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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, February 14, 2003

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 14, 2003

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE (CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND FIREARMS) AND FIREARMS ACT

BILL C-10—NOTICE OF MOTION FOR TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the stage of consideration of Senate amendments of Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE MODERNIZATION ACT

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved that Bill C-25, An Act to modernize employment and labour relations in the public service and to amend the Financial Administration Act and the Canadian Centre for Management Development Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to move second reading of the Public Service Modernization Act, a bill that puts the focus on our most important resource in government, our employees, who are there to serve Canadians.

It is a bill that sends a strong message to managers, public servants and union representatives that the good management of our human resources must be our first priority.

I have always believed that people are central to any organization, and in a service driven organization like the public service it is even more true. Our ability to continue to meet the needs of Canadians

depends on the quality of our people and on how well we lead them and manage them.

Two years ago, the government made a clear commitment in the Speech from the Throne to introduce long-awaited legislative reforms to the human resource management system of the public service, to ensure that it can attract the diverse talent it needs to respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

The government made this commitment because it recognizes that the Public Service of Canada is an important national institution that has served Canadians well for generations and must continue to do so. A professional, impartial and talented public service, in fulfilling its mission, contributes to the high quality of life we all enjoy.

Today governments, the private and voluntary sectors are facing a rapidly evolving operating environment. The pace of change seems to be accelerating, driven by technological advances and globalization.

Day to day work is becoming more and more knowledge-intensive, demanding new skill sets and forcing the need for an adaptable labour force. Demographic shifts are also creating an aging workforce and greater pressure for an inter-generational transfer of knowledge and expertise.

[*English*]

Governments face additional challenges. Public expectations of government are growing as citizens rightfully demand better service and greater involvement in decision making. Competition for talent with other employers is going to intensify in an increasingly tight labour market. Large numbers of federal public servants are expected to retire over the next decade and will need to be replaced. The public service of Canada needs to adapt to the shifting circumstances of the new century. It must ensure that it has the right workforce to successfully deliver its mission of serving Canadians.

Government Orders

To have an exemplary workforce, we must provide an exemplary workplace. For the public service, an exemplary workplace is a place that embraces diversity, where employees are proud to belong and where they can work in the official language of their choice and receive fair compensation. It is a supportive, professional environment that values competence and results, where decision making is delegated down to the level that makes the most sense, and where people are encouraged to be innovative and to use their judgment but are also held accountable for their actions. It is a place that promotes learning and professional development for all employees.

Of course such a workplace must also be a place of harmonious labour relations, with a real spirit of co-operation between the employer and union representatives, working together in a context where the public interest remains paramount.

●(1010)

[*Translation*]

These principles of an exemplary workplace are the principles upon which the Public Service Modernization Act was based. In fact, these principles are clearly set out in the two preambles contained in the bill. The values outlined in the preambles are the foundation upon which our human resource management system would be set.

As you know, the government has been working for some time now to improve the way it manages its people. Over the last few years, it has taken steps to combat harassment, strengthen diversity in the workplace, support employees with disabilities, and encourage learning.

Recently, we have renewed our commitment to official languages and have implemented a policy on internal disclosure for employees who wish to come forward with information about internal wrongdoing. We will soon be going forward with a new code of values and ethics for the public service.

[*English*]

Our legislative framework is the bedrock upon which all these and other human resources practices and policies are built. The public service modernization act proposes the fundamental changes we need. It represents a balanced approach to achieving many important objectives of human resources modernization and to creating an exemplary workplace.

The proposed bill will eliminate unnecessary red tape in staffing. It will lay the foundation for more constructive and harmonious labour relations. It will clarify the responsibility and strengthen the accountability of the key players in the human resources management system, the Public Service Commission, deputy heads and the Treasury Board, and it will provide greater support for employees in the area of learning so that they can pursue their professional development and continuously meet the needs of the public service.

Today we take a great step forward with the first major legislative reform of human resources management in over 35 years. I would like to speak for a moment about each of these three key aspects of the bill.

Let me begin with staffing. Competence and non-partisanship should be fundamental values of any professional public service. It is true today for our public service and it will continue to be so. Let me

be very clear: the proposed bill will in no way deviate from these values. In fact, it will reinforce them.

The current staffing system was designed with the merit principle as the cornerstone of public service hiring. However, in trying to achieve the ultimate objective of protecting the merit principle, our current system sets prescriptive and time consuming mechanisms for determining the best qualified candidate for a given position.

●(1015)

[*Translation*]

In 2000, the Auditor General reported that, on average, it takes 119 days to complete an internal appointment. In trying to guarantee excellence we have in fact hindered our ability to hire and retain the best and the brightest.

The Public Service Modernization Act would return the merit concept to its original intent of ensuring that competence is the basis for appointments, by requiring that an individual meet the qualifications for the work. Merit could also include the consideration of operational requirements, and the needs of the organization and the public service as determined by the deputy head and the employer. The bill in no way sacrifices the merit principle; but it does change our approach to it.

As a public institution, the public service is not, and cannot be managed in the same way as a business. It is, and must be subject to greater scrutiny in its hiring and management practices.

The Public Service Modernization Act would provide for more effective accountability. It would better align the roles and responsibilities of those who manage people in the government. It would clarify their roles and responsibilities.

This bill would maintain the Public Service Commission as an independent agency, accountable to Parliament, responsible for protecting the merit principle and ensuring that competence and non-partisanship are at the core of our staffing system.

Through the realignment of policy and training responsibilities, the commission would become more tightly focused on its mandate of ensuring merit and its responsibility to monitor, investigate and audit staffing activities.

The legislation would establish a new, independent public service staffing tribunal that would conduct third-party reviews of internal appointment complaints, assisting in protecting the integrity of the staffing system against abuse of authority.

Government Orders

The bill would also strengthen and clarify the role of the Treasury Board as the employer, granting it authority to set qualification standards and certain other human resources policies and regulations. It would also be responsible for determining the current and future needs of the public service.

[*English*]

The public service modernization act envisages increased delegation to deputy heads, balanced with stronger accountability. Deputy heads would determine the qualifications required for the work to be performed, along with the operational requirements and the needs of their organizations, as these are integrally linked to their management responsibilities. In addition to their delegated authorities, deputy heads would have direct authority to determine the learning and development needs of their employees, provide awards and set standards of discipline based on policies and guidelines by the Treasury Board.

These proposed changes to the staffing system would uphold the principles in the preamble and would support our vision of an exemplary workplace.

It is not just our staffing system that needs to be reformed. We must also modernize our approach to working with the bargaining agents that represent our employees. The federal public service is largely unionized and will stay that way. This is not a reality that we must accept; it is a reality that we should embrace. The more than 17 bargaining agents that represent 85% of our employees have ultimately the same objective as we do, to make positive change in the workplace. It is time that the unions are considered as partners in our quest to create an exemplary work environment, not as obstacles.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

Inspired by the Fryer committee, the bill before us, through a new and renamed Public Service Labour Relations Act, would introduce important changes to the current labour relations framework.

To improve dialogue and consultation, the government would require each deputy head to establish a joint labour-management consultation committee as a forum to discuss workplace issues.

The employer or deputy heads could also enter into co-development arrangements with bargaining agents that allow for joint discussion and problem solving and mutually agreed solutions without hindering the responsibility of management to make decisions.

The new legislation would recognize the National Joint Council as a potential forum for multilateral consultation and co-development. The NJC is an example of success where union and employer representatives work together in partnership.

[*English*]

The proposed bill would foster opportunities for informality and efficiency in the collective bargaining process. The bill would expand the role of the public service labour relations board, currently known as the Public Service Staff Relations Board. It would provide the chair with the flexibility to work informally with parties to mediate and help them reach agreements sooner. It would provide for

more informed negotiations by providing compensation research and analysis services to the employer and the bargaining agents.

As in current practice, bargaining agents would continue to choose between arbitration or conciliation to resolve collective bargaining impasses. However, new ad hoc public interest commissions would replace the existing conciliation boards and would consider the public interest when helping to resolve disputes. Appointed from a list of mutually agreed upon individuals, they would have the flexibility to mediate. Public reporting by these new commissions, coupled with their status and credibility, will help move the parties toward resolution and avoid strikes.

[*Translation*]

In case of a labour dispute and should public service employees exercise their right to strike, Canadians want to be reassured that they can rely on the government for the programs and services they need.

The proposed bill would ensure that all essential services would be provided during a strike. The government would have the right to establish the level of essential services that are needed to ensure public safety or security.

However, consistent with the new approach of partnership, the government and the bargaining agents together would determine the number of positions needed to provide these services.

The bill would modernize the management of conflicts in the workplace. It would require departments and agencies to offer informal conflict management services to all employees. This is an important addition to the formal processes that are now in place and would help resolve conflicts early, before they turn into formal disputes.

These proposals to the labour relations regime will require effort and attitude change on the part of managers and union representatives alike. Everyone must do their part.

However, given that both parties have the common objective of creating a healthy and productive work environment, it would only be in the interest of public service employees and ultimately the Canadian public to see these changes through.

• (1025)

[*English*]

Another key aspect of a modern workplace is training and development.

Clearly, one of our first priorities in implementing these reforms to the human resource management system would be to train our employees on how to function in this new environment. Linking people, their knowledge, and know-how to the mission of the public service must be a fundamental component of modernization and a critical element to the long term success of fostering in the public service an exemplary workplace.

Government Orders

The most efficient policies and systems in the world would come to naught unless managers and staff are trained in their usage. Our current approach to learning is fragmented and uncoordinated.

Bill C-25 proposes the creation of the Canada school of public service which would combine the Canadian Centre for Management Development and Training and Development Canada. The mandate of the new school would be to offer corporate, and other learning and development activities to all public service employees and managers across the country.

This integration of our learning services is key to better deliver training and development activities and to ensure that our public workforce has the capacity and knowledge to be able to adapt to change.

[*Translation*]

Ultimately, the government's capacity to deliver results for Canadians will depend significantly on its ability to promote a culture of continuous learning that will make the public service an organization that embraces innovation, tolerates responsible risk-taking and that continuously strives to improve in the way it delivers its mission.

Fundamental reform of this magnitude takes time and it cannot happen overnight. The public service must not only endeavour to implement change, but to do it right.

That is why we are looking at a multi-year timeframe to implement these changes—so we can review our progress, see what is working and what is not and adjust accordingly. As we move forward with implementing our reforms, we must be transparent and accountable for the results.

An essential element of effective accountability and transparency is clear and concise reporting. The hon. members of this House want timely, comprehensive information on how the public service is being managed. They need to know what has been achieved, whether the means used were appropriate, and what has been learned.

[*English*]

Under the bill, the President of the Treasury Board would report to Parliament annually on the implementation of the human resources management provisions of the act. This would be in addition to the current requirements to report on employment equity and official languages issues.

In addition, the Public Service Commission would continue to report to Parliament on its activities; the Public Service Labour Relations Board on labour relations issues; and the Public Service Staffing Tribunal on internal staffing complaints under its jurisdiction.

Through this comprehensive reporting, parliamentarians and government would be assured that the changes being implemented are well managed and that our human resources system is continuously being updated to reflect the times. We cannot wait another 35 years to review the system. That is why the bill proposes a review in seven years of our staffing and labour relations regimes.

Members of the House debate issues of great importance to Canadians: issues like health care, the environment, the economy and Canada's role in international affairs. All Canadians depend on us to ensure that government can continue to deliver on these priorities. It is then important to recognize that the public service underpins all that we do in government. People in the public service deliver the services to citizens across Canada and abroad.

[*Translation*]

Bringing about meaningful change in the public service will take the goodwill of executives, employees and union leaders. But firstly, it will need the support of parliamentarians.

I was quite encouraged to hear the statements by my hon. colleagues from the four opposition parties upon my tabling this bill. There was clear indication of the will to work in a non-partisan and, dare I say, non-confrontational and collaborative fashion to see these changes through so that the public service of Canada can continue to be among the best in the world.

[*English*]

The support of all members for the bill is critical. It would send a clear signal that the House is committed to good government and that serving Canadians with excellence is the main purpose of the public service and parliamentarians alike.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on February 6, 2003, the President of the Treasury Board of Canada and member for Westmount—Ville-Marie introduced in Parliament legislation claiming that it would modernize human resources management in the federal public service.

Bill C-25 brings with it a fair amount of Liberal boasting when the minister says the bill is the first wide-ranging legislation reform of human resources management in over 35 years. She says the current system is cumbersome and outdated. I have to ask, who has been minding the store for over nine years? We know that union and management do not get along. However, legislation alone will not save the government in labour relations.

The federal government gets the union behaviour it deserves or, more specifically, the Liberals have historically set the tone as the employer that has created its own unreasonable response from the union side. With this bill, the minister now finally admits that a more collaborative, consultative approach is needed. She is right, but the government has only arrived here in this last year. How fairly did it negotiate when it took over \$30 billion out of the workers' pension plan. That whole story sounded more like basic theft rather than negotiations. Employees remember bitterly.

My point is that all the joint councils in the world will not solve the human problem. Consultative and collaborative mechanisms can be created everywhere, but until there is a government that has an inherent philosophy that values employees and over time earns their respect by being always fair and honest with its workers, it will not realize its stated hopes for a balanced approach for human resources modernization.

Government Orders

Before me I see a bill of technicalities. Where is the commitment by the government to a set of values it would impose on itself first while, through this bill, it is prescribing values for others? Through this legislation it is prescribing values for the public service. I am sorry, we are now going to call it public administration. Where, at the same time in this so-called new era, is the government boldly describing self-imposed standards through which it could actually earn respect and create a culture of cooperation with workers?

The Liberals should apologize to Canadians and come clean with workers about broken promises. A new culture and climate must come from government first. It is my assertion that more can be accomplished in 10 minutes when everyone has learned through experience to trust each other and that they can all pull together than what could be accomplished in 10 years of bureaucracy making and rules manoeuvring.

I am talking about leadership. Leadership for a country so that we have some idea where we are going and we have a set of ideals of circumspection for political conduct as we journey on that national road to the future as a society. Wise and inspirational leadership is the only way in the long term for the grand hopes for a new collaborative management-labour culture.

One cannot legislate or coerce employees away from their sense of historical justice. The government cannot legislate away the memories and the deep sense of grievance. It has to earn it year in and year out.

That being said, I agree that the public service needs to have a renewed legal framework for its staffing and management practices to allow it to operate more effectively and to better meet the needs of Canadians. However, right off the top we are now going to call it public administration rather than public service. It sounds like an imperious government that claims to know best for everyone, that it will render what it knows as good for us all and administer instead of striving to serve need, serve the taxpayer in whose name we have government departments who serve the public interest, and serve to be accountable. Will citizens now be mere supplicants who will be administered?

The bill would provide for a new Public Service Employment Act, a new Public Service Labour Relations Act and would amend the Canadian Centre for Management Development Act and the human resources provisions of the Financial Administration Act.

The minister claims it is a balanced approach. However, it could be seen that under the guise of flexibility, while the employer makes room to adjust, it may also make room to manipulate and run rough over the plight of workers who would then increasingly turn to their union for a confrontational response.

• (1030)

The last situation we want to create is where the most prominent document on a worker's desk is a union contract. It can happen when a power shift occurs and new flexible authority is not implemented wisely. The government as a manager has started in a deep hole and if it ever hopes to get to higher ground, the powers that come through increased flexibility would have to be used carefully to obtain objective outcomes in a manner that makes sense to all those involved.

I hope that through better leadership from government, the increased flexibility in staffing and management of people will have safeguards to sustain a merit based, non-partisan public service. The minister sees the need for more constructive and cooperative labour-management relations to support a healthy, productive workplace. Does the government have any clue as to how to operationalize it?

Certainly, a greater commitment of resources to appropriate kinds of training is a start, especially skills in human relations and business, understanding organizational behaviour, industrial psychology, the science of decision-making, team building and people management. They all need to become part of the regular culture.

Wherever there is a supervisory role, even at lower levels, the incumbent must be given the people management training and be required to meet standards for supervising people. More coherent skill building can help employees pursue professional development to help meet the corporate needs of the public service. Clarified roles and strengthening accountability for institutions and individuals responsible for managing the public service should be an ongoing environment of review. Leaders cannot manage what they do not measure and assess.

A transparent culture of evaluation for both outcome and means must become the natural way of being rather than just an emergency reaction to the Auditor General or creating another crisis management project. There is a sound role for a vibrant, independent public service commission. Instead of trying to go around it, when it does not appear responsive enough, a better approach would be to fix it. Let us give the public service real resources to do its job and make it produce timely results, then receive the true potentials that such an independent role can deliver. Let us fix it instead of diluting and bypassing it.

This bill does appear to sufficiently maintain the role of the Public Service Commission as an independent appointment agency, accountable to Parliament for protecting merit, but the meaning of merit is watered down from striving for the best person who is most qualified to any from a group who may meet minimum requirements.

The minister claims the new approach to merit would improve a manager's ability to appoint people more quickly, when and where they are needed, while providing safeguards against abuse. My warning is that if the new direction is not done wisely, the broad system malaise that has been talked about so widely by the professional observers of the public service would only deepen and there would be no renewal of the public service culture. Nevertheless, I remain hopeful for the new independent public service staffing tribunal that would review internal staffing complaints and protect employees against abuse of authority.

Government Orders

My message to the minister is to give the tribunal a lot of capacity up front, as it is likely to be swamped in the beginning until things settle down. The start-up window for credibility would be very short and there would be little room for mistakes on this one. Let us make it comprehensive and capable. Let us resource it fully and ensure that it works for the benefit of everyone across the country.

The minister, through the bill, also realizes the need to assist the oversight role of Parliament. The statute outlines the requirement for the Treasury Board to report annually on human resource management issues. If this were to become one more feel good document that is so typical from the government, then the whole exercise would be lost. I would prefer an element of outside government assessment and certification as part of this reporting exercise, including computer access to the raw data. If the government wants to become transparent, here is its real chance.

The minister hopes the bill, to which we refer as the PSMA, would set the stage for a more constructive dialogue between managers and bargaining agents representing more than 85% of the public service workforce. They hope to improve collective bargaining through enhanced mediation and provide for more flexible methods to resolve conflict. This is very nice, but they certainly do not need to wait for a new act to behave more wisely, for it was always within the grasp of government to behave.

The government will try to fix things with new public interest commissions which will replace existing conciliation boards, supposedly to help parties resolve disputes and recommend settlements in consideration of the public interest. However, the government gets the union behaviour it deserves based upon years of previous conduct. While management must have both the legal power and the skill to manage, we have not yet seen an attitude from the Liberal political masters that any of the system tinkering in this bill would make much difference.

● (1035)

The government would also create a new Canada school of public service by amalgamating Training and Development Canada and the Canadian Centre for Management Development to provide coordinated and innovative learning for employees and managers.

I have optimism for this new arrangement. The government says that it has a strategy to equip the public service to adapt with excellence to the changing needs of Canadians. It makes a lofty claim when it says that through training it is committed to fair and respectful employment practices and effective workplace dialogue.

The government claims that the PSMA is a balanced legislative package resulting from research and consultation conducted by the task force on modernizing human resource management in the public service. We will be hearing from members of the task force at the committee stage process whether enough of their recommendations are in the bill.

Concerning the changes to the Public Service Labour Relations Act, it is to improve the labour-management relationship in the public service while maintaining the existing basic labour relations framework with a view to contributing to a healthy and more productive public service workplace. I note a change in the name of

the act, which employs labour relations instead of staff relations to modernize the vocabulary.

A new preamble in the bill tries to underscore the value of co-operative labour relations within a context where the public interest remains paramount. The government says that it is committed to a fair, credible and efficient resolution of matters arising in respect of the terms and conditions of employment. I hope it can lead by example. Certainly the disrespect it has shown Parliament in the past does not help its credibility when dealing with the workers who administer the people's business across the country. It seems some cabinet ministers and even backbench Liberal MPs think that the public service works for the Liberal Party.

Let us be mindful that the bill before us today must be viable, regardless of which political party forms the government in the years to come. What we are doing today should represent more leadership through partnership rather than control through rules.

The bill would affirm in law both the employers right to manage, to determine its own organizations, the assignment of duties and classification of positions, as well as some employee freedoms related to union activity. I hope the government will have the common sense to negotiate with the unions a more reasonable, practical amount of union activity that will be permitted on employer time and on employer premises.

There also would be a new public service labour relations board. The board's mandate would be broadened to provide adjudication, mediation and compensation research and analysis services. It is hoped that the individuals who are appointed to the board will be of the highest calibre the country can produce and who can inspire confidence from all sides, for their role is so important. The board would also continue to provide facilities and administrative support to the national joint council, which is recognized in the bill.

In respect of compensation analysis and consequent bargaining, it should be clarified that in general, public sector compensation levels should be referenced to and follow the benchmarks of the private sector and not lead them.

Two tier bargaining would allow for service wide bargaining to set the broad parameters for terms and conditions of employment in a bargaining unit, while permitting precise details to be negotiated in departments if the employer, the bargaining agent and the deputy head jointly agree. It is designed to result in terms and conditions more appropriately tailored to the needs of the job. The concept of a single master agreement, completed or complemented by sectoral agreements, is very well established across Canada.

Government Orders

Conciliation boards and conciliation commissioners would be replaced by public interest commissions. Public interest commissions would be non-permanent bodies consisting of one of three persons appointed by the minister responsible to assist the parties to resolve their dispute and make recommendations for settlement. The chairperson of the PSLRB would be able to recommend the appointment of a public interest commission, either at the request of the parties or on his or her own initiative. I would hope that if we ever get to that poor situation that one of these needs to be appointed, it would not be used for the government to negotiate through the media.

The right to strike would not be acquired until 30 days after an essential service agreement had been concluded. No essential service employee would be allowed to participate in a strike and it would be prohibited for any person to impede or prevent employees who provide essential services from entering or leaving their place of work.

Concerning strike votes, the bill would require bargaining agents to hold secret ballot strike votes in order to declare a strike. I think that is very wise.

● (1040)

The bill also would ensure that all bargaining unit employees have the right to vote and to be given a reasonable access to the vote. Strike votes would have to be held within 60 days preceding any strike. A majority of those voting would have to be in favour in order for a strike to be declared.

Concerning the informal conflict management system, each deputy head in the core public administration would be required, in consultation with bargaining agents representing employees in the department or organization, to establish an informal conflict management system and inform the employees in the department or organization of its availability.

Concerning amendments to the Financial Administration Act, the delegation of authority and responsibility to deputy heads, considerable sweeping power is given for their human resource requirements and their allocations. With deputy heads receiving such tremendous authority, it is hoped that ministers will keep them accountable. May we never see another HRDC scandal.

Concerning the Public Service Employment Act, the government claims to modernize staffing in the public service, clarify roles and responsibilities and give new meaning to merit, create new arrangements for staffing recourse and establish a regime for political activities of public service employees.

The preamble to the bill has some nice sounding commitments of appreciation for the public service, which later may be undermined in its implementation. It talks about the importance of a modern, flexible staffing regime based on merit without political interference. It mentions excellence, integrity and reflecting national diversity, whose members are drawn from across the country.

That very ideal is too frequently undermined by the geographic prohibitions against all Canadians having equal opportunity to apply for a competition. Such practice by the government hurts national unity and is a stain on our international reputation as a free and democratic society. I call on the minister to immediately prohibit any

such discrimination in hiring, for the free goods, capital and labour is fundamental to a market economy and a functioning democracy.

Responsibilities would be clarified among the Public Service Commission, Treasury Board, the employer, deputy heads and the new public service staffing tribunal. The PSST, as we would call it, would adjudicate complaints against internal appointments and establish regulations regarding complaint procedures. As I have mentioned, it is a very important entity.

We now come to the principle of merit that should apply throughout the public service at all levels. Initial appointments by the Public Service Commission would continue to be based on merit, free from political interference it is said, but with an approach to try and streamline the lengthy staffing process.

The following new definition is likely to be fought over and has already generated some national controversy in the media. An appointment would be based on merit when the Public Service Commission determines that the person meets the essential qualifications for the work to be performed and has regard to any additional qualifications that would be an asset or has regard to the operational requirements or current and future needs of the organization that may be identified.

The new meaning of merit would reflect the new roles and responsibilities of the PSC, the employer and the deputy heads. The employer would determine the needs of the public service, such as skill shortages and incapacities. The deputy heads would determine particular needs within their organizations, such as shift work availability and essential qualifications, as well as complementary qualifications that would be an asset for the job but that are not essential. It would be expected that the PSC would conduct the assessments and make the selection.

My problem is that the new, watered down definition of merit gives no direction to select the best person for the job within a specific competition process. Since that basic goal would no longer be required, no justification or accountability would be required to defend perhaps a sloppy selection process or even insider advantage to a favoured person.

There is nothing that will bring the whole system down faster than the informal social network of news among employees when it becomes known that a significantly less able employee was selected for promotion under the new proposed system, where this so-called winner met the basic qualifications but was clearly not the best person within any given competition. I say to the minister that she will have a disaster on her hands if she fails to fix this most basic definition.

Merit means exactly that, the person with the most merit within any given competition must be hired. That was the definition of the courts.

● (1045)

The parallel is the letting of contracts, which should be a straightforward business activity, but over which the government stumbles time after time.

Government Orders

The issue of contracts for the federal government is fraught with trouble across the country. It is because the government always seems to want to fudge the rules and play favourites and has insufficient standards that cannot be avoided. It is still too easy under present contracting rules to reward its political friends. That is why sealed bidding processes were developed for contracting in the private sector.

The minister knows all the trouble, the unfairness and the manipulation that goes on with contracting and picking a winner in a competition. The same potential for human nature will apply with a watered down definition of merit in the public service.

It is possible to be efficient and effective and still be fair. Alternately, can it be a wise use of human resource potential to not select the best person in a competition rather than just any from a group of unknown alternative criteria?

Since merit would now be just kind of incidental, why would a competition for promotion even be held? That operational hope is not acceptable. We can be efficient and fix the bottle necks without watering down the principle of merit.

Let us go to clause 33 which permits a secret or unadvertised appointment process. That is also unacceptable. It is not too onerous to post a competition on a computer database that is searchable on the net. Timely advertising of vacancies and promotional opportunities is an inherent part of the proper working of the merit principle. They are tied together.

Clause 34 includes the discredited language where it states:

—the commission may determine an area of selection by establishing geographic, organizational or occupational criteria...

This present definition in law cannot stand as it is so fundamental to all of what it means to have an independent and professional public service. It goes to the heart of why we have a Public Service Commission and what it was created for in the first place. Geographic discrimination is intolerable, and the public expects no less.

No system of appointment or promotion competition is perfect. I am pleased to see recourse for an employee is spelled out in the bill for internal appointment processes. The bill would allow informal discussion to occur between hiring managers and candidates throughout a staffing process to address concerns and correct errors with a view to reducing the need for formal recourse. Where formal recourse is necessary there would be a new, independent tribunal, called the public service staffing tribunal, to replace the current PSC appeal boards.

Employees who are in a competition would be able to make a complaint to the PSST for adjudication based on some grounds. These grounds would include abuse of authority, such as personal favouritism, or denial of the right to be assessed in the official language of one's choice.

The PSST would be able to interpret and apply the Canadian Human Rights Act if a discrimination issue were to arise, and if appropriate, give monetary relief in accordance with the act for pain and suffering and/or special compensation where the behaviour was wilful or reckless.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission would have the right to be notified if issues of discrimination were raised before the PSST and would have standing to make submissions to the PSST. This is designed to promote better decision making by the tribunal in the area of discrimination and employment and to streamline recourse.

However the provisions of the bill would not prevent an employee from making a complaint to CHRC.

The most practical and important part is missing from the legislation. What I do not see is that the PSST should have the clear power to negate a selection and require the process to be done over again with the opportunity for additional applicants to join in. That is the most appropriate, effective, corrective measure to ensure managers are fair, or, if they do not behave, they would have to do the same process over again next time and select the best person. The timelines could be quite fast and need not be seen as a bottleneck. This issue is so basic that it must be fixed.

It seems most reasonable that employees of separate agencies would automatically be able to participate in selection processes open to employees in the core public administration. Agency positions likely were formerly within the public service in any event, such as the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. Separate agencies would also be able to request that the PSC approve its staffing regime so that its employees could be deployed into the core public administration.

• (1050)

In the act the Public Service Commission would be required to consult with bargaining agents on key issues, principles governing layoffs, priorities for appointments, qualification standards, the definitions of promotion, probation deployment and appointment to level. Staffing would continue to be outside the scope of collective bargaining.

The PSC would have the authority to investigate whether an appointment was politically motivated or whether fraud occurred in an appointment process and could take corrective action, including revocation, if it was determined that an appointment was tainted by political influence or by fraud.

Now let us talk about term employees. They would be automatically converted to indeterminate, or what I would call permanent status, at the end of the cumulative period of appointment specified by the employer in circumstances determined by the employer. Currently I think that time is three years and it should be reduced to two years, calculated in actual hours of a normal working year.

The use of casual workers should be a concern to all of us. The allowable period of casual employment would be limited to a maximum of 90 days in any calendar year under the act. The government should review where it is using this practice with an effort to severely limit its use unless absolutely vital.

Citizens working in public service should not necessarily lose their political rights. On this matter, I do not think the government has the right balance in the legislation. The new act does try to establish a regime for political activities which balances the rights of employees to engage in the political process with the principle of political impartiality in the public service.

The scope of prohibited political activities is established in the act and through regulations of the governor in council are made on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission. In the case of deputy heads, at that high level the act would limit their political activities to just voting, which is appropriate. However, the requirement to obtain leave from the PSC to be a candidate in a federal, provincial or territorial election would be retained and a requirement would be added to obtain permission from the PSC to be a candidate in regional and municipal elections. The same regime would apply in relation to seeking to be nominated as a candidate. These are unreasonable restrictions.

There is also no definition in the bill that requesting leave should not be unreasonably withheld. A decision to grant or not to grant should also be appealable to somebody.

The real problem arises in the long process of seeking a nomination. In my personal example, I was a permanent provincial public employee. I was able to seek a federal nomination without my employer's knowledge or permission as my volunteer time, as long as it was legal, was none of the employer's business. I won my nomination but I had to wait about a year before the writ was dropped and the campaign started. No one, except federal government insiders, knew when the election campaign would start. I was able to invoke the section of the labour agreement that granted unpaid leave for up to five years when I requested it, without having to obtain the employer's consent. Related to my ability to perform my public service job, I was able to amicably invoke the start date of my unpaid leave. This was in 1993 and it looks like the federal government has still not caught up to enlightened British Columbia on that matter.

Work performance is the business of the employer. A conflict of interest concerning confidential government information is the business of the employer. However beyond that it is not the employer's business whether people are politically active, whether they belong to a party, if they do volunteer political work in their leisure time and if they obtain a nomination for an election for some unknown time in the future.

The government attitude, as reflected in the bill, is still in the dark ages concerning basic political rights and the encouragement of the brightest and best in the federal public service to come forward and appropriately become politically active. The sections as they are written are unrealistically paternalistic and controlling and are actually quite insulting. They would never withstand a charter argument if one was created.

Therefore I look forward to the minister assigning some resources to review this section of the bill as, on the face of it, it is far too restrictive and flies in the face of our democratic ideals in this country.

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●(1055)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will have approximately 10 minutes to conclude his remarks after question period. We will now proceed with members' statements.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ECO-TECH VILLAGE

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise in the House today to inform my hon. colleagues about the Eco-Tech Village, in the great riding of Halton. It will be the first community in North America to combine two innovative models in design: the ecovillage and the televillage.

Incorporating ecological sustainability with energy conservation and a high tech smart wired community residents will enjoy the best of both worlds.

Nestled below the Niagara Escarpment, those new community will blend into its natural surroundings while maintaining its connection to the rest of the town.

Through Action Plan 2000 and the Green Municipal Fund, the Town of Milton has received \$100,000 to see its study and design plan come to life. Congratulations to Milton for this innovative approach to municipal planning.

* * *

A SPOUSE'S VALENTINE

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today is St. Valentine's Day and I wish to recognize the unsung heroes of Parliament, our spouse's and significant others.

They raise our families and represent us in our constituencies while we are away from home. They endure the long hours, the late nights, the last minute changes, the pressure of election campaigns and the stress of long distance relationships. They sacrifice their privacy and they brave the scrutiny of the public eye.

In times of uncertainty and difficulty, they are our voices of reason and our most trusted advisers. They share our greatest joys and our deepest sorrows and they do it all with strength and grace.

Today, I send a valentine to our spouses and significant others, for their selfless support of the work that we do in the House of Commons.

And to my sweetheart Teena, I give my love and deepest gratitude.

* * *

●(1100)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the devastating oil spill off the coast of Spain which tarred about 180 beaches and killed thousands of birds and fish was caused by a single-hulled tanker.

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To prevent future disasters, the 15 European nations have agreed to ban single-hulled oil tankers carrying heavy fuel, as of this month. They have also agreed to impose by 2010 a total ban on single-hulled vessels more than 15 years old.

In Canada single-hulled tankers will be gradually phased out by the year 2015. Considering Canada's long coastline, the significant social and economic dependence on the fishery and the importance of protecting the health and beauty of our coastal ecosystem, I urge the Minister of Transport to move forward the Canadian ban to 2010, as the European Union is doing, to prevent disasters like the *Exxon Valdez* and the *Prestige*.

* * *

IRAQ

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past number of months the American government has beat the drums of war louder and louder in the hope of drowning out the world's pleas for a rational peaceful solution to the situation in Iraq.

The war rhetoric is just that; rhetoric. Not even the lowest evidentiary standards have been met that would justify bombing Iraq and in so doing kill thousands of innocent people there. In fact, we demand more proof for a conviction of armed robbery than Mr. Powell gave the world last week in arguing for the invasion of a sovereign nation.

War is an admission that diplomatic means have failed. It is my fervent hope that we continue on the road of diplomacy.

* * *

NATIONAL FLAG DAY

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 15, 1965, the Canadian government adopted the Canadian flag, a respected symbol throughout the world that reflects our values of peace, respect, justice and tolerance.

I am therefore pleased to recognize the efforts of the Prime Minister of Canada and Mr. Jesse Flis, who represented Parkdale—High Park as a member of Parliament for many years, in making National Flag Day a reality for all Canadians in 1996.

Our flag is a symbol of the nation's unity and represents all Canadians regardless of race, language or belief. It is my hope that Canadians today will join together and celebrate our shared heritage and identity. Let us be proud of our flag and proud to be Canadians.

* * *

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the economy of British Columbia is in dire straits. The softwood lumber dispute, downturn in mining, lack of progress in proceeding with offshore oil and gas development have all created unprecedented economic difficulties, especially in northwestern B.C. and my riding of Skeena.

In his upcoming budget, it is to be hoped that the finance minister sees fit to level the playing field tax wise. Equalizing the corporate income tax rate is necessary to encourage new investment in these vital industries.

Furthermore, it is incumbent upon the federal Liberal government to encourage its provincial counterpart to move on offshore oil and gas development. The B.C. equivalent of a Hibernia plus awaits direction from both senior governments.

The B.C. economy needs the jobs and revenues. Northern British Columbians require new employment opportunities. The resources are there. Government must cut red tape and taxes to create the opportunity for economic recovery in our resources sector.

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[Translation]

WORLD PEACE MARCH

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow there will be a world peace march that may be the largest demonstration in history.

All around the world, men and women will be calling on their political leaders to do everything possible to avoid a war. People will not allow the world to be swept up in the war-mongering that is fuelling the United States, before all other steps have been taken and all other alternatives have been exhausted.

Iraqi civilians, especially the women and children, have suffered enough at the expense of a tyrant at home and as a result of economic and political sanctions from abroad, without us adding the additional horror of a war.

The massive mobilization of millions of people marching tomorrow will send a message that the 21st century must not be a replay of the previous century with its two world wars, dozens of regional conflicts that cost millions of lives, and the ever-present threat of the Cold War.

The United Nations is the only venue where the Iraqi and North Korean situations ought to be settled. While there are undeniable threats, there is also hope for humanity, hope that we must never give up.

* * *

● (1105)

[English]

SUCCESS

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 8 I had the pleasure of attending the SUCCESS annual fundraising gala at Vancouver GM Place. This unique event, with over 12,000 attendees and representatives from all three levels of government including Lieutenant-Governor Iona Campagnolo, is truly a showcase gala in the community.

SUCCESS is a well established Chinese social service agency that served over 420,000 people in 2002. Under the leadership of Lawrence Woo, Michelle Kwok and Lilian To, the gala event raised over \$500,000 to support many community programs like employment training, immigrant settlement services and senior and youth programs to just name a few.

I want to congratulate and to thank SUCCESS and its board of directors for their hard work and dedication to the community.

* * *

VALENTINES FOR VETS

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is St. Valentine's Day and across this country more than 3,000 valentine greetings have been received by veterans in long term care facilities through the Valentines for Vets program.

Through this program for the past seven years, Veterans Affairs Canada has invited Canadians to create special valentines for our Canadian veterans. One veteran who received his valentine this year was quoted as saying:

It gave me a great feeling. They're strangers and Valentine's Day is about love but it's a great thing. It means these young people haven't forgotten me, forgotten what I did.

Another veteran indicated that he was thrilled because he had not receive a valentine since he was a child.

Sending valentine cards may seem like a small gesture but it is so meaningful for our veterans. Anyone who knows a veteran should take the time today to thank them for their service to our country. Let them know that they will be forever in our hearts, and they will love us for it.

* * *

ZIMBABWE

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in Zimbabwe opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai is on trial in a kangaroo court for allegedly plotting to assassinate Robert Mugabe. This trial is an absolute farce. The testimony is based on a doctored tape made by Ari Ben-Menashe of Montreal, an individual wanted for fraud internationally.

The RCMP has investigated these allegations. The release of that investigation would exonerate this individual. If the release of the investigation does not take place, this individual will be executed by hanging in the very near future with widespread ramifications for the region.

The trial is a farce. Canada cannot sit idly by and let an innocent man die based on the testimony of a fraud artist. The government must ensure that the RCMP's findings are made public and submitted to the court in Harare.

The RCMP should also investigate Mr. Ben-Menashe, his associate Alexander Legault and their company Dickens and Madson for international fraud, trafficking of blood diamonds and other crimes.

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ARARAT

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *Ararat* director Atom Egoyan's film that deals with the question of the recognition of the Armenian genocide and the effects of the continued denial on the ancestors of the victims of the first genocide of the 20th century has taken five of its nine Genie Award

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nominations, including best picture at the 23rd annual Genies last night.

Arsinee Khanjian was named best actress for her role in *Ararat*.

Ararat's other Genies were for best supporting actor, Elias Koteas; musical score, Mychael Danna; and costume design, Beth Pasternak.

The success of the film is a tribute to the talents of both Atom and Arsinee and reflects the overwhelming support *Ararat* has gained from fans of Canadian films around the world.

Last May from Cannes Atom Egoyan sent me a note saying, "You're my hero". We can all say, "Atom, you're a Canadian hero now".

I know my fellow members of Parliament join me in extending congratulations to the cast and crew of *Ararat* for a great Canadian success story.

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DENNIS MCDERMOTT

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the memory of Dennis McDermott, a fearless and articulate leader of the Canadian labour movement, who served as the Canadian director of the UAW, as president of the Canadian Labour Congress, and as Canada's ambassador to Ireland. He was a lifelong activist on human rights, and a member of the NDP and the CCF for over five decades.

Dennis played a key role in bringing about Ontario's first piece of human rights legislation in 1948. At the helm of Canada's UAW, he laid the foundation for one of the most successful trade unions in Canadian history, the CAW.

As president of the Canadian Labour Congress, he believed that trade unions should engage in the broader struggles from economic and social equality to peace and justice around the world.

May the road rise to meet you, Dennis, and may God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

* * *

●(1110)

[*Translation*]

JEAN-BAPTISTE MEILLEUR

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I note with great pleasure that Jean-Baptiste Meilleur has been designated a significant national historic figure.

Jean-Baptiste Meilleur, a doctor by profession and father of ten, was the first superintendent of public instruction in Lower Canada and is seen as the main founder of Quebec's public education system. He helped found the Collège de l'Assomption in 1833 and was a member of parliament for the riding of the same name from 1834 to 1838.

Oral Questions

As I have had the privilege of teaching at Jean-Baptiste Meilleur school in Repentigny and at the Collège de l'Assomption, it is with great pride that I make this announcement, an important one for our entire community.

It is said that the institutions Jean-Baptiste Meilleur established laid the foundations for the education system that has existed in Quebec for more than a century.

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ALEXANDRE CYR

Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is National Flag of Canada Day. I wish to take this opportunity to remind the House of the extraordinary work the former member for Gaspé, Alexandre Cyr, did to have this day recognized.

On February 14, 1973, Mr. Cyr got a unanimous vote of the House on a special motion asking that the Canadian flag stand in a place of honour among parliamentarians. The next day, on the eighth anniversary of the Canadian flag, the Speaker granted the hon. member's request.

Mr. Cyr accomplished a great deal as a member of Parliament. In this place where parliamentarians gather to work on improving society, he has left an important legacy, namely a reminder that patriotism and civic spirit are essential to our work.

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[English]

TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, according to Premier Grimes, Newfoundland and Labrador will receive only about \$200 million of the \$13.5 billion being transferred to the provinces over the next three years for health care. Because the transfers are shared on a per capita basis, our province always receives a relatively small amount. That problem is compounded by an aging and shrinking population spread over a huge piece of geography.

The Prime Minister has admitted that the per capita funding system does not provide adequate funding for Canada's three large but sparsely populated northern territories. Therefore, there should also be an equalization factor built into our share of federal health care transfers, a factor that takes into account the realities of our geography and demography. Otherwise a small province such as Newfoundland and Labrador will always be playing catchup to the rest of the nation.

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[Translation]

MICHAËLLE JEAN

Ms. Liza Frulla (Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, February is Black History Month. It is a time for Canadians to become aware of an aspect of their history and familiar with some exemplary people.

In this respect, Michaëlle Jean, an award-winning reporter, host and energetic filmmaker, is a model for young women in the journalistic and cinematographic fields. She was the first Black

woman to be appointed anchor at the Société Radio-Canada. Today, we can see her each week hosting *The Passionate Eye*, *Rough Cuts* and *Grands reportages*, among other things.

Ms. Jean joined Radio-Canada in 1988, serving as a reporter for *Actuel*, then the public affairs news show *Montréal ce soir* and *Virages*, and the national and international affairs program *Le Point*.

She has dealt with challenging themes and received many prizes for her efforts, including an Amnesty International Journalism Award in 1995 and a Galaxi Award for best information program host.

Michaëlle Jean is the kind of person who can truly inspire us as women.

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[English]

FOOD SERVICES INDUSTRY

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to praise Canada's largest employer. The food service industry employs more than one million Canadians. The people working in the industry range from teens to seniors, from full time career employees to students slaving away at school and at work getting ready to lead productive lives and productive and satisfying careers.

Those one million plus Canadians should know the Canadian Alliance is the only federal party on their side. They are being gouged by the Liberal government. Their association states clearly that they pay a disproportionate share of payroll taxes compared to high income earners and capital intensive industries.

The Canadian Alliance believes the employment insurance premiums are too high. The Conservatives raised them and the Liberals have squandered them since 1993 so there is no real unemployment insurance fund. It is gone, having been blown away by the high-spending Liberals.

Here is to the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association and the 1,020,700 people who are proud to work in it. Let us hope the finance minister finally listens to them and does something to help them in this great and wonderful industry in our country.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1115)

[English]

IRAQ

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last night in his speech in the United States, the Prime Minister was careful to endorse every single side of the international dispute over Iraq. This exercise in confusion rather than clarity was another step in our increasing slide to irrelevance on this issue.

Oral Questions

Now that the Blix report has been delivered, can the government be clear, will it stand unequivocally with our allies, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and others, in stating that they have the right to act and that Saddam Hussein will be disarmed?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, we prefer to know what the facts are before we state our position. We will look carefully at the Blix report. We expect that over the coming days the report delivered by Mr. Blix will be the subject of very careful consideration by nations around the world.

The Prime Minister made clear last evening Canada's position. We stand on that position.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, for months the Prime Minister has been telling the House that the government would tell us where it stands when the Blix report was presented. Today is the day. The Prime Minister has heard the report.

I will ask this in as parliamentary a manner as I can. On this issue today, where is the Prime Minister?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been told the Leader of the Opposition is a quick study, but not making his mind up while the report is still being delivered is an amazingly quick study. I think even he would concede that it would be worthwhile for us to carefully review the report that Mr. Blix and his committee is presently presenting in the Security Council of the United Nations before determining the position that the world community should take.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, every other member of the United Nations in the past few months has been able to tell its population where it stands on some of these issues. We are a sovereign country. Canadians have as much right to expect that from their government as any other nation in the world.

I know the real problem is that the Prime Minister faces a clash of civilizations within his own caucus. I will say to the Deputy Prime Minister, the government has been hearing, as have the rest of us, what Hans Blix has been saying today. Does it have any reaction at all to what Dr. Blix is saying on Iraq's—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what aspersions the Leader of the Opposition was casting in his reference to clashes of civilizations. Perhaps he might learn a little about civilization before he poses his next question.

In any event, I think it is appropriate we take—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We will hear the questions and we will hear the answers.

Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, there is not a clash of civilizations; there is a clash of views.

On that side, the Canadian Alliance is prepared to salute to the United States no matter what it thinks. There has been no time to

consider the report and no time to let the world community respond to it.

We believe that the onus in this case lies with the United Nations. The Security Council must consider the information that is being presented to it.

• (1120)

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals just keep ducking the issue that they said they would eventually face up to.

Hans Blix told the UN Security Council once again today that Saddam Hussein has not accounted for significant amounts of previously declared weapons of mass destruction. I do not know where the Prime Minister was. He said it today.

Resolution 1441 says that there will be serious consequences for non-compliance.

Will the Prime Minister simply come clean with Canadians on whether the government will stand with its allies in enforcing UN resolution 1441, yes or no?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we urged the Security Council to adopt resolution 1441. It is important that the Security Council have the opportunity to consider the information from the inspectors in order to determine what consequences should flow. Surely that is not too much to ask.

I know that those members have been eager to pull the trigger, but let us at least wait until we have a chance to review the report of Mr. Blix today.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are eager to avoid war by facing up and taking a stand, not by running, not by running from making a decision.

The government straddles the fence on Iraq and has done that so many times it has neutered our own position in the international context. We need an answer. For weeks the Prime Minister promised that the government would make a decision on the day the Blix report came out. Most other members of the international community have made a decision, one way or the other.

Why can the government not make a decision? Canadians deserve to know, our allies deserve to know, and Saddam Hussein deserves to know.

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could we perhaps have an hour to read the report?

What is it that compels the Canadian Alliance to demand that we insist on going to war within minutes of the inspectors beginning to present their report?

Resolution 1441 provided for an intrusive system of inspection. That is what Canada sought. That is what we have asked for.

The report needs to be considered in all of its respects before the world decides that the use of force, other than in self-defence, is justified.

Oral Questions

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the inspectors are presenting a new report to the Security Council, the international community fears that the United States will act unilaterally outside the framework of the United Nations.

Since the Prime Minister did not do so yesterday in Chicago, can the Deputy Prime Minister promise this House that there is absolutely no way that Canada will be part of any unilateral action by the U.S.?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a clash of views in this House, not a clash of civilizations. I believe that we have supported a very firm resolution because the Iraqi government has to understand that it must destroy its weapons of mass destruction.

We are now waiting for the report that is currently being presented to the UN Security Council.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said yesterday that any action against Iraq should be taken within the framework of the United Nations.

What will Canada's response be if the United States decides to act unilaterally, as it recently threatened to do?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Security Council has created a situation where there will be a response if Saddam Hussein does not accept the conditions in resolution 1441.

That is why we are waiting for Mr. Blix's report.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it just so happens that the initial comments that we heard about the Blix report confirm that the process put in place under resolution 1441, which was adopted by the UN Security Council, is not completed, but is working well.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell this House that the government is reaching the same conclusions on the inspectors' report, which was tabled today, and that, in this sense, this proves that the inspection process is working well and should be continued?

• (1125)

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, neither for the Canadian Alliance nor for the Bloc Québécois will we judge the report before we have had time to review it. The international community has an obligation to carefully consider the report and determine what measures will be necessary afterwards.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government should realize that the public is quite concerned right now and that one of the major issues is the fact that the role and usefulness of international institutions are being challenged by the United States and its main spokespersons.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister tell us what immediate action Canada intends to take to defend these international institutions, which it helped build?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that this criticism is not justified. In any case, it is the United States that asked for resolution

1441. It is the U.S. Secretary of State who presented the existing evidence, according to the United States, to the Security Council, on February 5.

I think we have a very appropriate position, which is to wait for the report and to examine it in the context of the Security Council, in the context of the international community.

[*English*]

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister.

News reports in the last few minutes are saying that Hans Blix has been saying that no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq and the inspectors are now having more freedom to move around the country, but that more time is needed and new spy planes are available to help in that inspection.

In light of that, could the Deputy Prime Minister say whether or not he will be speaking out and calling upon the United Nations and Security Council members to provide more time for inspections to be completed in Iraq, rather than going to war?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will not be responding in this question period to the content of the Blix report, because I have not had the time, nor has the government, to review it. It is continuing to be presented.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs will respond to the public later today when we have had an opportunity to consider carefully the content of all of the report, not simply excerpts of it.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Then, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Deputy Prime Minister about the Prime Minister's speech in Chicago yesterday, where he said going through the United Nations would add "legitimacy to the use of force" in Iraq. Yet the Prime Minister voted against the vote in the House for this House itself voting about going to war.

If the United Nations authorization equals legitimacy, I presume that in the Prime Minister's logic George Bush going alone would equal illegitimacy.

So I ask the Deputy Prime Minister, could he state in the House today that he would not participate in George Bush's war if it does not happen through the United Nations?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I think we should allow the world community the time to respond to the contents of the report.

I think it is important to recognize the wording of resolution 1441, which was a very strong resolution and which does threaten serious consequences for failure to comply.

What is at issue here is not simply whether or not the inspectors find weapons of mass destruction, but the degree of compliance which the Iraqi government affords to the intrusive inspection regime that the resolution requires.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question which the Deputy Prime Minister can answer today.

Oral Questions

Dr. Blix has just emphasized to the Security Council how important it is that his inspection team have access to intelligence information available to member states of the United Nations.

Has Canada acted directly to make available to Dr. Blix all intelligence information that has come to Canada's attention which might be useful to the UN inspection team in Iraq?

If Canada has not done that, would the Deputy Prime Minister explain why and would he undertake now to make all such information available to Dr. Blix from now on?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again I think we will wait and see what Dr. Blix has reported.

I am not going to get into a discussion about classified information and what use is made of it, but I will say that it is of great importance to the people of Canada and to the world community that not only do we achieve the disarmament of Saddam Hussein, but that the world conduct itself in a way that respects the norms of international law.

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• (1130)

TAXATION

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, Rod Bryden, a prominent Liberal and friend of the finance minister, wants to use \$60 million of Canadian taxpayers' money to pull the Ottawa Senators hockey team out of bankruptcy.

Why would the government accept a deal that will cost Canadian taxpayers \$60 million when there are other cash offers on the table to keep the Senators in Ottawa that will not cost Canadian taxpayers a penny?

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, decisions on these matters are made in a professional manner based solely on the law.

Let me reassure the member opposite that there is not, nor has there ever been, any political influence brought to bear on the tax ruling process.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the justice system is a mess and the justice minister is not helping. The courts have consistently failed to protect victims even where maximum allowable sentences are raised.

Under Bill C-20, child predators will still be entitled to house arrest instead of prison. When will the minister give Canadian children the protection they need by establishing minimum sentences for child predators?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our child pornography laws are among the toughest in the world, unquestionably so. We have continued to follow up. For example, Bill C-15A is now in force and deals with Internet luring. We have increased penalties within proposed Bill C-20. I think we

are doing a fine job. We are doing our utmost to protect those children, who are a priority with this government.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, why does the member not speak to police instead of bureaucrats?

Instead of protecting children in Bill C-20, the justice minister has refused to raise the age of consent for adult-child sex from age 14. He has failed to effectively eliminate all defences for child pornography. He has failed to eliminate house arrest for child predators.

Why will the justice minister not do the right thing? Why will he not finally change the law to protect our children?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that the hon. member understand that we are taking many important steps and that all of these steps, when put together, are very effective in dealing with child pornography.

We have brought forward legislation in Bill C-20 that brings only one defence against child pornography. We have taken away the defence of artistic merit. In fact, it is going to be a very effective way of dealing with those who would be child pornographers. We are here to protect our children.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IRAQ

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during his speech, the Prime Minister took a soft stance, particularly in regard to the American Secretary of Defense who now, after having tossed around the idea of using chemical weapons, has not excluded the possibility of using nuclear weapons in Iraq.

Does the government not agree that it is time to tell our friends and neighbours that they are causing this crisis to escalate? Should Canadian diplomacy not be used to tell the Americans to back off?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, said a few days ago and again yesterday, the United States is a country that greatly respects international law. We have complete confidence in its behaviour in this situation.

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are entering into an extremely dangerous period, and the public is concerned. Given the statements made by the Secretary of Defense, there is an expectation that Canada, as a friend and neighbour of the United States, will work to ease the tension.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister understand that Quebecers and Canadians expect their government to condemn the threat to use nuclear weapons?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to add to what I and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have already said. We are confident in the fact that the United States is a democracy, an ally committed to the rules of international law, as is Canada.

Oral Questions

●(1135)

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last week West Vancouver police clocked a street racer at 167 kilometres per hour in traffic. Later, with his ticket in hand, he boasted, and when he was asked about the consequences he just shrugged, saying, "I don't care". Only days before, two street racers were sentenced to house arrest for killing a pedestrian. There is no deterrent.

B.C.'s attorney general is again demanding limits on conditional sentencing. The provinces are amending their traffic laws, so why will the minister not do his part by restricting the use of conditional sentences?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly we are saddened when we see examples of this nature, but the reality is that conditional sentencing over the past six years has been excellent and has worked very well.

What the justice minister has asked the committee on justice and human rights to do is to take examples of this nature and look at the entire matter of conditional sentencing and bring recommendations back to him. The committee is meeting at the present time.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, many violent criminals have been given conditional sentences, like the men who raped a woman and then were let off by a judge who outrageously stated she considered their Haitian heritage.

The former justice minister, now the Minister of Industry, in response to our complaints stated that it was never the intention that conditional sentencing should apply to violent offenders

Given this position, why will the government not amend the Criminal Code to eliminate conditional sentencing for anyone convicted of violent offences, as I have asked for in Bill C-347?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada says that there is denunciation through this process within conditional sentencing.

There is no question that we are in the process of reviewing the matter, but the fact is that it has been quite effective in denouncing this type of activity.

When the committee reports back, we will see what action needs to be taken, if any, with respect to conditional sentencing, but we believe conditional sentencing is working.

* * *

[Translation]

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all week the Minister of Industry has been telling us that he is not interested in the spiralling cost of gas and how it is affecting people.

Is the minister prepared to admit that, if he had wanted to show his concern, he would have already brought this matter to the attention of the Competition Bureau?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the fifth time this week that the Bloc has called for federal interference in an area that falls exclusively under provincial jurisdiction. I do not accept the position of the Bloc. I do not accept their call for all powers to be centralized here in Ottawa. The role of the provincial governments must be respected.

We are responsible for regulating competition, but retail prices are a provincial responsibility.

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister will be able to understand my next question. I am going to ask it for the sixth time, in the hope of getting the right answer.

In October 2000, the price of heating oil in Quebec was about 51¢ a litre. At that time, the government felt that the situation was critical enough to mail out cheques to help people, even some who were in jail or no longer alive, pay for their heating oil.

Now that the price has gone over 60¢ a litre, is the minister going to decide to make a move, thereby proving that the interest shown in October 2000 was not just a ploy to get more votes?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the provinces are the ones responsible for regulating retail pricing.

At the federal level, we are responsible for competition, and the Competition Bureau is constantly monitoring the situation. If the hon. member wants to see some action taken at the provincial level, let him contact his head office.

* * *

[English]

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, here is something else Bill C-20 does not address.

Michael Parfremment was caught selling child pornography over the Internet. Police found a huge collection of child porn on his computer. This pervert got only 14 months of house arrest.

Why does the government continue to stand on the side of pedophiles and perverts, and against the children of our nation?

●(1140)

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the introduction of Bill C-20 was clearly brought forward to deal with matters of this nature.

Specifically, Bill C-15A, which is already in force, is being acted upon and will be used in matters of this kind, for it will not only allow for a better prosecution process, but will allow a judge to remove all of that material from the computer database.

We believe that we are doing the job. We will get it done and make sure that child pornographers do not get a foothold there.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, James Peart was convicted for sexually molesting children over a span of two decades. He was found guilty of 10 counts of assaulting children. His sentence was 20 months of community service.

Bill C-20 fails to address this atrocious denial of justice. Our justice system temporarily grounds abusers who have caused children a lifetime of suffering.

Will the minister commit to preventing those who sexually assault children from being handed conditional or inconsequential sentences?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would take a look at Bill C-20 he will see that we are increasing the penalties and sending a message to the courts as to how serious we believe this matter is.

I think it is very important that we remember that it is not the Minister of Justice who hands out the sentence, it is the judge in the court. We have to send the message. We are sending a message through Bill C-20.

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader.

Some time ago the House leader promised to take action on the Harper third party election spending case. I want to ask him exactly what action the government has taken since that announcement was made?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that earlier this morning the Attorney General of Canada filed an application with the Supreme Court of Canada seeking leave to appeal the decision in question. The government believes that restrictions on third party spending during elections, and full reporting and full transparency are worthwhile objectives in a democracy.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of National Revenue said she could go to jail if she told us what she thought of a hockey team getting \$60 million in taxpayers' money.

I come from Winnipeg where we know firsthand the folly of flushing taxpayers' money down the black hole of professional sports franchises.

My question is for the Minister of Finance, and he will not go to jail for an honest answer here, does he support the tax laws that bail out the Ottawa Senators to the tune of \$60 million? To the Minister of Finance, yes or no?

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat

this again. Decisions on these matters are made in a professional manner based solely on the law. The minister has not now nor will she in the future interfere in any of these processes.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after hearing an answer like that I think Don Cherry would agree we have to do something about concussions in this league too.

We know the Minister of Finance wanted to help the Ottawa Senators. He picked up the phone to call a bank president to bail them out. The bank said no and it looks like the minister said yes. There is still time for common sense to prevail here. We are in sudden death overtime and it is called the budget.

Will the minister tell us today he will put a stop to this corporate giveaway on Tuesday or will he just tell taxpayers to pucker up?

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what part of this the hon. member did not understand, but let me repeat it.

Decisions on these matters are made in a professional manner based solely on the law. Let me reassure the member, there is not, nor has there ever been, any political influence brought to bear on these rulings.

* * *

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I asked a question of the Minister of Transport I got a misleading answer. Perhaps he would like to correct it.

I asked a question about a number of jobs that were advertised by his department. In the ad, under who can apply, it stated only those people with postal codes in the immediate Ottawa area. His answer was that all Canadians are equal no matter where they come from in the country and they will be considered for any position. Both these answers cannot be right.

He cannot say that everyone can apply and the advertisement say that only those in the Ottawa area can apply. Did the minister mislead the House or does the ad mislead the Canadians?

● (1145)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague did not mislead the House. I think the member has to be fair. He knows quite well that hiring in the public service is in the hands of the Public Service Commission, which is an agency that reports directly to Parliament.

We are working with the Public Service Commission right now, and with other parliamentarians, to try to improve the system. We all know that right now there are some pilot projects in the system to help to extend the area of selection. That is why I do not think that his question was very fair to my colleague.

*Oral Questions***PUBLISHING INDUSTRY**

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Canadian Heritage's book publishing industry development program provides financial assistance to publishers for Canadian authored books. Publishers have to recognize the assistance of the federal government by placing the specified text at the front of the books.

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell us why the Government of Canada subsidized the publishing of the best selling Harry Potter series, a series that has sold over 192 million copies worldwide and was written by a British author?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Actually, Mr. Speaker, the Harry Potter series is not eligible for book publishing support under the book publishing system.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in Vancouver, Joel Libin, a 16 year old teenager, was brutally beaten while walking home one evening, leaving him with permanent brain damage. The two youths involved in this attack pleaded guilty, but were granted conditional sentences of only 18 months of house arrest.

Rather than continuing to review the matter, as the parliamentary secretary has stated, why does the government not commit to tabling legislation here and now to ensure criminals do serious time for serious crime?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I previously mentioned, conditional sentencing is one area that we have used over the last six years with some degree of success.

Clearly, it seems that the courts are finding ways to use it successfully. There has been an experience that has indicated that about 17% of people who would otherwise have been incarcerated are effectively dealt with through this process.

We are concerned about the victims, but in fact, we have to look at the entire program. The committee is now doing so and we await its report.

Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): What nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Here is another one that Bill C-20 does not cover.

A Calgary man was convicted of manslaughter after killing his infant daughter by snapping her spine. He received a conditional sentence of house arrest.

Will the minister listen to Canadians and introduce legislation that would ensure minimum jail sentences be imposed on people who commit such heinous crimes? Is it possible he can do that?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have clearly said today in the House, conditional sentencing serves a very good purpose within our judicial system.

There are exceptional cases. There are cases that need to be attended to and looked at. The minister has raised this with the justice committee. In fact, the standing committee is looking at that matter now and will bring a report to the House. Then we will do a proper assessment as to whether there should be changes.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, having tried three years ago to help professional hockey teams and the Senators, and having recently called the president of the CIBC, now the Deputy Prime Minister is prepared to take \$60 million from taxpayers' pockets to keep the team in Ottawa, at all cost.

Does the minister not understand that taxpayers do not want the government to give money to a professional hockey team whose most obscure player earns more than the Prime Minister of Canada?

• (1150)

[English]

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a preposterous accusation.

Just to make things clear I will repeat this one more time. Decisions on these matters are made in a professional manner. The government does not interfere in this process.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone will take issue with my next question.

The Minister of Finance is trying to do indirectly what he cannot do directly. Can the Minister of Finance assure us that there is no way our money will be used to save a professional hockey team whose players are millionaires?

[English]

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not a debate. This is the time for questions and answers and I have just answered the question.

* * *

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Roger Williams was convicted of possessing over 300 images of child pornography. His sentence? Just two years probation and 100 hours community service.

Bill C-20 does not address this. Higher maximum sentences will not help as long as pornographers continue to receive sentences of house arrest and community service.

When will the minister quit defending these criminals and introduce legislation to ensure that child pornographers at least receive a minimum jail sentence?

Oral Questions

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working very diligently with respect to the matter of child pornography within this country.

We have some of the toughest child pornography laws in the world. The fact is that we have more legislation before the House in Bill C-20, again increasing penalties and providing more limitations on defences against those who would be involved in child pornography. The reality is the government is working hard to protect its children and it will continue to do so.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance): It is working hard in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker.

This week, Air India bomber, Inderjit Singh Reyat, was awarded a five year sentence. He is eligible for parole in 10 months. For the death of 329 people, he will serve time in a federal facility equipped with a billiard table, tennis court, jogging path and a golf course, which the Solicitor General says is not a club fed.

It has taken 18 years to bring this murderer to justice. Is it any wonder Canadians have lost confidence in the justice system?

When will the government ensure that criminals face serious consequences for serious crimes?

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite is referring to some of the things that have been said in the press but the fact is that Correctional Service Canada will do an assessment on this individual regardless of what the judges ruled on this. It will do an assessment of this individual and will place him where it sees fit based on that assessment.

* * *

BILL C-10

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice.

The House may be called upon to concur or reject Senate amendments to Bill C-10, the cruelty to animals and firearms bill.

Could the parliamentary secretary please explain to the House what the advantages would be to Canadians for accepting the Senate amendments to Bill C-10 rather than having them rejected?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the process of gun control, it is very important that we start to reduce the costs. Bill C-10A is an excellent way of starting that process.

When dealing with Bill C-10A, it also deals with efficiencies and the efficiencies are simplifying the licensing process in terms of renewals, staggering renewals, more use of the Internet, establishing pre-clearance processes for those who want to come over to this country to use our outfitters and hunting establishments, and streamlining transfers from one to another. It is an excellent—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, a 58 year old man was found guilty of raping a young girl and was sentenced to two years of house arrest. He is allowed to leave his house and go to work even though the crime that he committed was done while he was at work. Bill C-20 does not address this.

Will the minister commit to eliminating conditional sentencing for criminals convicted of violent sexual offences?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all types of criminal offences over the course of time are reviewed and the sentencing that is applicable to them is reviewed.

As I have mentioned earlier in the House, on conditional sentencing, the matter has been referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. It is conducting a full and complete review and will report to the minister. We will see if any assessments or revisions are needed at that point.

* * *

● (1155)

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it goes on and on. A Moncton man was convicted of possession of child pornography and trading child porn on the Internet. Current legislation has no minimum standards so, no surprise, he was handed a six month conditional sentence. He goes home to his hard drive.

The new child porn bill, Bill C-20, does not provide minimum sentencing for these crimes.

Will the minister commit today to amend Bill C-20 to require minimum jail sentences for child pornographers?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that within our justice system we like to have the judges, who understand and know all the facts and circumstances of the case, weigh those in each individual case.

One of the problems with minimum sentencing is that many times there are unintended consequences. We do not wish to go there unless it is absolutely necessary. All the law reform commissions have recommended that we should not have much in the way of minimum sentencing and therefore we try to minimize them.

We are waiting for the committee to make its decision and bring forward its report. The minister will assess it and see where he may go.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBERS

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Employment Insurance Act requires that claimants prove their citizenship and identity to obtain a social insurance number.

The department only requires one document as proof, which goes against what the Auditor General has said, that two documents are required to meet the requirements of the act.

When is the minister going to give directives to officials to verify the citizenship and identity of social insurance number applicants diligently, before issuing the cards?

Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the department is making improvements to the registry and we have tightened up the requirements for proving identity.

As a result, since August 1, 2002, we accept baptismal certificates as identification for issuing a social insurance number and we only accept original documents as proof of identity for social insurance number applications.

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[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the valentines for vets program has been ongoing now for seven years.

Would the Minister of Veterans Affairs indicate to the House what the response has been this year and what this program actually means to our veterans?

Hon. Rey Pagtakhan (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the valentines for vets program is one more special way of remembering our veterans. It speaks to the respect and admiration we have for them, for their gifts of freedom, equality and justice.

I thank the thousands of school children and other Canadians across the country for sending their valentines, and also the staff at veterans affairs for distributing them to veterans nationwide.

The response this year is some 3,500 received. One veteran said "It gave me a great feeling". Indeed, this program means so much to our veterans.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in 1999 Scott Carew shook his infant daughter to the point where she sustained extensive brain damage. She will never advance past the mental and physical age of a five month old.

What was his punishment for destroying his daughter's life? Only two years of house arrest and hours of community service.

Bill C-20 does not address this. Will the minister introduce legislation to guarantee that conditional sentencing will no longer be used in cases of such violent crimes?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the examples that are being presented, our heart has to go out to the victims in those cases.

However the overall reality is that we must look at the system in its entirety. We are doing that at the present time through the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We will await its report and we will see if it recommends any changes to the existing legislation.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian General Standards Board is currently having discussions about changing the designation "genetically modified organism". The board would rather use the designation "genetic engineering product" or "product obtained through genetic engineering".

Does the federal government want, through this change, to show its unwillingness to properly inform consumers by using such expressions and to keep them in the dark as to where GMOs come from by changing the wording of the designation?

● (1200)

Mr. Claude Duplain (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, discussions are under way in various committees about the labelling of genetically modified products. Everyone is talking about it. It is under consideration. I will be happy to get back to the hon. member later, with better information than I can provide him with today.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

In the Prime Minister's speech in Chicago last night, he said that going through the United Nations adds legitimacy to the use of force in Iraq. Does it also mean that not going through the United Nations, to use force in Iraq would make the endeavour illegitimate?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we need to be careful here. It is important to recognize that the United Nations has already passed a very strong resolution with respect to the situation in Iraq which provides for serious consequences.

While we take the time to review Mr. Blix's report, it will be important to look at it in the context of the existing resolution 1441, as well as any future resolution.

JUSTICE

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is aware of the Patrick Kelly case. A tremendous body of evidence has been presented to the minister, evidence that indicates Mr. Kelly was wrongfully convicted of first degree murder.

He has been incarcerated now for almost 20 years. The request to have the case referred to the Supreme Court of Canada was supported by Project Innocence of the Osgoode Law School and by the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted.

The minister has had the request for two years. When will the minister refer the case to the Supreme Court of Canada?

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this particular instance we do have a very effective way of dealing with wrongful convictions but it does take time and a great deal of investigation to properly bring a case up to the point where a minister can make a decision.

The minister obviously is seized of the matter and I can make no further comment.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to reserve my right to raise a question of privilege.

In question period yesterday, the acting Prime Minister said that the government had no discernable information that Canada was the focus of a potential terrorist attack aimed at politicians, among others, yet, for several hours before that answer, the office of his colleague, the Minister of Industry, was quarantined by an anthrax threat.

I want to investigate whether the acting Prime Minister knew that when he answered, which would raise a prima facie question of privilege in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has taken note of the matter raised by the right hon. member for Calgary Centre.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 13 petitions.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-395, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (setting premium rate to control surplus in Employment Insurance Account).

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to introduce my private member's bill to amend the Employment Insurance Act to control surplus in the employment insurance account.

The amendments in this bill would require the commission to set a premium rate each year that would keep the surplus of the EI account between established upper and lower limits resulting from appropriate premium rate setting.

The facts are now well known. The accumulated surplus of the EI account increased to \$40 billion as of March 31, 2002; \$25 billion over the chief actuary of HRDC's recommendation of \$15 billion to operate the program. The \$4 billion EI surplus gained in 2001-02 constitutes nearly half the federal surplus of that year.

I understand through the media that the Minister of Finance is making some determination to change this in his budget. I truly hope this is the case and that my bill may be of assistance to him in that regard.

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

* * *

● (1205)

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first is signed by 609 residents of the GTA who are concerned about the encroachment of development on city conservation. They ask Parliament to have the federal government enact legislation to develop federal green spaces within our cities.

CANADA POST

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from a variety of petitioners who are concerned that the Canada Post Corporation Act prohibits rural route mail couriers from having collective bargaining rights. They call upon Parliament to repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

CANADIAN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COLLEGE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of the people of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, particularly from Petawawa and Pembroke, asking that Parliament recognize that the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College is essential to training Canadians for emergency situations, that the facility should stay in Arnprior and that the government should upgrade the facilities in order to provide the necessary training to Canadians, especially in these days of uncertainty and threat.

CANADA POST

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present.

Routine Proceedings

Pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to table two petitions today expressing concern that rural route mail couriers often earn less than minimum wages and cannot bargain collectively to improve their wages.

The petitioners therefore calls upon Parliament to repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act. The two petitions contain 55 signatures of Canadians from Winnipeg, as well as from Ste. Anne, Richer and Steinbach in my riding of Provencher.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to table three petitions today calling upon Parliament to protect the rights of Canadians to be free to share their religious beliefs without fear of prosecution.

The petition calls specific attention to sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code, which a bill currently before the justice committee, Bill C-250, seeks to amend.

The three petitions contain a number of signatures of Canadians from British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.

MARRIAGE ACT

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today calling upon Parliament to protect the laws regarding the institution of marriage so that there can be no change in the Canadian legal definition of marriage.

The petition contains signatures from residents of Ontario, mainly from the city of Brampton.

IRAQ

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents of Okanagan—Shuswap, I have a petition calling upon Parliament to affirm its support of Canada's continued resistance to U.S. pressure to join in a pre-emptive war on Iraq.

The petitioners insist that only the United Nations Security Council has the authority to decide whether Iraq is in compliance with Security Council resolution 1441.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, these 604 petitioners remind us that Canadians support ethical stem cell research, which has already shown encouraging potential to provide cures and therapies for diseases like Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injury.

They also remind us that non-embryonic stem cells, which are known as adult stem cells, have shown significant research progress, without the immune rejection and also the ethical problems associated with embryonic stem cells.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to focus its legislative agenda and support on adult stem cell research to find the cures and therapies necessary to treat the illnesses and diseases of suffering Canadians.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from several thousand people across Canada. The petitioners say that the courts have not applied the current child pornography law in a way which makes it clear that the exploitation of children will always be met with swift punishment.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 115 and 131.

[Text]

Question No. 115—**Mr. Jason Kenney:**

Why did the Royal Canadian Mint remove the traditional title "D.G. Regina" from the obverse of the 2002 10-cent piece, and is it the intention of the Mint to remove said title from other coins in the future?

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): The title DG Regina does appear on the 2002 10-cent coin.

In 2001, the Royal Canadian Mint temporarily changed the design of the 10-cent coin to celebrate the International Year of Volunteers. The Latin phrase, D.G. Regina, which is traditionally featured on all Canadian circulation coins, was omitted to accommodate the special 2001 commemorative coin whose design required additional art space. Commemorative circulation coins create important benefits by contributing to the overall success of the event being celebrated as well as generating additional seigniorage, or profit, for the government. In this case, the Year of Volunteer coin generated for the government approximately \$9 million in seigniorage.

Both the traditional Bluenose design and the Latin phrase were returned to the coin in January 2002

Question No. 131—**Mr. David Anderson:**

For each year from 1993 to 2001, what was the total amount billed to the government and its agencies by Angus Reid Group Inc. Research Associates?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): See reply to Question No. 38, tabled December 9, 2002.

* * *

● (1210)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 37 could be made an order for return, the return would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

[Text]

Question No. 37—**Mr. James Rajotte:**

Since 1993, what grants, contributions, contracts and/or loan guarantees made either through a crown corporation, department, and/or agency of the government were received by the holdings of the “blind trust” of the former Minister of Finance specifying the source and dollar amount, date made, reason(s) for providing the funding, and present status of the grant, contribution, and /or loan guarantee (whether repaid, partially repaid, or unpaid—including the value of the repayment—in the case of contracts please specify whether the contract is fulfilled, whether it was tendered and any reason for limiting the tender)?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-25, an act to modernize employment and labour relations in the public service and to amend the Financial Administration Act and the Canadian Centre for Management Development Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, before question period, I was outlining how the planned restrictions on public employees getting involved in politics is too restrictive. I am encouraged however because the minister told me during the break that she will have a second look at this section of the bill.

Throughout public service various oaths are taken. In Bill C-25 it has been observed that the oaths described do not refer to the Queen or to God. I view the more modern oaths for employee loyalty and non-disclosure for privacy as a contractual concept between employee and employer. There was some concern in the media about an apparent change in the oaths. An example is written in part 4, clause 54 of the bill.

It is my view that the oath is acceptable and reflects the recognition of standards for a modern business culture. The oath reflects a condition of employment that is contractual between the employee and the employer. The oath is job specific and is unrelated to the status of Parliament, the Queen or religion.

The Canadian Centre for Management Development Act will be renamed the Canada school of public service act. The purpose is to integrate learning activities in the public service. Training and Development Canada, which is currently administered by the PSC, and the Canadian Centre for Management Development will be amalgamated into a new institution of learning called the Canada school of public service.

Through this action it is hoped that the government will be mindful of the Justice Institute of British Columbia and its experience in public service training for many disciplines, the cross system synergies that can be found and also comprehend the capacity to market the school around the world.

It is hoped that this new federal school will have a broad mandate and that any permanent employee can apply for the use of its services. It is hoped that the school's mandate will be delivered under its auspices across the country as close as possible to where federal employees work and reside.

It is also hoped that partnerships will be strengthened with various universities, especially those with schools of public administration like the University of Victoria for example. The possibilities are limitless as Canada can sell its expertise around the world. With an outward attitude for participation rather than the Canadian tendency to isolate ourselves from world trouble, we could become the world's standard bearer to bring civil society and trusted public institutions to emerging democracies.

I also want to talk about the duty of public employees to observe and report wrongdoing, and having some protection so they do not bear retaliation for speaking up. The minister provided me with a long memo about “the policy on the internal disclosure of information concerning wrongdoing in the workplace”, which became effective in November 2001. Despite wide dissemination, I wonder how many public employees are aware of this system-wide policy. I doubt that many generally know of it. The policy is to allow employees to bring forward information concerning wrongdoing and to ensure that they are treated fairly and are protected from reprisal when they do so in a manner consistent with the policy.

I say to the minister that a long memo and attempts to have it circulated are not good enough. The memo could be rescinded tomorrow. The basic policy needs to be noted in the statute, something to the effect that Treasury Board will establish, observe and report wrongdoing policy for the public service and that the exercise of that policy in good faith will protect employees from activity that could be interpreted as reprisal. It need not be a long section. However the memo needs to have a basis in the statute in law, and the actual details would then form part of the volumes that Treasury Board produces for conduct.

We on this side of the House observe that the government has a big problem of morale in the public service. Many are stressed out and many are very cynical about anything changing for the better. The top levels want to leave and there may be a wave of retirements coming. Employees have seen many projects like universal classification, reorganization schemes and pronouncements by governments, come and go. Therefore they may be looking at this bill as just another one of those.

● (1215)

The data shows that worker satisfaction is declining. I can certainly tell the minister that consumer satisfaction with services from federal agencies is certainly declining.

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Let me be specific on that one for a minute. All of what we do here in this place is for the country. We work for the citizens and they pay all the bills. When we start to legislate and reorganize the public service, we have to talk about the public for whom all of this is supposed to be.

Government likes to change things from the top downwards. We think of a Lee Iacocca coming in and saving the basket case of Chrysler Corporation, or the new chief executive officer at IBM coming in to save old blue, driving change from the top with a new vision, a new leader, new ways of doing things. However, when we make such efforts, where do we put in the equation for the customer, the consumer, the taxpayer, the driving from the bottom up approach?

Being a grassroots reformer type of person, I am always looking at the grassroots perspective. Of course, being a politician I must always assess where the community opinion is. Understanding that in the public service we do not have real market forces, one has to assess the corrective power of consumers in a different way. One cannot go to a different store window and say, "Well, because we are not getting service from the immigration department, we will just go to some other window and get immigration service there".

We must look at customer satisfaction to assess our accomplishments for the public service. For example, if an average Canadian citizen goes abroad and marries someone, it may take up to three years to get landed immigrant status for a basic no problem file. The newlyweds could be separated for years. This is actually happening in Canada right now. That low standard of performance is just absolutely ridiculous.

The next example concerns the CCRA. We will all be filing out income tax forms soon and they are unreasonably complicated. When we see the distress of senior citizens trying to cope with these forms, we wonder who is serving whom. We can go down the list. For instance, I was at a town hall meeting with war veterans, seniors trying to communicate and get benefits due to them. With the initiative of government online and the emergence of automated call centres, the government is actually retreating from and disappearing from the clients that it is supposed to serve.

In so many ways the system is completely backwards, as the taxpayer has to go to unusual lengths to accommodate the bureaucracy, when it should be the other way around where the system has a duty to accommodate and also effectively communicate with those it is supposed to serve.

How do we give the best value for dollar, for the money that has been taken from voters? Will they get a passport when they need it in a timely manner? Will they be protected from terrorists who come here as bogus refugees? Is our Canada pension plan threatened by unwise plays and mounting losses on the stock market? Will a soldier receive extra help when he needs it when he gets home? Does our democracy work? These are public service employee issues.

I suggest the bill is just a small start at the beginning of a long process to get us out of a bad state. The collaboration the minister talks about with the unions can begin right here, right now in the House, by allowing the bill to be continued to be built by the pragmatic expertise and goodwill in the chamber.

She may defend the House against those vested interests deep in the Treasury Board, in the PCO, in the PMO who are saying why things cannot be done and why the opposition cannot be trusted for having sound judgment or having a concept of the bigger picture.

I commend the minister for her enterprise. I commit that we on the official opposition side will be constructive, for the last thing we desire is to play politics with the lives of public employees, for we all desire that Canada become the very best.

My House leader has asked me, because of manoeuvres on the other side related to private members' business, that all legislation will have an amendment.

● (1220)

Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-25, an act to modernize employment and labour relations in the public service and to amend the Financial Administration Act and the Canadian Centre for Management Development Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be not now read a second time but that the order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not really understand my hon. colleague's motion, but I imagine that we must try to be constructive in our work and I fully intend to be.

First, I would like to thank all public servants. I think that today's bill is what they have been waiting 35 years for. It is there to protect them and help them develop so that the system functions better.

We know how much everyone here depends on the public service. They provide services we need and use regularly, day in and day out. We know the vision and efficiency they bring to their job. Today, I would like to pay tribute to them because they all deserve it.

That said, I must admit that I have only glanced at the bill because I received a copy of it just yesterday. It is not the minister's fault, on the contrary. Rather, my party asked me to speak because I am familiar with the Canada Labour Code. I was asked to take this on, and I was pleased to accept.

I accepted because I believe that, in the House, we have the tools we need to advance issues such as the public service. It is not a simple matter. The federal public service is very complicated. We know how big Quebec's public service is, but it is not, of course, as cumbersome as Canada's.

Bringing about change and trying to please everyone is almost impossible. It is a bit like when we amended the framework legislation on the environment, an experience I will never forget. We had the environmental groups on one side, industry on the other and, in the middle, all the other stakeholders. It is clear that you cannot please all of the people all of the time, but it is possible to agree on some things.

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I would like, at this point, to address a comment to the Treasury Board president. I hope, and I would like an assurance of this, that in committee, we will actually be able to hear all the witnesses who want to come before us, as well as all the unions. The unions work with the employees, represent them and very frequently receive grievances.

I would like for the committee to be able to hear all the witnesses, to take the time to really work on this bill to ensure that it is effective not only for the next few years, but for a very long time.

However, and I will be speaking about this, I hope that the review period will be much less than 35 years. This does not make sense.

As we consider the bill and propose amendments, I hope that we will focus on this, and I also hope that the government will not do anything behind our backs. Let me explain.

Last year, we reviewed the Employment Equity Act. Perhaps the President of the Treasury Board is not aware of this, but while the committee was reviewing the legislation, Treasury Board decided to shut down the enabling resource centre for persons with disabilities. This was an essential service. It was not a costly operation; its annual budget was \$566,000.

But this step was taken just as we were reviewing the Employment Equity Act and hearing witnesses, including people with disabilities, who told us that the centre was extremely useful and of critical importance. In fact, we asked the minister to appear before the committee, but I believe it was not possible. What I am saying today may be news to the minister.

I strongly believe in the work of committees, because I think there are responsible people there who do their research. There are members who really want to get things done. But, while we are reviewing something of great importance, the government should not be making changes behind our backs. I am making this comment in the hope that it will be a lesson and that this sort of thing will not happen again.

• (1225)

I want to be clear on this. I have made my point. The enabling resource centre for persons with disabilities in the workplace is a centre that provides services to people with disabilities who join the various departments. These departments do not necessarily have what is required to allow these people with special needs to do their job. So, we are talking about a very important service that has not yet been reinstated.

This is a message for the President of the Treasury Board, if she takes a particular interest in this issue. We had been told that the departments were able to provide this service, but this is not true. It is not the case for every department. There are only three departments across the country that can provide these services, which are rather important.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Gouk: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

This is a very important debate. The minister is listening attentively and I believe that you should seek to ensure that there is a quorum present in the House.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reed): There is a quorum. Resuming debate.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Guay: Mr. Speaker, whenever we start talking about something important, we get cut off.

So, back to the bill. I believe that when we study a bill we also have the opportunity to pass on certain messages. I do not see the problem with the Canadian Alliance, but we all have our own temperaments and characters.

I would like to get to the substance of the bill and establish some background. After all, it is a very large bill. You have seen how many pages it has and it affects many other Canadian statutes. We have to look at what impact this will have.

Bill C-25, the Public Service Modernization Act—as I said earlier—would replace the former bill that dates back 35 years. The current policy became obsolete a very long time ago and it was high time to make the appropriate changes.

This bill is the result of numerous reports and studies, more than thirty in total. Extensive background work was done to determine the need to renew how recruitment and staffing are handled in the public service.

These reports and studies all found that there has to be a change in culture in the public service. This is the 21st century, and we have to modernize and make dramatic changes because things certainly are not what they were 35 years ago.

The President of the Treasury Board submitted her bill to the House on February 6, 2003. The objectives of this bill are to add the concept of merit, implement a more flexible staffing system, improve labour-management relations, and incorporate learning and development activities for employees in the public service.

With this bill, the Treasury Board believes it will be able to handle the constant reduction in the work force and the increased competition in the labour market. It is clear that the public service has to be competitive too. People should be just as productive as in the private sector. We agree with this point of view.

The government also intends to deal with the demographic problem in the public service. With this bill, it thinks it will be able to resolve the shortcomings relating to age and representativeness. It is obvious that the population is greying, in all of Canada and in Quebec, and this is something we have to face up to. People may retire far later than they used to, they may keep working longer. People are living longer than they used to, so all these situations have to be adapted to. That is what this bill is attempting to do.

Then there is the matter of the skills shortage. The government identifies this as being critical. The final intent of this bill is to improve the public's perception of the public service, and this is very important. Often people have a very negative perception of the public service, and this must be turned around.

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No one is expecting miracles, of course. There will be an attempt to find solutions that will work in the medium and long term. That will be the goal. The cultural change will have to focus particularly on the last aspect I mentioned.

This is a pretty thick bill, one that is imposing and important, since its intent is to bring about change not only to the technical aspects of the administration of the public service, but also the entire approach to it, hence the review and transformation of the culture of the public service. The approach taken must be structured and painstaking, if real changes are to be made, ones with real impact.

The purpose of the analysis that follows is to consider all the pros and cons of each provision according to its outcome.

As I have said, we are in favour of the bill in principle. It is, however, obvious that we shall attempt to bring in some major changes to correct what we consider its shortcomings. There are some elements we feel are not solid enough and might benefit from a some additions and clarifications.

● (1230)

As I said, our comments are meant as constructive criticism. I hope they will be well received in committee. I hope that my colleagues from all of the parties will provide constructive criticism on this matter.

There are flaws, including the issue of psychological and sexual harassment. This morning, an expert from the CSN, who conducted a study on this issue, sent me the results of a survey recently released indicating that 21% of employees in Canada's public service have said that they have been subject to harassment. That is a lot of people. I know the minister is very sensitive to this issue.

We should be more specific about this in the bill, because it is not specific enough right now. That is what representatives of certain unions are saying. This should be looked at and changes should be made to this effect.

Part 1 of the bill deals with the Public Service Staff Relations Act. The main purpose of this first part is to improve management-union relations, by establishing ongoing dialogue. In order to do so, the bill provides for better mediation to improve collective bargaining. The goal is to eliminate, or at least reduce, barriers to collective bargaining.

Finally, the bill establishes parameters to better manage conflict. Obviously, conflict management is not easy. It requires tools. There will now be experts to help. There are people who specialize in this area. It is important to know how to use their services wisely. The bill contains good provisions in this regard.

Existing provisions are maintained. The bill includes a description of management rights, the choice of process for dispute resolution and the administration of the act by an independent organization.

Part 1 is divided into 14 sections. It is fairly lengthy. The first section deals with labour relations. It deals with employee freedoms, but not with protecting employees in the case of whistle blowers.

We plan to propose an amendment to this effect. It is very important to protect employees who blow the whistle, and the bill does not contain such protection.

It seems unconscionable to us that public servants would only be protected by an internal policy. There needs to be real protection and we will present an amendment to this effect.

The 14 sections in part 1 deal with the workplace consultation committee and the Public Service Labour Relations Board, among others. Topics such as bargaining, essential services and strike votes are discussed.

Part 2 deals with grievances. Then, occupational health and safety is addressed. The last part contains general provisions. I am trying to outline, for the benefit of those of my constituents who are listening, how the bill is structured. I am also doing so for those who have an interest in the matter and will probably want to appear before the committee.

Division 3 in part 1 deals with consultation committees and co-development of workplace improvements. Each department will now be required to establish a labour-management consultation committee. This is great news. Very often, conflicts are best resolved at that level, and much quicker as well.

These committees will be established by the deputy head in consultation with the bargaining agents, and will provide a forum where all labour relations issues can be discussed. There is nothing more important than to listen to the employees. They are the ones doing the work, and using the equipment, on a day-to-day basis, eight hours a day. It is important to listen to them and to consult them. This way, simple solutions can often be found to complex problems which, if left to worsen, could end up in employees leaving. There are employees getting ill and problematic situations getting worse. I find this opportunity provided for in the bill most interesting.

The deputy head and the bargaining agents, in consultation, will have the power to make changes to improve the workplace in the context of actions by the National Joint Council or any other appropriate forum.

● (1235)

The bill defines this committee as the arena for all consultation between the parties on workplace issues and their participation in the identification of problems in the workplace and the development of solutions, with a view to adopting the appropriate solutions.

The Public Service Staff Relations Board's mandate is to provide arbitration services and mediation services. Through mediation, the parties could receive advice from a mediator during collective bargaining or grievance settlements.

We know that often it is important to have mediators who are objective, but who can make a rather significant contribution. This usually helps to resolve the conflict much sooner or to complete the negotiation much faster, which means agreements are also signed much sooner.

The Board's mandate is also to provide compensation analysis and research services.

Let us move on to bargaining rights and the dispute resolution system. The bill upholds the current dispute resolution system. There will be some exclusions. Management positions or positions of trust are part of these exclusions, except with regard to Department of Justice lawyers.

We will have to determine in committee whether people want to make improvements or changes to this. We will consult with union and labour groups and review the information they provide.

There are essential services. The government defines essential services as anything that is necessary for public safety. The employer has the exclusive right to determine the level at which an essential service is to be provided, the extent to which and the frequency with which the service is to be provided. Once the level is established, there will be an agreement on the essential services, specifying the types and number of positions required to provide said services. In an emergency, the agreement will be suspended or modified. The right to strike takes effect only 30 days after the agreement has been reached.

There is also arbitration. The mandate of the arbitration boards will be to take into account the needs related to the positions, namely to attract people with the necessary skills, offer compensation similar to comparable positions in the private sector, while maintaining the appropriate classification level.

Paragraph 148 (e) stipulates that:

the arbitration board must take into account the following factors, in addition to any other factors that it considers relevant:

(e) the state of the Canadian economy and the Government of Canada's fiscal circumstances.

Conciliation is also an extremely important part of the bill. This will be dealt with on an ad hoc basis. Board members will be appointed by the minister from a list provided by the employer and the bargaining agents. Both parties will select the names on the list.

The Public Service Labour Relations Board and the arbitration board will use the same evaluation factors: individuals with the necessary skills and a rate of pay comparable to private sector rates for the appropriate classification.

I have gone over part I in detail. Part II of the bill deals with grievances.

From now on, deputy heads must have mechanisms for resolving disputes. These mechanisms remain, however, informal ones, and employees must be informed of them.

Employees will be able to pursue disputes relating to discrimination, except in relation to pay equity. Employees can also submit grievances concerning the interpretation of the Canadian Human Rights Act. If a dispute arises, the Canadian Human Rights Commission must be notified and will have full discretion to make representations.

I see that the clock is ticking. I will not read you the whole thing, but this is an extremely important part of the bill.

Part III concerns occupational health and safety, which comes under part II of the Canada Labour Code. This code was revised a few years ago. Since work on reforming this legislation has been

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going on for many years, provisions relating to occupational health and safety legislation have been significantly updated and improved.

Part IV contains general provisions. It is now illegal to disclose notes or draft orders by members of the board, adjudicators, mediators, or public interest commissions, or by any individual participating in complaint resolution. This principle has its corollary in the enforcement of mediation agreements in Quebec.

● (1240)

Finally, there will be a review after seven years.

I will not be able to finish reading my document, because my time is getting short, and I know that my colleagues in the NDP and Conservative Party also want to have a chance to speak. We will have an opportunity to discuss this in committee, anyway.

I wanted to touch on the weaknesses of the bill, because there is one in particular that I consider important. Harassment is a very important point. I have just heard from a CSN member who will be appearing as a witness on behalf of that union on this issue.

A survey of 95,000 public servants—a lot of people—last December reported that one public servant in five had been the victim of harassment in the workplace. Yet there is nothing in this bill to protect public servants from the harassment reported by so many of them.

The minister needs to ensure that there is a very precise definition of harassment. Harassment is not necessarily sexual, it can also be psychological, and this is harder to detect in a company. So imagine how much harder it is to detect in a public service of 95,000 people. Specialists would be required.

When a person is a victim of harassment, he or she does not dare to speak up. The bill needs to provide the necessary tools for doing so. It will perhaps make it possible for resource persons to be made available to provide services to workers who feel they are victims of psychological or sexual harassment.

It is important to point out that, if this problem—which is said to affect 21% of the public service—can be solved, the atmosphere in the workplace will be far more satisfactory. When we feel there is no pressure at work, it is far more pleasant to perform our duties to the best of our abilities.

Protection of whistle blowers is also lacking, as I have already said. The new bill has no provision to protect whistle blowers, who alert the media to the perceived misconduct of their superiors.

With respect to the protection of the law, an independent integrity commissioner would be appointed to deal with these situations. But that is not enough, and we will be putting amendments forward.

Then there is the whole matter of recruiting and staffing. Staffing and the merit principle are at the heart of the reform in Bill C-25. Hiring will be made on the basis of merit, a notion we wish to expand, to speed up the hiring process. At present, it can take months, even years, each candidate having to be assessed and ranked according to standards set by jurisprudence.

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The minister wants to give managers greater leeway. Hiring time will be shortened, but we are wondering at what cost. The employees will have to make sure not only that they meet the position requirements, as they are currently required to, but also that they are on the good side of the boss under whom the position falls, or else they will no longer even be evaluated.

There is therefore the whole issue surrounding recruiting and staffing in which some balance should perhaps be sought, within limits. I realize that the process so far has proven complex and time consuming. But could a middle ground not be found? This is something we have a bit of a problem with.

There is also the whole bilingualism issue. Often, in filling positions, senior officials are hired who are not bilingual, but who undertake to learn the other language. Very often, what happens is that they do not learn that language. It is very important that the bill provide for that, that very strict rules be set to ensure that those hired to fill senior official positions are already bilingual, or are at least proficient in the other official language and prepared to develop their proficiency. People should not be hired, who promise to learn the language but end up never doing it.

There have been many reactions to this bill. These will be discussed in committee. That is the appropriate forum. Some, like Ms. Turmel, from the public service alliance, gave it a cold reception. However, through our work on the committee to try and improve the bill, solutions and common grounds will be found. As I said earlier, we will support and work in close cooperation with the committee. I hope that we will have the minister's full support.

I would like to add one last thing regarding the bill. It is something I was very pleased to see, not only as a member of the Bloc Québécois, but as an open-minded person. Section 54, on page 133, changes the oaths or solemn affirmations. They are being changed to make them more acceptable to people of all faiths.

When a person accepts a job, he or she has to take an oath or make a solemn affirmation. I agree with the fact that is required. However, swearing something to God serves no purpose if a person does not believe in God. The bill is now sensitive to this issue. I applaud the minister for this. That is what I call modernization.

We will be working hard with the committee. I would like to congratulate the minister for the work that has been put into this. I hope there will also be a procedure, some sort of mechanism to improve the act more than once every 35 years. I hope that maybe there could be a secretariat named to the public service, as we have in Quebec. This would allow for regular updates of the legislation to ensure that we are not operating under obsolete rules, forcing us to do twice the amount of work to improve an act that amends all sorts of other legislation.

So, I hope there will be some openness to these ideas. I would again like to thank the minister for these improvements.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say a few words on Bill C-25, the public service modernization act.

The bill is a good first attempt at overhauling the way the public service functions. By the government's own admission over the past few decades the public service has remained structurally and functionally a top down organization. It is somewhat stiff in its functioning, a lumbering giant that often requires a department to go through a maze of several months of paperwork and meetings in order to hire an ordinary file clerk.

Bill C-25 provides for more flexibility in staffing and in managing people. Managers, within certain limits, will have more power over hiring and who they hire, just like out in the real world. Applicants who feel they have been shortchanged in the staffing process will be given access to redress under the public service staffing tribunal.

The bill also stresses the need for a cooperative approach to labour-management relations. The intent is to make employees part and parcel of the process of running the workplace. Nobody really knows how to do a job like those who do it every day. If the intent of the bill holds true, we should have happier federal workplaces.

The bill provides for the overhaul and consolidation of the staff training and development process of the federal public service. It more clearly delineates the role of key players in the human resources area, in Treasury Board, the Public Service Commission and the various deputy ministers and their equivalents.

Many of the changes are long overdue improvements to the nation's public service. If carried out properly they could lead to a much happier, less strike prone and more productive public service.

Over the past 20 years the nature of work has changed. Knowledge simply flows in the computer age. We all know more and we all seem to do more. Whoever said computers would make life easier? Computers are fast and because of their importance in our lives, the pace of life has actually speeded up; it has become more efficient maybe, but it has definitely speeded up. The public service has not kept pace with the absolutely frantic pace of the private sector in the modern world.

Many public servants today are about to retire. They are baby boomers. We are told that 7,000 new people are needed every year just to keep pace with the retirements. A hiring process that lingers on for months often sees the best and brightest applicants scooped up by the private sector. When we add to that a looming shortage of skilled workers in all sectors as the baby boomers move on, the public service will be very hard pressed to come up with the good workers it will need. If there is a criticism of the government, it is that it has taken this long to act on the reality of the looming skills shortage in all sectors of the economy.

As for the bill, it appears to be very thorough and detailed indeed. The devil is in the details as they say. I am sure that as we speak, lawyers and labour leaders are combing through the fine print. If there are major problems, I am sure we will be hearing from the various stakeholders in the system. No doubt there will be a more detailed analysis of the bill done in committee.

It is important that managers have a greater say in the hiring process. After all, the people being hired are people they will have to work with every single day. As an employee and an employer, I have always seen the wisdom in having a harmonious productive workplace.

I recently read an article, and I am sure I was not the only one as it was quite a public article, that referred to a study on the issue of who did the best hiring, the manager or the technocrat from the human resources section. The study found that while both entities could assess applicants on their level of technical competence, the manager did a much better job of picking an employee who also fit into the organization. Simply put, I guess personality does count and it counts a great deal.

This extra power on the part of managers has to be matched with a strong grievance procedure. Managers have to be required to account for their decisions on hiring. Hiring people because of political pressure is forbidden. Hiring friends who do not meet the basic qualifications is not allowed. The government, as we are all aware, has taken care of a lot of its political friends, so let us not allow the system to get into bureaucratic patronage as well. If such people do apply and do win a post, there must be a process for redress. Part 5 outlines the process. Again, on this front, the devil is in the details and in the importance the government actually places on real reform. No doubt it will be given full scrutiny in committee.

One aspect of the bill I want to make particular reference to, and I am pleased the minister is here today, is section 34 of part 2 regarding appointments. It says that the Public Service Commission may determine an area of selection by establishing geographic, organizational or occupational criteria. This is a part of the bill that can accommodate affirmative action hiring, I am aware of that.

I am sure the minister is aware of the efforts made by my colleague, the member for Cumberland—Colchester, with respect to that particular provision. He questioned the Minister of Transport on it yesterday in the House. The minister expressly made the comment that these provisions do not exist. If they do not exist, what are they actually doing in the new bill in section 34, part 2?

I am sure the minister is aware as well that until recently, in Atlantic Canada especially, we were faced with federal job advertisements requiring applicants to be from certain geographic areas. In Newfoundland, for example, a job opening in St. John's might be restricted to applicants from the Avalon peninsula. People who lived in Gander or Labrador City could not apply. Also, many jobs in central Canada were offered only to applicants from restricted geographic areas.

There are two sides to the issue. Some people have said to me in my own constituency that we have so few federal job openings, how would they ever compete if 30 million other Canadians were free to apply? That was one side of the issue. The other side is that there are so many more job openings in central Canada and other places that they wish they could apply. There are two sides to the issue. I happen to be of the opinion that all the jobs should be wide open to people from all over Canada. Whether they come from Newfoundland or some other part of Atlantic Canada, or British Columbia, they should be free to apply.

Government Orders

I certainly hope the minister will make reference to section 34, part 2 when she speaks. On page 125 of the bill it is stated:

For purposes of eligibility in any appointment process, other than an incumbent-based process, the Commission may determine an area of selection by establishing geographic, organizational or occupational criteria or by establishing, as a criterion, belonging to any of the designated groups—

Unless I am interpreting it incorrectly, and that is entirely possible, the very problem the member for Cumberland—Colchester was talking about yesterday is still in the bill even though the Minister of Transport indicated when he answered the question in the House yesterday that it was not in the bill. I certainly hope the minister will address that particular issue because it seems to me to be discriminatory in a way, especially as it pertains to areas that do not have a lot of jobs.

At the time of course I favoured the view of my colleague, and I still favour that view, that in opening up the competition, everyone would be able to apply, and that is the fairest way to do it.

The intent of the bill is commendable. I recommend that it be sent to committee for detailed study and analysis. Hopefully we will correct some of these shortcomings in the bill when it gets to that point.

• (1300)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to join the debate on Bill C-25, an act to modernize the public service. I will keep my remarks brief because we are optimistic that by the end of the day we may be able to forward this bill on to the committee where the important work shall begin in doing a comprehensive review and analysis of the bill.

Comprehensive is the operative word because it is a huge piece of legislation. It is a very ambitious piece of legislation undertaken by the President of the Treasury Board. There is optimism in the labour community and among public sector employees that we are looking at meaningful change that will go beyond legislative change, but may, if successful, actually change the culture of the public service. That would be something we would all celebrate.

As is often the case, perhaps the best quote with regard to this new bill comes from Hugh Winsor. In the *Globe and Mail* he pointed out that as far as government goes, the less one intends to do about something, the more one has to study it. It is the rule of inverse proportionality.

I do not know if other members have mentioned this, but we note that the role of civil servants has been the subject of no fewer than 37 indepth studies in the last 40 years. Many of those studies made broad, sweeping recommendations. Many were entered into with the same optimism that I express today and none of them have really resulted in comprehensive changes in the way we do business as a public service.

The reason there is some room for optimism this time around is that we are starting with legislative change. We are attempting to fix the structural, skeletal aspect of the problems and then we can deal with the minutiae later on. That is why on the face of it the NDP caucus welcomes this undertaking. We commit that we will throw ourselves into it with all the attention it deserves.

Government Orders

I somewhat regret that instead of debating the bill I find myself forced to debate the amendment that was put forward, that the bill should be withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

That amendment would contemplate throwing out all the work that has been done to date. This would include the comprehensive 18 month study, the Fryer report. It would include the work of the task force led by deputy minister Ran Quail. Essentially it would bring up the matter of how to amend public service legislation at the newly formed committee on government operations and estimates.

I strongly suspect that the proposed amendment has more to do with political mischief than any sincere interest in addressing the copious problems that face our public sector employees. I am critical, as I say, that I am in a position now that my comments have to be taken in the context of debating a hoist motion rather than the bill which we had hoped would make meaningful amendments.

Having said that, let me speak to the importance of amending public service legislation. We should frame this in the context that the 1990s were a terrible decade for our public sector. There were seven years of wage freezes. Civil servants had to live through the madness of program review, which resulted in—

• (1305)

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to ask for a quorum call.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: There is quorum. Resuming debate.

• (1310)

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, just before we were interrupted by the quorum call, I was making the point that we should look at Bill C-25 in full light of the fact that the 1990s was a terrible decade for our public service employees.

There were seven or eight years of wage freezes with zero per cent increases. There was total devastation with program review where one-third of civil servants were laid off. Many were demoralized by job cutbacks because even though the civil service was reduced by one-third, the amount of work did not change. Employees were struggling with how to give service to the public with fewer resources and fewer people to do the job.

The ultimate insult was when the former President of the Treasury Board took the entire \$30 billion surplus out of the employee pension plan without so much as a by your leave, with no negotiations, without even considering the fact that a surplus in a pension plan is the property of the employees. A pension plan should be viewed as wages being held in trust until such time as they are needed. When that pension plan went into surplus, the entire surplus of \$30 billion was taken out of the employees' pension plan.

We can understand how morale reached a new all time low during the 1990s. It is in that context there is some reservation and hesitation on the part of public service employees as they look at this new proposal. Frankly, the level of trust suffered during that decade.

I have pointed out before that anybody who has been in the public service for a long time has lived through virtually every type of scientific management gizmo. Every type of California pop psychology one can imagine has been foisted on public service employees, from total quality management and William Deming, to quality work circles, to team concept and PS 2000. All of these ideas were supposed to do something about the terrible morale problem and the subsequent lack of attachment I suppose that many employees felt to their jobs.

The Fryer study identified many issues that would actually improve and lead to improved job satisfaction and ergo, improved productivity and a sense of well-being within the workplace. I am pleased to see that Bill C-25 incorporates some of the recommendations of the Fryer report.

I can serve notice to the minister that during the committee hearings we will be recommending further amendments that would further implement other issues raised by the study that have not found their way into the legislation. It is another reason we were optimistic that we could move the bill out of the House of Commons into committee where this meaningful work would begin.

Human resources and labour relations are always difficult issues. They are very complex. They are multifaceted in a sense. They are even more complex in the public sector because labour relations deal with the imbalance in the historical relationship between employers and employees. That imbalance is accentuated when the employer is also the legislator. I say that only to preface my remarks that the government, and previous governments, Tory governments as well, have exercised their legislative power over their employees far too readily and far too often. It has become the norm.

A specific example is back to work legislation. It has become the norm in the labour relations regime in the public sector that as soon as people exercise their right to strike or their right to withhold services, they can almost guarantee that the government is already printing back to work legislation to bring to the House of Commons.

In the few years I have been here as a member of Parliament I believe there have been five separate occasions when the government has ordered public service employees back to work, whether it was in the post office or in the public sector at large.

• (1315)

My argument and the reason I raise this, and I am serving notice that we will be raising this at the committee level as well, is that free collective bargaining does not work if we are holding back the power for employees to use the only tool they have to apply pressure to the employer, which is the right to withhold their services. When we deny employees that right, we are bastardizing the whole concept of free collective bargaining.

Government Orders

In 1966, when the public service employees won the right to free collective bargaining, it was an error, an omission, that a labour relations regime was not factored in, that a clear, concise and concrete labour management regime was not introduced as well. Instead, labour relations have been dealt with in an ad hoc, hodgepodge fashion. The one thing I welcome in the bill is that it does contemplate clarifying the relationship between employees and employers and, if I can take the minister at her word, reintroducing an element of fairness to the system by using a bipartite approach. Labour and management can sit down at the table as equal partners in a new national council concept and deal with the real issues of, from our point of view, job satisfaction, and, from their point of view, productivity and yardsticks to measure progress. That in itself is a move forward.

I have mentioned this before and I will again. It may be that because the minister's experience is from the Province of Quebec that she is open to this type of more progressive labour-management relationship, whereas those of us in western Canada have to still suffer through a situation where unions are always fighting for recognition. Not truly welcome at the table, they have to elbow their way to the table. Even then they are allowed at the table in a very reluctant way. It is an adversarial situation before the conversation even begins.

The European model is one of a more tripartite approach, where unions are recognized as a key element of civil society. I believe that if this attitude, this mentality, were transferred or moved into the federal public service, it might lead to real progress in the relationship that we see with the federal government and its employees.

I will not go into detail on the bill at this time because I still have some hope that we may get co-operation from all the parties in the House, that with one more speaker taking us to the end of the day we can conclude debate on the bill and get it to committee so we can hear from the 16 bargaining units affected by the bill. That will be the opportunity for us to make meaningful amendments to the bill and hopefully see it through to its logical conclusion.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to speak on Bill C-25. The whole subject of employer-employee relationships and employer-employee relations has been an interest of mine for a great number of years.

I have indicated on numerous occasions that for 27 years I taught at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in mathematics and computing. For four years before that, when I was just a kid, I taught high school. Believe it or not, in both of those environments I was involved with employer-employee relationships in a very real way.

I was always astounded when I first graduated from university. I really was just a kid. I was 22 years old, I had two degrees and away I went into the work world. I graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with great pride and unfortunately could not get a job in Saskatchewan. When Alberta beckoned and offered me a job, saying that it had never yet been disappointed in a graduate from the University of Saskatchewan, I took the job.

Suddenly, I was the math department in a small rural high school in Alberta. I was just a young person, 22 years old, offering in-service to the other teachers because we were going through the

years of new math. The reason I bring this in that it all ties together. As a result of doing this in-service work, I got to know many teachers throughout the whole county. At one of the annual meetings of the Alberta Teachers' Association local there, I suddenly was elected, just this young fellow from Saskatchewan, to be the president of the ATA local. One might call it a teachers' union. We always called it a professional association.

It was a very interesting experience, because as soon as one has the opportunity to work representing other people one immediately finds ways of bringing together people who are far apart. I found it an incredibly valuable experience, because 95% to 99% of relationships between employers and employees are healthy and good and work fine, but there is always that 1% to 5% where a conflict develops for one reason or another. How do we reconcile that? How do we bring those people together?

Of course it becomes a real mixture of psychology and sociology and a whole bunch of other things, and often very little mathematics, although I did apply some mathematics to it. I discovered that if there are two people, there is only one relationship between the two of them. If there are three people, there are three relationships. If I had a way of drawing a diagram, there are person A and person B, so there is that one, persons B and C, and persons A and B, so there are three relationships. That grows geometrically as the number of people increases. For example, if there are 16 people there are 120 relationship pairs.

When we have thousands of people in a civil service, like we have in Canada, we cannot expect that there would not occasionally be frictions between the personalities, so employer-employee relationships and inter-employee relationships become very important. One discovery I made early on when I was a young kid teaching high school math and involved in the ATA was that we have to learn to co-operate. One has to forgive. There has to be an attitude of acceptance and understanding. There has to be a culture like this one: I like my job, I like the people I work with, what I am doing is worthwhile, it is valued by my employer, and it is valued by my clients, whoever they are.

● (1320)

In the civil service, these clients are usually citizens of our country. Many of our civil servants work with citizens of other countries. All of us, regardless of our position, even members of Parliament, have to work on those interpersonal relationships.

When the President of the Treasury Board brings forward Bill C-25 and says that the government is going to modernize the public service, I would like to emphasize that underlying this is the foundation of value for each individual who works in the public service.

Private Members' Business

I also became involved in this when I went to the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Lo and behold, there were about 750 professional staff members there who honoured me by electing me as their first president of the academic staff association at NAIT. Until that time, we had been forced members of AUPE, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, whether we wanted to be or not. Even then, before I was the president of the staff association, I was elected president of branch 38 of AUPE. I had an opportunity there, and later as the staff association president in taking part in the formation of our new staff association, to build on the important foundations I discovered earlier in my life. It was an interesting experience.

There is one thing I want to comment on. Bill C-25 includes the whole subject of arbitration and conciliation and methods of solving disputes. I would like to advise the President of the Treasury Board and all Liberal members here today, the huge crowd of them, that they need to do this right.

I will share a personal experience. When I was the president of the staff association, for our very first contract we put our heads together and asked whether we wanted the right to strike. A number of members said no. They felt that the only time members need the right to strike is when a situation cannot be solved in any other way. So we reasoned. If we have an argument with our neighbour about where a fence should be, we have a court system and a legal system in which that can be arbitrated. It can be determined. We do not have to picket in front of our neighbour's house stating he is being unfair because his trees are on our land or whatever the problem is. That is not how to solve these types of situations. We find out where the boundary is and we have to live with the decision. That is true in every area of conflict. There is a mechanism or there are developing mechanisms in our country to solve those conflicts, through hearings, through arbitration, through conciliation and whatnot.

We argued that for ourselves the right to strike was a means to an end, not an end in itself. We bargained away in our very first contract on a clause which was set up so that it would be perpetual in subsequent contracts. Both parties had to agree if the clause were to be removed. Once the clause was in there, unless both parties agreed to remove it, it would stay in there perpetually, which is a good way of putting it. We put into that clause a whole sequence of arbitrations and mediators and everything, a whole dispute resolution mechanism so that disputes could be properly solved. It worked really fine.

Now I am going to take a slam at the provincial government of Alberta. It worked really fine until those guys in the government, and I am talking now as an employee, those guys in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, passed a rule which stated that in cases of arbitration, the arbitrator must take into account government policy.

• (1325)

That seemed like a really innocuous little statement, but it threw a pile of sand into the smooth working gears of our relationship. After that, when it came time to negotiate a new round of salary agreements or whatever the government would simply, in advance of that, make a public announcement. This was when inflation was 8% to 10% per year. The government would say that its policy that year was that no government employee shall have a raise increase exceeding 2%.

That blew us out of the water. It made it very unfair because it said we could not bargain fairly. If we could not come to an agreement we could go to arbitration because we had binding arbitration. If binding arbitration was there the government had already passed a rule that we had to take into account government policy and it had declared the policy was 2%. That was the end of the show.

The House can see how frustrated we were. It landed up that we were there in the boxing ring and the person with whom we were boxing was also the referee. It made it very unfair.

My advice to that vast group of Liberals who would impose this legislation is to ensure that where there is arbitration and where there is conciliation that it be kept fair. If the Liberals do not, they will cause unrest in the civil service which they do not want.

That is a very important principle. I am arguing a principle, not specifically the wording of the bill. I expect the committee will look after that.

• (1330)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

USER FEES ACT

The House resumed from November 29, 2002 consideration of the motion that Bill C-212, An Act respecting user fees, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-212, An Act respecting user fees, introduced by the hon. member for Etobicoke North. I can say from the outset that the Bloc Québécois will support this initiative.

Indeed, user fees, whether they are set by departments or other federal agencies, are a recent development, but one that seems to be gaining momentum. As we know, in recent years, not only in Canada, but also in a large part of the western world, governments have had a tendency to reduce personal and corporate income taxes, while trying to find other means, which are often less visible than personal income taxes, to fund the activities and services provided by their various departments or agencies.

It is estimated that, for last year alone, consumers paid \$4 billion for services provided by government agencies or departments.

Taxpayers are not stupid. They realize that if, on the one hand, taxes are lowered but, on the other hand, user fees increase, they might end up being the losers.

As the bill proposes, there is a need for greater transparency about what these user fees really are and for Parliament to play a role in setting these fees. We know that, contrary to income tax, which is a progressive tax—the higher the income, the higher the marginal tax rate—user fees are the same for everyone. They represent a form of regressive taxation, which may be totally legitimate—there is no denying that—but which still affects taxpayers and the people of Canada and Quebec differently.

Before user fees are imposed or changes are made to them, it is imperative that Parliament have the authority to look at the impact of imposing or changing these fees. Especially since this is not only a regressive tax, but user fees will often be charged for a service that is a monopoly.

Take passports for instance. If I need a passport, I have no choice. I must contact the department responsible for issuing passports, fill out the form and pay for the service. This is a monopolistic situation.

Regulation is necessary, as in the case of most monopolies. Parliament must ensure that imposing user fees will not have disproportionate and unfair consequences for Canadians and Quebecers.

Also, and this is in keeping with the debate we had this morning, there is the matter of the quality of service. If user fees become common and increase, but the quality of service available to the taxpayers and users decreases, and there is a monopoly, there will certainly be public frustration and even questions about the public nature of these services, as is already the case.

So it is perfectly normal for Parliament to be able to make a decision using the procedure set out in this bill, one I find quite appropriate. Parliament must be able to vote on the imposition and amount of user fees.

This bill also proposes to establish a federal regulatory body—which is quite appropriate—to hear complaints and also examine the imposition of user fees or changes to user fees. We have no problem with this. I think that the Standing Committee on Finance should also play a major role in considering requests to implement user fees, as well as the amount of such fees, based of course on all the documents prepared by this federal regulatory body.

● (1335)

Should the House support this bill at second reading, and I hope it does, and refer it to a committee, I would like to look at a particular issue that is not covered by the hon. member's bill, namely private foundations.

In her April 2002 report, the Auditor General said, and I am quoting the first paragraph of the main points in chapter one:

The federal government has paid billions of taxpayers' dollars to private foundations and other delegated arrangements set up to achieve public objectives, transferring the funds years before Canadians receive the intended benefits.

I draw the attention of the House to the following sentence:

The government has delegated program responsibilities to these arrangements, but they are often beyond the reach of Parliament's scrutiny.

The Auditor General is referring here to public programs.

Private Members' Business

It seems to me some private foundations could also provide services and collect user fees. We should take a close look at this. I am not referring to all the activities of these foundations. Indeed, as regards this aspect, the Auditor General is already proposing greater accountability to Parliament on the part of the government and of these foundations, which receive billions of dollars from the federal government.

In addition to what the Auditor General proposed, I think that during consideration of Bill C-212, we could see whether there is interest in expanding this bill to certain private-based activities—as the Auditor General mentioned herself—that have responsibilities with respect to public programs.

At this stage, I have made a list of foundations that we might find interesting, and there are many. I think the committee will have to take a more technical approach to all this information, namely whether a foundation to which delegated a certain number of responsibilities in public programming have been delegated, imposed user fees.

At this time, I will not dispute the fact that Bill C-212, An Act respecting user fees, could also apply to the activities of some private foundations.

I think the basic principle of the bill is entirely valid. It has a close connection with current discussions within all the political parties about enhancing the role of Parliament and the role of its members. It is a duty that is expected of the elected members, that is, to ensure that user fees are valid and reasonable when they are implemented, and that these fees do not become prohibitive.

It is part of the role of Parliament. It is also an issue of transparency, especially in a context where tax breaks totalling \$100 billion have been announced for the next five years. The government should not give tax breaks with one hand and take back user fees with the other. This amounts to regressive taxing. There are already examples of what this government is capable of, with employment insurance.

So, in terms of transparency and democracy, I think that Bill C-212 deserves the support of the House. As I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, the member can be assured of the support of the Bloc Québécois.

[*English*]

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to share some thoughts on this bill. I will begin by saying that I was asked by the sponsor of the bill, the member for Etobicoke North, and by the parliamentary secretary, the member for Niagara Centre, if I supported the bill? My answer was unequivocal. I said that I absolutely supported it, which means there are some things in the bill that make sense, but there are some concerns that need to be addressed.

To simply support it outright would probably cause some difficulty, unless we are absolutely sure, and I think this process will allow this to happen, that we will have an opportunity to make some changes.

Private Members' Business

Let me focus on a couple of things. I would not be surprised if the opposition supports a bill of this nature simply because the process which would be put in place would allow the opposition the opportunity to vote against every user fee that the government might deem necessary to put in place. To my friend, there is clearly an opportunity for political grandstanding if this is not handled properly, not that my hon. friends opposite would ever do that. Therefore we would be politicizing the process of putting in place fees, users fees, that were necessary for the proper functioning of agencies, departments of government. On the other hand, should Parliament not have a role in the oversight? That is where the balance here makes some sense.

I tend to agree with the principles the member has outlined in the bill of the need for more parliamentary oversight. We have to be careful about the process, not necessarily in terms of one fee or one issue, but in terms of the huge operation of public institutions in the government. In fact, there is even a suggestion that this could impact into the private sector whenever we deal with agencies or corporations that are regulated by government bodies. The obvious example would be Bell being regulated by the CRTC, or the music industry, or television or something of that kind. Some people might like it if we could have a more hands on ability to affect the fees that Bell charges. I do not know that we want to take the government, any government of any political stripe, down the road where we interfere to that level.

One issue is that when we at any level of government deal with a particular project, we should deal with the big picture. We should not micromanage. I do not believe that is what we were elected to do.

I use the example in days gone by when I was in municipal government. I was president of the Peel Non-Profit Housing Corporation, which builds housing projects. When we built a housing project, some members of the board literally wanted to pick the colour of the curtains or the design of the building. That is not the role of the board of that corporation. The role is to approve projects, put in place the financing and give the professionals the opportunity to build the facility, deliver it on time and hopefully on budget. To have the politicians involved in the everyday decisions and management of it would frankly cause me some concern.

I have spoken to the member about this. I believe if the bill receives approval in the House, it will go to committee. I am told it may go to the finance committee. It perhaps should go to government operations. I would ask the member to give some thought to that. It is more of an operational situation. The finance committee might find itself too busy to deal with the bill in a timely fashion.

One area I would want to deal with at committee would be the impact on crown corporations. In my role as parliamentary secretary of transport, the balance of that statement is four crown corporations. My role in working with the minister is to work with Canada Mortgage and Housing, Canada Lands, Canada Post, Queen's Quay and the old port of Montreal.

● (1340)

The concern I have is that many of these corporations, and I will just give a couple of examples, like Canada Post, CMHC and the

Mint, have been given commercial mandates. They have a responsibility to market their services and products.

Canada Post is renowned throughout the world. It is a very typical Canadian institution. At home we tend to denigrate Canada Post and say nasty things about it. Yet there are some 26 countries throughout the world which hire the international marketing arm of Canada Post to help them do a better job of delivering mail in those countries. As is often so typical, a service developed here in Canada is recognized in other parts of the world in a better way and with greater acknowledgement of its success.

CMHC has a commercial mandate. The commercial mandate takes it to the point where it runs a very large and successful mortgage insurance operation. If it were impacted on the setting of its fees by the fact that it had to go through the actual fee setting outside the commercial realm or if it had to come to a parliamentary committee, we would be putting an unfair burden upon that corporation. It does have to compete. GE Capital has a mortgage insurance arm and it would be under no such obligation to come before a parliamentary committee to set its fees.

We have to look at some exemptions if we are to look at this. We have to be able to say that perhaps there are some fees or some areas that are more directly involved with Parliament and should have greater oversight and involvement. However clearly we should not penalize crown corporations or private sector corporations in their ability to compete in the marketplace.

This comes to the very issue of the role of Parliament versus the role of government. We have had calls recently for a vote in this place on whether Canada should participate in a war in Iraq if a resolution comes down through the United Nations. It seems to make some sense to the people on the street that Parliament should make that decision. However the basic fundamental problem in differentiating between the role of Parliament and the role of government goes to the very root of my argument with regard to micromanaging.

The government has certain executive responsibilities. The government is the Prime Minister and the cabinet. The rest of the people members of Parliament in support of the government or members of Parliament in opposition to the government. Technically the government is that group of men and women who form the governor in council, which is the cabinet of the government, and they have a responsibility. If they had to come to Parliament for a vote every time they needed to make a decision which had widespread impact on the country or in our relationships in foreign affairs, because of the debates we see in this place where positions are entrenched because of certain beliefs and certain political parties, the risk would be that we would paralyze the country and make it impossible for the government to fulfill its mandate.

That does not mean Parliament should not have a lot to say and a lot to do with regard to all these decisions. That is why we have the committee system and the opportunity to go forward with ideas, good ideas such as Bill C-212.

Let me just wrap up by saying that having identified a couple of concerns to my colleague, the member for Etobicoke North, I hope we can take out of the bill some of the areas that would lead to micromanaging, that would hurt the commercialized mandates of crown corporations and private sector companies and that would take Parliament as a group into the areas in which frankly none of us were elected to be involved. At the same time, if we adopt the principle involved here, we can say that we stand for more accountability and transparency in the setting of user fees because at the end of the day, a user fee is simply another form of taxation. It may be voluntary taxation. In other cases it is mandatory and people require it.

● (1345)

I could go on about whether we should have user fees in health care, which would be the obvious one that comes to mind. That would not be a voluntary user fee, and our party is opposed to that. However I do not want to get into the debate of that issue in relationship to this bill.

We should support the bill in principle and send it to committee. However there needs to be an awful lot of work done among the member sponsoring it, the committee and the government to make this a useful tool where we can say to the people of Canada that we have indeed improved the system of governing this great nation.

Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today and speak to on behalf of our party to Bill C-212, the private member's bill which deals with criteria for user fees.

I want to remind the House that this problem has been around for a long time. To support that, I want to quote what the auditor general said in 1993 about the ability to scrutinize this. He said:

We are concerned that Parliament cannot readily scrutinize the user fees established by contracts and other non-regulatory means. There does not exist a government-wide summary of the fees being charged, the revenues raised and the authorities under which they are established.

This caused our member for Medicine Hat to introduce a private member's bill on this very same topic in 1997, which was Bill C-205. I know he intended that his private member's bill would be an opportunity to fulfill those concerns which were raised by the auditor general of the day.

I know the member for Etobicoke North has raised a number of interesting areas and key points that need to be addressed. Quite frankly we agree with him when he calls for the need for more parliamentary oversight when user fees are introduced or changed. We agree with him when he calls for the need for greater stakeholder participation in the fee setting process, which is part of what I just said. We agree with him when he calls for the improved linkages between user fees, the federal department and the agency performance specification and standard.

● (1350)

He talks about the requirement for more comprehensive stakeholder impact and competitiveness analysis when new user fees or fee increases are contemplated. He talks about the goal of increased transparency addressing these fees where applicable. He goes on to talk about the need for independent dispute resolution

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process and the need for annual reports outlining all user fees. We understand what he is saying and we agree with his observations.

However in addition to having parliamentary scrutiny on user fees, we submit that the following principles should also apply. I know the member will probably agree with a lot of these as well and hopefully, in a collective fashion, we will be able to make some changes.

One, the fees must be based upon the actual cost to providing the service. Unfortunately they are not necessarily set that way now. Some fees are much higher than the actual cost of service being provided.

Two, services must be cost effective. I know the member opposite is a prudent type of thinker and will agree with that. This is a key point. In many cases we believe the services are not being provided in a cost effective way and we have to ensure they are.

The member raised the point that currently \$4 billion was going into the federal treasury in user fees. If that cost is reflective of the program that needs to be put in place to administer it in the way which has been just outlined so that the different groups are not paying costs which are not their own or not inflated costs, then that is fine. However in many cases we believe those costs are in fact exaggerated and it is just another form of a hidden tax on the industry itself.

Three, administrative costs must be as low as possible and the documentation requirements must be there in the operation of business.

Four, there should be no cross-subsidization of services for commodities or region. This is a very important point. We have seen too much of this kind of thing in the past. We have seen too many cases where the costs are borne by one area that should be borne by another sector, another industry or another part of the country. Cross-subsidization should not and must not occur.

● (1355)

Five, wherever possible, fees should be directly applied to prevent fee inflation to indirect application through the service provider.

Six, there must be a system in place for tracking the overall incident of fees and the effect on industry with a process for consultation.

Simply put, we do not mind the idea of user fees or a cost recovery. We think that is important. However the user fees must reflect what is a reasonable amount of cost recovery to actually do the job and should not bear out an overinflated bureaucracy that does not adapt quickly to where that individual sector is itself.

It is important that these industries be allowed to function. We have a tough time already in this country. Taxes are very high. We have to compete internationally. Our productivity has fallen against that of the United States for about 25 years and we have to look at ways to cause that to change.

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My party has held hearings across Ontario over the last few years. We have been told that regulation is just as big a cost to businesses, especially small businesses, as taxation is. In fact, it is disproportionately higher for small businesses because they do not have the people dedicated specifically to complying with regulation or people who are administrating these cost recovery programs on them.

Regulation is a huge cost. I think in some of the studies done by the Fraser Institute it showed a total regulation cost of \$100 billion annually to industry in Canada. That is an astronomical amount. It hurts industry in terms of being competitive. It hurts the economy, and the bottom lines of businesses are tremendously affected.

To sum up, we understand what the member for Etobicoke North is trying to say in his bill. We support it. We have offered some further suggestions. We believe this is the time to get the user fee regime right after so many years. This is a step in the right direction and I suggest that all members in the House should support the bill.

Mr. Tony Tirabassi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by commending the member for Etobicoke North for his contribution to improving a very important area of user charging.

The government acknowledges that improvements can be made to our fee setting process. In fact, it is currently working on a policy review which I believe addresses a number of the concerns raised by my colleague in Bill C-212.

I would like to begin by providing some contextual and background information. Cost recovery and charging have existed in one form or another since Confederation. Parks Canada, for example, has been charging for its services since the 1880s.

Today, the Government of Canada, like most other governments, charges for a range of optional and mandatory services for the use of public assets and for rights and privileges. Revenues from these various activities currently amount to about \$4 billion per year. This is in relation to a total expenditure of some \$170 billion.

Canada's user charges comprise about 2% of total federal government revenues. A study of charging practices in other jurisdictions showed that this was generally in line with other countries studied.

Cost recovery is a fair and equitable way of financing government programs and services, including those of a regulatory nature. Its longevity and universal application are a testament to the soundness of its fundamental principle. This establishes that it is reasonable that those who receive special services in excess of those enjoyed by the general taxpayer should bear some, or all, of the cost of providing those services.

I should emphasize that this rationale is not challenged by those who pay the fees. In fact, private citizens, industry representatives, academics, economists, the Office of the Auditor General and the Standing Committee on Finance have all voiced support for this fundamental principle.

The cost recovery and charging policy ensures that, under the responsibility of the individual ministers, the consideration and implementation of charging initiatives is subject to important principles and requirements.

As I have indicated, user charging is not an activity specific only to Canada. A comparative study on the issue showed that the core objective of user charging does not vary among countries; that is, that users pay for the special services they receive. This includes charging for the full or partial cost of regulatory activities.

As in Canada, other countries' fee setting processes are decentralized, which means that ministers are accountable for the charges implemented by their departments. It is important to note that not a single jurisdiction saw the need to have its user fee requirements set in law.

In terms of policy guidance, Canada was found to be most explicit on a number of important elements, most notably, consultation and service standards.

Further, Canada is one of only two jurisdictions that require departments to provide dispute resolution mechanisms, and the only one to require departments work with fee payers to assess impacts.

Can more be done? Yes, absolutely, and we are striving to make those improvements.

The government is in the latter stages of a comprehensive review of this policy. The review heard from 59 firms, industry associations and other non-governmental organizations. This covered some 70 programs of the 400 federal programs with user charges. The review results indicated that most areas of federal cost recovery programs seemed to be working quite well.

In particular, the review found that the majority of paying users contacted were satisfied with the approach and the level of consultation on user charges. However they did cite a frequent need for greater feedback from departments during consultations.

• (1400)

Also, the review confirmed that paying users have raised relatively few disputes with respect to their fees. When disputes did occur, they were mostly administrative in nature and almost always resolved through informal contact directly with departments.

However the review also found that there should be greater awareness among paying users of the existing dispute resolution mechanisms available to them.

The review, as supported by previous recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance and the Auditor General, did, however, point to a need for clear direction in implementing the policy.

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The proposed changes to the policy, therefore, will consider these recommendations as well as what was heard from users and departments. Namely: improved consistency through clearer overall direction with respect to what departments must do and consider when introducing or amending charges; greater clarification of the objectives and requirements expected for meaningful consultations; all programs with charges to have service standards, as well as consult with stakeholders on performance and on the measures to be taken if those standards are not met; increased attention on monitoring user charging activities within departments through stepped up Treasury Board Secretariat involvement.

In addition, every department will now be required to identify an individual at the assistant deputy minister level or higher to oversee the implementation of the policy and to serve as a point of contact for TBS.

Further recommendations are: increased direction and emphasis on establishing and communicating departmental dispute management mechanisms, including the provisions for independent advisory bodies to make recommendations to ministers; and, more open, clearly communicated information through enhanced annual reporting to Parliament and the public of such things as total revenue collected by the various types of charging activities and the performance provided to stakeholders.

This policy instrument, with its improvements ranging from greater monitoring to enhanced reporting, is intended to complement our existing standing committee system, a system that already provides the mandate for committees to flesh out issues relevant to Canadians.

It is important to note that the government is still working with the hon. member for Etobicoke North, industry representatives and departments on the revised changes to the cost recovery policy. A second draft of the proposed changes was distributed to all advisory committees in December 2002. Members, including industry representatives, are now in the process of submitting their comments. The second draft has also been shared with the Standing Committee on Finance so it can view the direction the government is proposing in a number of important areas.

The point being, that we continue to listen, to be open and to explore ideas for addressing concerns. We cannot, of course, promise across the board satisfaction with the end product given the nature and complexity of the issues at hand. However we are encouraged by the feedback from stakeholders and from the member for Etobicoke North, that we are headed in the right direction in a number of areas of concern.

Much of Bill C-212 appears aimed at issues related to regulatory activities and programs. Let me assure my colleagues that regulation does not exist for its own sake. Regulatory programs exist in response to the calls of generations of Canadians for the protection of their health and safety.

A report drafted last year for the OECD-wide review of regulatory reform in Canada stated the following:

Canada was one of the first OECD countries to adopt a regulatory reform programme and has pursued ever broader and deeper reforms for the past 25 years. The quality of its regulatory governance is almost certainly a key contributor to its

successes in terms of both economic performance and the achievement of its social goals.

These words do not describe a system in need of major overhaul. We are striving to do better. The Smart Regulation Strategy announced in the last Speech from the Throne aims to accelerate reforms in key areas to promote health and sustainability, to contribute to innovation and economic growth, and to reduce the administrative burden on business.

● (1405)

No one is arguing against reforms. There is no system or organization that cannot be improved. We continue to work with stakeholders, and again, with my colleague from Etobicoke North, to find solutions and improvements to the cost recovery system.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to express my support for the private member's initiative before the House today in terms of greater accountability when it comes to user fees put on by the federal government.

There are many user fees that bring in a lot of cash for the federal government each and every year. The important thing is to bring in more accountability and transparency in terms of user fees in all forms of taxes and legislation in general.

In fact, I would like to see a whole raft of parliamentary reform to make this place more relevant to ordinary people. Over the years that I have been here, I have seen a lessening of importance of the House of Commons itself and the growing importance of the executive.

I came here in the Trudeau years, in 1968, and I remember a great battle in the summer of 1969 when I was just 23 years old. There was a great battle for the change of rules in the House of Commons. There was a tremendous fight which went on all through the month of July. With the change of rules, more power was taken away from the House of Commons and given to the Prime Minister's Office and the executive.

What has happened over the last 25 or 30 years is that the trend has continued through the Mulroney years into the present years, where the Prime Minister's Office and the executive have far too much power. What we need is some serious parliamentary reform where parliamentary committees would be more independent and have the right to timetable themselves, introduce legislation, and freely elect their own chairs. The member across the way knows exactly what I mean by that from the experience we had together at a House of Commons committee roughly one year ago.

That is the direction I believe we should be going as a House of Commons. The Prime Minister's Office and indeed the premiers' offices in our country have far too much power to make many appointments unilaterally. I have seen many appointments made by all levels of government over the years. If we were to recommend appointments to the relevant parliamentary committee, in other words, nominate an individual for a relevant position and have the relevant committee either ratify or accept the position, then certain recommendations by the federal government would not be made.

Private Members' Business

I remember the case of a former cabinet minister back in the Trudeau years who was appointed to head a crown corporation. In this particular case I did not find a single government member who agreed with the appointment, but they were all like political eunuchs because of our parliamentary system, they could not do anything to stop the appointment which was made by the Prime Minister of the day. That is not a commentary on one political party or the other. It is the kind of political system we have that puts far too much power into the hands of the executive branch of government and in the hands of the Prime Minister.

In fact, if we look at our system, I do not think we will find any system in the world that is a democracy and I am not talking about Baghdad or North Korea. However, I am talking about elected parliaments that put so much power in the hands of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's executives choose the federal judges; Supreme Court judges; cabinet ministers; and senators, except for the hockey team, the Ottawa Senators, which they are now bailing out by millions and millions of dollars a year. They appoint all the senior officials of government, the head of the RCMP, the head of the military, and the list goes on and on.

The Prime Minister also has the power to fix an election date whenever the Prime Minister wants to call an election and to bring in a budget whenever the Prime Minister wants to do so. We should have fixed dates for elections, budgets, and throne speeches. We should take that power away from the government. In doing so we would have timetabling that would be more fair and just for everybody concerned.

The fixed budget date, for example, would allow the provinces, municipalities and school boards to plan because they would know if there would be a budget every second or third week of February or March or whatever that date would be. We should have fixed election dates as well so that there would be a level playing field for all the parties.

Those are some of the things we need in terms of serious parliamentary reform. Part of that is greater accountability in terms of the finances and the taxes of the country.

A user fee is a tax with another name. It is not a hidden tax. It is very vivid and visible as a tax with another name. I oppose many user fees, however we do need some user fees. I am not saying we cannot have user fees. If we use a park often or some other public facility often, there are arguments to be made in favour of user fees.

• (1410)

However the problem with some fees is that they can be very regressive. A user fee usually applies across the board. Whether people are wealthy or poor they pay the same user fee. In that regard it becomes a very regressive tax. This is another reason to make sure we pass the motion before the House today, Parliament would have greater say and there would be greater accountability, greater transparency and less likelihood of a user fee that is really regressive.

This is a very important motion. I want to mention a recent example of spending gone wild without parliamentary accountability, the gun registry program. Whether we are in favour or against the gun registry program, it initially was supposed to cost \$2 million a year, then \$100 million and now it is over \$1 billion.

The Auditor General has made it very clear that the program has become a major financial boondoggle. The Auditor General also said that Parliament was not allowed to see the books over the years, which we should have been able to do, and that things were hidden from the elected representatives of the people.

If there is one purpose more than any other purpose as to why we are here, it is to be the guardian or the watchdog over the tax money of the ordinary Canadian people, to make sure that their tax money is spent in a wise way and in a way that is good for the country and good for the common good.

However we have a gun registry program where over \$1 billion dollars has been spent and where consultants have been hired. One billing I noticed, which was reported in one of the national newspapers, showed that the Department of Justice was billed for \$1,000 a day for 365 days a year. What bureaucrat would sign off on that invoice, working Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, no matter what?

As the Auditor General said, a lot of this information was withheld from the Parliament.

I would like to see a system where a parliamentary committee, the public accounts committee or whatever, would have the power and the authority to subpoena any government department it wanted, to force a department to open its books, and allow the committee to have a thorough look at the books to make sure that the spending being done is being done in accordance with the intent and the laws that come out from the Parliament of Canada.

In that regard we may need, as it has in the United States, a better staffed parliamentary committee system, where we would have more funding to hire the expertise needed for the parliamentary committees, and where we would have the background to actually do a better cross-examination of some of the witnesses.

I remember back to the parliamentary constitutional debates a few years ago when we were looking at the issues surrounding the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords. At that time Parliament decided in its wisdom to provide all the parties with extra research help for that parliamentary committee on the government side and the opposition side.

I was on that committee and it was probably the best committee on which I have ever served in terms of having the expertise, where parliamentarians had the ammunition, because of the thorough research being done by committee staff, to put the proper questions.

I know we have a good staff in the Library of Parliament but sometimes we have to supplement that staff with staff that is a bit more political in terms of the kind of research that they are doing.

I think we should look at some of these ideas as precedents in other parts of the world that have worked very well.

This comes right back to the main thrust which is that we need more accountability and more transparency, particularly when it comes to the public finances of the nation.

I would like to see the day when we have the political parties in this country coming together as one to say that the executive, the Prime Minister's Office, has far too much power, that Parliament has far less power, and that we have to increase the power and the independence of parliamentary committees. We need the right to initiate legislation, the right to timetable legislation and the right to have fewer confidence votes in the House of Commons. We have far too many confidence votes here.

In Britain, when Margaret Thatcher was at the height of her popularity, the government lost many votes on government bills but it did not fall. Instead, it went back to the drawing board and came up with bills that were more acceptable to the parliament of the country. We should be doing that in Canada. We are in the stone age in terms of the need for parliamentary reform.

● (1415)

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the efforts of my colleague from Etobicoke North that are aimed at improving the federal fee setting process in Canada.

I would like to provide the House with some information on cost recovery and user charging in relation to what is in place and what my colleague's bill aims to achieve.

Currently, pursuant to the authorities granted to them by Parliament, individual ministers are responsible for establishing and amending fees. As such, ministers are responsible for evaluating and responding to the many factors relevant to a charging decision. They are accountable to the public and to Parliament.

The Treasury Board cost recovery and charging policy works inside this legislative framework, as it must. It sets out the conditions and factors ministers are to consider when users are charged.

Bill C-212 would change Canada's approach. It would establish a standing committee or mandate an existing standing committee to scrutinize all proposed user charges and make recommendations to the House for their approval or rejection.

This overlooks that standing committees currently have the power to examine user charges in their departmental portfolios and call on ministers to provide information.

As this debate has shown, the Standing Committee on Finance is willing and able to examine a government-wide practice like user charging in a very effective way.

The additional provisions of Bill C-212 would create an unprecedented overlap in responsibilities and authority between ministers, the standing committee, the House, and new undefined independent dispute mechanisms. It would create a new role for legal challenges so that ultimately the courts would decide.

That would make existing parliamentary oversight much less effective. This is because the bill would replace existing lines of authority with a very complex, costly and unwieldy new process. First, the bill's proposed approval process would require the House of Commons to approve, reject or amend all user charge proposals upon consideration of the committees recommendation. This would stray from the current practice and philosophy that Parliament delegates questions of application and detail, such as fee setting, to the executive which is done in the name of efficiency.

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Second, as an act, the provisions of the bill would be enshrined in law. The ultimate arbiters of user charging then would not be parliamentarians or the executive. It would instead be Canada's court system. Complainants dissatisfied with a departmental decision or simply seeking to delay things might well go to court to argue a technical issue. For example, paragraph 4(1)(a) of the bill would require that:

Before a regulating authority fixes [or amends a fee]... it must take reasonable measures to notify clients...of the user fee proposed...

Paragraph 4(1)(b) adds that the regulating authority:

give all clients or service users a reasonable opportunity to provide ideas or proposals for ways to improve the services to which the user fee relates;

There is no definition as to what constitutes reasonable in these cases. Therefore complainants lose nothing by contending in court that the *Canada Gazette* and the Internet were not reasonable means of notification, or that a four week consultation period was not reasonable as it coincided with a busy period in their work cycle.

● (1420)

Imagine the caseload on the already overburdened court system. Consider how this would delay decision making for new fee proposals. Imagine how all this would impede the courts' ability to hear more serious cases, such as violent crime, and consider, of course, the court and legal costs.

Third, paragraph 4(1)(e) calls for each charging authority to:

establish an independent dispute resolution process to address a complaint or grievance submitted by a client regarding the user fee or change.

The bill does not establish whether this new ruling authority would overrule the minister responsible for the charge. For that matter, it might overrule the authority of the House committee.

Nor does the bill define what constitutes a complaint or grievance. The government is well aware that complaints range from relatively minor practical questions to challenges of a department's fundamental right to institute charges.

Fourth, the bill would extend the reach of this approval process more broadly than perhaps was intended. We must note that it would also apply to crown corporations. Their ability to quickly respond to clients would be delayed by this new process and that contradicts the reason Parliament granted them a reasonable degree of independent authority: so that government could be more businesslike.

Much hard work was done here in Parliament to create crown corporations like Canada Post. The intent was to make these organizations more efficient and reduce the red tape burden on delivering these services to Canadians. Why would we undo that work and effectively make them less responsive? Yet that is what the bill would do.

Private Members' Business

Furthermore, the bill reads, "This Act applies to all fees fixed by a regulating authority". The bill defines "regulating authority" as:

—a department, agency, board, Crown corporation, commission, or any other body that has the power to fix a user fee or a cost recovery charge under the authority of an Act of Parliament.

As worded, the bill could also apply to private sector entities, such as Bell Canada and Shaw cable, whose prices are "fixed by a regulating authority", like the CRTC. These businesses would be embroiled in yet another round of hearings and the expense and delay associated with them. The repercussions would be far reaching and potentially very serious for firms who rely on faster, not slower, decision making authorities, which in turn affects their bottom line.

Fifth, the proposed process would also require fees to be justified in comparison to all those of all other OECD countries. This risks pressuring Canada to establish fees at an international lowest common denominator. Canadians feel strongly about their government's role in protecting public health, safety and security. They expect better of us than such an unsophisticated approach. They understand that many complex factors determine the level of service people want and the amount they are willing and able to pay.

I wish to convey strongly that the government is committed to the values of transparency and accountability which are so important to this subject. It is very serious about improving the current policy on user charging, which is now in the final stages of development. Extensive consultations have been held with internal and external stakeholders. In December, the government distributed a second draft of proposed policy changes to all policy review advisory committees. For its part, the government remains committed to acting on this feedback to address outstanding concerns.

The policy remains open and the review continues. The direction it is taking will provide more explicit guidance to departments who charge. This will strengthen the accountability of the fee setting

process to Parliament, to stakeholders and to the public to bring about greater consistency.

● (1425)

This is in response to previous recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance and the Auditor General. The changes clearly address the concerns raised by my hon. colleague's bill, which include: improved consistency through clear overall direction with respect to what departments must do and consider when introducing or amending charges; greater clarification of the objectives and requirements expected for meaningful consultations and that these consultations will be ongoing throughout the life of the charging program and not just at the inception of the charges; all programs with charges to have service standards; increased attention to monitoring user charging activities within departments; increased direction and emphasis on establishing and communicating dispute management mechanisms; and more open, clearly communicating information through enhanced annual reporting to Parliament and the public.

These are the reasons why I commend my hon. colleague's concern about improving the situation. I hope I have injected some of the reasons why the system we have now, while it can be improved and I hope it will be improved, is working quite well.

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. The order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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

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

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Whole

MR. BOB KILGER

The Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole

MR. RÉGINALD BÉLAIR

The Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole

MS. ELENI BAKOPANOS

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

HON. ANDY MITCHELL

MR. BILL BLAIKIE

MS. MARLENE CATTERALL

MR. BOB KILGER

MR. JACQUES SAADA

MR. DALE JOHNSTON

MR. JOHN REYNOLDS

HON. DON BOUDRIA

MR. LOYOLA HEARN

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Second Session—Thirty Seventh Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CA
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CA
Adams, Peter	Peterborough	Ontario	Lib.
Alcock, Reg	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	Lib.
Allard, Carole-Marie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Laval East	Quebec	Lib.
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CA
Anderson, David	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CA
Anderson, Hon. David, Minister of the Environment	Victoria	British Columbia	Lib.
Assad, Mark	Gatineau	Quebec	Lib.
Assadourian, Sarkis, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Brampton Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Asselin, Gérard	Charlevoix	Quebec	BQ
Augustine, Hon. Jean, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Bachand, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Quebec	PC
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	Quebec	BQ
Bagnell, Larry	Yukon	Yukon	Lib.
Bailey, Roy	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CA
Bakopanos, Eleni, The Acting Speaker	Ahuntsic	Quebec	Lib.
Barnes, Rex	Gander—Grand Falls	Newfoundland and Labrador	PC
Barnes, Sue	London West	Ontario	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Brampton West—Mississauga	Ontario	Lib.
Bélaire, Réginald, The Acting Speaker	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	Lib.
Bélangier, Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellemare, Eugène	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	Lib.
Bennett, Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Lakeland	Alberta	CA
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères—Les-Patriotes	Quebec	BQ
Bertrand, Robert	Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle	Quebec	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio, Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)	Vaughan—King—Aurora	Ontario	Lib.
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—Petite-Patrie	Quebec	BQ
Binet, Gérard	Frontenac—Mégantic	Quebec	Lib.
Blaikie, Bill	Winnipeg—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Blondin-Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Secretary of State (Children and Youth)	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Ontario	Lib.
Bonwick, Paul	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	Lib.
Borotsik, Rick	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	PC
Boudria, Hon. Don, Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	Lib.
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Quebec	BQ
Bradshaw, Hon. Claudette, Minister of Labour	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Lib.
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CA
Brien, Pierre	Témiscamingue	Quebec	Ind.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Brison, Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	PC
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.
Bryden, John	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Aldershot	Ontario	Lib.
Bulte, Sarmite	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	Lib.
Burton, Andy	Skeena	British Columbia	CA
Byrne, Hon. Gerry, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Caccia, Hon. Charles	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Cadman, Chuck	Surrey North	British Columbia	CA
Calder, Murray, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade	Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey	Ontario	Lib.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Caplan, Hon. Elinor, Minister of National Revenue	Thornhill	Ontario	Lib.
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Quebec	BQ
Carignan, Jean-Guy	Québec East	Quebec	Lib. Ind.
Carroll, Aileen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford	Ontario	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester	Nova Scotia	PC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CA
Castonguay, Jeannot, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.
Catterall, Marlene	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	Lib.
Cauchon, Hon. Martin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Outremont	Quebec	Lib.
Chamberlain, Brenda	Guelph—Wellington	Ontario	Lib.
Charbonneau, Yvon	Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies	Quebec	Lib.
Chatters, David	Athabasca	Alberta	CA
Chrétien, Right Hon. Jean, Prime Minister	Saint-Maurice	Quebec	Lib.
Clark, Right Hon. Joe	Calgary Centre	Alberta	PC
Coderre, Hon. Denis, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Bourassa	Quebec	Lib.
Collenette, Hon. David, Minister of Transport	Don Valley East	Ontario	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—St. Clair	Ontario	NDP
Comuzzi, Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	Lib.
Copps, Hon. Sheila, Minister of Canadian Heritage	Hamilton East	Ontario	Lib.
Cotler, Irwin	Mount Royal	Quebec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup— Témiscouata—Les Basques	Quebec	BQ
Cullen, Roy	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Cummins, John	Delta—South Richmond	British Columbia	CA
Cuzner, Rodger, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister	Bras d'Or—Cape Breton	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Dalphond-Guiral, Madeleine	Laval Centre	Quebec	BQ
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Stockwell	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CA
Desjarlais, Bev	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Desrochers, Odina	Lotbinière—L'Érable	Quebec	BQ
DeVillers, Hon. Paul, Secretary of State (Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Simcoe North	Ontario	Lib.
Dhaliwal, Hon. Herb, Minister of Natural Resources	Vancouver South—Burnaby	British Columbia	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Quebec	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Discepola, Nick	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Quebec	Lib.
Doyle, Norman		Newfoundland and Labrador	PC
Dromisky, Stan	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Ontario	Lib.
Drouin, Hon. Claude, Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)	Beauce	Quebec	Lib.
Dubé, Antoine	Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la- Chaudière	Quebec	BQ
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Quebec	BQ
Duncan, John	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CA
Duplain, Claude, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Portneuf	Quebec	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne, Solicitor General of Canada	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Efford, R. John	Bonavista—Trinity— Conception	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Eggleton, Hon. Art	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Elley, Reed	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	CA
Epp, Ken	Elk Island	Alberta	CA
Eyking, Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Farrah, Georges, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de- la-Madeleine—Pabok	Quebec	Lib.
Finlay, John	Oxford	Ontario	Lib.
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CA
Folco, Raymonde	Laval West	Quebec	Lib.
Fontana, Joe	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster—Coquitlam —Burnaby	British Columbia	CA
Fournier, Ghislain	Manicouagan	Quebec	BQ
Frulla, Liza	Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint- Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles	Quebec	Lib.
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Quebec	BQ
Gagnon, Marcel	Champlain	Quebec	BQ
Gagnon, Sébastien	Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay	Quebec	BQ
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing— Pembroke	Ontario	CA
Galloway, Roger	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	Lib.
Gaudet, Roger	Berthier—Montcalm	Quebec	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval	Quebec	BQ
Girard-Bujold, Jocelyne	Jonquière	Quebec	BQ
Godfrey, John	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton Centre-East	Alberta	CA
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Gouk, Jim	Kootenay—Boundary— Okanagan	British Columbia	CA
Graham, Hon. Bill, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Toronto Centre—Rosedale	Ontario	Lib.
Grewal, Gurmant	Surrey Central	British Columbia	CA
Grey, Deborah	Edmonton North	Alberta	CA

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Grose, Ivan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Oshawa	Ontario	Lib.
Guarnieri, Albina	Mississauga East	Ontario	Lib.
Guay, Monique	Laurentides	Quebec	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Beauport—Montmorency— Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans	Quebec	BQ
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CA
Harb, Mac	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Harper, Stephen, Leader of the Opposition	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CA
Harris, Richard	Prince George—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	CA
Harvard, John	Charleswood —St. James— Assiniboia	Manitoba	Lib.
Harvey, André, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Quebec	Lib.
Hearn, Loyola	St. John's West	Newfoundland and Labrador	PC
Herron, John	Fundy—Royal	New Brunswick	PC
Hill, Grant	Macleod	Alberta	CA
Hill, Jay	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CA
Hilstrom, Howard	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CA
Hinton, Betty	Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys	British Columbia	CA
Hubbard, Charles, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Miramichi	New Brunswick	Lib.
Ianno, Tony	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	Lib.
Jackson, Ovid	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	Lib.
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	CA
Jennings, Marlene, Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce— Lachine	Quebec	Lib.
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CA
Jordan, Joe	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	Lib.
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Nunavut	Nunavut	Lib.
Karygiannis, Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore	Nova Scotia	PC
Kenney, Jason	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CA
Keyes, Stan	Hamilton West	Ontario	Lib.
Kilger, Bob, The Deputy Speaker	Stormont—Dundas— Charlottenburgh	Ontario	Lib.
Kilgour, Hon. David, Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)	Edmonton Southeast	Alberta	Lib.
Knutson, Hon. Gar, Secretary of State (Central and Eastern Europe and Middle East)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	Lib.
Kraft Sloan, Karen	York North	Ontario	Lib.
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau— Mirabel	Quebec	BQ
Laliberte, Rick	Churchill River	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Lalonde, Francine	Mercier	Quebec	BQ
Lanctôt, Robert	Châteauguay	Quebec	BQ
Lastewka, Walt	St. Catharines	Ontario	Lib.
Lebel, Ghislain	Chambly	Quebec	Ind.
LeBlanc, Dominic, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Beauséjour—Petitcodiac	New Brunswick	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.
Leung, Sophia	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	Lib.
Lill, Wendy	Dartmouth	Nova Scotia	NDP
Lincoln, Clifford	Lac-Saint-Louis	Quebec	Lib.
Longfield, Judi	Whitby—Ajax	Ontario	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Quebec	BQ
Lunn, Gary	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CA
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CA
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Peter	Pictou—Antigonish— Guysborough	Nova Scotia	PC
Macklin, Paul Harold, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Northumberland	Ontario	Lib.
Mahoney, Steve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Mississauga West	Ontario	Lib.
Malhi, Gurbax, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour	Bramalea—Gore—Malton— Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Maloney, John	Erie—Lincoln	Ontario	Lib.
Manley, Hon. John, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
Marceau, Richard	Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier	Quebec	BQ
Marcil, Serge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Quebec	Lib.
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River	Manitoba	PC
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Ontario	Lib.
Martin, Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	CA
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Quebec	Lib.
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Matthews, Bill	Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Mayfield, Philip	Cariboo—Chilcotin	British Columbia	CA
McCallum, Hon. John, Minister of National Defence	Markham	Ontario	Lib.
McCormick, Larry	Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	Lib.
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
McGuire, Joe	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
McKay, John	Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Minister of Health	Edmonton West	Alberta	Lib.
McNally, Grant	Dewdney—Alouette	British Columbia	CA
McTeague, Dan	Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga—Maisonnette	Quebec	BQ
Meredith, Val	South Surrey—White Rock— Langley	British Columbia	CA
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CA
Milliken, Hon. Peter	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Alberta	CA
Mills, Dennis	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria, Beaches—East York	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.
Mitchell, Hon. Andy, Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	Lib.
Moore, James	Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CA

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Murphy, Shawn	Hillsborough	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Myers, Lynn	Waterloo—Wellington	Ontario	Lib.
Nault, Hon. Robert, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Kenora—Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.
Neville, Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Normand, Hon. Gilbert	Bellechasse—Etchemins— Montmagny—L'Islet	Quebec	Lib.
Nystrom, Hon. Lorne	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	NDP
O'Brien, Lawrence	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	Lib.
O'Reilly, John	Haliburton—Victoria—Brock	Ontario	Lib.
Obhrai, Deepak	Calgary East	Alberta	CA
Owen, Hon. Stephen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Quebec	Lib.
Pagtakhan, Hon. Rey, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development)	Winnipeg North—St. Paul	Manitoba	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CA
Pankiw, Jim	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	Ind.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	Quebec	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Denis, Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie)	Brome—Missisquoi	Quebec	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Quebec	Lib.
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	Alberta	CA
Peric, Janko	Cambridge	Ontario	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Quebec	BQ
Peschisolido, Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Richmond	British Columbia	Lib.
Peterson, Hon. Jim	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Pettigrew, Hon. Pierre, Minister for International Trade	Papineau—Saint-Denis	Quebec	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	Quebec	BQ
Pickard, Jerry	Chatham—Kent Essex	Ontario	Lib.
Pillitteri, Gary	Niagara Falls	Ontario	Lib.
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet— Bécancour	Quebec	BQ
Pratt, David	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	Lib.
Price, David	Compton—Stanstead	Quebec	Lib.
Proctor, Dick	Palliser	Saskatchewan	NDP
Proulx, Marcel, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Hull—Aylmer	Quebec	Lib.
Provenzano, Carmen	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	Lib.
Rajotte, James	Edmonton Southwest	Alberta	CA
Redman, Karen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Reed, Julian	Halton	Ontario	Lib.
Regan, Geoff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Carleton	Ontario	CA
Reynolds, John, West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	British Columbia	CA

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CA
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, President of the Treasury Board	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Quebec	Lib.
Robinson, Svend	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Rocheleau, Yves	Trois-Rivières	Quebec	BQ
Rock, Hon. Allan, Minister of Industry	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Matapédia—Matane	Quebec	BQ
Saada, Jacques	Brossard—La Prairie	Quebec	Lib.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	Quebec	BQ
Savoy, Andy	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	Lib.
Scherrer, Hélène	Louis-Hébert	Quebec	Lib.
Schmidt, Werner	Kelowna	British Columbia	CA
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Serré, Benoît	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Ontario	Lib.
Sgro, Judy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shepherd, Alex	Durham	Ontario	Lib.
Simard, Raymond	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	Lib.
Skelton, Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CA
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CA
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CA
Speller, Bob	Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant	Ontario	Lib.
Spencer, Larry	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CA
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil	Quebec	BQ
St-Jacques, Diane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development	Shefford	Quebec	Lib.
St-Julien, Guy	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik	Quebec	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin	Ontario	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stewart, Hon. Jane, Minister of Human Resources Development	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CA
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Strahl, Chuck	Fraser Valley	British Columbia	CA
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Telegdi, Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Thibault, Hon. Robert, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Thibeault, Yolande	Saint-Lambert	Quebec	Lib.
Thompson, Greg	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	PC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	CA
Tirabassi, Tony, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Niagara Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Toews, Vic	Provencher	Manitoba	CA
Tonks, Alan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Torsney, Paddy	Burlington	Ontario	Lib.
Tremblay, Suzanne	Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis	Quebec	BQ
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	Lib.
Valeri, Tony	Stoney Creek	Ontario	Lib.
Vanclief, Hon. Lyle, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CA
Venne, Pierrette	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Quebec	Ind. BQ
Volpe, Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Lib.
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Wayne, Elsie	Saint John	New Brunswick	PC
Whelan, Hon. Susan, Minister for International Cooperation	Essex	Ontario	Lib.
White, Randy	Langley—Abbotsford	British Columbia	CA
White, Ted	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CA
Wilfert, Bryon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Oak Ridges	Ontario	Lib.
Williams, John	St. Albert	Alberta	CA
Wood, Bob	Nipissing	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Lynne	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CA
VACANCY	Perth—Middlesex	Ontario	

N.B.: Under Political Affiliation: Lib. - Liberal; CA - Canadian Alliance; BQ - Bloc Quebecois; NDP - New Democratic Party; PC - Progressive Conservative Party; Ind. - Independent

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Second Session—Thirty Seventh Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (26)		
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	CA
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CA
Benoit, Leon	Lakeland	CA
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CA
Chatters, David	Athabasca	CA
Clark, Right Hon. Joe	Calgary Centre	PC
Epp, Ken	Elk Island	CA
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton Centre-East	CA
Grey, Deborah	Edmonton North	CA
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	CA
Harper, Stephen, Leader of the Opposition	Calgary Southwest	CA
Hill, Grant	Macleod	CA
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	CA
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	CA
Kenney, Jason	Calgary Southeast	CA
Kilgour, Hon. David, Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)	Edmonton Southeast	Lib.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Minister of Health	Edmonton West	Lib.
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	CA
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	CA
Obhrai, Deepak	Calgary East	CA
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	CA
Rajotte, James	Edmonton Southwest	CA
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	CA
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CA
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	CA
Williams, John	St. Albert	CA
BRITISH COLUMBIA (34)		
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay—Columbia	CA
Anderson, Hon. David, Minister of the Environment	Victoria	Lib.
Burton, Andy	Skeena	CA
Cadman, Chuck	Surrey North	CA
Cummins, John	Delta—South Richmond	CA
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Stockwell	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CA
Dhaliwal, Hon. Herb, Minister of Natural Resources	Vancouver South—Burnaby	Lib.
Duncan, John	Vancouver Island North	CA
Elley, Reed	Nanaimo—Cowichan	CA
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby	CA
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Gouk, Jim	Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan	CA
Grewal, Gurmant	Surrey Central	CA
Harris, Richard	Prince George—Bulkley Valley	CA
Hill, Jay	Prince George—Peace River	CA

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Hinton, Betty	Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys	CA
Leung, Sophia	Vancouver Kingsway	Lib.
Lunn, Gary	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CA
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CA
Martin, Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	CA
Mayfield, Philip	Cariboo—Chilcotin	CA
McNally, Grant	Dewdney—Alouette	CA
Meredith, Val	South Surrey—White Rock—Langley	CA
Moore, James	Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam	CA
Owen, Hon. Stephen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Peschisolido, Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Richmond	Lib.
Reynolds, John, West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast	CA
Robinson, Svend	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Schmidt, Werner	Kelowna	CA
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan—Shuswap	CA
Strahl, Chuck	Fraser Valley	CA
White, Randy	Langley—Abbotsford	CA
White, Ted	North Vancouver	CA

MANITOBA (13)

Alcock, Reg	Winnipeg South	Lib.
Blaikie, Bill	Winnipeg—Transcona	NDP
Borotsik, Rick	Brandon—Souris	PC
Desjarlais, Bev	Churchill	NDP
Harvard, John	Charleswood —St. James—Assiniboia	Lib.
Hilstrom, Howard	Selkirk—Interlake	CA
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River	PC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Pagtakhan, Hon. Rey, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development)	Winnipeg North—St. Paul	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	CA
Simard, Raymond	Saint Boniface	Lib.
Toews, Vic	Provencher	CA
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North Centre	NDP

NEW BRUNSWICK (10)

Bradshaw, Hon. Claudette, Minister of Labour	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
Castonguay, Jeannot, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Madawaska—Restigouche	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Herron, John	Fundy—Royal	PC
Hubbard, Charles, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Miramichi	Lib.
LeBlanc, Dominic, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Beauséjour—Petitcodiac	Lib.
Savoy, Andy	Tobique—Mactaquac	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Thompson, Greg	New Brunswick Southwest	PC
Wayne, Elsie	Saint John	PC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (4)		
Barnes, Rex	Gander—Grand Falls	PC
Byrne, Hon. Gerry, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	PC
Efford, R. John	Bonavista—Trinity—Conception	Lib.
Hearn, Loyola	St. John's West	PC
Matthews, Bill	Burin—St. George's	Lib.
O'Brien, Lawrence	Labrador	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Blondin-Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Secretary of State (Children and Youth)	Western Arctic	Lib.
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Scott	Kings—Hants	PC
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester	PC
Cuzner, Rodger, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister	Bras d'Or—Cape Breton	Lib.
Eyking, Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore	PC
Lill, Wendy	Dartmouth	NDP
MacKay, Peter	Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough	PC
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Geoff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	West Nova	Lib.
NUNAVUT (1)		
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Nunavut	Lib.
ONTARIO (101)		
Adams, Peter	Peterborough	Lib.
Assadourian, Sarkis, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Brampton Centre	Lib.
Augustine, Hon. Jean, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Barnes, Sue	London West	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Brampton West—Mississauga	Lib.
Bélair, Réginald, The Acting Speaker	Timmins—James Bay	Lib.
Bélanger, Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bellemare, Eugène	Ottawa—Orléans	Lib.
Bennett, Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio, Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)	Vaughan—King—Aurora	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Bonwick, Paul	Simcoe—Grey	Lib.
Boudria, Hon. Don, Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Lib.
Bryden, John	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot	Lib.
Bulte, Sarmite	Parkdale—High Park	Lib.
Caccia, Hon. Charles	Davenport	Lib.
Calder, Murray, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade	Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey	Lib.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Caplan, Hon. Elinor, Minister of National Revenue	Thornhill	Lib.
Carroll, Aileen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford	Lib.
Catterall, Marlene	Ottawa West—Nepean	Lib.
Chamberlain, Brenda	Guelph—Wellington	Lib.
Collenette, Hon. David, Minister of Transport	Don Valley East	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—St. Clair	NDP
Comuzzi, Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Lib.
Copps, Hon. Sheila, Minister of Canadian Heritage	Hamilton East	Lib.
Cullen, Roy	Etobicoke North	Lib.
DeVillers, Hon. Paul, Secretary of State (Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Simcoe North	Lib.
Dromisky, Stan	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Lib.
Eggleton, Hon. Art	York Centre	Lib.
Finlay, John	Oxford	Lib.
Fontana, Joe	London North Centre	Lib.
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CA
Galloway, Roger	Sarnia—Lambton	Lib.
Godfrey, John	Don Valley West	Lib.
Graham, Hon. Bill, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Toronto Centre—Rosedale	Lib.
Grose, Ivan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Oshawa	Lib.
Guarnieri, Albina	Mississauga East	Lib.
Harb, Mac	Ottawa Centre	Lib.
Ianno, Tony	Trinity—Spadina	Lib.
Jackson, Ovid	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Lib.
Jordan, Joe	Leeds—Grenville	Lib.
Karygiannis, Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Keyes, Stan	Hamilton West	Lib.
Kilger, Bob, The Deputy Speaker	Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh	Lib.
Knutson, Hon. Gar, Secretary of State (Central and Eastern Europe and Middle East)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Lib.
Kraft Sloan, Karen	York North	Lib.
Lastewka, Walt	St. Catharines	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Longfield, Judi	Whitby—Ajax	Lib.
Macklin, Paul Harold, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Northumberland	Lib.
Mahoney, Steve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Mississauga West	Lib.
Malhi, Gurbax, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour	Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale	Lib.
Maloney, John	Erie—Lincoln	Lib.
Manley, Hon. John, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance	Ottawa South	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Lib.
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John, Minister of National Defence	Markham	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
McCormick, Larry	Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Lib.
McKay, John	Scarborough East	Lib.
McTeague, Dan	Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge	Lib.
Milliken, Hon. Peter	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Mills, Dennis	Toronto—Danforth	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria, Beaches—East York	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Mitchell, Hon. Andy, Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Lib.
Myers, Lynn	Waterloo—Wellington	Lib.
Nault, Hon. Robert, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Kenora—Rainy River	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat	London—Fanshawe	Lib.
O'Reilly, John	Haliburton—Victoria—Brock	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga Centre	Lib.
Peric, Janko	Cambridge	Lib.
Peterson, Hon. Jim	Willowdale	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Lib.
Pickard, Jerry	Chatham—Kent Essex	Lib.
Pillitteri, Gary	Niagara Falls	Lib.
Pratt, David	Nepean—Carleton	Lib.
Provenzano, Carmen	Sault Ste. Marie	Lib.
Redman, Karen	Kitchener Centre	Lib.
Reed, Julian	Halton	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Carleton	CA
Rock, Hon. Allan, Minister of Industry	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.
Serré, Benoît	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Lib.
Sgro, Judy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	York West	Lib.
Shepherd, Alex	Durham	Lib.
Speller, Bob	Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stewart, Hon. Jane, Minister of Human Resources Development	Brant	Lib.
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.
Tirabassi, Tony, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Niagara Centre	Lib.
Tonks, Alan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	York South—Weston	Lib.
Torsney, Paddy	Burlington	Lib.
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Lib.
Valeri, Tony	Stoney Creek	Lib.
Vanclief, Hon. Lyle, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Prince Edward—Hastings	Lib.
Volpe, Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.
Whelan, Hon. Susan, Minister for International Cooperation	Essex	Lib.
Wilfert, Bryon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Oak Ridges	Lib.
Wood, Bob	Nipissing	Lib.
VACANCY	Perth—Middlesex	
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Easter, Hon. Wayne, Solicitor General of Canada	Malpeque	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
McGuire, Joe	Egmont	Lib.
Murphy, Shawn	Hillsborough	Lib.
QUEBEC (71)		
Allard, Carole-Marie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Laval East	Lib.
Assad, Mark	Gatineau	Lib.
Asselin, Gérard	Charlevoix	BQ
Bachand, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	PC
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	BQ
Bakopanos, Eleni, The Acting Speaker	Ahuntsic	Lib.
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères—Les-Patriotes	BQ
Bertrand, Robert	Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle	Lib.
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—Petite-Patrie	BQ
Binet, Gérard	Frontenac—Mégantic	Lib.
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	BQ
Brien, Pierre	Témiscamingue	Ind.
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	BQ
Carignan, Jean-Guy	Québec East	Lib. Ind.
Cauchon, Hon. Martin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Outremont	Lib.
Charbonneau, Yvon	Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies	Lib.
Chrétien, Right Hon. Jean, Prime Minister	Saint-Maurice	Lib.
Coderre, Hon. Denis, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Bourassa	Lib.
Cotler, Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup— Témiscouata—Les Basques	BQ
Dalphond-Guiral, Madeleine	Laval Centre	BQ
Desrochers, Odina	Lotbinière—L'Érable	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Discepola, Nick	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Lib.
Drouin, Hon. Claude, Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)	Beauce	Lib.
Dubé, Antoine	Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	BQ
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	BQ
Duplain, Claude, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Portneuf	Lib.
Farrah, Georges, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok	Lib.
Folco, Raymonde	Laval West	Lib.
Fournier, Ghislain	Manicouagan	BQ
Frulla, Liza	Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul— Pointe Saint-Charles	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Gagnon, Marcel	Champlain	BQ
Gagnon, Sébastien	Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay	BQ
Gaudet, Roger	Berthier—Montcalm	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval	BQ
Girard-Bujold, Jocelyne	Jonquière	BQ
Guay, Monique	Laurentides	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Guimond, Michel	Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans	BQ
Harvey, André, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Lib.
Jennings, Marlene, Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	Mercier	BQ
Lanctôt, Robert	Châteauguay	BQ
Lebel, Ghislain	Chambly	Ind.
Lincoln, Clifford	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Marceau, Richard	Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier	BQ
Marcil, Serge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Lib.
Martin, Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga—Maisonneuve	BQ
Normand, Hon. Gilbert	Bellechasse—Etchemins—Montmagny—L'Islet	Lib.
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Denis, Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie)	Brome—Missisquoi	Lib.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Pettigrew, Hon. Pierre, Minister for International Trade	Papineau—Saint-Denis	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Price, David	Compton—Stanstead	Lib.
Proulx, Marcel, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, President of the Treasury Board	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Rocheleau, Yves	Trois-Rivières	BQ
Roy, Jean-Yves	Matapédia—Matane	BQ
Saada, Jacques	Brossard—La Prairie	Lib.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	BQ
Scherrer, Hélène	Louis-Hébert	Lib.
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil	BQ
St-Jacques, Diane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development	Shefford	Lib.
St-Julien, Guy	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik	Lib.
Thibeault, Yolande	Saint-Lambert	Lib.
Tremblay, Suzanne	Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis	BQ
Venne, Pierrette	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Ind. BQ
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CA
Bailey, Roy	Souris—Moose Mountain	CA
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CA
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CA
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Wascana	Lib.
Laliberte, Rick	Churchill River	Lib.
Nystrom, Hon. Lorne	Regina—Qu'Appelle	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Pankiw, Jim	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Ind.
Proctor, Dick	Palliser	NDP
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CA
Skelton, Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CA
Spencer, Larry	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CA
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CA
Yelich, Lynne	Blackstrap	CA
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Larry	Yukon	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of February 14, 2003 — 2nd Session, 37th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Chair:	Raymond Bonin	Vice-Chairs:	Nancy Karetak-Lindell Maurice Vellacott	
Gérard Binet	John Godfrey	Inky Mark	Brian Pallister	(16)
Serge Cardin	Charles Hubbard	Pat Martin	Julian Reed	
David Chatters	Yvan Loubier	Anita Neville	Benoît Serré	
Stan Dromisky				

Associate Members

Jim Abbott	John Cummins	Jay Hill	Gilles-A. Perron
Diane Ablonczy	Stockwell Day	Howard Hilstrom	James Rajotte
Rob Anders	Bev Desjarlais	Betty Hinton	Scott Reid
David Anderson	Norman Doyle	Rahim Jaffer	John Reynolds
Gérard Asselin	John Duncan	Dale Johnston	Gerry Ritz
André Bachand	Reed Elley	Gerald Keddy	Jean-Yves Roy
Claude Bachand	Ken Epp	Jason Kenney	Werner Schmidt
Roy Bailey	Brian Fitzpatrick	Robert Lanctôt	Carol Skelton
Rex Barnes	Paul Forseth	Gary Lunn	Monte Solberg
Leon Benoit	Ghislain Fournier	James Lunney	Kevin Sorenson
Stéphane Bergeron	Cheryl Gallant	Peter MacKay	Larry Spencer
Bernard Bigras	Yvon Godin	Richard Marceau	Darrel Stinson
Rick Borotsik	Peter Goldring	Keith Martin	Chuck Strahl
Garry Breitzkreuz	Jim Gouk	Philip Mayfield	Greg Thompson
Scott Brison	Gurmant Grewal	Grant McNally	Myron Thompson
Andy Burton	Deborah Grey	Val Meredith	Vic Toews
Chuck Cadman	Art Hanger	Rob Merrifield	Elsie Wayne
Bill Casey	Stephen Harper	Bob Mills	Randy White
Rick Casson	Richard Harris	James Moore	Ted White
Joe Clark	Loyola Hearn	Lorne Nystrom	John Williams
Joe Comartin	John Herron	Deepak Obhrai	Lynne Yelich
Paul Crête	Grant Hill	Charlie Penson	

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair:	Paul Steckle	Vice-Chairs:	Howard Hilstrom Rose-Marie Ur
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Rick Borotsik	Marcel Gagnon	Larry McCormick	Bob Speller
Garry Breitzkreuz			

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Odina Desrochers	Gerald Keddy	James Rajotte	Lynne Yelich
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CANADIAN HERITAGE

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Vice-Chairs:

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Wendy Lill
Dennis Mills

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Chair: Joe Fontana

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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Charles Caccia

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FINANCE**Chair:**

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Ted White
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Lynne Yelich

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Chair: Tom Wappel

Vice-Chairs: Rodger Cuzner
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R. John Efford
Reed Elley

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Dominic LeBlanc

Bill Matthews
Joe Peschisolido
Carmen Provenzano

Yves Rocheleau
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Brian Pallister
Charlie Penson
James Rajotte
Scott Reid

John Reynolds
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Svend Robinson
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Aileen Carroll	Art Eggleton	Francine Lalonde	Karen Redman	
Bill Casey	Mark Eyking	Keith Martin		

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Rob Anders	Brian Fitzpatrick	James Lunney	Benoît Sauvageau
David Anderson	Raymonde Folco	Peter MacKay	Werner Schmidt
André Bachand	Paul Forseth	Inky Mark	Carol Skelton
Claude Bachand	Cheryl Gallant	Pat Martin	Monte Solberg
Roy Bailey	Peter Goldring	Brian Masse	Kevin Sorenson
Sue Barnes	Jim Gouk	Philip Mayfield	Bob Speller
Colleen Beaumier	Gurmant Grewal	Grant McNally	Larry Spencer
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Bernard Bigras	Art Hanger	Rob Merrifield	Peter Stoffer
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Rick Borotsik	Stephen Harper	James Moore	Greg Thompson
Garry Breitkreuz	Richard Harris	Shawn Murphy	Myron Thompson
Scott Brison	Loyola Hearn	Lorne Nystrom	Vic Toews
Andy Burton	John Herron	Brian Pallister	Tony Valeri
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Rick Casson	Jay Hill	Charlie Penson	Joseph Volpe
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Joe Clark	Betty Hinton	James Rajotte	Randy White
Paul Crête	Rahim Jaffer	Scott Reid	Ted White
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Stockwell Day	Betty Hinton		

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Joe Clark	Grant Hill	Brian Pallister	Ted White
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Rodger Cuzner	Howard Hilstrom	James Moore	Yolande Thibeault
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Mauril Bélanger	Walt Lastewka			

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