members have the floor, they need the courtesy of being heard.

The hon. member for Gatineau.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, one would think that the government would at least listen to its friends, and it does not have many.

As former Ottawa police chief and Conservative, Vernon White said:

What I am hearing from police agencies, (is that) the amount of resources having to be pushed into (counter-terrorism) work right now means there's other work not getting done, in particular organized crime investigations. I'm not sure we can afford to do that.

I am not sure either. Could the minister explain to us why the Conservatives made cuts to public safety?

• (1135)

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what part of the answer the opposition has not heard clearly. That is absolutely false.

In fact, our government has increased spending for our security agencies by one-third. It is a common practice that when we create budgets for departments and they do not spend it, it is either rolled over or returned back to the government.

I find it completely unacceptable that party members across the way, who have voted essentially against every measure to get tough on crime, to fight terrorism and protect our children, have the audacity to stand in the House and bring up these types of issues.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, increasing funding that does not get used is not really efficient.

Even though the Conservatives have been heavily criticized for their partisan ads paid for with public money, they are now injecting another \$11 million into pure propaganda. With just a few months to go before the election, no one is falling for this. This is crass self-promotion on the taxpayers' dime.

Instead of racking up \$65 million in pure propaganda, why do the Conservatives not invest in our social programs and other priorities for Canadians?

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recruitment, training and retention are key priorities for the Canadian Armed Forces. The new recruitment advertising campaign is part of our commitment to support our troops in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Canadian Armed Forces recruited approximately 4,500 regular force personnel last year alone.

We are proud of our men and women in uniform. Public opinion research shows that 90% of Canadians have a positive impression of members of the Canadian Armed Forces, up from 78% in 1999.

Following a decade of darkness under the Liberals, we have increased the defence budget by over 27%, and we will not make any apologies for doing that.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is clear to everyone that one of the government's main priorities is advertising before the next election. This \$11 million more on additional advertising is more than double what it would cost to keep the Veterans Affairs offices open. It is the average old age security benefit for almost 1,800 seniors.

How can Conservatives justify spending millions more in publicly-funded partisan advertising just before an election, while cutting help to seniors and veterans?

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that it is important we advertise for retaining and recruitment for the Canadian Armed Forces, and that is what this advertising is all about. It is to maintain and increase the capabilities of the proud men and women who serve us day in and day out, who stand on the wall and protect our nation as well as carry out dangerous missions around the world.

On the member's comment about Veterans Affairs offices, I would remind her that we now have over 600 new points of service for our veterans across the country. We can indeed do both, recruit and provide services, right across our great country.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we hear that more than 400 of Canada's wealthiest people and businesses had secret bank accounts at HSBC in Geneva.

Honest Canadians who pay their taxes are exasperated at the government's inaction on this. Yesterday, at the Standing Committee on Finance, the Conservatives rejected our motion to get to the bottom of this tax avoidance scheme.

Why is the Conservative government refusing to work with us to fight white collar criminals who are benefiting from tax havens?

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, this government has zero tolerance for tax evasion.

The CRA received 1,349 files from France related to HSBC. Of those files received, 154 were duplicates, 801 contained zero dollars and 394 were deemed high risk or high dollar files. Where non-compliance was expected, the CRA conducted hundreds of audits, leading to \$21 million in taxes and penalties being reassessed. This work is ongoing. Furthermore, the CRA has received over 250 voluntary disclosures identifying \$123 million in undisclosed amounts.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing is more important than protecting our children. I believe we all agree with that. However, the Conservatives have chosen to use \$10 million from the fund the RCMP uses to fight child pornography. This is the same government that just spent \$2.7 million on glamour photos for its cabinet ministers. Just yesterday, it had the nerve to ask Parliament for an additional \$11 million for partisan TV ads, and we have all seen enough of those.

When it comes to stomping out child pornography, it is all about budget cuts. How can the government continue to make these kinds of talks, saying what is important and what is not when its priorities surely are not the priorities of—

• (1140)

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary to the minister of public safety.

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly reject the premise of that question. The fact is that we have not cut anything. We have actually increased funding to our security agencies by one-third.

With respect to this child exploitation coordination centre, there has been difficulty retaining and recruiting individuals to work in this field. Imagine for a moment the horrific scenes officers have to weed through. I talked a moment ago about the fact there are 200 million images. That is the issue. The Liberal member knows full well—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa South.

[Translation]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Except that is not true, Mr. Speaker.

The facts do not back up the Conservatives' claims that they take crime seriously. They cut the RCMP's funding to combat child pornography by \$10 million. On the other hand, since coming to power, they have spent \$750 million on partisan advertising. Their ministers spent more than \$2.3 million on photos of themselves. It is obscene.

When will this government make it a priority to protect our children?

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is our government that brought in new, tough sentences for child exploitation. It is our government that ended the ability of child molesters to get criminal record suspensions. It is this Conservative government that introduced the tougher penalties for the child predators act.

Canadians listening today will not be fooled by the opposition parties. They know it is only this government that will protect the interests of our children and our country. It is this government that is protecting our national security as well.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, American basketball fans are getting excited about another annual March madness, while in Canada taxpayers ready themselves for another round of March madness. This is the sad practice of Conservative ministers shovelling money to their party pals for little or no work, like the March 2013 contract the finance minister dished to Guy Giorno. The party's legal adviser was paid \$5,000 for a 2,000 word speech that was never read. The department said that the speech broke the rules. Why are taxpayers on the hook for this blatant Conservative patronage?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said the other day, that is just simply not true.

I suspect Canadians, and I know Ontarians, are quite nervous about the approaching Ontario Liberal budget, which, with the support of the Liberals here, will introduce a carbon tax that will cost all Canadians more money and a payroll tax that will kill business and job investment.

On the opposite token, we have a Minister of Finance who will introduce a budget very soon that will include a balanced budget, reconfirm the investments we have made in the armed forces and the fact that we have put more money into the pockets of every Canadian family. That is good news for families and good—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Nickel Belt.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada will hold its annual convention in Toronto in a few days.

The government's track record on mining has not been great. The government is dragging its feet on the Circle of Fire, and we still do not know whether the tax credit for junior mining companies will be renewed.

Why is the Conservative government not providing predictable and long-term support for the mining sector?

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, mining is a global industry, and our government is committed to attracting investment, opening new markets, supporting innovation, improving regulatory effectiveness, and promoting corporate social responsibility. That is why we are continuing to lower taxes, reduce red tape, open new markets, and create the conditions for companies to succeed in Canada, particularly those in the extractive sector. Canada has the lowest overall tax rate on new business investments in the G7, giving us a distinct advantage in the extractive sector.

We will continue to build on this action.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every year the government leaves the decision to extend the mineral exploration tax credit to the last minute. The budget delay means added uncertainty for the whole mining sector and lower investment in Canada.

There are 25,000 people, from one hundred countries, meeting in Toronto in just over a week, and all of them are waiting to know if the government will extend the tax credit that is set to expire at the end of March.

When will the government give the mining sector the predictability that it needs to make investment and create jobs in Canada?

• (1145)

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we are continuing to lower taxes, reduce red tape, open new markets, and create the conditions for companies, particularly those in the extractive sector. We want to see them succeed here in Canada.

As I have said, we have the lowest overall tax rate on new business investments in the G7. That gives us a distinct advantage in the extractive sector.

We will continue to build on these actions.

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[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government's mismanagement has also taken its toll on education.

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador is now turning to the Auditor General of Canada to get things done. Yesterday, the organization gave the Auditor General a thick file outlining the mismanagement of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

What is the minister waiting for? When will he take action and respond to the demands of aboriginal peoples who, like everyone else, just want a quality education for their children?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government believes that first nations students should have access to a quality education system, just like all other Canadians. They deserve it.

That is why, since 2006, our government has invested over \$10 billion to support the elementary and secondary education of approximately 117,000 first nations students living on reserves. We have invested approximately \$1.7 billion in school infrastructure.

The purpose of all of these investments is to give first nations children access to a good education system.

[English]

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives can fool some of the people some of the time, but they cannot fool all of the people all of the time with their rhetoric.

Many first nations communities face underfunding and a lack of training when it comes to fire and emergency services. Communities across the country are without fire protection and dependent on the neighbouring towns. These communities experience major response time delays that can have devastating and tragic impacts.

Will the minister recognize this crisis and work with these communities so they get the protection they need and deserve, or will the government continue to turn a blind eye and continue to put people at risk?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the government is working co-operatively and in partnership with first nations throughout Canada in order to allow them to provide fire protection on reserves. The budgets are constant and going up throughout Canada. Since 2006, we have invested over \$185 million to support these services on reserves.

We will continue to work in partnership with first nations to continue in the same direction.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's natural resource sector supports an impressive 1.8 million good paying jobs. It accounts for nearly 20% of our economy and provides government tax revenue for important services like health, education, and infrastructure.

Oral Questions

Residents in my riding expect our government to create jobs and grow our economy, while, of course, protecting the environment. Most are eager to see more oil and pipeline development in New Brunswick.

Could the minister share with the House what we are doing to provide benefits for working Canadians?

[Translation]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that important question.

As he said, Canadians expect our government to make decisions based on facts and scientific evidence. That is why any decisions about the energy east project will be based on independent scientific studies.

However, the leader of the Liberal Party has already jumped to conclusions by saying that this project is not socially acceptable. That is what he is saying in Quebec. We have been clear. Our decisions will be based on scientific evidence and facts, not on ideology.

* * *

[English]

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, you will know that Canadian beef exports to South Korea are worth \$25.8 million annually. The Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement was supposed to increase the beef trade with South Korea, but the latest BSE discovery has now put a halt to these exports. Other trading partners may soon follow suit if information or reassurances are not provided.

What steps is the minister taking to protect our existing beef exports, and when will Canadian farmers be able to resume their beef exports to Korea?

• (1150)

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the World Organisation for Animal Health recognizes Canada as a controlled risk status country. We expect our trading partners to continue to recognize this status. South Korea, in particular, has followed our bilateral trading protocol and used Canada's strong controlled system. The government is working to fix this temporary trade disruption as soon as possible.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, free trade agreements alone will not improve our trade balance, especially not the ones negotiated by this government.

For example, the free trade agreement with South Korea did not prevent that partner from imposing a moratorium on Canada because of the discovery of one case of mad cow disease. That is very worrisome. Nevertheless, we will continue to export Canadian beef.

What is the government's plan to reassure Korean consumers, and more importantly, what will the minister do to help our beef

producers given that he promised them better access to the Korean market?

[English]

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, South Korea has followed our bilateral trading protocol and used Canada's strong controlled system. The government is working to fix this temporary trade disruption as soon as possible.

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PARKS CANADA

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' drastic cuts to Parks Canada have forced parks to scale back or shut their gates for winter, and now volunteers are needed to keep many of Canada's national parks open. An \$800-million investment in parks can produce \$5 billion in economic activity, supporting local jobs and communities. Parks like Wood Buffalo need strong support, especially to increase tourism.

Why are the Conservatives abandoning Canada's national parks?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated yesterday, there have been no reductions to Parks Canada's budget. In fact, the overall budget has increased by 26%, and this is in addition to the \$391 million we announced in economic action plan 2014 to maintain and upgrade Parks Canada's infrastructure. These investments will ensure that Canadians and visitors are safe and continue to enjoy our country's natural heritage. Our government also launched the national conservation plan last year, which includes new investments.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' incompetence and flip-flop on the approval of citronella has had a negative impact on our economy.

A Quebec company lost more than \$1 million, and some employees lost their jobs. The company was even forced to buy back stock from customers, in addition to paying fines.

This entire industry is in the process of rebuilding. This is amateur hour.

How does the minister explain this whole mess?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians have access to a wide array of choice for natural health products, and Health Canada's oversight recognizes the lower risk of most natural health products. The department has approved thousands of products as being safe and effective.

Regarding citronella, the department has announced a review to ensure that these products have the proper level of oversight, and this review will ensure that Canadians have access to safe and effective products.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the fourth anniversary of the Syria crisis approaches, 5.6 million children are in need of assistance. Will the Minister of International Development personally attend the donor conference in Kuwait on March 31, and will he make a meaningful contribution on behalf of all Canadians to champion the children of Syria?

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that question. Indeed, the conference is coming up in March in Kuwait. We are still in consideration of whether or not the minister is going to attend that. However, I can tell the House that Canada has been one of the largest donors. It is the third-largest donor to the World Food Programme, helping the people of Syria and helping the people who are most vulnerable.

We will continue to assess the situation with our allies and continue to work with our partners.

* * *

● (1155)

*[Translation]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the imprisonment and cruel and inhumane treatment of Saudi blogger Raif Badawi continues to be met with outrage in Canada and around the world.

The government called for clemency, but calling for clemency does not guarantee that Raif Badawi and his lawyer will be immediately and unconditionally released, nor does it allow Raif to be reunited with his family in Quebec.

Will the government explicitly demand that these two individuals be released immediately and unconditionally and that Raif be reunited with his family here in Quebec?

[English]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Consular, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government considers the punishment of Mr. Badawi to be a violation of human dignity, and we continue to call for clemency in this case.

The promotion and protection of human rights is an integral part of our Canadian foreign policy. Mr. Badawi is not a Canadian citizen, but we will continue to make our position known both publicly and through diplomatic channels. Our government has made representation, and it will continue to do that.

* * *

*[Translation]***RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail is caught in a vicious cycle. It has fewer customers as a result of bad service. The fewer customers it has, the less service it provides. The equipment and service in the east are pathetic.

Parliament must regain control of this fundamental service and impose a governance and funding structure on VIA Rail, as has been done in the United States with Amtrak.

Will the Conservatives support a legislative framework for VIA Rail? Why are they treating passengers like second-class citizens?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail's primary objective is to provide safe and efficient passenger service, but it has to do it in as cost-effective a manner as possible. The government has supported VIA Rail significantly since 2006. In fact, \$1 billion in investment has gone into this passenger rail service.

We always ask VIA Rail how it plans to increase ridership and how it plans to improve service. It is its job to get it done, and we expect it to do so.

* * *

*[Translation]***JUSTICE**

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the New Brunswick Court of Appeal has six judges. At present, there are three anglophone and two francophone judges. The Association des juristes d'expression française du Nouveau-Brunswick is justified in asking that the next judge be a francophone, so that both communities have equal representation.

Will the minister undertake to appoint a francophone to the New Brunswick Court of Appeal and promise not to pick from the list of Conservative organizers, as they did with Justice Richard Bell?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member certainly understands that we must have a non-partisan judicial system. Judges are picked on the basis of their qualifications and merit. We are happy to continue that practice. I have confidence in the competence of the judicial system in New Brunswick, or anywhere else in Canada.

Oral Questions

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Barlow (MacLeod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have an important opportunity to build on our record of responsible resource development while securing long-term security for all Canadians, which I think is particularly important for the people of my riding of MacLeod. This is why our government is taking action to ensure that we benefit from the economic potential of our natural resources.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources update the House on the Prime Minister's exciting announcement yesterday?

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for MacLeod for that question.

Countries around the world are looking to do business with Canada because it offers the best fiscal conditions for secure energy supply. Yesterday's announcement by the Prime Minister reaffirmed our government's commitment to promoting Canada's resources on the world stage through the capital cost allowance for the emerging LNG industry.

In contrast to the high tax-and-spend agenda of the Liberals and the NDP, our low-tax plan is delivering results for Canadians by creating jobs and economic growth from coast to coast to coast.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the coming weeks, there are about to be severe cuts to the shrimp fishery in northeastern Newfoundland and Labrador for the entire province. This coming Monday, there is a large protest scheduled by citizens on Fogo Island. Specifically, they are going after the last-in, first-out policy. Recently the provincial government, their fellow Conservatives, said that if this policy exists, the inshore fishery will be devastated.

Therefore, my question for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is this: Finally, will she eliminate the last-in, first-out policy and save our inshore fishery?

• (1200)

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's interest in this issue. I can tell him that the minister is committed to balancing economic opportunity while promoting the sustainability of the northern shrimp fishery. Reductions to quotas are never easy, but our priority has to be sustainability.

The last-in, first-out policy has been part of this fishery since 1997, when it was introduced by the Liberal government. Under that policy, the new entrants received the vast majority of the new access with the understanding that if reductions were necessary in the future, the LIFO policy would be in effect.

It is our view that the terms agreed to previously need to be respected.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Quebec government confirmed that the Ste. Anne's veterans hospital transfer is a hundred per cent ready to go, and it will be transferred at the beginning of 2016.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs please update the House on the status of this project?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Edmonton Centre for his personal commitment to our veterans.

Our government continues to work diligently with the Government of Quebec toward a successful transfer of the Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue veterans hospital while maintaining excellence in care for veterans in the language of their choice.

Contrary to what the member for Lac-Saint-Louis and his federal Liberal Party claims, our government is standing up for veterans and delivering tangible results. Veterans can count on our government to ensure that our veterans have the best care available and to continue to support our veterans in every capacity.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Claude Patry (Jonquière—Alma, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the current Quebec government is hurting the regions by making ill-advised decisions to supposedly improve public finances, the fiscal imbalance between Ottawa and the provinces continues to grow. Between 2009 and 2013, Quebec lost \$6.5 billion in federal transfers.

Will the government stop lining its own pockets at the expense of Quebec and the provinces, and will it restore transfers based on people's needs?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are protecting transfers to provinces, and transfers for health and social programs continue to increase. The Liberals made drastic cuts to transfers to the provinces and the territories. We will never do that. We will ensure that every territory and province has the capacity to provide health care, education and other social services that families need.

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[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, Maria Venancio was a Filipino temporary foreign worker who worked at a McDonald's Restaurant in Edmonton. In 2011, Ms. Venancio was biking to work and was struck by a motor vehicle, rendering her a paraplegic and therefore unable to work.

Under the rules of the temporary foreign worker program, as she is unable to work, she has no status and is currently facing deportation. Ms. Venancio has applied to become a permanent resident, but deporting her to the Philippines while she is convalescent would seem to be inhumane and even un-Canadian.

Why will the Minister of Immigration or the minister in charge of border services not intervene to protect an extremely vulnerable temporary foreign worker?

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member will know that because of privacy laws, I cannot speak to the specifics of this particular case.

I will state this. Canada has one of the most fair and generous immigration systems in the world. With that said, we must ensure that we continue to welcome newcomers while respecting Canadian taxpayers at all times.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the government claims to be cracking down on terrorists, and through Bill C-51, our security agencies are about to assume broad new powers. However, our security agencies lack the resources to carry out even their current mandates. Both the RCMP commissioner and the deputy CSIS director clearly told parliamentary committees last October as much, that a lack of resources makes tracking all extremists at all times simply impossible. Now we have learned that collectively, CSIS, the RCMP, and the Department of Defence have allowed \$11 billion to go unspent and lapse.

In its zeal to balance its budget in an election year, does the government not understand that increased security powers without adequate resources is an exercise in futility?

• (1205)

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in actual fact, we have increased resources to our national security agencies by over one-third.

Just recently, this last week, we experienced more terror in the world, in Copenhagen. We have also seen attacks in Australia, recently in Paris, and of course here, on October 22. It is absolutely imperative, when we talk about legislation that is before this House, that we pass it to enable us to give the resources and tools to our security agencies to keep our national security and our citizens safe.

* * *

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the government quite rightly decided to appeal the decision to allow people to cover their faces during the swearing-in part of citizenship ceremonies. The Conservative Party even started a petition to require people to show their faces during the swearing-in.

Routine Proceedings

With just a few months to go until the election, the Canada Elections Act does not forbid veiled voting. I would think that voting is at least as important as a swearing-in ceremony.

Will the government keep the promise it made in the 2007 throne speech and honour the two bills it introduced subsequently? Will it say that veiled voting is not the way we do things here?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Fair Elections Act requires all voters to show identification before voting.

As I recall, the Bloc Québécois opposed that requirement and the bill. It is interesting that the member wants people to show their faces without a piece of identification that can be used to confirm who they are. The Bloc Québécois really should start reading and thinking about its own contradictions.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE RAIL ACT

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-52, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act.

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

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today signed by many Canadians from the Sherbrooke area.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to immediately use every diplomatic means necessary to ensure that Raif Badawi is released and reunited with his family, which has sought refuge in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Raif was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes for creating an online program in Saudi Arabia.

The petitioners are joining with the parliamentarians in all parties who have already asked the government to take action on this case.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition today signed by hundreds of people from my area in eastern Quebec and northern New Brunswick who are calling for better VIA Rail service in our region.

The railway is in terrible condition. Service is declining and the frequency is diminishing. A lot of improvements are needed. We hope the federal government will listen.

Government Orders

[English]

EATING DISORDERS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are serious mental illnesses that incapacitate more than 600,000 Canadians and can be fatal.

Petitioners call upon the government to work with the provinces, territories, and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive pan-Canadian strategy for eating disorders, including better prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and support.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in the House today, signed by hundreds of residents of the city I represent, New Westminster, but also Richmond, British Columbia, and Delta, British Columbia.

These Canadians are concerned about increasing illegality because of seed patents that are being privatized. The petitioners are calling for Parliament to ensure that the Government of Canada and the House of Commons are committing to international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against hunger and poverty; that they ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small family farmers; and that they protect the rights of small family farmers, particularly in the global south, to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

• (1210)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in question period, I spoke of Fogo Island, and now I want to speak of Change Islands, just next door.

The people there are in dire need of a wharf for commercial reasons. They have a commercial opportunity presented to the island in the fisheries sector. Unfortunately, they cannot exercise this because of the dilapidated wharf they have. Therefore, petitioners are calling on the government to invest in this wharf to make sure that their island is sustainable. I have several hundred signatures here from the Change Islands and surrounding communities off-island on the mainland of Newfoundland.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-32, An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: I believe there are still seven minutes left for questions and comments for the member for Gatineau.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Gatineau for her speech.

It is quite rare—there is no denying it—that we see a bill like Bill C-32 that allows the official opposition to finally support the government so we can work together to the same end.

Unfortunately, we must again condemn the time allocation imposed on this bill and the fact that despite our efforts and the very reasonable amendments proposed at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, they were all refused.

Because she was able to hear from so many witnesses, I wonder if my colleague, the justice critic, could tell me if she heard anything or got any impressions from witnesses or other stakeholders in the area of justice and victims rights regarding the fact that the government was completely closed to any suggestions for improving this worthwhile and commendable bill.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question.

I realize that they are often the same groups. We are really getting to know one another. Justice committee meetings are practically convivial now. There is a common thread running through the Conservatives' bills, and as a result, they often invite the same witnesses to come and explain things to us. That is why we are really getting to know them.

I am also coming to the realization, and this was true particularly during our study of the victims bill of rights, that the victims' associations the Conservatives like to trot out for photo ops in support of their bills have their eyes and ears wide open.

I am saying that, but members of those associations are no fools. They know that the government likes to use them, but the cause is greater than their personal feelings. They have big hearts. They have been through absolutely horrible situations, so they will always step up when they see an opportunity to advance their cause even a little, but they are no fools.

I would like to take a moment to correct the member. Indeed, the Conservatives had no interest in what I would call quantitative amendments that would have made a huge difference to victims. I think that is unfortunate because they claim to stand up for victims.

They accepted just one opposition amendment, and it was one of mine. It does not make me terribly proud because they changed the amendment quite a bit. Nevertheless, I asked for this:

Government Orders

Two years after section 2 comes into force, a committee of the House of Commons, of the Senate or of both Houses of Parliament is to be designated or established for the purpose of reviewing the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights enacted by that section.

I thought two years was reasonable. It was my way of ensuring that a House committee would truly look at how much this bill of rights accomplished. Out of respect for the victims rights associations, this would allow them to come and tell us whether there had been any major changes.

True to form, the Conservatives proposed an amendment to the amendment to push back the study to five years. Moreover, it blew my mind, but they rejected this proposal: “The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada must prepare and cause to be laid before each House of Parliament an annual report for the previous year on the operation of this Act that contains the following information”.

It would have been interesting to see some statistics. This government is not a big fan of information. We could have had statistics. I asked for “(a) the number of restitution orders made under section 16;” since this was an important part of the bill of rights to them. I get the impression that it will not get used as much as we think.

I also asked for the following because that is what the victims are calling for: “(b) the number of requests for information made under sections 7 and 8; and (c) the number of complaints filed under sections 25 and 26”.

Unfortunately, the government rejected all this.

• (1215)

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the NDP's justice critic, for her professionalism and diligence in debating the bills introduced by the Conservatives.

I also thank her for pointing out the Conservatives' misleading statements. They claim to stand up for victims, but in reality this bill is nothing but an empty shell. They will not compensate victims. They have no plan for compensating victims. They are off-loading that burden onto the provinces.

Could my colleague speak more to the fact that the Conservatives are washing their hands of this and off-loading the burden onto the provinces?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I could talk about that for 25 minutes.

The provinces will have to deal with the administration of justice, which is their responsibility. The content—meaning crime and justice—is our responsibility. The provinces are responsible for the administration of justice. I would say that is a big responsibility. We draft the laws, and they have to take action based on what we draft and decide. This is often done without much consultation, with all due respect to my colleagues opposite, who say that they consult when they hold one or two meetings a year with federal, provincial and territorial justice ministers. Often, this process is very superficial.

The Conservatives say that they are working on something. Their idea of consultation is limited to informing people of what will be

passed. They say that they have a majority so they will not accept any amendments, that they already know where they are going and that this is how things will be. Then they explain what that means.

We are running out of time. It would have been great to have more time to debate this issue and to talk about different aspects of the bill. I did not get a chance to talk about the part that deals with the complaints of victims who are not happy with how certain things work. Once again, it is a voluntary system that is not clear at the provincial level. It could create some problems and could get bogged down.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-32. It is a bill that I suspect will receive unanimous support of the House of Commons, and there should be no one surprised in regard to that. Legislators as a whole, whether at the national level or at the provincial level, truly want to do whatever is possible from a legislative perspective and outside of legislative perspectives to ensure that we can bring more justice and express more sympathy and so forth to victims of crime.

The right to information, the right to protection, the right to participation, and the right to restitution are rights that we hear a great deal about whenever we talk about victims. I would like to add some thoughts dealing with the legislation and, if time permits, to cite some concerns I have specifically with respect to Winnipeg North in regard to gang activities, which are not unique to Winnipeg North. Gang activities occur in many other municipalities and areas across the country, and there is an important role that the government needs to play in dealing with that issue.

It is worthy of note that the Liberal Party will be supporting Bill C-32, and that should come as no surprise. We have worked with other political parties in the past in recognizing the importance of victims and in wanting to make sure we do whatever possible in having a legislative agenda to deal with the issue.

Even though the government talks a great deal about being the great defender of victims and victims' rights, if we get down to the details, we find that the government has really not done all that well and that there is more it could have done. Because of its general attitude in bringing forward legislation, we could have been able to accomplish a whole lot more.

I say that because in 1988, had the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers of justice actually endorsed the Canadian statement of basic principles of justice for victims of crime. That was back in an era of Progressive Conservatives, under Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell. They demonstrated the need to be able to work in co-operation with different stakeholders, and in particular with the different levels of government.

In 2003, after a considerable amount of discussion had taken place among federal officials, provincial officials, and other stakeholders, the original statement of basic principles of justice for victims of crime was changed and modified, and again I emphasize that it was through working with other jurisdictions that a great deal was accomplished. Ultimately it was to promote fair treatment of victims and to have that reflected in federal, provincial, and territorial laws, policies, and procedures. That was done because the different entities were working together.

Government Orders

I suspect that a greater sense of agreement and co-operation among the different levels helped put the necessary funding and resources in place to ensure that it was possible not only to talk about changes but to act on those changes. I will refer later in my comments to the resources.

A reference in the preamble to the 2014 victims bill of rights notes that some very basic principles were identified back in 2003. They were intended to be promoted so that there would be fair treatment for victims. As I said, those would then be reflected through laws, policies, and procedures.

● (1220)

I would like to list all eight of them: first, victims of crime should be treated with courtesy, compassion, and respect; second, the privacy of victims should be considered and respected to the greatest extent possible; third, all reasonable measures should be taken to minimize inconvenience to victims; fourth, the safety and security of victims should be considered at all stages of the criminal justice process and appropriate measures should be taken when necessary to protect victims from intimidation and retaliation; fifth, information should be provided to victims about the criminal justice system and the victim's role and opportunities to participate in criminal justice processes; sixth, victims should be given information, in accordance with the prevailing laws, policies, and procedures, about the status of the investigation; the scheduling, progress, and final outcome of the proceedings; and the status of the offender in the correctional system; seventh, information should be provided to the victims about available victim assistance services, other programs and assistance available to them, and means of obtaining financial reparation; and eighth, the views, concerns and representations of victims are an important consideration in criminal justice processes and should be considered in accordance with the prevailing law, policies and procedures.

I was here when the minister introduced the legislation. He indicated at that point what a wonderful hallmark it would be to pass Bill C-32. There is no doubt that Bill C-32 is a step forward, as we acknowledge, and that is why we support the legislation. However, it does not deserve the type of applause the Minister of Justice has envisioned for it. There are many shortcomings in the legislation.

Since the Conservatives formed government in 2006, not much legislation has materialized putting victims first, despite what we hear on a weekly basis in the House of Commons. In other words, there is vast room for improvement. One might say that as a member of the Liberal Party, it is easy for me to make that statement, but let me refer to some recommendations in the recent report by the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime on the victims bill of rights legislation based on discussions with stakeholders at that office's April 13 forum.

To quote federal ombudsman Sue O'Sullivan from May 2014, she stated in reference to the bill:

...the Bill fails to fully address the breadth and depth of victims' needs and concerns. As the Bill moves through the Parliamentary process, I will be pushing for further change to strengthen the Bill and I encourage all Canadians to do the same.

Of the nearly 30 recommendations the ombudsman made to the Government of Canada for inclusion in its bill, only 4 have been

fully addressed, and another 10 have only been partly addressed, which really suggests that there is a great deal of room for improvement.

● (1225)

I looked at the report by that office and it is fairly extensive. If members look at the nine recommendations made for the victims bill of rights, each of them has specifics. Let me provide a couple of examples.

The first recommendation talks about the victims bill of rights being enforceable and usable. It states:

Critical to have the rights of victims enshrined in law and enforceable, accessible for victims.

The concept of justice expanded from an exclusive focus on convicting individuals of crimes to include a full response to the needs of victims; justice is seen to be done when the offender is held accountable and the victim restored to the maximum extent possible.

Should include accessible knowledge through data collection and dissemination (with privacy considerations) to enable the community to monitor and evaluate equality, progress and effectiveness.

In this report, there are nine recommendations. I just made reference to one of them, which consists of a series of suggestions. Each recommendation, in fact, has a series of suggestions. There is a lot in here, including about voice and standing; the right to information, financial protection and support, psychological support and resources; limiting opportunities for offenders to profit from crimes or to re-offend; equitable, respectful, and individualized treatment; the inclusive definition of victim to include anyone in Canada harmed by crime; and integrated, accessible and simple services and resources with minimum standards across the country. These are all points in which there are actionable points that follow each one of the eight recommendations that I just listed. The point is that there is so much more that we could have done to improve the legislation.

The Liberal Party critic, the member for Charlottetown, has done a phenomenal job in making sure that our party's perspective is espoused and talked about. He has represented us exceptionally well at the committee stage and, in fact, made numerous attempts to make changes or bring forward amendments to the legislation.

I would like to quote some of the thoughts expressed by the member for Charlottetown with regard to one specific presentation that he heard in committee. This particular individual was Maureen Basnicki, a Canadian whose husband was killed in the 9/11 attacks. At committee, she explained that she had experienced difficulty in accessing victims services because her husband was murdered by a terrorist outside of the country. She urged us to extend any lawfully available domestic rights to Canadian victims of crime that occur outside of Canada.

I would like to share some her testimony with the chamber. She stated:

...perpetrators of crimes are still demanding their rights as Canadian citizens when they've been successfully prosecuted for crimes outside the country, and I want to bring balance to this. This is not a new step. It's new for Canadians, perhaps, but other countries do this, many other countries. Most other countries do.

Government Orders

After listening to Ms. Basnicki, the member for Charlottetown, on behalf of the Liberal Party, introduced an amendment to capture her unfairly overlooked constituency, even though reference was made to it in the report. The Liberal critic suggested granting domestically available victims benefits to Canadians who have experienced serious personal injury crimes outside of the country or whose family members have been murdered outside the country.

• (1230)

What do members think happened at committee? A wonderful, valuable amendment, something that was referenced in other forms by different stakeholders, was voted down by the Conservatives for apparently no good reason, other than that the Liberal Party had brought forward the amendment, perhaps.

The member for Charlottetown introduced other amendments. Some of those amendments were based on the Canadian Bar Association's recommendations on Bill C-32.

One of the interesting ones that received a great deal of discussion was with regard to plea deals and what happens when there is an admission of guilt compared to deals where there are attempts to come up with a plea bargain. There was some clarity introduced in making sure that the system would be more efficient and fairer to victims. Again, the government rejected them.

There were many other amendments brought forward, including allowing victims of crime in Canada to file victim impact statements and to make restitution claims without being present in Canada, so as to avoid the expense of having to return here. Another was returning court discretion on the timing of restitution payments, since restitution orders may interfere with the victims' enforcement of civil orders. There was also one preserving court discretion to disallow a community impact statement if someone unjustifiably purported to speak on behalf of a community. There were more amendments as well.

However, the government is so partisan at committee that even if there is a legitimate amendment that would improve the legislation, it has a standard default position in response. If it is not a Conservative amendment, the government will not vote in favour of it. As a result, we are failing to recognize important amendments that would make the legislation that much better.

This is where I believe the government needs to be held to task. Yes, it is passing legislation. As I said, we will support this legislation, but we must indicate to Canadians that the government consistently fails to recognize worthy amendments that would improve legislation. As a result, it is Canadians who are paying the price because of the Conservatives' attitude when it comes to passing legislation in the House of Commons and their complete disregard of amendments that would improve legislation.

At committee, it was interesting. This is something else that the member for Charlottetown wanted to make reference to. The Grand Chief asked us to alter Bill C-32 to "better reflect the unique circumstances and needs of first nations persons who are victims of crime". In short, he asked us to extend the principle of the Supreme Court's Gladue decision, which extends special historic consideration to aboriginal offenders' and victims' side of the question. The Grand Chief recommended, and we did introduce, amendments to

address that issue, at least in part. Again, the Conservatives turned them down.

There were concerns regarding restorative justice, and if time permits, I will take the opportunity to deal with that toward the end of my comments.

The bottom line is that the government has been afforded the opportunity—are you telling me that my time is up, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Daryl Kramp): You have five seconds.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, hopefully, someone will ask me a question. I was hoping to be able to go on the record with some thoughts on gang activity, but I am thankful for the opportunity to have been able to say at least a few words on the issue.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his speech. I especially appreciated his pointing out that the Conservative government does not give any consideration to the work done in committee, especially since getting its majority.

The work done by committees, which are part of our parliamentary and democratic institutions, is being rather perverted by the government. As the member clearly explained, based on his extensive experience, committees help improve bills by amending them.

As my colleague, the justice critic, mentioned, the NDP moved several amendments to this bill in order to add real value.

I would like to hear more from the member about committee work. Whether with this bill or the many others that have amended the Criminal Code, not recognizing the work of committees will have negative consequences for Canada's future.

• (1240)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if the government had more of a co-operative attitude going into the committee, we could improve the quality of the legislation. All of us would benefit if occurred.

Let us take a look at the issue of the rights of victims. I made reference to Brian Mulroney whose government worked with the provinces to ultimately develop our first basic principles of justice for victims. Then Jean Chrétien made modifications to it, and I quoted those rights.

I did not have time to make reference to former prime minister Paul Martin or the member for Mount Royal, who took initiative and enhanced the rights of victims.

Whether it was any level of those changes that were brought in, there was a high sense of co-operation with the different levels of government. There was a great deal more effort in taking into consideration what opposition members had to say.

Government Orders

Under other administrations, amendments that were brought forward to committee, whether they were Liberal, or New Democrat or Progressive Conservative amendments, years back, they were not only allowed to be debated, but a good number of them were passed. Why? Because it was in the best interest of the legislation being debated.

The current majority government has forgotten that principle. It has that natural default position of when an amendment is not Conservative, it resists and votes against it. That is to the detriment of good legislation.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before asking my question, I would like to comment on the question posed by my colleague from LaSalle—Émard.

In previous parliaments, it was normal for the government, even one with a majority, to accept a number of amendments proposed in committee. Up to two-thirds of the amendments put forward in committee were accepted by previous governments.

However, in the 41st Parliament, regretfully, none of the amendments moved by opposition parties have been accepted. That is very unfortunate.

[*English*]

If my colleague has any concluding remarks related to gangs or any other concluding remarks, I would like to hear them.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there was so much that I wanted to say on this legislation, but there is a personal side to this for me in the sense of the rights of victims.

There is so much more a government can do to prevent victims in the first place. On gang activity, far too many young people are engaged in those activities. If the government were to invest more in activities in which young people could get engaged in to prevent them from getting involved in gangs, we could prevent people from becoming victims in the future.

I would like to see the government have a more caring attitude in providing the alternative programming or supporting and working with the different levels of government to create and generate the activities that would help our young people and keep them out of gangs.

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it strange that on such an important issue that transcends all political spectrum that we would get caught up in a bashing kind of rhetoric. I understand the hon. member opposite has certain passions about doing that. The reality is that it takes away from the integrity of what we are endeavouring to do, and also the importance of the bill in this context.

I have been on this page for a good long time through various governments. I can remember the days of the Liberal governments when, as a member of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, we pleaded for adjustments to legislation to better deal with things like victims issues, and for the most part, we were discounted, so this is not a political issue. We need to get our collective act together and start thinking about why we are here and what we are here to do.

Does the hon. member have any recollection of the days of Paul Martin, then prime minister, when the police pleaded for these kinds of issues and we were totally discounted?

• (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, let me address the point the member raised at the beginning. My choice would be to have a government go to the committee stage of a bill with an open mind and be receptive to amendments proposed by opposition members.

The government cannot have it both ways. It cannot go to committee and reject everything opposition members have to say in bringing forward amendments and voting against all of them, as this majority government consistently has, then when the bill comes forward for third reading, say that the member is too political.

We support the legislation because we believe it is a step in the right direction, but it could have been better legislation had the government been more receptive to listening and working in a co-operative more apolitical fashion at committee stage.

In regard to the listening, I can assure the member that whether it is meeting with premiers, mayors and other organizations and stakeholders, I do not know of another prime minister outside of Paul Martin who was outreaching, working and trying to build consensus.

In his very short period of time, look at what he was able to accomplish, whether it was the Kelowna accord or many other deals with our first nations, or child care. There was a litany of things in a very short time span such as the green agreement, the health care accord. We have not seen this type of consultation. It does not necessarily mean everyone gets everything, but at least the genuine attempt for outreach and consultation was done exceptionally well. I am very proud of the former prime ministers Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien on these issues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoulu, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I cannot help but respond to the speech given by the Associate Minister of National Defence. He is claiming that the Conservatives suggested those ideas when Paul Martin's government was in office. However, we then had eight years of inaction before we finally started this debate, which, unfortunately, has been subject to time allocation. That is truly shameful.

My colleague was quite right in pointing out the fact that our constructive proposals are all too easily rejected. I would like him to comment on that.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I made reference in my comments to Sue O'Sullivan, the federal ombudsman for victims of crime. That captures a number of thoughts to which the member makes reference.

A lot more can be done. However, it is not fair for the Conservatives to trumpet all the time that they are the great defenders of victims rights, because their actions speak differently.

Government Orders

•(1250)

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.

I am honoured to have an opportunity to participate in the third reading debate on Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights act.

There were a lot of consultations, including in my own riding of Edmonton Centre. As we all know, the bill does propose significant changes to Canadian criminal law.

It is thanks to some great work of the tireless staff in the Department of Justice, people like Pam Arnott, working closely with the Minister of Justice, who have brought the bill to the House. Most important, the bill would create the Canadian victims bill of rights to enshrine enforceable rights of victims of crime in federal law for the first time.

These rights fall into four main areas.

The right to information would give victims the right to general information about the criminal justice system, available victim services and programs, as well as specific information about the progress of the case, including information related to the investigation, prosecution and sentencing of the person who harmed them.

The right to protection would give victims the right to have their security and privacy considered at all stages of the criminal justice process, have reasonable and necessary measures to protect them from intimidation and retaliation, and to request their identity to be protected from public disclosure.

The right to participation would give victims the right to convey their views about decisions to be made by criminal justice professionals and have them considered at various stages in the criminal justice process, and to present a victim impact statement.

The right to restitution would give victims the right to have the court consider making a restitution order for all offences for which there are easy to calculate financial losses.

In addition, the bill would amend other legislation, such as the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to provide greater specificity to those rights.

Bill C-32 is the most recent example of our government's commitment to improving the experiences of victims of crime. Because of the transformative nature of these reforms and the significant impact they will have on the experiences of victims in the criminal justice system, the Canadian victims bill of rights is a milestone in the quest for justice for victims of crime.

This government has long been aware of the need to do more for victims of crime. Indeed, it has been one of our top priorities. Since 2006, we have designated more than \$140 million to give victims a more effective voice in the criminal justice system.

We have seen the results of this investment in concrete terms, such as through the creation of more than 20 child advocacy centres across Canada that help children and their families navigate the justice system.

We have also undertaken a robust legislative agenda that has included many reforms benefiting victims of crime. These have included Bill C-37, Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act, which reformed the victims surcharge provisions in the Criminal Code; Bill C-14, Not criminally Responsible Reform Act, which addressed the needs of victims accused persons found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder; and, most recent, Bill C-13, Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act, to address cyberbullying.

While we are proud of everything we have done for victims of crime, the victims bill of rights is truly a significant achievement. Ensuring the rights of victims at the federal level recognizes the difficulty that victims can experience as they participate in the criminal justice and corrections systems. It would provide concrete means to ensure that the needs of victims would be respected.

The rights enshrined in the Canadian victims bill of rights and the amendments to the other acts that are included in Bill C-32 would apply to all victims of crime.

However, some of the proposed provisions would have special significance for vulnerable victims, such as victims of sexual offences, and that is where I would like to focus my attention today.

Bill C-32 proposes amendments to the Criminal Code scheme that governs the production of third party records. To be clear, this scheme applies to documents of all kinds for which there is a reasonable expectation of privacy and which are being sought as evidence in criminal trials involving sexual offences. The proposed amendments are consistent with the rights of victims to privacy and security, which would be enshrined in the Canadian victims bill of rights.

Four amendments are proposed to the third party records regime.

First, the amendments would ensure that all historical sexual offences would be included within the procedures governing the release of third party records by replacing the current list of historical sexual offences with a general description to ensure that all victims of sexual offences would be protected by this scheme.

Second, the period of time for which an accused must serve their application for the production of third party records would be doubled from 7 to 14 days.

Third, the court would be required to inform the complainant or witness of their right to be represented by independent legal counsel during the in camera process.

Finally, a court would be required to consider the right to personal security of a complainant or witness when determining whether to produce a record for inspection by the court or whether to produce the record to the accused. This would codify the Supreme Court of Canada's jurisprudence in this area.

Government Orders

•(1255)

Bill C-32 also includes a number of amendments that specifically address the needs of victims of sexual offences when they testify as witnesses in criminal proceedings. The benefits of testimonial aids, such as support persons, use of a screen that spares the witness from seeing the accused, or testimony outside the courtroom by closed-circuit television, are well documented.

Bill C-32 would make testimonial aids more readily available for adult vulnerable witnesses, including victims of sexual offences, by providing the courts with greater discretion to determine whether to order their use. Currently such testimonial aids may be ordered for adults when a court determines that they are necessary for the witness to provide a full and candid account. Amendments proposed in Bill C-32 would allow a court to make such orders for adult witnesses, including victims of sexual offences, when they believe it would facilitate the giving of a full and candid account. The language is important here.

Additionally, a court would be required to consider the security and protection of the witness, and society's interest in encouraging the reporting of offences and witness protection in the criminal justice system, when deciding whether to order a testimonial aid.

The Criminal Code provision governing the appointment of counsel to conduct the cross-examination of a witness when the accused is self-represented would also be amended to benefit victims of sexual offences. The amendment would presumptively prohibit a self-represented accused from personally cross-examining a victim of sexual assault, unless the judge is of the opinion that the proper administration of justice requires it. This presumptive approach is currently the case with victims of sexual harassment, and recognizes that victims of certain crimes are more vulnerable while they participate in the criminal justice process.

A victim's right to privacy and protection under the Canadian victims bill of rights would also be supported by amendments to section 486.5 of the Criminal Code, which governs publication bans for adults. Currently a judge may order a publication ban for an adult victim or witness, if the order is deemed necessary for the proper administration of justice. Bill C-32 would allow a court to order a publication ban for adult victims and witnesses when it is in the interest of the proper administration of justice. Once again, the language is important.

When determining whether to order a publication ban, the court will consider factors, including whether the witness can suffer harm, rather than significant harm, as is currently required, if their identity were disclosed. These amendments would be particularly beneficial to victims of sexual offences, who are often more vulnerable due to the nature of the offence.

This bill has been thoroughly examined by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. The standing committee held nine days of meetings and heard evidence on many critical aspects of the bill. It has also been the subject of comprehensive debate in the House of Commons. In fact, this bill has enjoyed the support of all parties, at all critical stages of parliamentary consideration. There has never been any question in anyone's mind on both sides of the House about the need to

recognize victims of crime and the positive and long-reaching impacts that this bill will have on their experiences in the criminal justice system.

The time has come for this House to conclude our study and debate of this bill. I hope that all parties will work with us as we ensure that this landmark piece of legislation is passed as swiftly as possible. For too long, victims have voiced the concern that their perspectives have not been heard. This government has made a commitment to improve this situation, and has in fact made significant progress in improving rights and services to victims through many legislative and program initiatives.

Victims have waited a long time for this bill. Let us not make them wait any longer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we said that we would support the bill and we will definitely do so at this stage because the bill is still a good first step.

However, I would like to share one of our concerns. What about the families of victims who have died? Bill C-32 does not contain any provisions on helping families of victims to heal. Sometimes life is never really the same after such an incident occurs. Some people are never able to return to work. Some develop mental health problems and have difficulty reintegrating into society.

There is nothing in Bill C-32 in this regard. Even before this bill was introduced, cuts had been made to key programs for victims, particularly in the area of rehabilitation and mental health.

Why is there nothing in Bill C-32 about helping the victims' families and loved ones heal and readjust to life and society?

•(1300)

[*English*]

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is a good one.

Bill C-32 addresses a number of aspects of this whole picture of victims' rights and so on, but it addresses the judicial process, and that is what it is intended to do. It does not, and was never intended to, address some of the things that would fall out of that because this is not endless.

However, there are a number of things that would fall out of it. There are various mental health programs and services in the provinces. Most of them are delivered provincially, as that is where those authorities reside.

It is a legitimate question. It is a matter that should be addressed, but I do not think that it is part of Bill C-32.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have some reservations.

Government Orders

Yes, we will support this bill because it is important to victims. However, if the Conservatives think it is that important, then why did they wait eight years after taking power to make it happen? Why did they implement a system to process victims' complaints without allocating the resources needed to make it work?

Because there will not be any resources, victims will not be able to use the complaints system. It is totally ineffective. The government must give victims the means to exercise their rights if it really wants them to be heard.

[*English*]

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, again, that is a reasonable question. We all have mixed feelings in this place about just about everything that goes on here.

The question was why we waited so long. All governments have priorities, but no matter what we bring forward and when, somebody is going to ask why we did not bring it forward before. That is also a fair question. Every government is going to attack its agenda. Things will have a higher priority because of certain circumstances that would necessarily put things farther down the list. Those circumstances change. This was deemed to be an appropriate time, with an opportunity to bring this forward.

With regard to resources, the resources are there. They will continue to be there, and they will continue to be improved as this process rolls out and matures and more people begin to take advantage of the four basic areas of rights that will be exercised. I itemized them in a bit of detail. The resources are there. They will be there, and they will continue to be improved as we go along.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my Conservative colleague for his speech and his answers.

Can he tell me what the Conservative government is doing to prevent crime? Can he name any programs to prevent violence against women and to prevent street gangs?

[*English*]

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, again, that is a good question. The member named one of the organizations. I am familiar with a number of them in my own community, and they are across the country. They are things like community programs, sports programs, the YMCA, and YOUNG. I am not sure if YOUNG is across the country, but it is certainly very active in my city. That is getting youth off the streets, away from gangs, and giving them alternative activities. There is the youth emergency shelter system, which is another one that brings at-risk youth off the streets and into environments where they can be helped and can participate in programs that keep them away from the kinds of things that we know harm our young people.

There is much being done, and much more can always be done.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today in support of this important bill, Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights. It has been a long time coming, yet many people over decades prior have seen the need for something in the order of what we have here today.

The victims bill of rights is unlike any other legislative proposal for victims of crime in our country. It would create a stand-alone act, the Canadian victims bill of rights, or the CVBR. As my esteemed colleague just moments ago spoke so very eloquently about, it would enshrine 12 rights for victims at the federal level, for the first time in Canadian history. That is what the bill is all about.

My colleague mentioned those 12 rights being grouped into some different areas of information, protection, participation, and also restitution. All would be enforceable through the remedy scheme proposed in the bill. That is only the first part of the reforms included in Bill C-32. In order to give life to the 12 rights set out in the Canadian victims bill of rights, Bill C-32 includes amendments to the Criminal Code, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, and the Canada Evidence Act.

I am very proud to be part of this historic recognition of the important role of victims in the criminal justice process. It is on the eve of my departure from this place in the fall, along with my colleague who spoke prior and others around this place. However, there is a great sense of satisfaction that we got this together and it is being passed under our watch, so to speak.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has just finished an extensive study of this important piece of legislation. I was very pleased to hear so many members of the committee, from all parties, expressing their support for the bill. We have already heard those inferences here this morning.

This support speaks to the importance of the bill's overall goal of recognizing victims and ensuring that they occupy a more meaningful place in our criminal justice system. I was also pleased that so many witnesses took the time to testify at committee. Indeed, some 40 witnesses appeared before the standing committee to offer their views on the victims bill of rights. Most of those witnesses expressed their overall support for the bill while offering some specific constructive comments and suggestions for its improvement. Many acknowledged the importance of the bill in taking this first step toward treating victims as more than mere witnesses in the criminal justice process.

We also heard some criticisms. Some argued that the bill would cause excessive delays in an already overburdened justice system. In particular, they felt that a victims's right to information, supported by changes in the Criminal Code, would bring the criminal justice system to a halt. For example, proposed new subsection 606(4.1) would require a court that has accepted a guilty plea from an accused as a result of a plea agreement for a serious personal injury offence or murder to inquire of the prosecutor whether reasonable steps have been taken to inform the victim of the agreement. If it is not reasonable in the circumstance to do so, the crown would then be required to notify the victim as soon as possible.

Government Orders

That amendment would allow victims to be informed, at an early opportunity, of potential plea bargains as they are on the horizon. Victims would be entitled, under proposed new subsection 606(4.2), to ask the crown attorney to notify them of plea agreements in cases involving other indictable offences with a maximum punishment of imprisonment of five years or more.

It is clear that these amendments were carefully crafted to respond to victims' desire to be informed of plea agreements, to respect the independence of crown prosecutors, and to avoid delays in the criminal justice system that could infringe on an accused's right to be tried within a reasonable time, or which would otherwise grind the system to a halt.

It is worth noting that section 20 of the Canadian victims bill of rights addresses aspects of that concern directly, and that the act is to be applied in a manner that would not likely interfere with the proper administration of justice. That would include causing excessive delay in the prosecution of an offence. This particular amendment, which supports a victim's right to information, has been criticized by some for not going far enough. We have heard from witnesses who would like a victim's right to participation to include an ability to present their views on plea agreements before they are accepted by the court.

Some are aware that in developing this victims bill of rights, all of the views presented during the in-person and online consultations were considered. They were weighed, and it is very much a balancing act. In this bill, I think we have it right.

• (1305)

Victims have repeatedly noted the importance of being informed of a plea agreement as soon as practical. The committee heard testimony from witnesses who spoke of the positive effects of informing victims of plea agreements. It can make them feel more included in the criminal justice process and more likely to understand the nature of the plea agreement.

The issue of possible delays in the criminal justice system resulting from informing victims of plea agreements was raised at committee. In particular, the testimony provided by Mr. Gilhooly, who shared his experiences as a victim in the criminal justice system, summed it up perfectly. When asked if he thought the new duty to inform victims of a plea bargain would somehow delay the court process, he replied, "it would have taken 15 minutes to have kept me apprised", when referring to the plea agreement reached for hockey coach Graham James.

I agree with Mr. Gilhooly's remarks. Bill C-32 has struck the right balance between informing victims while avoiding delays in the criminal justice system.

Another Criminal Code amendment that has received a great deal of attention is proposed in the new section 486.31, which would codify the common law practice of enabling a witness to testify without revealing his or her true identity, typically through the use of a pseudonym. This provision has been criticized as being contrary to principles of fundamental justice and unconstitutional. However, I disagree, as would many around this place, obviously.

The proposed scheme would be discretionary and would require a judge to determine that such an order was in the interest of the proper

administration of justice, a test that is well established in our current criminal law. The judge would consider a number of factors when considering whether to make that order. These factors would include fair trial rights, the interests of the witness in question, and societal interests relating to the proper functioning of our criminal justice system.

This provision would recognize the critical role witnesses play in the criminal justice system. Intimidation, such as threats of harm, can be directed at witnesses to impact their evidence, or indeed, in some cases, to prevent them from testifying at all.

In the 2007 case of *Named Person v. Vancouver Sun*, the Supreme Court of Canada also recognized that it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to order a witness to testify using a pseudonym. Indeed, courts across Canada have done so. For example, in the case of *R v. Moosemay*, 2002, an Alberta court authorized a witness in a Wildlife Act prosecution to testify using a pseudonym to protect his safety. Similarly, in *R. v. Gingras*, 1992, the Alberta Court of Appeal made an order to protect the safety of a prison inmate who testified and feared for his safety if his identity was made public. These cases demonstrate that orders such as these can be important in a wide variety of situations.

The standing committee heard from one witness who works with victims of human trafficking and who was threatened as a result of her testimony at trial. She too very much supports this provision to protect the security of victims.

The fair trial rights of the accused will always remain at the centre of the criminal justice system. However, a criminal trial must acknowledge and accommodate, to the extent possible, other important societal interests, such as protecting those who agree to testify as witnesses.

We know that the Canadian victims bill of rights cannot be all things to all people. It has been criticized by some for going too far in recognizing victims rights and by others for not going far enough. I, for one, believe that the bill has struck the right balance. It provides in plain language the rights victims should be able to exercise in the criminal justice and corrections systems. It also includes appropriate limitations that respect the myriad interests at play in the criminal justice system, including the rights of an accused. Most importantly, it provides the framework upon which all levels of government, federal, provincial, and territorial, can build to continue to strengthen the criminal justice system's treatment of victims.

I hope that all members will support Bill C-32 and take part in this historic change in our Canadian criminal law.

• (1310)

The Speaker: It being 1:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, February 4, 2015, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Private Members' Business

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, February 23, 2015 at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

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

• (1315)

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I think if you seek it you shall find agreement to see the clock at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: Shall I see the clock at 1:30?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

VIA RAIL CANADA ACT

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP) moved that Bill C-640, An Act respecting VIA Rail Canada and making consequential amendments to the Canada Transportation Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to begin the debate today on Bill C-640, the VIA Rail Canada Act. This bill, which is long overdue, directly addresses the cause of many of the problems that have been facing our public passenger rail service ever since it was created in 1977. The bill provides the main, most crucial measure needed to resolve those problems.

When VIA Rail was created with the goal of taking charge of the declining passenger rail service, which was then provided by CN and CP, it was given very few of the tools needed to carry out that enormous task. One of the fundamental tools was legislation that clearly and fully explained the rights, powers, obligations and mandate of the new crown corporation. VIA Rail was never given that. Instead, it was created in a rather ad hoc, ill-considered manner. In the end, it was basically like a rudderless ship, without any navigational aids or even an engine.

We saw the sad result. The management of VIA Rail has been unstable for nearly four decades. Its funding varies considerably. The company has barely been modernized. The fees for accessing the freight network are excessive. Passengers are made to wait for hours to give priority to freight trains. The worst part is that the public interest has been set aside countless times when, instead of providing support, governments have said that the only solution to VIA Rail's problems is radical cuts rather than rational changes.

This contrasts sharply with the U.S., where Amtrak, under similar circumstances, was founded to perform the same role as VIA. Before it ever turned its first wheel, in 1971, Amtrak was given the strong legislative foundation required to restore passenger rail. Its enabling act set the course for its growth into the useful, efficient, and cost-effective public transit service it is today. While it has not always been smooth sailing, Amtrak has weathered many financial and legislative storms because of its comprehensive legislation.

My member's bill is intended to do the same for Canadians. Like the act that launched Amtrak, it spells out what VIA must do to deliver nationwide rail passenger service that will play a strategic role in the economic, social, and environmental life of Canada. It would delineate a basic national network. It would set realistic and attainable performance standards. It would establish a mechanism to adjust VIA services, when necessary, here in the House of Commons. It would specifically end the backroom decision-making that has on several occasions wiped Canadian communities off the rail passenger map.

Many communities across this great nation depend on the services offered by VIA Rail to attract trade and commerce. In my riding of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, passenger rail service was suspended beginning in 2011.

Many people come to my riding to experience its natural beauty and especially to reach destinations such as Percé Rock and Forillon National Park. I have known many an individual who has come to visit these landmarks, with the train trip being an integral part of the excursion. However, declining train frequency has led to a gradual decline in the number of passengers. Reduced track speed due to deferred track maintenance has further led to declines in use. More recently, VIA has closed or sold a number of train stations. There is no joy in waiting for a train in the dead of night in a rural region without the shelter of a train station. Fighting winter storms often leads to scheduling delays, while passengers wait on unsheltered platforms. This is no way to increase ridership.

Passenger rail is important to keep local economies moving. It also performs a basic public service.

• (1320)

Seniors and people with mobility challenges depend on passenger rail to reach destinations, such as clinics and hospitals. For many, such as in my riding, with public services such as hospitals so very far apart, the bus is simply not an option, and a flight is prohibitively expensive. The train is their best and sometimes only possible solution.

I have heard from people across this country about the need to improve passenger service. I have gone to train stops to ask people what they would like to see in passenger rail. I mainly hear that they seek a reliable, on-time, frequent service.

Private Members' Business

Rural regions with less than daily service typically see a gradual decline in the number of passengers. A recent example would be the *Ocean*, the Montreal to Halifax train. This route, the longest-running continuous train service in this country, having recently celebrated 110 years of continuous service, was cut from six trains a week to three. The effect was almost instantaneous. The passenger load dropped by nearly 40%. The route was even further threatened by the closure of its very rails in New Brunswick. After significant public pressure, the government did come up with a funding solution to keep the track open for the next 15 years.

As a member of the official opposition, I do not have a lot of opportunities to congratulate the government, but in this case, I will make an exception. The track, for now, is safe, but were it not for the public pressure that so many people in eastern Quebec and New Brunswick performed, the government surely would have let that track go.

Bill C-640 would also give VIA the fair and logistical rights it requires to operate effectively in the real world of competitive, multi-modal transportation. It proposes a cost-sharing basis by which VIA could partner with provincial or regional governments to add service to the basic national network. It would reaffirm the need for passenger trains to have reasonable priority over freight. It would also provide for the development of a fee schedule that would grant VIA access to the freight railway lines on terms that would be fair to all parties.

Around the globe, modern passenger trains are vital elements of the mobility strategies of nations with which we compete. If Canada is to be a part of this worldwide rail passenger renaissance, we must finally put VIA on a proper footing. That it has survived this long without a legislative mandate is a tribute to the inherent strength of the very concept of passenger railroads.

I have the opportunity to right a historic transportation wrong with this legislation, and I encourage others to support this bill. I certainly encourage the government to look at it again and consider sending this to committee for more debate.

I want to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of many people who have helped me draft this bill and who have also accompanied me in our passionate resistance to the decline of passenger rail in this country.

I would like to start with Greg Gormick, an expert in passenger rail, an expert who has worked tirelessly all his life to bring the issue of passenger rail to the forefront. He has been speaking in many communities bringing the issue of passenger rail forward. Without his clear and honest work, we never would have made it as far as we have.

The people who live in eastern Quebec and northern New Brunswick are especially to be applauded for the amount of energy they have expended trying to save not only their passenger rail but the very rail system on which they depend.

The passenger rail service in our part of the world has decayed substantially, and we need to see the government show that it is willing to support our remote communities with one of the vital links we have to the outside world.

We do not have an exemplary bus transportation system. We do not have an affordable airline system. What we do have is the potential for daily rail service. We have had it in the past. If a train were to run as often as it should, we would be able to get that ridership back up again.

● (1325)

The interest is there, the capacity is there, and the freight that is the very backbone of the sustenance to keep that rail system going in eastern Canada is also present. We have all of the tools required. The only element that is missing is the government's unconditional support.

Some may wring their hands over the so-called subsidy required by our passenger rail system while, ironically, they regard much more massive spending on highways and air traffic as investments. Every modern country with passenger rail has operating costs. Imagine if Canada decided to eliminate everything from our lives that requires public investment. We would scrap schools and libraries. The parks would be gone, as well as hospitals and firefighters and anything we could name. We need to invest in public infrastructure if we want this country to work.

Trains are solid public investments. The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that every dollar spent on passenger rail service generates three to four times that amount back into the economy. That logic has simply not taken hold here. While VIA languishes and we debate its legislative future, Canadian-built passenger trains are thundering over steel rails of America, some of them at 250 kilometres an hour. American politicians of all stripes realize the issue is not whether America can afford to have passenger trains but whether it can afford not to have them.

The contrasts and contradictions between VIA and its expanding publicly owned American cousin Amtrak are shocking. The most fundamental difference between the two railways is legislation. Amtrak has it; VIA does not.

Bill C-640 would address this glaring legislative gap by providing a sort of bill of rights for passenger trains. It would give VIA the mandate it requires to deliver a large portion of the sustainable intercity mobility needed in 21st century Canada.

Visionary legislation set Amtrak rolling in 1971, and Bill C-640 could establish the mechanism to restore service to all communities that lost their trains through political expediencies here in Ottawa. Northwestern Ontario has had good news. After 104 years of continuous service, Thunder Bay lost its passenger service, the *Canadian*, back in January 1990, as a result of the Mulroney government's slashing of VIA's financing by 50%. In 2012, the current government cut \$41 million from VIA's annual subsidy, which had been previously cut and frozen at \$166 million by the Liberal government in 1988, with no provision for inflation.

Private Members' Business

I would like to make it clear that this legislation is the next step in VIA's evolution. VIA needs to know that there is a legislative framework that is going to keep this company rolling and that passenger rail has a future in this country. We have capacity in Thunder Bay and La Pocatière, Quebec, to build the rolling stock that we need. This bill would create jobs in areas that really need that support, and passenger rail has been proven to be a shot in the arm for the economies of the communities where trains pass through.

We need VIA Rail in our communities. It is a fundamental choice that Canadians must make. This bill is the first step. The government needs to take the next.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see a bill about support for VIA when that party consistently votes against the funding we put forward for VIA.

To the bill in question, first, I notice that the legislative framework that the NDP is proposing mimics the framework for Canada Post. I find that a little peculiar, because the business of sorting and delivering mail is substantially different from the business of passenger rail.

Aside from that, this bill proposes major restrictions on the independence and governance of VIA Rail such that it could not function properly as a corporation.

As well, there would be major legislated fixed costs to VIA if this bill were to pass. The most recent Amtrak statistics I have are for 2012, when Amtrak lost \$1.4 billion. It loses somewhere in that range every single year. VIA had a subsidy of \$305 million on behalf of taxpayers last year. Is the member trying to bury VIA or does he want the government to nationalize VIA?

• (1330)

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, first, VIA is a crown corporation. We do not need to renationalize something that already belongs to the crown.

Second, regarding the subsidy that is paid through the U.S. for passenger rail, it has 10 times more passengers on its network than we do. Therefore, the actual amount paid per passenger is significantly less in the United States than it is here.

If our country were to start investing in passenger rail, we would have the domino effect of creating wealth across the country in so many communities that need it. We need to start investing, and we need to start investing now.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I was led to believe I would have seven and a half minutes today to give a speech. I prepared for it for about 12 hours, but so be it. The House leader of the NDP has pulled that opportunity.

I have two quick points—

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you know, questions and comments around private members' business are supposed to be directed to the bill itself, rather than making partisan shots.

The Speaker: I believe the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster was making an appeal for relevance. He will know that the Chair does not usually intervene on relevance in the first seven or

eight seconds of a question or comment, but I do think the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North will get to the substance of the private members' bill with which we are dealing.

The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, I have two quick points.

The first point is that recently I met with the very dynamic new CEO of VIA, Yves Desjardins-Siciliano. I was very encouraged by his personal commitment, and I believe him, to return passenger rail throughout Canada, but especially through Thunder Bay and the North Shore, which was a very profitable and popular route. He needs this legislation to empower his renewed vision for VIA across Canada.

The second point is that VIA is under the thumb of the freight railways, especially CN, on whose tracks it operates the bulk of its trains. The worst aspect of this one-sided relationship is that, contained in the 10 year train service agreement, VIA was left to negotiate on its own with CN in 2007, without help from the government. In the last five years, CN's charges to VIA have increased by 42% and will rise another 40% by 2018. There are other detrimental provisions in that confidential agreement.

In summary, the hard-working member has produced superb legislation. I and the Green Party will support it totally, and we thank him for his hard work.

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member, and I do appreciate the work the member has put into this as well.

Let us be clear that there are communities in the country that would benefit directly through more investment in VIA Rail, Thunder Bay being one and La Pocatière, Quebec, being the other. Those are places where the capacity is already in place to build all of the rolling stock that we need to get this train moving again.

The Bombardier corporation has the technology, but what does it do with that technology? It sells the rolling stock to the United States. It knows to invest in the passenger rail system. Unfortunately, the government seems to have missed the track completely.

• (1335)

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in debate today.

Passenger rail has played a critical role in our country's development, and the service provided by VIA Rail is of great importance and value to Canadians. That is why I am happy to have the opportunity to speak to private member's Bill C-640, An Act respecting VIA Rail Canada and making consequential amendments to the Canada Transportation Act.

Private Members' Business

As Canada's national passenger rail operator, VIA Rail provides Canadian travellers with safe, efficient, and cost-effective service. Our government recognizes the importance of VIA's passenger rail services in the lives of Canadians, as well as the critical links that VIA provides to remote communities and the important role it plays in the national tourism market. Our government continues to support VIA through annual subsidies for its operations, with last year's totalling some \$305 million; as well major capital investments, which have totalled over a billion dollars since 2007.

It is because of this government's commitment to VIA Rail and its objectives that we cannot support Bill C-640. This bill seeks to establish a legislative framework for the business affairs of VIA and includes a number of prescriptive measures affecting numerous aspects of VIA's operations and governance structure. These include changes affecting the selection of board members, routing, scheduling, the content of commercial agreements and even VIA's status as an arm's-length crown corporation.

While the intention of these measures may be to support VIA's services to the benefit of Canadians, in actuality the bill would have the opposite effect, creating inefficiencies that would result in poor financial performance and a greater burden on the taxpayer. The critical drawback of this bill is that it would increase government and parliamentary intervention in VIA's business affairs. This is a misguided attempt to secure VIA services that would actually hinder VIA's operations.

The bill proposes to intervene in VIA's affairs, designating the routes that VIA must operate and the service frequency of certain routes. Specifically, it would make VIA's current network routes mandatory and increase the service frequency on VIA's heavily subsidized long-haul routes from Toronto to Vancouver, and from Montreal to Halifax. Further, the bill would require extensive oversight by the Minister of Transport and Parliament to allow VIA to alter any routes. Should VIA intend to eliminate any service, the Minister of Transport would have to ask the Canadian Transportation Agency or a third party to review and make recommendations to be tabled in Parliament. The bill would allow as few as 20 senators or 50 members of the House of Commons to file a motion to amend or revoke a recommendation set out in the report. This means that a minority of parliamentarians could delay change to VIA services that could be required to meet its objective of providing efficient passenger rail services.

This intervention in VIA's business affairs that Bill C-640 proposes represents a total reversal of the national transportation policy that has been in place since the Canada Transportation Act came into force in 1996. That act affirms that we are most likely to maintain a competitive, economic, and efficient national transportation system by allowing competition and market forces to be the prime agents in providing transportation services. Public intervention should therefore be reserved for instances when our desired outcomes cannot be adequately achieved through competition and market forces. Accordingly, our government's position is that it does not intervene in the day-to-day running of VIA Rail.

As an independent crown corporation, VIA is responsible for its own operational decisions. That includes scheduling and routing. This approach allows VIA the necessary flexibility to assess its own operations and to decide how it can best meet its objectives. This

may involve adjustments to train schedules and staffing levels, or the reduction or ending of a service to better align services with actual market demand. Given decreasing ridership and increasing costs, the financial challenges of operating VIA's current network cannot be addressed solely through operating efficiencies. All of VIA's routes currently require some level of subsidization by taxpayers. In this context, VIA's services have undergone rationalizations to ensure that they provide value to taxpayers while at the same time maintaining a national network of services that are important to Canadians.

• (1340)

By mandating VIA's routes and frequency and requiring considerable government and parliamentary processes and oversight to alter them, the bill would effectively prevent VIA from making its own business decisions to ensure that it operates in a cost-efficient manner by matching its services to demand. It would severely obstruct VIA's ability to react to changes in its marketplace and to adjust accordingly.

The measures proposed in the bill encourage inefficiency and would inevitably increase VIA's costs, including from running too many trains with too few passengers, for example. These costs would be passed along to taxpayers, as more public funds would be needed to augment the current subsidy to VIA. It goes without saying that this would not be in keeping with VIA's objective to provide efficient and cost-effective services to Canadians.

Furthermore, the increased oversight regarding VIA's business affairs would mean an expanded role for Government organizations like the Canadian Transportation Agency. The new responsibilities proposed in the bill would require additional financial and human resources, thus adding more costs to Canadians without merit.

The proposal to make VIA an agent of the crown raises further financial concerns. This measure could make the government directly liable for any debts and losses incurred by VIA. This would be compounded by the bill's proposed borrowing limit of \$500 million for VIA. All of this could translate into greater risk exposure for the federal government, and ultimately the taxpayers of Canada.

The negative financial implications of the bill reach beyond the confines of VIA Rail. Bill C-640 could have a negative impact on the country's economic growth by disadvantaging our freight rail system. The bill would amend the Canada Transportation Act to give VIA general scheduling and operational preference over freight rail in the event of a conflict.

While it may be intended to support VIA's on-time performance, giving VIA unfettered priority and rights over freight traffic could significantly impair Canada's freight rail operators. We all know the critical role that freight rail plays in our supply chains, and our government has taken action to strengthen its effectiveness and reliability. The bill would undercut these advancements and could jeopardize the performance of Canada's economy and our reputation as a reliable trading partner.

Our government is committed to supporting VIA in its objective to provide Canadians with safe, efficient, and cost-effective service. Bill C-640, however, would impede that objective. By dictating VIA's operational practices and requiring increased government and parliamentary oversight, Bill C-640 would encourage inefficient practices, decrease value to Canadians, and increase the burden on the taxpayer. Further, the measures in the bill could have a negative impact on our economic growth. It is clear that our government cannot support such a bill, particularly one that would undermine the efficient operation of our national passenger rail service in this way.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by commending my colleague from the NDP for bringing forward this bill. It is a welcome contribution to the very large and comprehensive problem of our rail system in its fullest context, that is to say, the passenger, freight, and commuter rail service systems. I believe the whole question of our rail system in Canada is very much at play.

I am pleased to follow up on the remarks of my colleague, the parliamentary secretary to the minister. Indeed, after watching the government for nine years, and many of its front-line ministers for a decade previously while they served in another right-wing government, when it comes to the question of VIA Rail and its future, I have concluded that it is the government's intention to attempt to privatize VIA Rail in due course.

When I began speaking this way several years ago with respect to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, the Conservative members scoffed. They dismissed it. They said that I was an alarmist and that it was an attempt to frighten people. However, we know that the government followed the regular pattern it does when it wants to divest itself of a crown asset. That is how it goes about it, and that is what it did with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. As far as I am concerned, that is what the government is now beginning to do with VIA Rail.

In the context of atomic energy, the Prime Minister dispatched his then director of communications to make a series of public remarks about the state of that crown corporation. It was very disturbing to the thousands and thousands of Canadians who had helped build AECL and had, after 58 years, made it into one of the world's leading global nuclear research, nuclear power plant, and medical isotope-producing companies. The Conservatives began their pattern of running down an asset, called it a sinkhole and, of course, then sold it at a fireside price. That was 58 years of global tradition and Canadian leadership they sold for \$100 million to SNC-Lavalin. That is what they do.

Therefore, I am having this conversation today and making these remarks in the context of my conclusion that if re-elected, the government fully intends to divest itself of VIA Rail and to move in

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the same direction with respect to Canada Post. We see the same techniques and actions being taken and have just heard similar remarks by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport. It is unfortunate because Canadians have come to depend on passenger rail as part of their tradition, as part of what they need, as part of their economy. Whether it is the use of passenger trains for hunting and other ecotourism opportunities in northern Quebec, or for passenger use in and around Sarnia or, as my colleague mentioned, for use on Vancouver Island, there is a present demand for passenger rail in this country.

My colleague has gone a certain distance in his bill to make some recommendations for change. I commend him for stepping up to the plate and recommending anything that might improve VIA Rail. I do not agree with all of the measures. I think there is an element of it that is perhaps too prescriptive, which may or may not fit more readily in the tradition of the NDP's view of how to manage a crown corporation. I commend him for making some positive recommendations for change. However, there are larger questions looming that I want to come back to, such as what I mentioned just a minute ago.

Right now the Canadian rail system is basically bottle-necked. This bill was deposited here on the floor today in the context of a major problem. We have too many demands on the rail system as it is presently constructed.

● (1345)

Given the existing rail capacity and the existing status of our railways—that is, the rail itself—and given the fact that we built our cities around the railways, which we never contemplated when we tried to unite this country a century or more ago by using rail, what we have is a bottleneck situation. It is being made worse by a massive 1,500% increase in the transportation of oil and fossil fuels by rail just over the last two or three years.

As I like to remind my colleagues regularly, even if we build every pipeline that the government has been contemplating now for a decade—a pipeline south, a pipeline west, and a pipeline east—and those three pipelines all carried fossil fuel, we would still be having—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, my point of order is to relevance. We are talking about passenger rail, not pipelines or oil by rail. I know the member is experienced when it comes to debate. He knows the rules of this House, and he should probably be instructed to at least stick to the matter currently before Parliament.

● (1350)

The Speaker: I know the member for Ottawa South will want to make reference to the bill before the House. He has about three and half minutes to conclude his remarks.

Private Members' Business

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, it is only the parliamentary secretary who does not understand the connection between the transportation of fossil fuels and passenger rail in Canada. What is he talking about? This is exactly the problem we are facing in Canada, a denial by Conservatives that we have a problem on the ground in the competition for the use of rail between passenger rail and other forms of rail use. What does he not understand about that?

The problem is that by 2024 we are going to be producing one million barrels a day of excess capacity of oil, and it is going to be shoved onto the railway system. The problem is that the government does not want to have an adult conversation about that and the fact that it is having a spillover effect. The parliamentary secretary hoots and hollers and continues to yell from his side because he does not want to have a real conversation about what is really happening on the ground.

We have a logjam. Our farmers in the Canadian prairies lost \$3 billion in revenue as ships were sitting off the coast of B.C., because the Conservative government could not get that grain to market.

This bill is important. An adult discussion about passenger rail is very important in the context of the choices we are going to make as a country.

As I said earlier, some of the measures in the bill are highly prescriptive. For example, it mentions only the Canadian Tourism Commission and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities as sources of directors for the corporate board. I do not think that is comprehensive or perhaps realistic. I think the member might have his own views in that regard as well.

As for stipulating that track use by VIA Rail should take precedence over all other forms of rail use, I would like to hear more about that from our private sector operators and urban transit systems to see what the distributive effects of such a measure, if implemented, would have on an already bottlenecked system.

I think the bill is a good contribution to a much larger question about where we are going in this country for the next century, and not for the next six months, which is what the Conservatives would have us do. They are fixated on October 19, not on solving longer-term problems. Their fixation on this election is actually leading to poor public policy outcomes.

We need to have a discussion here on where we are going with rail for the next century, and the bill would help us have it. This is an important conversation for us to have. It is our responsibility as legislators, on behalf of all Canadians, to treat this issue responsibly over a longer term. Again, I think the bill goes some distance in raising questions.

The member has done a good job as well with the idea of having specific legislation that would govern VIA Rail. Let us begin by beginning, and it is a good beginning to have a legislative framework that actually embraces VIA Rail. There is the question of whether VIA should be coming back to this House in terms of its internal management systems, such as winding up with a route here or cutting back in staff there or changing the frequency of train service, and that is a discussion I think we should have at committee.

We will be supporting sending the bill to committee to have a more extensive discussion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and I would like to commend the hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine for this initiative. This bill is very important because it will help protect and improve passenger transportation in Canada. Canadians deserve a suitable, safe and efficient passenger train service, and this bill is the way to fill that need.

Before I forget, I have to say something about the hon. member for Ottawa South. He said that this was a way for the Conservatives to privatize Via Rail and that this was where they were going. I agree with that. That is what all their cuts to Via Rail are leading to. Nonetheless, the Liberals have no lessons to give on this, when they are the ones who privatized CN, a crown corporation. That is where it all started. When they privatized CN they also gave CN priority rights to the tracks.

Take the example of the train that runs between Halifax and Montreal, known as the Ocean. It is an important train for passengers. Our ancestors worked hard to build the railways. At the time, the idea was to develop our country and, at the same time, to provide passenger service for Canadians. I do not believe that our ancestors wondered whether they were going to make money with freight or passenger trains. That is not what they were concerned with. They wanted to give Canadians a service allowing them to travel from one end of the country to the other.

I will just give a small example of what is happening in my area, between Halifax and Montreal. Is it acceptable for the train that leaves Moncton at 3 p.m. to arrive in Bathurst at 8 p.m.? It takes about two hours to travel from Bathurst to Moncton by car. It takes five hours by train. Who wants to ride on a train travelling at 50 kilometres an hour? As everyone knows, there are no freight trains between Miramichi and Bathurst, and the speed limit is 50 kilometres an hour. If you travel by train often enough, you can watch the deer overtake it. Perhaps we could use it to go hunting. The current VIA Rail schedule is really ridiculous.

The government has a responsibility because it is not a private company. It is a crown corporation. I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport tell us that the government should not intervene. It is as though he was saying that the company is already privatized. He is saying that the government does not want to pass legislation to bother VIA Rail. That is ridiculous.

I would like to thank the NDP members from Nova Scotia and Quebec, as well as my colleague from Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, who worked very hard with us to secure the railway between Miramichi and Bathurst. If we had lost this railway, we would have lost VIA Rail between Halifax and Montreal.

We have to try to make them understand that if you take all the people on the Acadian peninsula and in the Gaspé, from Rogersville, Miramichi, Bathurst, Campbellton and Amqui, to Rivière-du-Loup and Rimouski, there are about 300,000 people. The government was eliminating that service. They kept saying:

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• (1355)

[English]

It is arm's length from the government. We are not allowed to get involved.

[Translation]

It is funny that the \$10 million was given by VIA Rail, but it was the minister who came to Fredericton to announce it. The member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe is the one who presented it and then the minister was thanked by the member for Miramichi. The entire Conservative family took credit for a crown corporation that they want to keep at arm's length.

The last person to speak was the president of VIA Rail, who practically thanked the minister for giving him the money. The train is important to us since it has always served the people back home without a car who have to go see a specialist in Moncton, Halifax or Montreal.

However, things changed two years ago when VIA Rail decided to reduce the number of trips to three days a week. Before, a person could leave Bathurst at 8 p.m., arrive in Montreal at 8 a.m. and see a specialist at one or two in the afternoon. Then, at 6:30 p.m., they could board the train back to Bathurst without having to pay for a hotel room in Montreal. This was done in one trip. It is inevitable that there are now fewer passengers on the train.

On Monday morning, because of the storm, I took the Bathurst train. The train left Bathurst at 5:30 a.m. Bathurst is an hour's drive from Campbellton. We got to Campbellton around 7 a.m. and had to stop to fill up with diesel. We were not able to go on until 11 a.m. There was a snowstorm, so I am not blaming VIA Rail, but would that be acceptable in France or the United States?

The bill introduced by my colleague from Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine would give passenger trains priority on the tracks, but the Conservatives seem to think that is some kind of sin and believe that passengers should have the right of way to travel.

When I travelled to France and other places, I found that the passenger trains were given priority and that they were full. As a result, there are fewer cars on the road, which is better for the environment. That is not the case here. Not only are passenger trains not given priority, but the government does not care about them at all. The government is taking funding away from VIA Rail, saying that the company should be able to support itself and even make a profit.

That is not the vision that our forebears had for VIA Rail when they put trains on the tracks. They wanted to provide a service to all Canadian taxpayers. The politicians at that time were not thinking about taking money from taxpayers. Quebeckers and Canadians want this service. They do not mind contributing to a railway that runs from one end of the country to the other. It is shameful that the government is not supporting VIA Rail's projects. I am proud that the NDP members are saying that they will support VIA Rail.

The least they could do is vote to ensure that this bill can be studied in committee, where they can find a way to refocus VIA Rail's vision on providing services to Canadians. I am proud of the fight we led to maintain VIA Rail service between Halifax and

Montreal. In Bathurst, Rogersville, Halifax, Campbellton and Miramichi, people spoke up to say that they wanted VIA Rail and passenger rail service. The government cannot ignore that. Let us hope that the government does not follow the example of the Liberals, who were champions of privatizing our crown corporations. As a result, we have now lost them all.

I sincerely hope that this bill passes at second reading and that it goes to committee so that we can hear from experts.

• (1400)

If the Conservatives cannot support it, it is because in their minds, this is just like Canada Post; they want to privatize all of our crown corporations. That is not the Canada I want to live in.

[English]

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lend my support for an excellent private member's bill, to create a legislative framework for the provision of national passenger rail services.

Canada is a laggard, an outlier, in the provision of passenger rail services in the world, on the planet. We have a system that is owned by the federal government somehow, without legislative oversight. It has recently cut service so drastically that it is now almost laughable in some parts of Canada. All other modern economies, whether that is the U.S., Europe, Asia, or Australia, all have robust and thorough passenger rail systems.

That is not so with Canada. Canada has decided, starting with the Mulroney government, and now with this government, to cut our passenger rail systems and to cut them in such a way that it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The argument is that there are not enough passengers so they cut service, which then causes there to be even fewer passengers. That then causes the government to say it should not be subsidizing the fewer passengers.

Rail service is one of the ways that we, as Canadians, can reduce our use of fossil fuels and the greenhouse gases that we would normally be putting into the atmosphere through the other transportation systems we use in the country, through cars, airplanes, trucks, and other vehicles. The rail system in Canada is ideally suited to take over that role of transporting individuals. However, we do not have a government that believes in transporting individuals by rail. We do not have a government that believes in very much, but the system of transporting individuals by rail is one of the things that we are certain it does not believe in.

In terms of us being a laggard, there are statistics around the world about what countries do in terms of billions of passenger kilometres in a year. India is by far the leader, with over a trillion passenger kilometres. On that list are countries like Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Turkey, and the Czech Republic. Canada is not on the list at all, and that is because we have almost no passenger rail service in the country because it has been cut by successive Liberal and Conservative governments.

That is the crying shame that we are here to try to start correcting. It is going to take time, but at least with a legislative framework for VIA Rail, we can start rebuilding it.

Private Members' Business

The parliamentary secretary talked about one aspect of the bill that would harm our freight rail system by giving passengers priority. Well, the last time I checked, there were not too many people on a freight train who might be late for a meeting if they had to wait for a passenger train to go through. The rail companies have systematically eliminated their sidings. We used to have a system in Canada where freight trains would move on to a siding while a passenger train went through. Now they run trains that are too long for their sidings. In my riding of York South—Weston, they are actually removing the siding because they cannot get the trains on it anymore. Therefore, these two-mile long trains full of oil or grain are preventing passenger trains from travelling at a reasonable speed.

In addition, we have a government that has subsidized the freight rail system in our country to a large degree. The most recent example was the money it spent, reportedly on VIA Rail. It spent half a billion dollars on VIA Rail upgrades by giving money to CN. CN put in a beautiful new third line between Toronto and Montreal. Who uses it? It is used for freight. Who has to stop and wait for the freight trains to go by? VIA has to wait, even after the government put that rail in.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, even though we the taxpayers paid for the line, which is you, me, and everyone else in this room, and everyone else in Canada, VIA Rail still has to pay rent on that line. Does that make any sense to you, Mr. Speaker? Does that make any sense to anyone in the room?

An hon. member: Only to the shareholders.

Mr. Mike Sullivan: Only to the shareholders of VIA Rail, Mr. Speaker.

• (1405)

In terms of freight, Canada is actually number two in the world in terms of tonne-kilometres per capita that are transported. Russia is number one at 12,000 tonne-kilometres per person, and Canada is number two at 10,517. What does that mean? It means we have the infrastructure. We have the rail capacity in this country to move lots and lots of goods, but we are not using it effectively to move people. We are not using it in such a way that the people of Canada can actually make use of that infrastructure, some of which, if not all of which, was created with federal and provincial government money.

People in this country been asking the government to change its approach to the VIA Rail dilemma for the past several years, ever since VIA Rail started to do the bidding of the Conservative government by reducing service. In St. Marys, Ontario, Chris West and Lynn Hainer and the rest of an advocacy group there have been holding meetings on a regular basis and invited VIA Rail to the meetings to find out why their service had to be cut when the service had lots of passengers. The answer they had was, “Well, we just decided.” There is not really an answer.

We know that there is something going on from the government side that is perhaps pushing VIA Rail to remove itself from what the government might call non-competitive routes, or non-filled routes, but that it has made it impossible for individuals in the area between Toronto and Sarnia to get to Toronto or to get to Sarnia. As a result, the farmers and residents of rural Ontario are now forced to drive, and they do not want to drive. They want to take the train, but they

can no longer take the train. It is no longer possible. The trains have been cancelled.

There are residents of New Brunswick and in the Gaspé region who are begging the government to reinstate their rail service. We have it in New Brunswick, although it runs very slowly, and in the Gaspé it is still not there. On Vancouver Island, a rail service was put in place as a result of the sale of a CP Rail system to the people of Vancouver Island so that they could put a rail service in between Victoria and Comox. There was a huge tax benefit to the CP Rail system, but that rail system is now languishing because repairs were necessary. CP had left it in a derelict state. It received a huge tax benefit for the so-called donation, and now where are we? We do not have any rail service. It is not running. There was agreement locally that there would be, but VIA Rail has not come forward with its side of the agreement.

In four areas of this country—the Gaspé, New Brunswick, southwestern Ontario, and Vancouver Island, rail service is disappearing under the Conservative government. We had it and we are losing it, and that is the crime of the government's approach to rail service. While the rest of the world is moving toward rail service, this government is moving away, in such a way that it is sometimes irretrievable.

My colleague for Acadie—Bathurst pointed out how long it takes for trains to get from A to B there, and the same is true in southern Ontario, except that the federal government gave a private rail company money to upgrade the line. It did not bother to do it, so the train takes two hours to get from Kitchener to Toronto, whereas it takes about 45 minutes to drive that distance. It is yet another example of the government's waste. The government sends money freely away, supposedly to upgrade a service, and then watches the money disappear when the service does not actually get upgraded.

This is an excellent bill. It would give us a start in putting VIA Rail back on the footing it needs to make Canada competitive in the transportation business with the rest of the world.

Private Members' Business

●(1410)

The Speaker: The time provided for the 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.

It being 2:15 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:15 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

MRS. STELLA AMBLER

HON. JOHN DUNCAN

HON. DOMINIC LEBLANC

MR. PHILIP TOONE

MS. NYCOLE TURMEL

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Second Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Adams, Eve	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	Lib.
Adler, Mark	York Centre	Ontario	CPC
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council	Nunavut	Nunavut	CPC
Albas, Dan, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Alexander, Hon. Chris, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	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 Health	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Consular	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Ind.
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Armstrong, Scott, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith	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	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Barlow, John	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	CPC
Bélangier, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	Ind.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	NDP
Bergen, Hon. Candice, Minister of State (Social Development)	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture)	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevington, Dennis	Northwest Territories	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	Québec	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Block, Kelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	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, Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brison, 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 Development	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 Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs	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 the Environment	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	Ontario	NDP
Chan, Arnold	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
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
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	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
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
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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 Justice	Mississauga—Erindale	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
Dubourg, Emmanuel	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	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 Canadian Heritage	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eglinski, Jim	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Falk, Ted	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Associate Minister of National Defence	Vaughan	Ontario	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Findlay, Hon. Kerry-Lynne D., Minister of National Revenue	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven	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	FD
Freeland, Chrystia	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
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
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	Québec	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	Québec	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gill, Parm, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	CPC
Glover, Hon. Shelly, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	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	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (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 Prime Minister, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada 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	Ind.
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, Hon. Ed, Minister of State (Science and Technology)	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	GP
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	NDP
James, Roxanne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	CPC
Jones, Yvonne	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	Ontario	NDP
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Kent, Hon. Peter	Thornhill	Ontario	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	FD
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent.....	Québec	NDP
Lauzon, Guy.....	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary	Ontario	CPC
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Devel- opment Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	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, Hon. K. Kellie, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.....	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 Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Maguire, Larry	Brandon—Souris.....	Manitoba	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 Health and for Western Economic Diversification	Kamloops—Thompson— Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Menegakis, Costas, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Richmond Hill	Ontario	CPC
Michaud, Éline	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.....	Québec	NDP
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound...	Ontario	CPC
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Industry	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Hon. Rob, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	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	Ind.
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 Foreign Affairs	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval	Québec	NDP
Obhrai, Hon. Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Finance	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	New Brunswick	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	CPC
O'Toole, Hon. Erin, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Québec	Ind.
Papillon, Annick	Québec	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie	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
Perkins, Pat	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm	Québec	Ind.
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet— Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Hon. Pierre, Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	CPC
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	NDP
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Transport	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Rankin, Murray	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	Alberta	Ind.
Ravignat, Mathieu	Pontiac	Québec	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	Québec	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Rempel, Hon. Michelle, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Rickford, Hon. Greg, Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	Ontario	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	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 Minister of Finance	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 Fisheries and Oceans	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	CPC
Shipley, 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, Hon. Kevin, Minister of State (Finance)	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, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	Ontario	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	CPC
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	NDP
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	NDP
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Trottier, Bernard, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie	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
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Multiculturalism)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
Vaughan, Adam	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	Lib.
Vellacott, Maurice.....	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.....	Saskatchewan	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.....	Peace River.....	Alberta	CPC
Watson, Jeff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport .	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 (Foreign Affairs and Consular)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence.....	Oakville.....	Ontario	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South.....	British Columbia	CPC
Yurdiga, David	Fort McMurray—Athabasca ...	Alberta	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River...	British Columbia	CPC
VACANCY	Peterborough	Ontario	
VACANCY	Sudbury.....	Ontario	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Second Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Health	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Barlow, John	Macleod	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
Eglinski, Jim	Yellowhead	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Obhrai, Hon. Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	Ind.
Rempel, Hon. Michelle, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Hon. Kevin, Minister of State (Finance)	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Multiculturalism)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Peace River	CPC
Yurdiga, David	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Albas, Dan, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	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, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade	Abbotsford	CPC
Findlay, Hon. Kerry-Lynne D., Minister of National Revenue	Delta—Richmond East	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	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 Health and for Western Economic Diversification	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Industry	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 Minister of Finance	North Vancouver	CPC
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	NDP
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	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, Hon. Candice, Minister of State (Social Development)	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Bezan, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	CPC
Falk, Ted	Provencher	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Glover, Hon. Shelly, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Saint Boniface	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Lib.
Maguire, Larry	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	CPC
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith	Fredericton	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Hon. Rob, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	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 (7)

Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Ind.
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
Jones, Yvonne	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)

Bevington, Dennis	Northwest Territories	NDP
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NOVA SCOTIA (11)

Armstrong, Scott, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour	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 Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Central Nova	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP

NUNAVUT (1)

Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council	Nunavut	CPC
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ONTARIO (104)

Adams, Eve	Mississauga—Brampton South	Lib.
Adler, Mark	York Centre	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alexander, Hon. Chris, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Ajax—Pickering	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	NDP
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Baird, Hon. John	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Braid, Peter, Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	CPC
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Oshawa	CPC
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	NDP
Chan, Arnold	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board	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 Justice	Mississauga—Erindale	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 Canadian Heritage	St. Catharines	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Associate Minister of National Defence	Vaughan	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Freeland, Chrystia	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Gill, Parm, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	Brampton—Springdale	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (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, Hon. Ed, Minister of State (Science and Technology)	London West	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	GP
James, Roxanne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Scarborough Centre	CPC
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	NDP
Kent, Hon. Peter	Thornhill	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Leitch, Hon. K. Kellie, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women	Simcoe—Grey	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	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, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Richmond Hill	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Nash, Peggy.....	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Foreign Affairs.....	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon.....	Carleton—Mississippi Mills.....	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Finance.....	Eglinton—Lawrence	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre.....	CPC
O'Toole, Hon. Erin, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Durham	CPC
Perkins, Pat	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Poilievre, Hon. Pierre, Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform.....	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Transport	Halton.....	CPC
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Hon. Greg, Minister of Natural Resources and Minister 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
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon.....	CPC
Trottier, Bernard, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie	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
Vaughan, Adam.....	Trinity—Spadina	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Watson, Jeff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Essex	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	CPC
VACANCY	Peterborough	
VACANCY	Sudbury	

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Egmont	CPC

QUÉBEC (75)

Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	NDP
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Ind.
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture)	Beauce	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	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
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
Dubourg, Emmanuel	Bourassa	Lib.
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	NDP
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	FD
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	NDP
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Groguhé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	NDP
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Ind.
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	NDP
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	FD
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent	NDP
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	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	Ind.
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	Ind.
Papillon, Annick	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	BQ
Péclet, Ève	La Pointe-de-l'Île	NDP
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm	Ind.
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
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Lib.
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Consular	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Block, Kelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	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	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 (Foreign Affairs and Consular)	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Leef, Ryan	Yukon	CPC

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of February 20, 2015 — 2nd Session, 41st Parliament)

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Vice-Chairs:

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Carolyn Bennett

John Barlow
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Earl Dreeshen
Jonathan Genest-Jourdain

Carol Hughes
Kyle Seeback

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

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Jasbir Sandhu

Devinder Shory

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David Tilson
Lawrence Toet
Brad Trost
Bernard Trottier
Susan Truppe
Dave Van Kesteren
Mike Wallace
Mark Warawa
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Hon. Diane Finley	Minister of Public Works and Government Services
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Hon. Gerry Ritz	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Hon. Christian Paradis	Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie
Hon. James Moore	Minister of Industry
Hon. Denis Lebel	Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec
Hon. Leona Aglukkaq	Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council
Hon. Lisa Raitt	Minister of Transport
Hon. Gail Shea	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Hon. Julian Fantino	Associate Minister of National Defence
Hon. Steven Blaney	Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Hon. Ed Fast	Minister of International Trade
Hon. Joe Oliver	Minister of Finance
Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay	Minister of National Revenue
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Hon. Chris Alexander	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Hon. K. Kellie Leitch	Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women
Hon. Greg Rickford	Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario
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Hon. Lynne Yelich	Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular)
Hon. Gary Goodyear	Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)
Hon. Rob Moore	Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)
Hon. John Duncan	Minister of State and Chief Government Whip
Hon. Tim Uppal	Minister of State (Multiculturalism)
Hon. Alice Wong	Minister of State (Seniors)
Hon. Bal Gosal	Minister of State (Sport)
Hon. Kevin Sorenson	Minister of State (Finance)
Hon. Candice Bergen	Minister of State (Social Development)
Hon. Michelle Rempel	Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)
Hon. Ed Holder	Minister of State (Science and Technology)

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Mr. James Bezan	to the Minister of National Defence
Mrs. Kelly Block	to the Minister of Natural Resources
Mr. Peter Braid	for Infrastructure and Communities
Ms. Lois Brown	to the Minister of International Development
Mr. Paul Calandra	to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs
Mr. Colin Carrie	to the Minister of the Environment
Mr. Bob Dechert	to the Minister of Justice
Mr. Rick Dykstra	to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Mr. Parm Gill	to the Minister of International Trade
Mr. Robert Goguen	to the Minister of Justice
Mr. Jacques Gourde	to the Prime Minister, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec
Ms. Roxanne James	to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Mr. Randy Kamp	to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Mr. Gerald Keddy	to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Hon. Mike Lake	to the Minister of Industry
Mr. Pierre Lemieux	to the Minister of Veterans Affairs
Mr. Chungsen Leung	for Multiculturalism
Mr. Tom Lukiwski	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
Mrs. Cathy McLeod	to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification
Mr. Costas Menegakis	to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Hon. Deepak Obhrai	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights
Mr. Andrew Saxton	to the Minister of Finance
Mr. Mark Strahl	to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Mr. Bernard Trotter	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie
Mrs. Susan Truppe	for Status of Women
Mr. Chris Warkentin	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services
Mr. Jeff Watson	to the Minister of Transport

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