



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, November 24, 2004  
(Part A)**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 24, 2004

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Don Valley East.

*[Members sang the national anthem]*

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PHYSICS

**Hon. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the UN designated 2005 as the International Year of Physics in recognition of the 100th anniversary of Einstein's papers on the photoelectric effect, Brownian motion and the size of molecules and the theory of relativity that led to the famous equation  $E=mc^2$ .

The Canadian Association of Physics will celebrate the year through a lecture tour on the theme "Einstein's legacy", a string quartet composed in honour of the year and a Herzberg lecture entitled "Was Einstein Right?". These and other activities can be found on <http://www.cap.ca/wyp2005.html>.

Canada has a fine record in physics. For example, physics research has helped us deal with challenges related to the development of a sustainable society, including environmental conservation, clean energy sources, public health and security in this 21st century.

I congratulate the Association of Physicists on its fine work and wish its members well during this special year.

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### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a cold summer night may be an inconvenience, but for grain producers sub-zero temperatures in August are a nightmare. In one night bumper crops became worthless fields. No one could have

predicted such a natural disaster, but the August 20 frost that hit Saskatchewan was just that, a disaster.

Our producers, still struggling to pay this year's farming bills, do not know where they will find the money to plant their 2005 crop. The CAIS program is only an income stabilization program, not a disaster relief program. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has admitted as much.

Our producers need an avenue of financial support. It is high time the federal government recognized the plight of producers by designing true disaster relief programs that meet the needs of producers caught in desperate situations beyond their control.

The 2004 crop has become known among our farmers as the best crop there never was. Without proper support from the government, it may also be their last.

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### HEPATITIS C

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week the Government of Canada announced its intention to enter into discussions on options for financial compensation to people who were infected with hepatitis C through the blood system before January 1, 1986 and after July 1, 1990.

The ravages of this disease and its effect on the individual and families involved has been immeasurable. The disease has stripped away health, careers, home and has caused unspeakable anxiety.

At one time, Canada's blood scandal made for daily headlines. However, even after it disappeared from the news, victims have continued living with the consequences every day.

I applaud the measures taken by the government to build upon its previous commitment to ensure that those people infected with hepatitis C before 1986 and after 1990 are attended to. They have asked us to re-examine the options for compensation. Their voice has not been forgotten. We are listening and we hope and believe that this is the right and the responsible thing to do.

An accountable government such as ours engages its efforts not exclusively in determining the vision for a healthier future, but also ensuring that the needs of Canadians across the country are attended to.

*S. O. 31*

[*Translation*]

**LÉA JOBIN**

**Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we cannot let winning seven Quebec titles in athletics go unheralded, and that is exactly what Léa Jobin, a young track and field athlete from Drummondville has just done. Léa was recently named athlete of the year at the Athlétas gala.

This tiny and self-effacing dynamo really made a name for herself over one summer. Among her achievements: a javelin record, with an amazing 28.86 metre throw, and a prodigious long jump of 4.40 metres.

Like her fellow athletes, Léa needs considerable financial support to advance in her career. Quality equipment, training and competing in the various meets all run up huge bills.

It is therefore important for the government to make a commitment to support developmental athletes.

Congratulations to Drummondville's Léa Jobin, Quebec athlete of the year.

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[*English*]

**CHILD POVERTY**

**Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the month of November marks the anniversary of an all party resolution in the House of Commons to eliminate child poverty. On November 24, 1989, the House of Commons unanimously resolved to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children. Despite consecutive years of economic growth, more than one million children, or almost one child in six, still lives in poverty in Canada.

As government representatives gather to develop a national child care plan, my constituents call upon them to build a solid foundation that supports a universal, high quality public program.

As members of Parliament we can help guide Canada toward a quality, universal, accessible, developmental and inclusive child care system.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has failed to provide sufficient resources for the RCMP in the province of Manitoba.

One of the major policing issues in rural Manitoba is that 35 of the 65 designated highway patrol officers have been transferred out of highway patrol, leaving only 30 RCMP highway patrol officers for the entire province. This often leaves accident scenes without police attendance and long stretches of major highways and the border without regular patrols.

At the same time there are also fewer officers to deal with other policing issues such as violent crime.

On behalf of the people of Provencher and across the province of Manitoba, I call upon the federal public safety minister to work with

Manitoba's minister of justice to increase the number of police officers in the province to meet the demands of public safety.

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• (1410)

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, agriculture and agrifood production is a key driving force of Canada's economy, which produces \$25 billion in agrifood exports annually.

Canadians enjoy an affordable and safe food supply that is the envy of the world. GrowCanada's partners contribute to our regional and national economy, producing industrial raw materials, finished products and many other markets beyond food and fibre.

Tangible benefits from plant science innovations are vital to our evolving agri-economy. That is why I am proud to sponsor this evening's reception, in the Commonwealth room, entitled, "Canada: Where Innovation Takes Root", hosted by CropLife Canada and its GrowCanada partners, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Grain Growers of Canada and the Canola Council of Canada.

I urge all hon. members to attend this event and support innovation and Canadian agriculture. If we ate today, let us thank a farmer.

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[*Translation*]

**ASSOCIATION DU CANCER DE L'EST DU QUÉBEC**

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this Friday, November 26, from 7 p.m. until midnight, the people of my region will have an opportunity to again show their generosity and solidarity for a good cause.

This will be the 15th annual Télé-Info for the eastern Quebec cancer association, a live broadcast from the studios of CFER-TV in Pointe-au-Père.

With this information and fund-raising activity, the association expects to collect some \$115,000 with which to continue providing its many services. Télé-Info will feature testimonials from people affected by cancer and information on the services that are available.

The telethon will be hosted by none other than well-known TV personality Suzanne Lapointe, who has had a bout with cancer herself.

When we know that, within a few years, one person in two will experience cancer at some point in their lives, it is more important than ever to be informed and to take immediate action.

The theme of this 15th annual telethon will be "United for life". I invite my fellow citizens to listen to their hearts and get out their cheque books, and unite for life.

[English]

### MUSIC INDUSTRY

**Mr. Andy Savoy (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to inform the House that Music in Canada Coalition, or MICC, is in Ottawa today for the first time, meeting with all parties on matters of great economic and cultural importance. MICC unites, with one voice, more than two dozen associations representing the more than 46,000 Canadians working in all aspects of the music industry.

The Canadian music industry continues to grow new talent and increase its presence on the domestic and international music scenes, due in large part to the Government of Canada's support through the Canada music fund which expires at the end of this year.

Canadians from every province, territory and constituency have benefited from the Canada music fund, and all Canadians benefit from its success.

The Department of Canadian Heritage, in its latest report on plans and priorities, clearly speaks of the fund's success when it states, "Continued, stable investment in sound recording through the Canada Music Fund is essential to continued growth and success".

I urge all members of the House to support MICC in its call to renew the Canada music fund with long term stable funding to help the Canadian music industry address ongoing challenges, new technology and an increasingly competitive landscape.

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### TAXATION

**Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while all Canadians are already experiencing a winter without NHL hockey, the finance minister is doing his best to end junior hockey in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Jr. Hockey League is the only junior hockey league in Canada where the players, through their sponsors, are taxed on the room and board per diem that they receive.

For two years the Minister of Finance has done absolutely nothing to help teams in his home province. It is a disgrace that he has done nothing to help the SJHL. It includes teams like the Humboldt Broncos, a team in my constituency which is the heart of the town of Humboldt, a team which demonstrates the best of Canada and a team which is stuck with a \$10,000 discriminatory tax bill.

Fortunately, the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands has presented Bill C-285 to protect the SJHL.

While the Minister of Finance has done nothing to help protect Saskatchewan hockey, all other Saskatchewan MPs do support the bill and will support Saskatchewan hockey.

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### TAEKWONDO ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

**Mr. Marc Godbout (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last September I visited the Demers Taekwon-Do in my riding to speak about the importance of supporting our young people and to present the Canadian flag to the junior boys and girls of the Taekwondo Association of Canada's national team. At that time they were

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preparing for the taekwondo world championships in Daejeon City in South Korea. The championship was held in October.

Five members of the Canadian junior team live in my riding. Two members of the junior girls team brought home gold medals. Today I would like to recognize them: Annik Laferrier, 1st Dan, age 17; and Jessica Ford, 1st Dan, age 17.

• (1415)

[Translation]

I would like very much to pay tribute to the determination and devotion shown by these young people.

[English]

Finally, I wish to recognize their coach, Michel Demers, 5th Dan; coordinator, Mr. Harry Burke; and, most important, the parents, Mrs. Diane Laferrier and Mr. John Ford.

[Translation]

Congratulations to Annik and Jessica. Ottawa—Orléans and Canada are very proud of them.

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[English]

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of the women's committee of the Canadian Labour Congress and their postcard campaign "15 Days, 15 Ways to End Violence Against Women".

From now until December 6, Canadians can send a postcard a day to remind the Prime Minister his government needs to do more than just make promises to help end violence against women.

This December 6 will mark 15 years since 14 young women were murdered at Montreal's École polytechnique because they were women.

This month is also Family Violence Awareness Month, a sad reminder that violence also comes not just from strangers but often from those closest to us.

It is time to act. The Canadian Labour Congress has shown us 15 ways to make it happen. Now the government must show us it has the will to end violence against women.

Our thanks go out to the Canadian Labour Congress for its vision and its campaign to end violence against women.

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### BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Newton—North Delta, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, British Columbians are fed up with the Liberal Prime Minister's empty rhetoric on western alienation. We want action.

### Oral Questions

The Liberals have mismanaged the Fraser River salmon fishery, failed to open the U.S. border to live Canadian cattle, mishandled avian flu, are permitting the softwood lumber crisis to continue, and have done little to save our forests from the pine beetle.

They closed CFB Chilliwack, turned off Pacific lighthouses and foghorns, and ripped the heart out of the Pacific Coast Guard. They provide inadequate emergency preparedness, under-resource the RCMP, and allow marijuana grow ops and crime to flourish.

Our streets and highways are congested, while cities wait for gas tax money. Hospitals are underfunded and university tuition is skyrocketing. Federal jobs and contracts are moving east. B.C. is under-represented in the Senate.

The Prime Minister talks the talk but does not walk the walk. British Columbians will not be fooled by the Liberals.

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[Translation]

### SWINE PRODUCTION

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to highlight the opening of a research and training centre for pork production at the Ferme-école Desjardins de Lanaudière, in Saint-Thomas-de-Joliette.

The region of Lanaudière and Quebec is expecting good things of this centre, which will test alternative manure management techniques incorporating sawdust that are more environmentally friendly and will improve quality of life and production efficiency.

The pork industry generates nearly 30,000 direct and indirect jobs in Quebec, some 2,000 of them in Lanaudière.

Lanaudière also gains a research centre that will promote pork production techniques using thin bedding, which is later composted, reducing odour problems by 80% both in the barns and on the fields.

This new research and training centre is unique in Quebec and will also be used to train students in agricultural techniques, train workers in pork production, and promote the use of this technique.

I congratulate the chair of the board, Gilles Martineau, and all the partners who have created this wonderful project.

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[English]

### UKRAINE

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Ukraine have been cheated out of democracy and freedom by widespread irregularities and corruption in their recent election. These transgressions have been well-documented by observers from Ukraine and from around the world, including observers from Canada.

All Canadians, especially those of Ukrainian backgrounds, are deeply upset by this unfair election and expect that Canada will take tough and direct action by sending a clear message to Ukraine that we will not recognize the results of a bogus election. These people are counting on the Liberal government to take real action and to take a real position for a change to have this bogus result overturned.

So far the Prime Minister's actions have been weak and indecisive. Canadians, especially those with close connections to Ukraine, deserve more.

When will the Prime Minister take a stand on their behalf, clearly condemn this corruption and demand the democratic will of Ukrainians be honoured?

\* \* \*

● (1420)

### UKRAINE

**Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the situation in the Ukraine is critical.

Glasnost and perestroika, which the world celebrated 15 years ago with the destruction of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain, is under siege.

The will of the Ukrainian people to choose their own government must be respected. The Russian government must not interfere in Ukraine's internal affairs.

I call upon the Canadian government to use all international forums, such as OSCE, NATO, the European Union and the United Nations to defend the right of the Ukrainian people to democratically elect a government of their own choice.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### UKRAINE

**Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, millions of people are on the streets of Ukraine and elsewhere to protest irregularities in that country's elections. There is a real danger that these irregularities could result in an illegitimate regime in Kiev.

Is the government willing to tell Ukrainian Canadians and all Canadians that it is willing to take action and willing to send signals that it will withhold recognition or even assistance to ensure that after a century of struggle against Soviet communism, Ukraine will never again return to undemocratic rule?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon on behalf of the Prime Minister, and, I know, everyone in the House, and the people of Canada.

Considering the allegations of serious and significant electoral fraud from international and Canadian election observers, the Government of Canada cannot accept that the announced results by the central election commission reflect the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people. Therefore Canada rejects the announced final results.

The Government of Canada calls for a full, open and transparent review of the election process. Canada will have no choice but to examine its relations with Ukraine if the authorities fail to provide election results that reflect the democratic will of the people of that country.

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#### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the government for that answer and I look forward to the government working with Secretary of State Powell and our other allies to ensure that this situation changes course and returns to democracy.

In the meantime, I am obliged to return to irregularities in Canada.

I want to ask the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to confirm that she today dismissed her chief of staff, and, if that is true, to divulge to the House the full reasons for that dismissal.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since when are we supposed to be discussing personnel issues of our staff on the floor of the House of Commons?

When I came to Ottawa it was my understanding that the House of Commons was a place that was respected and where we had proper debate on issues and matters of overall importance to Canada.

**Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am in disbelief with an answer like that. I do not know how the minister thinks the goings on in her office are not her responsibility in the House. It is yet another non-answer to a question.

If her chief of staff is gone, if it was not good enough for him to wait for the report from the Ethics Commissioner, why should we wait for her report from the Ethics Commissioner? Should she not be gone as well?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times in the House, there is a process in place.

The minister has made it absolutely plain that she wants to be transparent and she will be held accountable. In fact we have a process, which is an independent Ethics Commissioner.

The Ethics Commissioner is investigating this matter. The minister has indicated that she is happy to have the report of the Ethics Commissioner made public.

I think we should all await the outcome of that process before prejudging circumstances and calling into question the good character and reputation of members of Parliament.

• (1425)

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's dance of a thousand veils on the exotic dancer file continues.

The minister, in her answer, says that she respects the Privacy Act, but she has allowed the casual examination of confidential files, not only in her campaign office, but also in a strip club.

#### Oral Questions

It turns out that the minister's potentially former chief of staff carelessly discussed immigration files in her campaign office and a strip club.

The only thing thinner than the minister's adherence to privacy is perhaps some of the costumes in that club. When will she resign?

**Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think opposition members are getting pretty desperate. They never let the facts get in the way of anything. As long as it is a good story, they are going to throw it out. There are clear media reports, since they believe everything they read in the media, that the critic herself acknowledged that she did not actually receive any information. There were no violations of the Privacy Act.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, these are serious improprieties. There are over 679,000 immigration applications waiting to be processed. They include people who may wait up to two years and they cannot casually drop into the minister's campaign office for help.

Let us review the facts. A stripper with an expired visa, working in the minister's campaign office, is permitted to jump the queue. The minister abuses her position by allowing this campaign worker to bypass the system and move ahead of legitimate applicants, and breaches the Privacy Act along the way.

When is the minister going to do the right thing? Is her chief of staff still working for her, and when will she resign?

**Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have clearly indicated, I, not them, have asked the Ethics Commissioner to see if there were any improprieties or any breach of ethics on any of the issues that have been raised here.

Clearly, I wish that the Ethics Commissioner would report yesterday, not tomorrow. We must wait for his decision. That is why we hired an independent Ethics Commissioner. We, in this government, established an independent Ethics Commissioner to give guidance and advice to all of us in the House.

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[Translation]

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General was very clear in her report yesterday on the subject of employment insurance. The only expenditures that can be charged to the employment insurance account are benefit expenditures and administrative expenses.

In light of this stark observation by the Auditor General, how can the government continue to refuse to improve the program when, again this year, another \$2 billion was diverted from the account, for a total of \$46 billion?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the rate was established for this year at \$1.98, it was fully the expectation that it would provide a balance between revenues coming in and expenditures going out. Of course, when we set the rate for the coming year, we will again attempt to achieve that balance between revenues coming in and benefits going out. We expect to make that announcement in the next few days.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is a joke. A mere \$46 billion was diverted from the account by the government. A minor detail

In front of millions of viewers, during the leaders' debate, the Prime Minister himself made a commitment to review the 910 hour rule determining eligibility.

What is the government waiting for to meet this commitment made by the Prime Minister? He will not be able to back out because he made this commitment in front of millions of people.

*[English]*

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is taking the necessary time to ensure that the appropriate and correct decisions are made rather than policies scribbled down on the back of an envelope, as I gather is being recommended by the Bloc Québécois. However, I can assure the hon. gentleman that in the coming year he and Canadian workers can look forward to lower rates and higher benefits.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister makes a promise it is serious. The Prime Minister made two promises. He promised to reduce the 910 hour requirement and he promised, in Rimouski, to find a way to improve the situation and do more for seasonal workers.

In light of repeated criticism by the Auditor General and of the promises by the Prime Minister, how can the government continue to ignore workers' complaints by stubbornly refusing to correct the situation?

● (1430)

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have already begun to correct the situation. We proposed changes a few months ago, but obviously the hon. members opposite do not read the papers. I said we were going to correct the anomalies and we are in the process of doing so. However, we will not present a slapdash and incomplete plan.

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the situation certainly has not been corrected. This is the fifth time the Auditor General has said that the government is not respecting the spirit of the law. To help the government respect the spirit of the law, the Bloc Québécois has tabled two bills: one to improve the employment insurance system and another to set up an independent fund.

Since these two bills correspond directly with what the Auditor General is saying, does the government intend to support these two Bloc bills, since it was the Prime Minister himself who promised these things?

*[English]*

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is obviously examining all issues very carefully with respect to employment insurance. In the short run, we have the issue of setting the rate which indeed is authorized for us to do by law. We will be doing that in the next number of days. The hon. gentleman will see lower rates and higher benefits in due course. He will also see that the government takes very seriously the concerns of Canadian workers and the people who employ those workers.

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**CHILD POVERTY**

**Hon. Ed Broadbent (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 1989 the Prime Minister joined with other Liberals in voting to put an end to child poverty in Canada. During the 1990s, despite growing surpluses which now total some \$61 billion, the government did virtually nothing about it.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. How can the government justify the shameful fact that today a million of our kids are in poverty even more than in 1989?

**Hon. Ken Dryden (Minister of Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the results of the report that the hon. member refers to are disappointing. After six straight years, when the child poverty rates went down, this report says that they have gone up. All of that has been helped in the last few years by a better economy, lower unemployment rates, an increase in the national child benefit, and now new initiatives in terms of child care. However, I and other ministers in the House will continue to work in areas that affect child poverty. I am sure that the provincial governments will do the same.

**Hon. Ed Broadbent (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during the 1990s, when this government continued with its cutbacks in spite of building surpluses, countries including Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and a couple of others acted on child poverty and virtually eliminated it.

Will the government put an end to the hypocrisy and commit itself today to targeted reductions in child poverty in the years ahead?

**Hon. Ken Dryden (Minister of Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, in the last number of years there have been significant efforts made in the area of child poverty, including a dramatically increased national child benefit and the announcement of a very ambitious child care program. We will continue to work in areas that affect child poverty, as other ministers in this government will, and as will the provincial governments.



### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, reports are leaking out that the immigration minister has fired her chief of staff. The minister has not denied that in the House. I would like to remind the House that he is an individual who is more than just a chief of staff. He has been with the minister since her days on Toronto city council. They have been working very closely for a long time.

My question is simple. Is Mr. Wons taking a bullet for the minister today?

• (1435)

**Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I have not fired my chief of staff. Second, it is demeaning to stand here and throw people's names, whether it is the public or staff who work for us, and have them bandied around here as if they are useless people, while members stand here under the immunity of Parliament. I think it is disrespectful for Parliament.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister obviously has a problem understanding the seriousness of this situation. She has been found to have helped a campaign worker jump the queue. She rushed that through three days before the election. Her campaign staff, including her chief of staff, were doing confidential immigration business in her campaign office. They were charging expenses to her ministerial budget while they were working on her campaign. They failed to report a deportee with a Canada-wide arrest warrant to the authorities.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one has to wonder why we all talked about the need for an independent ethics counsellor for 10 years. We now have it as a result of this Prime Minister and this government.

I have asked them to look at this, to see exactly where we are going, and to seek the advice of the Ethics Commissioner. I am totally confident that there has been no breach of ethics and that will be found when he reports back. Let us wait until the Ethics Commissioner reports back.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has tried to portray the granting of a minister's permit to a stripper as an act of compassion. However, we now know that for senior aide Ihor Wons it was regular operating procedure to meet with the owners of strip clubs. They would discuss ways to circumvent the immigration system in order to bring exotic dancers into this country.

How many permits did the minister sign as a result of Mr. Wons' rendezvous at these clubs?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are hearing from the same member the most unfounded and outrageous allegations. He has tried to do this before in this House. If he has any evidence of the allegations he just made, let him table that evidence in this House today.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we ask questions so we can get to the bottom of these allegations. This minister continues to fail Canadians by not exposing her role in this. Allegations that eight women were improperly granted landed immigrant status by this minister's official have recently come to

### Oral Questions

light. Once again, the minister and her staff are in the middle of scandal.

Will the minister finally take the responsibility for her role in this scandal and resign?

**Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not take any lessons from that sanctimonious parliamentarian over there who is a disgrace in this Parliament. If the member has any proof of those allegations, he should put them on the table now, or shut up and sit down.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I think it would be helpful if all hon. members kept quiet.

The hon. member for Saint-Lambert.

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[Translation]

### CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, recent government comments on the draft convention on cultural diversity are extremely vague on two of the key issues raised. As far as relations between the WTO and the convention in particular, the position is totally nebulous.

What I want to know from the minister is, what position does Canada have in mind to ensure that the countries concerned have the means to protect their culture when they feel it is under serious threat? Also, what exactly did she mean yesterday with her reference to wanting a convention that is legally applicable?

• (1440)

**Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our comments on the preliminary draft are now available on the net. First, I would point out that comments on the draft were gathered from all provinces.

Second, article 19 states specifically that the convention should be legally applicable, protect the cultures of the various countries, and enable the countries to have cultural policies and regulations that protect their individual cultural expression.

That is the objective of the convention. It will be discussed this afternoon in the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

**Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the federal government's comments on the Internet last week, it had absolutely nothing to say about the second element of the UNESCO convention, the dispute settlement mechanisms.

Is its refusal to commit to the necessity of having such a mechanism not merely proof that, in actual fact, the government's true position is to subordinate the convention to the WTO rules?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would begin by suggesting that my colleague take a look at article 19. Canada has played a lead role as far as cultural diversity is concerned. Canada is the one responsible internationally for bringing all of the countries together, not just the members of the Francophonie. We will continue to play that lead role. This convention must be legally applicable. Culture is protected, and will continue to be protected under the convention.

\* \* \*

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday, at the Quebec Liberal Party convention, Jean Charest spoke about Quebec's jurisdictions at the international level and said that what comes under Quebec's jurisdiction at home comes under it everywhere.

Is the government prepared to recognize that Quebec has a right to have its own voice at the international level, as regards its own jurisdictions?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that Canada speaks with one voice at the international level. Quebec is often represented in Canadian delegations, as are other provinces. This was the case at UNESCO and at other international forums. We continue to cooperate with our partners, the provinces.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Jean Charest made the same statement in Charlottetown when he said that it is up to Quebec to assume its internal jurisdictions at the international level. Contrary to what she is saying today, at the time, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said that she could live in perfect harmony with such remarks.

Therefore, will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs commit to asking her government to allow Quebec to have its own voice abroad, as regards its own jurisdictions?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always somewhat amusing to see the Bloc Québécois trying to be the spokesperson for the federalist government in Quebec City. This is always a bit of a surprise to me.

Right now, we have a case in point with the Francophone Summit. The premiers of Quebec and New Brunswick, and the Prime Minister of Canada, are working in partnership at the summit. This is an example to follow.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what a tangled web we weave. Denial after denial as the minister claims ignorance about the involvement of her chief of staff with strip club owners trying to get visas for exotic dancers.

Today's *Toronto Sun* says:

Terry Koumoudouros, president of House of Lancaster 1 and 2, said he met with Ihor Wons, [the minister's] senior policy adviser, at his club on The Queensway.

I called him (Wons) up...He came down and I asked for him to help me get the girls from the Dominican Republic.

What was the minister's right-hand person doing meeting at strip clubs to get these—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me also be very clear that I disapprove of this kind of business that was referred to, this industry. I am on record when it comes to all of those issues that involve women and I will fight on them any day. But we also have an obligation for minister's staff that have to meet with people when they are asked to do so. That is exactly what the staff member was doing.

● (1445)

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable. The minister's right-hand man for years and years goes and meets with the owner of strip clubs to give preferential treatment to people trying to get exotic dancers into the country while 600,000 legal immigrants are in line trying to get into this country.

The minister has made a disgrace of her office by breaking the rules and by not answering questions in the House. If she thinks what her chief of staff did was wrong, then has she fired him? If not, why not? Why will she not take responsibility instead of having him take the bullet?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is disgraceful, and we have seen it day after day, is how those hon. members—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Calgary Southeast asked a question and he is entitled to hear the answer. I cannot hear the answer because there is so much noise. I urge hon. members to restrain themselves. I know it is Wednesday, but the Deputy Prime Minister has the floor and we will hear the answer. Pity the member for Calgary Southeast who wants to hear this.

**Hon. Anne McLellan:** Mr. Speaker, what is disgraceful here is in fact how the hon. member chooses to misrepresent the *Toronto Sun* article. Is it not interesting how he only quotes from some portion of that article? I do believe that if he went on and was honest and fair with the members of this House, it would become clear that within that article is stated the fact that no preferential treatment was given to anyone.

**Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 70% of my community casework is about this dysfunctional immigration department. We now learn that this favoured dancer that we have been talking about, and her husband, first went to their own MP and were told, "Follow the rules". Then the couple went to the immigration minister's campaign office in the election and were able to trade their political work for a government benefit. That is against the law.

Members of this House obey the law. Why cannot the minister?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I say this one more time, if that hon. member has—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Once again I remind the House. The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam asked a question and he has a supplementary. How can he ask a supplementary if he cannot hear the answer to the question? The Deputy Prime Minister has the floor. We will hear the answer.

**Hon. Anne McLellan:** Mr. Speaker, as I have asked before, if that hon. member has any evidence to support the allegation that he has just made, I ask him to table that evidence in this House this afternoon.

**Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the evasions continue. We have heard about the Ethics Commissioner, but it cannot be used to cover for ministerial accountability.

I put this to the Deputy Prime Minister. Everyone knows that the immigration department is in an absolute mess. The Prime Minister promised during the election to clean things up.

Will the Prime Minister just keep his word, assign some real priority to this national disgrace, replace the minister of immigration, and stop the ongoing damage to Canada's international reputation with this very poorly run department?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it only somewhat strange that this party in particular is now expressing such deep concern about our immigration policies.

Having said that, in fact I think our country is regarded around the world as one that has been welcoming for decades to immigrants and to refugees. We will in fact continue, and we know and this hon. minister has indicated that in fact she is reviewing our immigration policy. She is reviewing the way we deal with refugees in this country and that is a responsible thing to do. We would ask hon. members—

• (1450)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Ajax—Pickering.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in a taxpayer funded mailing bearing the Conservative logo, the opposition engages in partisan propaganda which states among other things that our military was once proud. I suppose opposition members have forgotten the role that our men and women have played in Haiti or Afghanistan or elsewhere, in their eagerness to score political points.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Ajax—Pickering has the floor.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, they might be proud of saying our military is not proud. I am proud of our military, I am proud of what they did in Haiti, and I would like to ask the Minister of National Defence if he can reassure this House of the proud role that our military plays around the world.

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for the question because I think it is important that the opposition not allow opposition rhetoric to obscure the pride that we have in our military, the pride that we have in the roles they played in Afghanistan, in Haiti and in Bosnia.

When I go and see our young troops, our men and women, I hear them say, “We want to be deployed overseas. We want to work for Canada. We want to bring Canada to the world the way the world wants Canada”. I am proud of our military. Our party is proud of our military. I think we should all be proud of our military instead of trying to use it as a political football the way the opposition does.

\* \* \*

**UKRAINE**

**Mr. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we would like to congratulate the government for its decision not to recognize the results of the fraudulent election in Ukraine. We would point out that other countries seem to be prepared to take further steps. We would hope that the Government of Canada would take steps to indicate solidarity with the people of Ukraine, who have had their democratic rights denied. I hope that will be done in consultation with the Ukrainian community here in Canada.

Could the government inform us of what some of the steps might be that it is considering at this time to back up Canada's decision?

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question but I also want to point out that the hon. member only 35 minutes ago witnessed solidarity in the House in purpose on the Ukrainian people and the plight they find themselves in at this point.

We will work with the international community and show the same solidarity that exists in the House of Commons to work with our partners to ensure that there is international opprobrium for the actions that have taken place in Ukraine.

I can assure the hon. member that we will consult with all Canadians. Perhaps there will be an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to have a formal debate in the House, perhaps as early as this evening, with your permission.

\* \* \*

**CHILD POVERTY**

**Mr. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we welcome these initiatives and look forward to assisting in any way we can.

I want to congratulate the member for Ottawa Centre for standing to raise the issue of child poverty. Fifteen years ago in the House, with the unanimous support of all parties, he raised that issue and there was a commitment to reduce child poverty in this country.

*Oral Questions*

What we have seen instead are targets for debt reduction and for every other kind of economic objective except the reduction of child poverty. We now have more than a million children living in poverty and we have disgraceful answers from the government. Will the finance minister allocate some resources?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, all Canadians will be deeply troubled by the reports of the statistics with respect to child poverty. We have taken steps in the past, and very important steps. The creation of the child tax benefit, which is on its way to rising to the value of \$10 billion a year, is a major initiative. The initiative being led by the Minister of Social Development to drastically expand our child care system is another initiative. We are working on homelessness issues, on housing issues, on jobs and employment and improving employment insurance. On all of those fronts, we will not rest until this job is done.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Ms. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are getting bogged down in the mad cow issue and leaving the dairy farmers to fend for themselves.

Today they must resort to radical actions in order to get the attention of the contemptuous Liberal government.

Why is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food letting the situation go from bad to worse and taking no action on the crisis?

[English]

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, quite to the contrary, as I said in answer to the many questions that the Bloc has directed at us in the last couple of days, we have provided some \$366 million to Quebec producers under business risk management and additional money in terms of BSE.

As I have said on many occasions, there is a specific issue with dairy cull cows. We are dealing with that issue. There is a range of options on how that could be done. Part of it could be through the pricing that is about to be announced in respect of milk. Others have mentioned a minimum price. There are other initiatives we may want to undertake. We are in discussions at this moment, figuring out the best way to do it.

• (1455)

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, day after day, the minister repeats the same refrain. The dairy producers of Quebec have had enough of being held hostage by a single slaughterhouse. They are forced to sell their animals at terrible prices to a virtual monopoly.

Is the minister dragging his feet in this file in order to protect the interests of the Colbex-Levinoff group, because they contributed \$45,000 to Liberal coffers?

[English]

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely ludicrous. I would suggest that

they stop playing politics and start helping producers. The reality is that we put forward a \$38 million program that will assist in building new slaughter capacity so that there can be a competitive environment that will allow there to be a reasonable marketplace in Quebec and elsewhere in this country.

\* \* \*

**INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Jim Prentice (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Auditor General again reported discrepancies between the information provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to the Treasury Board. The auditor reported that the department lacked procedures to ensure accountability of proper spending contrary to what it told Treasury Board.

The report also criticized the department for not providing Parliament with the complete picture on \$1.4 billion of expenditures on aboriginal education programs.

Why has the department misled Treasury Board? Why has the department not been forthright with Parliament and when will the minister come clean?

**Hon. Andy Scott (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said in response to a question from the member for Halifax yesterday, the Auditor General has pointed out that the gap remains unacceptable between aboriginal Canadians and non-aboriginal Canadians. That is the position the Government of Canada holds as well.

That is the reason we are working with first nations today in different parts of the country to make sure that we work together with the community to solve the problem because we will not solve it for them.

\* \* \*

**MÉTIS NATION OF SASKATCHEWAN**

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after the May 26 Métis election in Saskatchewan the provincial government commissioned former provincial chief electoral officer Keith Lampard to investigate.

Following the release of his damning report that found the Métis election was neither fair nor democratic, the Saskatchewan government froze the \$400,000 a year it has contributed to the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. The Métis Nation of Saskatchewan however is still receiving more than \$500,000 a year from the heritage department.

After Lampard's report, why is the federal government still continuing to financially support a group which is illegitimately holding political office?

[Translation]

**Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Métis is of great concern to us. It is true that there was a problem with the election, but on the other hand, we do not want to let the community down. Perhaps I will be able to provide more detailed explanations to the hon. member.

\* \* \*

#### GOVERNOR GENERAL

**Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is the same story every year. It is impossible to get a clear picture and to know exactly how much is allocated to the functions of the Governor General, because amounts are spread here and there in the budgets of various departments. Last year, the costs associated with the activities of the Governor General and her office totalled \$41.2 million.

Could the President of the Treasury Board tell us how many million dollars it will be this year? We want to know exactly how much the Governor General is costing us overall, without having to search through all the different departments.

[English]

**Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very interesting and important question.

I was impressed by the hearing that the committee held yesterday when this was raised with the Auditor General. I frankly was very impressed with the openness of the Auditor General's staff in trying to answer these questions.

It is true the different parts of the Auditor General's expenses, particularly her travel expenses, are paid out of different budgets. We discussed the dilemma in pulling that together and I undertook to work with the committee to provide that information.

• (1500)

[Translation]

**Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to know how much the Prime Minister's company received in government contracts, we have had to ask the Auditor General, in order to get the figures quickly and punctually.

I will ask the President of the Treasury Board this: Will we have to once again ask the Auditor General to go over the budgets of the various departments and agencies in order to provide us with the grand total as soon as possible?

[English]

**Hon. Reg Alcock (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I should start by saying I think I just referred to the Auditor General rather than the Governor General. It is the Governor General's funding we are talking about.

The simple answer to the question is no. As we discussed at some length in the committee yesterday, the public service modernization

#### Oral Questions

process that we are engaged in and which was announced in the budget is to do exactly what the member is requesting. It is to put in place a modern expenditure management information system that allows us to answer these questions quickly and easily and make it entirely transparent for the members of the House and the citizens of Canada.

\* \* \*

#### HEALTH

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday Canadians lost more faith in the government after the release of another Auditor General's report on Liberal waste and mismanagement.

Health Canada paid 400% more for certain drugs and spending increased by \$88 million over the past two years.

The Auditor General points out that Health Canada has been warned on three previous occasions about the waste in the drug programs.

How can the minister explain the incompetence and mismanagement of these federal drug programs?

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the recommendations that the Auditor General makes are very important. I met with the Auditor General. I have discussed the recommendations. We accept all of them fully. In fact, I have asked my department, as it implements those recommendations, to consult with her on a regular basis so that our implementation of the recommendations meets with her approval.

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#### AIR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that the Liberal government made a \$234 million profit taxing air travellers for security. At the same time we know that Transport Canada charged our airports \$256 million for rent. This is outrageous. This hurts airports. It hurts airlines. It is bad for business and it is bad for tourism. The worst part is that the Canadian air traveller has to pick up the tab for everything.

When are the Liberals going to learn that every service is not an opportunity for the Liberal government to make money? When will they stop gouging taxpayers and reduce airport rents?

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this subject is very important to us all and to everybody who is involved in the air transportation business. That is why I am in close consultation with my colleague the Minister of Finance. I hope that this issue is going to be taken seriously. I agree that we have to do something on it. We are going to be moving on it.

\* \* \*

#### SUDAN

**Mr. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, the Prime Minister will be travelling to Khartoum to meet with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

*Points of Order*

As we all know, over 70,000 people have died and over 1.5 million people have been displaced from their homes in the Darfur region of Sudan. Can we be assured that the Prime Minister will confront the Sudanese president about the continuing human rights violations in Darfur? Especially, will the Prime Minister highlight the Sudanese president's lack of commitment toward stopping the vicious Janjaweed militia?

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know how passionately the hon. member for Mississauga—Brampton South is concerned with this issue, as we are in the House.

I want to assure the hon. member and every member in the House of Commons that the Prime Minister will continue to press urgently for a resolution to this conflict. This of course will be one of the issues he raises next week when he meets with the Sudanese president.

I want to also inform the hon. member that we have taken a number of initiatives at the United Nations with respect to the Security Council members in support of a resolution that enhanced the African Union mission and \$20 million to help in that effort.

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**CANADA PENSION PLAN**

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a report by Canada's Association for the FiftyPlus says seniors are being shortchanged \$1 billion by the CPP fund. A comedy of errors, including missing records and confusing terminology, is preventing one in six seniors from receiving their full CPP payout. That is not funny.

CPP provides retirement income and financial help for seniors. Sixteen million people contribute to the fund which is managed by the Liberal government.

My question for the minister is, when will the government clean up its act and give the money back to the seniors who desperately need it?

• (1505)

**Hon. Tony Ianno (Minister of State (Families and Caregivers), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 4.4 million recipients get payments each month from the CPP. Out of these, since 1999 when the last audit was done, 99.8% of the recipients received the fair amount. Social Development Canada offers all Canadians, free of charge unlike the RPI, that any assessment required for the dropout rate be considered. It will be done free of charge to ensure that they are getting their due.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the new Poet Laureate of Parliament, Pauline Michel, and the outgoing parliamentary Poet Laureate, George Bowering.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** I invite hon. members to join them in room 216-N for a reception.

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 81(14), it is my duty to inform the House of the motion to be considered tomorrow during the consideration of the business of supply.

[*English*]

That the House call on the government to take the appropriate measures to sell the 11,000 acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build the Mirabel Airport.

This motion, standing in the name of the hon. member for Calgary Southwest, is votable.

[*Translation*]

Copies of the motion are available at the Table.

[*English*]

Order, please. The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage is rising on a point of order.

**POINTS OF ORDER**

[*Translation*]

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to a question from the hon. member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin on the Métis and the contribution that had been given. It should be noted that we have been funding aboriginal organizations for more than 30 years.

However, the Department of Canadian Heritage had approved core funding for the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan before the Lampard report was published. Future payments have been suspended until the report has been read and the findings released.

Thus, no payments will be made.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Reynolds (House Leader of the Official Opposition in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during question period today and during one of the answers from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the minister made some comments. You may not have heard them because there was a lot of noise at the time, but she said things like “sit down and shut up”.

I think it is the Speaker's role in the House to tell members when they should sit down and when they should be quiet, and you may do it in different language. Also, I think the member talked about being out of order, and that is also the Speaker's purview.

I would like to ask the Speaker to review the comments made by the member and if they were not in order, to maybe advise her of that at the next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** I will be happy to review the comments.

*Routine Proceedings*

● (1510)

**PRIVILEGE**

COMMENTS OF MINISTER OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Hon. Judy Sgro (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the question of privilege put forward by the member for Central Nova stating that I had deliberately misled the House through false information. It is one that I take very seriously and one to which I want to respond.

On Friday, November 19, I stated the following:

Mr. Speaker, I have asked the ethics commissioner to give me advice on whether or not I have breached any of the ethical codes, but I would like to tell the member something else.

The deputy leader of the Conservative Party requested a permit a couple of weeks after the election for a personal friend. I have since learned that the hon. member's personal friend was a former Conservative candidate and has been a big political contributor to the Conservative Party. I guess I should have asked, did he not work on the campaign.

That was exactly what I said. I would like to clarify that a little bit further. My sentence could have been, and I will rephrase it for the clarity of the House, "Did they work on the Conservative campaign".

In answering the question, I was not trying to attack the integrity of any member of the House or to provide misleading information. I was simply trying to point out that in dealing with people's lives, as we do in immigration, partisan politics is simply not the basis for my intervention. By asking a rhetorical question, my intention was to demonstrate that the process was not influenced by politics. I was attempting to illustrate that I judged each case based on its merits, no matter which member brought it forward to my attention. It is not a question of fact, but of misunderstanding.

When the hon. member's staff called my office on August 13, my office was led to understand that this individual was a friend of the member. The person who was the member's friend was making representation on behalf of the applicant. The applicant was not the member's friend, but the member's friend was the person representing the applicant.

Therefore, I return to my original point: Politics did not impact my decision. It was on the merits of the case that I intervened, as I do on all of these cases.

**The Speaker:** I have taken this matter under advisement and will continue to do so in light of the comments from the hon. minister.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to four petitions.

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

**Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament regarding its mandate and forum. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the first report later this day.

\* \* \*

**MARRIAGE CAPACITY ACT**

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-300, an act to amend the Divorce Act, the Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Act and the Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce my private member's bill, an act to amend the Divorce Act, the Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Act and the Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, which would establish equal access to civil marriage and divorce for gay and lesbian couples in Canada.

The bill seeks to recognize the loving relationships, responsible commitments and full equality of gay and lesbian couples. It also recognizes the decisions of 19 judges in 7 provincial and territorial jurisdictions that the current laws do not conform with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I would urge the government to make this bill unnecessary by having the courage of its new found convictions and introducing its own amendments without delay.

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

\* \* \*

● (1515)

**PETITIONS**

CANADIAN FORCES

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Canadians from coast to coast, I will persist in presenting these petitions every chance I get. This one is from the citizens of Windsor, Ontario who wish to again draw attention of the elected House of Commons to the fact that many of our military families live in on base housing, that many of these homes are below acceptable living standards and that they are also subject to ongoing rent increases.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to immediately suspend any future rent increases for accommodation provided by the Canadian Forces Housing Agency until the Government of Canada makes substantive improvements to the living conditions of housing that is provided for our military families.

*S. O. 52*

## PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Newton—North Delta, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the residents of Newton—North Delta to present a petition signed by a huge number of members of St. Bernadette Church in Surrey, B.C. as part of the White Ribbon Against Pornography campaign. The petitioners urge Parliament to stop the flood tide of obscenity pouring into our nation's communities and homes, especially through the Internet.

Since this petition is very long and signed on a ribbon, I would ask for unanimous consent to accept it in this format. I know it is not in the usual format that we table petitions.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Newton—North Delta have the unanimous consent of the House to table the petition, notwithstanding the irregularities in respect of the petition?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the people of Campobello Island, New Brunswick and surrounding area. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to say no to the construction of an LNG terminal in Eastport, Maine, U.S.A. The key to this is that terminal can only go ahead if we allow the passage of tankers through internal Canadian waters.

The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to do what it did 30 years ago in similar circumstances when a proposal of that nature was being considered in the United States of America. We said no to the passage of those tankers through internal Canadian water.

These people understand the risk to the environment, to our citizens, and are asking the Government of Canada to say no to the transport of LNG tankers through Head Harbour Passage, Canada.

## NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to present two petitions today.

The first petition is signed by residents of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland who point out that the U.S. missile defence would incite a new nuclear arms race and put weapons in space.

The petitioners point out that Canadian citizens, including Victoria, Vancouver and Nanaimo, Burnaby, Sparwood, Bowen Island and Grand Forks have passed resolutions opposing Canada's participation in the U.S. missile defence. They call upon Parliament to oppose it as well.

## MARIJUANA

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by residents who want to draw attention to the House that our marijuana laws are terribly outdated, beginning with the Le Dain Commission over 30 years ago. The House has been called upon repeatedly to enact reforms.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to modernize Canada's marijuana laws to create a legal environment where adults can enjoy marijuana in a responsible manner.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Perhaps before questions on the order paper, I might ask if you would seek unanimous consent of the House to revert back to motions. The hon. member for Thornhill did not correctly hear you call for motions and she indicated that she might ask for unanimous consent to accept a report of the joint committee on the Library of Parliament.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to revert to motions?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

**Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

● (1520)

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

## UKRAINE

**The Speaker:** I wish to advise the House that I have received notice of an application for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre.



**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52, I ask leave to propose the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the rapidly deteriorating situation in Ukraine as a result of an attempt at coup d'état by the present administration and its impact on our domestic and foreign policies.

SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** The Chair has considered carefully the request of the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre. While there may be some argument whether this fits four-square within the terms of the Standing Order, I do believe the matter is certainly one of some urgency.

Accordingly, perhaps with some misgivings, the Chair is inclined to permit the debate. I order that the debate will take place later this day in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 52.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE ACT

**Hon. Liza Frulla (for the Minister of the Environment)** moved that Bill C-7, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act and the Parks Canada Agency Act and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the third time and passed.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to rise on third reading of Bill C-7, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act and the Parks Canada Agency Act and to make related amendments to other acts.

This bill would give legislative effect to the government's reorganization that was announced on December 12, 2003, as it affects Parks Canada, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of the Environment.

The bill would update existing legislation to reflect two orders in council that came into effect in December 2003 and July 2004. They transferred control and supervision of the Parks Canada Agency from the Minister of Canadian Heritage to the Minister of the Environment.

The bill would also clarify that Parks Canada would be responsible for historic places in Canada, and for the design and implementation of programs that relate to built heritage.

The legislation would be primarily technical in nature. It would update the Department of Canadian Heritage Act and the Parks Canada Agency Act. It would also amend the statutes that enable Parks Canada to deliver its mandate; notably, the Canada National Parks Act, the Historic Sites and Monuments Act, the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Species at Risk Act, the Canada Shipping Act, and the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act.

Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas represent the soul of Canada. They are a central

### Government Orders

part of who we are and what we are. They are places of magic, wonder and heritage. Each tells its own story. Together, they connect Canadians to our roots, to our future and to each other. Responsibilities for safeguarding and celebrating heritage would continue to be shared among departments and agencies across government.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage would retain a key leadership role and overall responsibility for cultural heritage and would continue to work closely with the Minister of the Environment and with other ministers to keep common objectives with heritage.

I would like to assure the House that Parks Canada's organizational integrity would be maintained. Parks Canada would remain committed to working with Canadians to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations. This is fitting given the important linkages between the environment, heritage and sustainable development.

I would like to clarify again that the Prime Minister has the continuing ability to decide on which minister has the responsibility for departments and agencies, and to transfer organizations to another minister's responsibility in order to meet objectives.

Parliament has given government the ability to transfer portions of the public service and ministerial powers, duties and functions from one part of the public service or from one minister to another. This would not give the governor in council the power to expand and alter the powers of either ministers or departments. Parliaments plays an important role in this regard.

The power granted to the government gives us necessary flexibility to reorganize the institutions of government to address government priorities and public needs. It is in keeping with the Prime Minister's responsibility to assign ministers portfolios, establish their mandates in keeping with existing legislation, and identify priorities for their portfolios.

The Minister of the Environment has been responsible for the Parks Canada Agency since December 12, 2003.

While the amendments simply reflect the current reality, the government must defend the principle regarding the Prime Minister's ability to make organizational changes. Therefore, we do not support the amendments.

I would like to take a few moments to talk about the built heritage aspects of Parks Canada's mandate. Built heritage includes sites, buildings and monuments recognized for their historic value. These include battlefields, forts and citadels, shipwrecks, archeological sites, cultural landscapes, bridges, houses, cemeteries, railway stations, historic districts, ruins, engineering marvels, schools, canals, courthouses, theatres and markets.

● (1525)

Responsibility for built heritage is managed through a number of programs, including national historic sites, federal heritage buildings, heritage railway stations, and federal archeological heritage shipwrecks in the historic place initiative. These activities are of interest to all parliamentarians and to Canadians in general.

*Government Orders*

Through the Parks Canada Agency, the Minister of the Environment has responsibilities in three key areas: the management of Parks Canada's built heritage, federal government leadership in programs relating to built heritage, and a Canada-wide leadership role in built heritage.

Hon. members are probably most familiar with the first of these areas, Parks Canada's role in the stewardship of historic places. Parks Canada leads the national program of historic commemoration which identifies places, persons and events of national historic significance. The program aims to celebrate Canada's history and protect associated sites.

Parks Canada administers about one in six of the more than 900 national historic sites which speaks to the diverse and rich history of Canada. Parks Canada's stewardship role with respect to these places, and their historic values and resources is similar to a stewardship role with respect to national parks.

Federal government programs relating to built heritage is the minister's second key area of responsibility. Through its leadership in the federal heritage buildings program, Parks Canada works with departments to protect the heritage character of buildings, while the property is within federal jurisdiction.

The Auditor General has indicated that problems similar to those for national historic sites administered by Parks Canada exist for national historic sites and federal heritage buildings administered by other federal departments. The government is considering ways to respond to the Auditor General's concerns over weak conservation standards and accountability requirements, as well as the recommendation to strengthen the legal framework to protect built heritage. For many years Canada has lagged behind other G-8 nations and its own provincial and territorial governments in the protection of historic places.

The minister's third area of responsibility is to provide Canada-wide leadership in built heritage. Only a portion of the historic places in Canada are owned by the federal government. Cooperation with others is critical. This requires participation by individuals, corporations and other governments across Canada.

Year after year, decade after decade, more and more historic places are being lost. Remaining heritage buildings and structures, cultural landscapes and archeological sites continue to be threatened. Recognizing the need to deepen its resolve to protect built heritage, the Government of Canada has responded with the launch of the historic places initiative, the most significant conservation effort related to historic sites in our national history.

The historic places initiative is based on the acknowledgment that government alone cannot save all buildings and other historic places. The keystone of the initiative is a broad, national coalition with the provinces, territories, municipal governments, coupled with equally valuable cooperation involving aboriginal peoples, heritage experts and a comprehensive number of institutions, organizations, communities and individuals.

In the field of heritage, we are truly in an area of policy interdependence. The goals of the initiative are to create a culture of heritage conservation in this country by providing Canadians with basic tools to preserve and celebrate historic places, and by

protecting historic places under federal jurisdiction. Strategies focus on helping Canadians build a culture of conservation.

The protection of Canada's built heritage is not only about saving what is meaningful from the past. It is also about sustaining strong communities for today and tomorrow. Rehabilitation of existing buildings capitalizes on the energy invested in the original structures and prevents unnecessary use of new materials and energy.

Less demolition means reduced pressure on landfill sites and the revitalization of historic downtown areas. It increases the need for new civic infrastructure, such as roads, sewers and public transit. By contributing to such sustainable communities, public policy truly makes a difference in people's lives.

● (1530)

Consensus has emerged on the role that Canada and Canadians want for historic places in our lives in our communities. One of the common goals is the need to provide all Canadians with the practical information and tools they need to protect historic areas.

The launch in 2004 of the Canadian registry of historic places is a product of that collaboration. It is probably one of the most important initiatives that we have seen in this country in terms of the preservation and the celebration of history. For the first time in one place Canadians will have a registry of the buildings and the sites that are recognized as historic by any order of government in the country.

It is anticipated that the registry will contain approximately 20,000 historic places when it is fully populated. The registry will be an important tool for policy makers, community organizations, teachers, students, and families who want to learn about and help preserve the past.

As a former educator, one who taught Canadian history for 20 years, I can say that this is a significant breakthrough, not only a significant breakthrough in terms of establishing this registry, but because we now have a joint commitment by all orders of government. This is an example of good federal-provincial-territorial cooperation.

The standards and the guidelines provide clear and accessible guidance on good conservation practices. This document was developed in consultation with federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and non-governmental stakeholders. There will be a common benchmark for conservation principles and practices in Canada.

It has already been adopted by Parks Canada and by several provincial and municipal jurisdictions. The standards and guidelines are a model of promoting a new approach to the science and technology of building conservation, and promoting and circulating the information broadly for the benefit of all Canadians.

*Government Orders*

Parks Canada is also implementing the commercial heritage properties incentive fund, a new program announced in 2003 to engage the private sector in the conservation of historic buildings. This fund is a four year \$30 million plan designed to tip the balance in favour of conservation over demolition. It provides financial incentives to eligible commercial historic places listed on the registry in order to encourage a broad range of commercial uses for historic properties within our communities.

Fiscal measures like this program are central to engaging others to achieve the government's goal for built heritage. Historic places connect us to our past, to our future and indeed to each other. They provide places of learning for our children and places of understanding for both new citizens and Canadians of long standing.

What we cherish as part of our national identity we also recognize is part of our national responsibility. All Canadians share the obligation to preserve and to protect Canada's unique culture and national heritage. Together we hold our national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas in trust for the benefit of this and future generations.

With this new reporting arrangement, through the Minister of the Environment, it will clearly define responsibilities for built heritage programs. Parks Canada will continue to work to safeguard Canada's built heritage, support the protection of historic places within federal jurisdiction, and engage Canadians broadly in preserving and celebrating our country's historic places. It will continue to play a similar role in the protection of Canada's heritage sites for which it is so well respected by Canadians and indeed admired internationally.

• (1535)

I respectively encourage all my colleagues on both sides of the House to support Bill C-7. The bill again has technical amendments to move the Parks Canada Agency from Heritage Canada to Environment Canada.

However, the work that we are doing collectively to ensure that not one more historic site is lost is extremely important. We have lost 20% of our historic sites since the 1970s. Therefore this agreement on the registry is very important and the work that we do and the support that we give Parks Canada, both emotionally and financially, will be important for generations to come.

Again I urge all members to support the legislation.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I feel the passion in the words and emotion that the parliamentary secretary brings to this important issue.

I have a number of questions that I would like to put to him. I am curious in terms of the real dollars that have been set aside over the coming years for the historic places initiative that was recently announced and if the allotment has been considered as to where it might be going.

I am also very interested in this national coalition that the parliamentary secretary spoke of with respect to the types of partnerships that would be put in place in order to get this done. I heard there may be provincial governments and potentially some municipal levels as well. I am also hearing something from the for profit business community.

I would like to know if there are specifics in the planning of the department in terms of whether these historic sites will be jointly co-managed or co-owned or what the perspective is in this coalition in order to protect these national historical sites, which we all recognize are very important.

• (1540)

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Speaker, first I will point out that the registry is an amazing initiative in that we have collaboration and support from all provincial and territorial governments.

Second, I will be looking forward to the member and other members in the House supporting additional funds for this initiative. Initially it will be around \$40 million. However, now that we have this registry in place, there is no question that we need to ensure it continues. In fact, technically it will end at the end of March next year.

Therefore we need the support of all members to ensure this continues because not only is it a good example of federal, provincial and territorial cooperation, but it is in fact essential. I never want to get up again and have to say that we have lost more historic buildings and sites in this country. It is my personal view that it is a national disgrace that we have lost 20% since the 1970s. This type of registry program is in existence in the United States, France, Great Britain and Australia. Therefore, it is essential that we support it financially and otherwise.

In terms of commercial properties, in this case the hon. member's point is well taken. Essentially what we are looking at is providing commercial owners who purchase an historic property with the many opportunities, avenues and assistance needed to maybe open a restaurant, a store, or a community centre, something of value, rather than tearing down an historic building and having it go to landfill. The building could be restored to its historic glory in terms of customizing, which means going back to the nature of the doors, the windows and the soffits. Anything to do with these buildings will be taken care of. That is why the registry is important. That is why information in the most minute detail is there.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in this discussion of Parks Canada, it is very interesting that the hon. member failed to raise the concerns of the people of Nichols Island.

Nichols Island exists in the core of my constituency just north of the village of Manotick, in an area that is controlled by Parks Canada. On Nichols Island runs a road that over the years has been decapitated by the flow of the river that runs alongside it. Due to these changes, it is no longer safe for this road to exist for the residents of Nichols Island. In reality, it is now prohibited for fire trucks and some other emergency vehicles to pass on this road. Were there a fire, we might have a real emergency on our hands because fire trucks could not reach the point of emergency.

What is the federal government's response? It claims it is the city's responsibility. The city claims it is the government's responsibility. The federal government, under Parks Canada, is even considering charging the residents of the island to pay for the repairs to the road. I think that is outrageous.

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This has gone on for over a decade. For over a decade these people have waited for this road to be repaired. It has put them in peril and has added stress to their lives. It has affected their real estate values. It is generally reflective of a government that just does not care.

I would like the hon. member to rise in the House and do two things. Will he stand and assure the residents of Nichols Island, the good people who live just north of Manotick on the Rideau River, that they will not be responsible for paying for the upkeep of this public road? Second, will he stand and guarantee that this problem, this menace to the safety and security of some of my constituents, will be resolved in the very imminent future?

• (1545)

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Speaker, first, I am at the pleasure of the Chair and I am restricted to 20 minutes, therefore I did not comment and the bill does not deal with each individual site in the country. If I could have done that, I would have been more than happy to. Unfortunately, I am bound by the rules of the House.

Since I have not heard this issue before, if the member would like to put it in writing to me so that I have all of the details, I assure him that I will bring this to the attention of the proper individuals and that we will get a response back to him in the most timely fashion.

Being a former municipal politician I can understand some of the issues that the member has raised but I would think that is not an issue that I can discuss in any detail on the floor of the House—

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Shame.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** The member says shame. The shame would be if I stood up and said I would not entertain it. The member cannot have it both ways. If he is serious about this issue, which I assume he is, then he will have the decency to put it in writing and give it to me, and I will take it under advisement and get back to him with an appropriate answer. If he does not like the answer then he can bring it back.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard of this particular incident to which the opposition member has spoken and it is of a grave nature.

I want to go back to the historical properties for a moment and the \$40 million that has been allocated. I wonder if the hon. member might make mention of whether there has been any assessment of what is actually needed in this country. The property just mentioned and many others are falling into a state of incredible disrepair. Would he be able to inform the House as to what is actually needed in terms of a dollar figure to maintain and restore our historical sites?

The notion that has been put forward by the parliamentary secretary is that we either must knock these historical monument sites down or sell them. Clearly there must a third option in this, which would be to properly fund the restoration and to maintain them in the public good. The idea of selling them as the only recourse to tearing them down seems to be a lack of political will and funding.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Speaker, if things were as easy as the member said there would be no problem.

The Government of Canada administers 150 national historic sites and the provinces and municipalities administer thousands of others.

The member might want to talk to his own provincial government about the need for real teeth in terms of heritage acts in this country. For example, in the province of Ontario, within 180 days of a developer purchasing a site with an historic property on it, that property will be demolished. This is a federal, provincial, and municipal responsibility.

In terms of what needs to be done, that is why we are having federal, provincial and municipal orders of government provide us with a registrant of those sites on the registry. We hope to eventually have 20,000 on there because it is important.

There is no alternative. The only alternative is to preserve it. I do not accept demolition or decay as options. Now that we have the political will, which the member talked about, and we obviously have it federally, provincially and municipally, we now have the tools to act responsibly in the public good.

This is good public policy. I expect all members will support the legislation as we move forward.

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure to speak to the bill again and to let the House know that we support the bill in terms of transfer of parks from the heritage department to the environment department. We think it makes a lot of sense and obviously it can be administered better.

Today we also need to make a commitment to parks and to heritage sites so that in fact they will not become the poor cousins of the environment department and will be considered an important part of this whole portfolio.

The parliamentary secretary has mentioned cooperation between municipalities and between provincial governments. That is something in which our party believes very strongly.

It is interesting, too, when we talk to the general public. I just had the pleasure, along with my colleague from the Bloc, of addressing a group of university students who are here visiting the House this week. When we listen to their questions and concerns, what we hear is that environment certainly plays a very large role in what they think is important for their future, their families' future and their concerns. It is very rewarding to speak to a group like that because of their comments, their questions and their encouragement.

As well, I think it is important to talk about the heritage of parks and what they mean to different Canadians, their importance from an economic and an ecological standpoint, and of course we can get into tourism, what it means, and the image it creates for our country. Many of us who travel a lot and have for many years are very concerned about what people think of our country. Many of them do think about the parks and the parks system. Any number of times when I tell people where I am from they ask if that is close to Banff, Lake Louise or whatever, so it is an international thing that people know about.

*Government Orders*

I am very concerned as well about the \$500 million deficit in infrastructure. The fact is that through the 1950s and 1960s we committed to preserving these parks, to having proper signage, to having a proper system of parks, and we have let that decline for various reasons. I think that for many parks we have done a disservice to future Canadians by letting this happen.

As well, when I visited the parks, I met with chambers of commerce that are close to the parks. I think most specifically of Jasper Park. One of the major comments I heard was the fact that cleaning of snow and repair of highways in parks comes out of the parks' budget, yet many of these roads are through the park and are part of transportation. A great deal of the parks budget is being used up for maintenance of highways, which is a transportation issue and really has nothing at all to do with the park.

Those are the kinds of issues that I hope Environment Canada takes a look at. I hope this department will manage better than the heritage department has done. As the critic for this area, I hope to hold the government's feet to the fire to be sure it makes parks the priority that I think most Canadians want them to be.

As well, having a long term vision and knowing where we want to go in terms of environment and the parks system becomes critical. It does not matter whether we are talking about the Great Lakes or the salmon fishery on the Pacific or of course the serious problems with oil spills in Atlantic Canada. It does not matter where we are talking about. No matter where it is in this country, I believe that we have had a relatively short term vision for what we want to do environmentally.

If anything, ecosystems do not work in the short term and changes to the environment usually happen over much longer periods of time. Again, I would encourage the government to come up with a much longer term plan for parks and for heritage sites throughout this whole country, and it will be our job to make sure that it does.

On the bigger issue, I will comment about the government's performance in environment. It is interesting that we are now rated 24th out of 24 of the industrialized countries by the OECD. We have an analysis done by the Conference Board of Canada. We have the environment commissioner, who for the last number of years has reported on our environmental standing. We are not doing that well. We have a number of major and serious environmental problems. Most of the world thinks of us as being that pristine, clean, pure air and pure water place, yet when we actually pull off the cover we find something quite different.

•(1550)

Therefore, I am disappointed that we are dealing with very minor environment bills. Obviously I am waiting for some substance in terms of the government's plan for the environment. While Bill C-7 is important, it could really be called a housekeeping bill. It is something that we are going to support but basically it is little more than housekeeping.

As for Bill C-15, which is basically about oiled birds in the Atlantic and Pacific, I think I asked my first question about oiled birds in 1996. The number of dying birds was 300,000 a year minimum and was probably more like a million, and I was told that the government would have legislation very soon. That was in 1996.

I did a private member's bill in 1997 and here we are in 2004, almost 2005, and we finally have a piece of legislation on the oiling of birds.

That is not very quick action. If we do the mathematics, we see that this is an awful lot of birds. Those populations cannot withstand that kind of loss year after year with a government that is moving so slowly on environmental issues. I would hope that Parks Canada will not undergo that same tedious performance that we have seen to this point on a bill like that.

I want to come back to the environmental issues of our country. To be rated 24th out of 24 by the OECD is quite a shock. To be rated anywhere from 23rd to 15th or so by the Conference Board of Canada and to be rated by a number of other notable boards and groups in the very low part of the industrialized world is not something that I am proud of. Certainly as the senior environment critic, I hope we will change this and dedicate ourselves to change.

Let me give some examples. The first is the issue of raw sewage being dumped into the ocean. It is not a first world, advanced and developed country that dumps raw sewage into the ocean, yet we have three cities dumping raw sewage into the ocean and we call that environmental integrity. We have to change that, if for no other reason than just the reputation of our country.

I worked on the Sumas 2 issue, testifying in the U.S. as an intervenor on the Sumas 2 project and then again in Abbotsford on the same project.

Mr. Speaker, I know you are very familiar with that issue.

When I went to see the governor of the State of Washington it was very interesting. I went there to tell him they were taking water from our aquifer, that they were going to pollute the second most polluted airshed in Canada, the Fraser Valley, and that they were going to dump sewage into the Sumas River, which drains into the Fraser River in Canada. The most important issue was the location, which was wrong because of those factors.

The governor listened and then he commented. His comment was that he was very glad I went to see him. He said that he understood the air quality issue in the Fraser Valley, but he said, "Why don't you and I get in my car and drive down to the Seattle Harbour and you let me show you your sewage coming from Victoria?" He said that when we did something about our sewage, he was ready to talk about our air.

That is a pretty tough argument to follow up on. It is pretty tough to say, "No. My air is more important than your water". It is not an argument that one is going to win. As a result, we left it at a draw. I came back home and said that I was going to fight like heck to stop that from happening in my country.

•(1555)

We talk about the pure, clean water we have and yet we have over 300 boil water warnings at any given time. Who would have thought that in a country like Canada we would not be able to drink the water wherever we are in this country? I am embarrassed that this is the case. I believe we must dedicate ourselves to fixing that problem because it is a serious problem.

*Government Orders*

Why did we not get a bill on that issue instead of this one? We could have very quickly transferred our parks. That has been done anyway. It is not a major thing. It is a housekeeping item. Let us talk about sewage. Let us talk about water. Let us talk about those kinds of things.

We have over 50,000 contaminated sites. We have a minimum of 8,500 federal contaminated sites. Let us talk about identifying, prioritizing and going after them. That would be a piece of legislation that a lot of Canada would be very interested in.

Let us talk about the record of cleanups. I do not think the people of Sydney will tell us that they are all that impressed with the speed at which the Sydney tar ponds have been cleaned up. Yes, there have been plans, and yes, there have been failed plans, but really there has been little else.

Let us talk to the parents of young children in Toronto. Let us talk about the smog warning days when little Johnny should not go out and when grandma should not leave her home because of the air that is not clean enough and could in fact damage their health. Obviously this something we can deal with.

Let us talk about landfills. Last week I went to British Columbia. On my way, I picked up a paper. On the front page of the *Ottawa Citizen* last Thursday, I saw that the City of Ottawa is being sued for \$45 million. What is it being sued for? It is being sued for the seepage out of its landfill site, which has contaminated neighbouring property.

What about those brownfields that no one will insure? They have full servicing past them, costing municipalities a lot of money, but they cannot be used because of potential contamination and future lawsuits. Those lawsuits are starting to come.

This is our Canada that we are talking about. This is our environment that we are talking about. This is in the top five issues of all Canadians.

Are there solutions? Yes, there are. There are many solutions. There are solutions to that water problem. We need to understand our aquifers. We need to understand the charge and recharge. We need to understand the quality and pollution issues. We need to look at all of that. We need legislation that will help the provinces and municipalities to do that.

I had an interesting time at the end of August. My wife enjoyed it. I promised her a nice holiday at the end of August and in early September. I said to her, "Guess where we're going? By the way, did I tell you I have a few appointments on our holiday?" Our first appointment was at an incinerator. She has been to many other incinerators, so she knew where we were going. We visit landfill sites. We have been doing that for only about 35 years.

One day, we were picked up about 7:30 in the morning and we went to the most modern incinerator there is in downtown Copenhagen. It is fascinating because it is an incineration plant that is using the most modern technology. It has recycling at the front end, with cement products, building materials, glass and that sort of thing. Then the rest is put into a huge hopper. That big hopper then feeds it into a big turning drum, of which there are six, and that

garbage is then turned and rotated. It is brought up to 100° Celsius. In this case, gas was used.

● (1600)

I went on another holiday with my wife to Berlin. We found it was using the methane from the fermentation of sewage for fuel. These cities are recycling this. That garbage is incinerated and the combustion from that goes from 100° Celsius to 1,000° Celsius, which creates steam. Animal waste and sewage can also be burned. The steam then drives a turbine which then produces electricity, which is sold. It takes that steam, cools it down and distributes that hot water.

The particular system travels 104 kilometres. It has a 2% loss of energy in that 100 kilometres, and the heat is sold. Now there is income from the electricity and from the heat. Then that flue gas runs through a number of treatments. Various chemical processes are used in this. One involves using ammonia and the sulfur dioxide from the flue gas, which becomes 85% on the first pass, is turned into gypsum, which is used in making wallboard. That gypsum is then sold, another source of income.

The nitrous oxide is then broken down into its component parts and that nitrogen is then turned into fertilizer, which provides a new source of fertilizer, which is sold to the agricultural community. The CO<sub>2</sub> is captured is gasified and that gasified CO<sub>2</sub> is then put into titanium containers, which are then sold to the greenhouse industry. Remember that the best use of CO<sub>2</sub> is photo synthesis. By adding more CO<sub>2</sub> to greenhouses, production can be greatly increased. It can also be sold to Norway, where it is put into wells and improves the recovery of gas and oil by sequestering it under the ground. Now the CO<sub>2</sub> is gone.

Heavy metals now have been precipitated out and those heavy metals then can be sold to industry and recycled. The dioxins are separated out and further incinerated.

The point in this whole rant, if one wants to call it that, is that is the kind of vision and legislation we need in the House. It is environmentally sound and it will make a difference. It will deal with our air quality situation, our water pollution situation and provide income.

This is the final thing on garbage. I enjoy visiting these places. I am not sure my wife has the same joy. The neat part is the plant I visited is owned by 11 municipalities in 21 towns and cities. They took out a 25 year mortgage on it. That is how it was financed. Yes, it is more expensive than a landfill, but think about what they have done. The mortgage has been paid off, and they now have a resource from which they can make profit.

I could go on for a long time on the subject of the environment. I think I have demonstrated that in the past. I look forward to the opportunity of talking about the other kinds of bills that could come forward. Let us get the housekeeping done quickly and move on to some more substantial environmentally sound bills.

*Government Orders*

•(1605)

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the House we should extend our sympathies to his wife. He obviously knows how to show a girl a good time. Notwithstanding that, if I took the member at his word, I would say let us call for unanimous consent on the bill. If he would like to get this through, I would be more than happy to do that. I agree that it is a housekeeping bill. We will be bringing forward more substantial legislation with the help of my colleague across the way.

My colleague across the way raises an interesting issue in which I have had many years of involvement. That is on the issue of incineration, district energy. I probably have visited many of those same places that the hon. member has. I brought my wife actually as well, but I did not bill it as a holiday. I want members to know that it was a working session with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. If a person is going to do that, then at least it should be billed properly and say that it is a working activity, rather than a holiday with some meetings.

The member brings up an important issue. The provinces obviously deal with this issue of incineration. When we deal with the district energy field, is very important that we include CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, using any kind of biomass, whether it is wood chips or garbage as in Uppsala, Sweden where garbage is made into ingots to heat homes. In Denmark heating and cooling homes is through district energy.

This is very important, and I would hope that the member might support a change to class 43.1, which at the moment discriminates against district energy in the sense that it is a very expensive project upfront. The money that is saved five and seven years down the road is very important, and that pays for itself. However, it is the initial pipes, et cetera.

First, could the member comment on class 43.1? What might his party do to assist that, again in dealing with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions?

Second, on the issue of incineration generally, what role does he see the federal government playing in that? I would again concur with this member. I would rather see state of the art incineration as in Europe today. He probably saw that in Denmark and Sweden. How can we assist or do we have a role in this, so we do not use 600 acres of valuable farmland for dumps?

\* \* \*

•(1610)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among all the parties, I believe you would find consent for the following motion. I move:

That when the House begins proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 52 later this day, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be entertained by the Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-7, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act and the Parks Canada Agency Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, obviously I think there are many areas where we could work together.

Let us look at Toronto where 400 trucks a day go down the highway to Wisconsin. That has to end. It makes no sense from a trucking standpoint, a safety standpoint or an environmental standpoint. There is no argument for that. I do not understand why that happens and why we would not change that.

My frustration with this whole issue has been this. When I first came here, I went to Environment Canada. I asked officials what we could do to change the way we dealt with garbage. They told me that as a member of Parliament I could not talk about that because that was a provincial issue. They told me to go and see the province.

I talked to officials in a number of the provinces. They told me not to talk to them about garbage, or research or ask questions. They told me I should go to the municipalities.

I went to the municipalities and they said that they did not have the money to do any kind of research or development on that. They said that it would be too costly, and referred me back to the provinces.

That is the problem. The technology is there. The federal government's job is to show people the technology and show them the vision. Show them where we want to go, how we want to treat garbage and provide them with that background. Who does not have a problem with garbage?

The difference is we have to think of garbage as a resource, not a waste. We have to do some educating. We could cooperatively do that with the provinces because everyone has a problem. I am meeting with two mayors this weekend from small towns. On January 1, they will not have a place to put their garbage, and they do not know what to do. Europe dealt with that situation 35 or 40 years ago by containerizing it and sending it to major incinerators. As the member has said, the new incinerators are perfectly clean.

Yes, we would cooperate on that and, yes, we should work on that immediately.

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**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will not be taking any honeymoon advice from him. My fiancé would not have any of it.

To get back to the bill with respect to the parks, while it is perhaps a housekeeping bill and a technical bill, there were some problems we had to fix along the way. I am also curious about the member's opinion that ecological integrity is spoken to a number of times in terms of protecting parks and their ecological integrity. With respect to historic sites, the government talks about committing \$40 million. The former minister of the environment stated publicly that the minimum requirement would \$218 million.

Within the bill, the government promises to protect ecological integrity and these national monuments. In making announcements today and feeling very self-congratulatory, the commitment of \$40 million does not put us anywhere near the position in which we need to be. The answer then becomes, it will sell them for coffee shops, that it will sell them to the private sector. That is how the government will deal with its responsibility to protect these national monuments rather than funding them properly, and not to the tune of \$40 million, but to the tune of \$218 million, which has been declared by previous ministers as the minimum.

How much trust can we have in the government moving this housekeeping bill forward and in its statements on ecological integrity and protection of national sites?

• (1615)

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, obviously I identified the \$500 million round figure for the shortfall in infrastructure. We are in this situation because of the underfunding for many years, probably since the sixties. That is 40 some years that parks have been underfunded. Obviously we have to look at that.

As well, we have to make the point that humans are part of the equation in parks. It scares some people a little when we talk about ecological integrity. Some people would define that as meaning no humans in those areas. We have to clarify that because we need the public on side. To get the public on side to support this, any government needs to say that humans are part of the equation. Yes, there are protected area and fragile areas, but that can be controlled. However, we must always let the public know that those parks are for them and for future generations.

I think we will get full cooperation and thus support for the funding. I do not know whether it is \$200 million or \$500 million that is necessary, but I would say that the environment department, which now will be responsible for parks, should very quickly analyze that, come back to our committee and let us take a look at those numbers. Then we can make a recommendation to the minister.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, does the member believe that moving the agency to Environment Canada might help in its work in protecting endangered species? Many parks have a good function under certain circumstances. Would he like to say anything on that or on endangered species in general?

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, it fits in environment much better and there is a much greater chance that the environment department will understand the whole ecological picture of endangered species.

We went through the endangered species legislation, debated it 11 days in the House, and spent many hundreds of hours working on it, with over 300 amendments, et cetera.

We believe we need to preserve endangered species. The problem we had with that legislation, and a majority of the committee had a problem with many aspects of it, was who would made the decisions in classifying. If we take a piece of private land out of production, there should be a definite means spelled out in the bill for compensation, and not just in the regulations because that is not in them. There should be a *mens rea* clause, as opposed to a due diligence clause, where a person needs to show intent for the destruction of that endangered species.

The biggest problem with the issue has been this. Alberta has had a great many fisheries officers show up all of a sudden. Those fisheries officers carry guns and wear flak jackets. Why are they there? We did not all of a sudden have a fisheries. Therefore, it is one of two things. They ran out of fish in the oceans, so they had to come somewhere or they were there for some other reason, maybe to enforce legislation that had just become law.

In talking to the Canadian Wildlife Service, it has a very few answers to how officers are actually going to administer this—

• (1620)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite Patrie.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have this opportunity today to speak to Bill C-7.

This is a bill we have had an opportunity to examine in committee. It is administrative in nature, in principle at least, but has also afforded us an opportunity to do some serious thinking about the role parks should play in Canada.

This bill was introduced on October 8 by the Minister of the Environment. Hon. members will recall that the hon. member for Victoria, who was with us this afternoon but has unfortunately has had to leave, was the one behind this bill, the purpose of which is to transfer responsibility, control and supervision of the parks agency to Canadian Heritage from Environment.

We need to keep in mind the reason we are examining this bill today. We are doing so because the government decided on December 12, 2003, to enact an order in council in order to transfer these responsibilities, as I have said, from Canadian Heritage to Environment. What is more, on July 20, 2004, a further order in council came into effect relating to the responsibilities for built heritage. It was required in order to clarify the earlier order in council. The basic purpose of the bill is to provide legislative support to the orders in council of December 12, 2003, and July 20, 2004.



What is more natural than to have our parks come under the responsibility of the Department of the Environment? What this bill reflects is the aspect of ecotourism. We cannot take steps to protect areas, to implement a policy intended to protect ecosystems and to apply notions of ecological integrity as is the mission of Parks Canada, in part, when the agency is connected to Canadian Heritage, with its totally different vocation.

It is somewhat natural, if I may use that expression, to see this responsibility being transferred to the Department of the Environment. To us it is obvious and significant. We must remember the whims of the previous Minister of Canadian Heritage; every time she touched a tourism product or opportunity, no matter what it was, all she saw was an opportunity to make political hay.

Despite the past whims of the former Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, now the Minister of the Environment, we hope that ecological integrity is at the heart of this administrative change we are now looking at in legislative form.

Of course, this is a technical change. On this side of the House we have determined that this change will not have administrative impacts that would damage or distort the working environment. That is important. In recent months we have seen the conflicts at Parks Canada and seen how the agency's employees have been treated. On this side of the House we saw this legislative change. We have, by talking to the unions, ascertained that this administrative change will not have an impact on the way the work is done. That is what the union leaders have told us and that is the guarantee the government has given us.

• (1625)

Therefore, there is nothing in this bill that could change the way work is organized and thus change the employee's job descriptions. What we hope is that the government has learned from the recent dispute at Parks Canada that it should provide the necessary conditions so employees can do their work properly.

When I met with representatives of the Public Service Alliance of Canada on this issue, they described the conditions in which some employees work every day. There are mitigation measures in Forillon Park, for example. With a choice between preventing or reducing the impact of erosion on a hill and constructing a wharf, the wharf was chosen. In a context where ecological integrity should have been protected, the choice was made to improve tourism infrastructure.

It is not incompatible, and I do understand that. Ecology and tourism can go together, except that management, and of course the employees who work on Parks Canada infrastructure, do not have enough resources. When ecological integrity—and those whose responsibility it is to protect it—is shortchanged in terms of resources, it is always the ecosystem that suffers in the end.

We cannot talk about ecosystems without talking about habitat, which, in turn, brings us back to the issue of species at risk and endangered species. These species will never be adequately protected, if there is no real protection of their habitat.

My concern is that the conditions facing those who manage our parks and the employees who devote their time to parks are less than ideal in terms of work organization as well as resource protection. In

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the coming years, we will have to not only implement administrative changes such as the ones we are considering today, but also to strengthen our network of parks in Canada.

Let us be clear however. I did not say extend the network of Parks Canada. We are basically facing choices. What are these choices that this Parliament might have to make? What decisions might Parliament, and the Minister of Finance in particular, have to make in the coming years? We have two choices. One choice would be to consolidate the network of parks in Canada. At present, everyone agrees that the current network is in an advanced state of deterioration. Even the Auditor General said so in 1996. The other choice would be to increase the number of parks in Canada.

Choices have to be made. We cannot have it both ways. Either we consolidate the existing network by providing quality services while ensuring proper environmental integrity, or we increase funding and dole out money here and there to develop protected areas all over the place, without necessarily ensuring habitat protection.

We have to think about these things. There are consequences for Quebec. I will remind the hon. members that one of the key elements in past negotiations between the federal government and the provinces was this transition from land belonging to the provinces, naturally, to land under federal jurisdiction. Increasing the number of parks and the area designated as protected increases at the same time the number of crown lands, which means that they will be under federal jurisdiction.

Very often, federal jurisdiction is difficult to enforce on these lands, whether we are talking about the Species at Risk Act or the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

• (1630)

Quite often, these acts, which were adopted here in Parliament, are not even implemented on lands that are under federal jurisdiction.

This is why I am asking today that our existing parks be consolidated, in cooperation with the provinces and park networks.

Let us not forget that we have wildlife preserves in Quebec. We have parks that are under the responsibility of Parcs Québec. It is possible to consolidate the existing federal network while also consolidating the existing provincial network. The idea is not to increase the number of parks in Quebec merely for the sake of it.

We must care about protecting and implementing the concept of ecological integrity, which is based on the protection of our ecosystems. There is a lot of work to do in this regard, because, as I said, resources are limited and needs are constantly growing.

The report tabled by the Auditor General in 1996 is a case in point. This report was released over eight years ago. However, it was mentioned that even though Canada adopted the concept of ecosystem-based management, even though Parks Canada defines ecological integrity as a condition where the structure and function of an ecosystem are unimpaired by stresses induced by human activity and are likely to persist, the planning process does not always provide a clear link between ecological integrity objectives and initiatives. That was the conclusion of the Auditor General of Canada.

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That means there is a flaw in the Parks Canada mission, in the concepts it adheres to and also in its practice.

We can only hope that this administrative change will result in concrete changes in practice. We have to make sure that the Parks Canada goal to maintain ecological integrity is put into practice.

That is why we sincerely hope that these administrative changes, which will transfer this agency from Canadian Heritage to Environment Canada, will help us move in that direction and reach the mission objectives.

I congratulate my hon. colleague from the NDP opposite as well as his party for presenting this motion, which was adopted by this Parliament a few days ago. It leaves no room for prevarication by the government. My colleague opposite took measures that have been adopted by this Parliament to ensure this responsibility truly falls to the Minister of the Environment.

Of course there are administrative changes made by order in council and there is this bill. However, in this Parliament we made sure this responsibility will truly belong to the Minister of the Environment. I think this is another way to consolidate and to make sure that ecological integrity will be maintained.

I was saying earlier that the federal government is in no position to preach in its jurisdiction. I was saying that many parks in Canada are in poor shape and their ecological integrity is not being protected. There is also the example of Gatineau Park.

Believe it or not, but Gatineau Park, which is not far from here—a few kilometres or a few minutes from Parliament Hill—does not have legal status under Canadian law. This park is the responsibility of the National Capital Commission, whose primary interest is urban development such as developing Sparks Street here in Ottawa. It is quite incredible. This park is federal responsibility, it is not part of Parks Canada's network, but rather the National Capital Commission, which in the past, has often been lax when it came time to apply the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

This land, which is under federal jurisdiction, is not protected by the same guarantees as those confirmed by Parks Canada in its mission. The park comes under the responsibility of a commission that looks after such urban planning matters as certain streets in this city, Ottawa. There is something unacceptable about that.

This is why we have representations from members of a not-for-profit organization inquiring whether this jewel of biodiversity, which is there to protect the habitat, could come under Parks Canada. I have no problem with that, provided things are done correctly, that Parliament is duly informed, and that we can guarantee the ecological integrity of the area.

We are aware that, when it comes to parks, and without saying that the law of the jungle prevails at present, there is a lot to be done. There is legal protection in place, yes, but very often no resources available. What is more, in the past, the responsibility lay with Canadian Heritage.

● (1635)

I greet the hon. member for Victoria, who has just joined us. I have had many opportunities to join with him in battles for the

preservation of ecological integrity. It is rare to see a member of a political party as courageous as he has been in recent weeks and months. He has dared to continue to defend the moratorium on oil exploration in his region. This does him proud, and I mean that.

The government needs to understand that what is fundamental to any decision making, if we want to end up with a true strategy for sustainable development, is to put strategic environmental assessment into application, that is to say make plans, programs and policies focus on sustainable development.

This administrative change we are considering today must therefore be not just that, but have an impact on actual Parks Canada practices as well.

● (1640)

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened very attentively to the speech by my hon. colleague who is very familiar with environmental issues and speaks passionately about them. He is right to do so because it is certainly time for us to talk seriously about the environment.

I believe my hon. colleague said that he hoped the new law would not necessarily just increase the quantity of parks and the quantity of facilities, but that there would be some consolidation. He fears that the opposite will happen. I have trouble believing that things will be improved simply by changing the law.

Since this new parliament began, we have passed many bills to split up departments, add new ones, or add new structures. But all these changes will not necessarily improve things.

The hon. member mentioned certain parks, including Gatineau Park. Some parks are being neglected and more money should be allocated to improving facilities and infrastructure.

It makes me think of La Mauricie National Park. My predecessor in the riding of Saint-Maurice, Jean Chrétien, was Prime Minister for a long time. We all knew him. He defended La Mauricie National Park. I remember all the debates we had back home because we thought that the Mauricie region, in the heart of Quebec, perhaps was not the place for a federal national park.

The park was created nevertheless and it was done in good taste. I have been there very often to camp and cross-country ski.

As I listened to my colleague, I was thinking that this park, which is loved by the local people and very near to the city, seems to be neglected these days. Why is it that when something is working well, we leave it to fall apart? We are acting like children who abandon one toy and reach for another. I would also like to talk about Lac-Saint-Pierre, but I will stop here because I want to give my colleague time to answer.

I would ask him if he thinks the new legislation will make it possible to improve things in La Mauricie National Park.

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**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to go to Mauricie park many times. I often go camping there with my family. I am an ecotourism enthusiast and I often go with my family to Mauricie park, which is very beautiful and should represent the spirit of a national park.

It has an infrastructure, a field and a protected area that has the very touristic purpose of welcoming visitors. We have noticed that the number of visitors to our parks in Canada has increased considerably because people, young and old, want to be in touch with nature.

I think we should be able to combine the concept of ecology and tourism, but we have to improve the current infrastructure, the poor state of which I have seen for myself. We have to maintain ecological integrity, especially in Mauricie park, because our parks in Canada are often used as an indicator of the ecological health of our species. Loons and the state of the loon population in Canada—in Gatineau park—is an indicator of the health of loons in Canada.

Not only are these parks a place to welcome visitors, but they are also used as ecological health indicators. Thus, we have to apply the concept of ecotourism and make sure that these protected areas are used as ecological health indicators.

• (1645)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as always, I have listened to the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie with interest. I found his speech very interesting and his presentation on the law went into considerable detail.

He spoke a great deal about ecosystems and protecting areas. I share his conviction that more needs to be done as far as the environment is concerned.

I come from BC, a province where the NDP government set a ten-year objective for parks and wildlife sanctuaries of 12% of the province's total area. It managed to accomplish that within the ten years and was the first in North America to put in place these resources for the public.

Does the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite Patrie believe it would be a good idea to follow the NDP's example in BC and to have a target figure of 12% of the Canadian territory in order to protect our Canadian species as well as protecting our land?

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, I do believe this is a goal we should pursue and which is in keeping with international conventions on protected areas. I can think of wetlands, among others, which are rich in biodiversity and which very often generate oxygen for our lakes and rivers. We must ensure that these ecosystems and areas are protected.

In Quebec, we have to recognize that we have lagged behind in the past. But I must say—and I am pleased to do so—that in recent months, in pursuing the goal the hon. member referred to, Quebec has implemented a very aggressive strategy and policy to significantly increase the number of protected areas within its jurisdiction. We must indeed pursue that. It is not always easy, but we have to develop partnerships with certain sectors.

It is clear that, to pursue greater biodiversity protection, we need to develop a strategy, building on what we have achieved in Quebec

through *Stratégies Saint-Laurent* and priority intervention zone committees, or ZIP committees. These are organizations comprised of volunteers who want to protect the existing shores and ecosystems.

As I said, we will never succeed in adequately protecting our ecosystems in Quebec and Canada unless a strategic environmental assessment is prescribed in cabinet directions as well as legislation. Plans, policies and programs all have to go in that direction. The day this legal obligation is provided in legislation, as it is in some countries, departments, and Environment Canada in particular, will be required to comply and work toward sustainable development.

I think that this will be achieved through our protected areas and an increase in their size, in Quebec as well as in Canada.

• (1650)

[English]

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to rise today in the House to speak to Bill C-7. While it has been referred to in a number of different ways by various members in the House as a technical move and a piece of housekeeping, it also affords us the opportunity to refocus our attention on the importance that we place on national parks and heritage sites.

The importance that we have been placing on this in a lot of respects has been mere words and nice intentions. Some questions have been put to the government asking what its intentions are with respect to the budget, moneys, and the serious intent that will follow this so-called housekeeping procedure.

We support the move of Parks Canada to the Department of the Environment. This makes perfect sense with respect to protecting the ecological integrity and administration. That is where it started out and that is where it should go back.

I am a new member and the process that we went through in terms of addressing this bill, taking a look at it thoroughly in committee, making some changes to it, and how those changes came about, was very informative to me in terms of how the House could possibly function. There is a certain measure of cultural experience going on for certain political staffers within the government as to how the House may or may not function in the future.

In the past there may have been some tendency to steamroll things, to push things through committee, heaven forbid, or to use non-elected representatives to push a certain political agenda. We bumped into a bit of that in the process of this bill coming forward. It was very interesting to watch how the House functioned as a whole, how we were able to get support from the other opposition parties, talk to members within the government who also found some agreement toward the changes that we were looking for, and receive enough support to have proper and good amendments come forward.

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We started with a good bill. It was potentially a housekeeping bill and we made it better. That is the idea of this place, not to simply accept what comes forward but to make changes that we feel represent the views of our constituents across this country. That is the work of the committee and the House.

Herein lies an opportunity for us in this minority government to address other more significant pieces of legislation. I am thinking of Kyoto, water and air quality across this country, and other aspects of the environment, which other members have spoken about today, that need addressing and need the influence of all members of the House in terms of drafting legislation. I am encouraging the government and its political machine to consider conferring with the other parties prior to tabling bills.

There was a suggestion put forward last night in a small committee about green papers, the reintroduction of discussion papers from the government, allowing them to approach other members to have discussion points rather than presenting take it or leave it bills, and going through the arduous process of making serious amendments. There seemed to be a great receptivity among those who were involved in the committee work last night toward a move where the government would come forward with a series of questions and proposals which members in the House could toss around back and forth, and then legislation could derive from that.

I believe this legislation is stronger for a number of the points that have been raised by other opposition members and by members of the government. This piece of legislation firmly affixes where the control and responsibility lies. Who, in a sense, holds the bag for parks in Canada? It is with the Minister of the Environment. The minister is in the best position to understand the importance of ecological integrity and is put in cabinet to protect those aspects that have been talked about so much in the House and in committee, namely, how important parks are to our national identity.

I believe the member for Red Deer was referring to how important parks are for people just to refer to places. There are certain parks that people can bring forward in their minds. Clearly, it is a part of our makeup in this country. Oftentimes Canadians fall back and forth trying to find some point of identity. How do we distinguish ourselves on the world stage? Clearly, we have some perception of ourselves as protectors of the environment. We have some perception of ourselves as having great open spaces that we take care of and manage on behalf of future generations and on behalf of the globe, quite frankly.

Are we properly funding these things? Absolutely not. We have been hearing this from former environment ministers. We are hearing it from the parliamentary secretary. While the words and the platitudes are nice, that these parks are important, that species are important, that we care about future generations and these historic sites, we seem to lose the will along the way, when we head to the budget process, to actually find the dollars identified by the Auditor General and the minister's own staff that are needed to protect both the ecological integrity and the historic sites within this country.

I want to ask a question of the parliamentary secretary in terms of the reconstruction, redesign and rebuilding of many of our monuments and sites. When I look around this particular site here with the asbestos in the walls, the terrible footprint that this place

leaves in terms of its actual harmony with the environment, the buildings that we stand in and work in are not healthy buildings. They are not healthy for the people who work here. They are not healthy for the environment as a whole because they leak so much energy.

• (1655)

I would certainly encourage the government, as we are looking to make some real investments in the future, to think of the ecological footprint of all these buildings we are hoping to restore. I hear the Prime Minister is having some problems with some drafts in his residence. We would be more than open to the suggestion of actually fixing the environmental catastrophe that the Prime Minister's residence has become.

**An hon. member:** For free.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** For free. Indeed, yes. He does not have to actually carry that bill, unlike many Canadians who are looking to do the right thing.

I spoke earlier to the notion that any further shifts in responsibility for parks must come back to the House. Initially, this met with some derision and some opposition from members in the government. They felt that it was something that could be taken care of by the Privy Council or cabinet. As a new member I am greatly encouraged that we are able to actually stop that because if parks are this important, if our heritage sites are this important to Canadians, then why would we not return to the House if we were going to make any significant direction changes as to who has control and who has direction over those sites and parks.

It only makes sense to go through the unfortunate arduous process of this democracy and return to the House to consider a serious and significant change in the administration of parks in Canada. It should not happen behind closed doors. I was surprised that there were only a few members from the government side who thanked us for our scrutiny of the bill to ensure that they themselves would have some voice because the backbenchers, and many members on the government side, are actually gaining in influence and power.

**An hon. member:** Thank you.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** You are welcome.

I am now hearing thanks, Mr. Speaker. That is quite encouraging.

We must instruct those people who assist government, people in the Privy Council and in the Prime Minister's Office, that they in fact may not be steering the ship entirely. They may have to talk to their own party members, and heaven forbid, they may even have to speak to some of the opposition members to gain support for a piece of legislation that Canadians clearly think is important.

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It has been suggested in committee that every time we do this move it costs approximately \$25 million. For a drastically underfunded department, like Parks Canada, the cost of \$25 million and the staffing time it takes to move this thing over every other time, we now have a somewhat arduous process in order to do it again. Clearly, there is not enough money to go around in the parks system as it exists right now. Why would we spend our time switching all the letterhead, signs, aides, firing and hiring, and going through that entire process every five or six years?

I am glad that it is going to be difficult and that we will have to come back here, and seriously consider whether we want to do that or not, and not strip away more badly needed funds to the parks. This is a distraction from the parks mandate. It is not meant to be moving offices, changing signs and looking at new letterhead every five to six years. It is meant to be protecting our cultural and ecological heritage.

In polling at times, Canadians have consistently identified parks as one of the strongest national symbols that we have, above the anthem and the flag. Why, under such a strong significance and such a strong identification, does this House find it impossible to properly fund it? When flags are distributed and we ensure that the anthem is known to all school children, we understand that it has something to do with keeping the national identity across such a vast and varied land.

Why, when we look to our parks system, do we simply assume that it will take care of itself and we can consistently underfund it and in fact create a deficit year in and year out?

The topics have been wide ranging whenever we raise the environment as a topic and members feel a certain privilege to address many environmental issues. That is not my prerogative today. I do not have a great deal of interest in talking about many other environmental aspects, but I will talk about the Kyoto protocol for a moment, something that we have signed on to and ratified. With the recent ratification by Russia, we have certain obligations.

I think that in some small way the process that we went through on this technical bill could in a sense offer some leadership and guidance to the government because the bill is starting to talk about some of the interjurisdictional problems that we are going to face in a serious way if we are going to address climate change in any significance.

Right now, we have done little to next to nothing. I believe the minister is in Iceland hearing about how accelerated the process is around climate change and that we do not necessarily need further studies. We are hearing about it. I represent a northern riding and we are hearing from people who have lived on the land for thousands of years that they have never seen anything like this.

● (1700)

We are seeing forest fires that we have never seen before. We are seeing incidents of weather and climatic change we simply have never seen before.

The science is in on climate change. To continue to stick our heads in the sand over this issue is wrong. We need to collaborate to make sure that the old debate on environment versus jobs goes somewhere

else. It does a disservice and shows disrespect to future generations to constantly pit jobs against the environment.

The university in Peterborough, Ontario which I attended had a strong program in retrofitting houses which created all sorts of jobs around that small community. By simply looking at the issue of energy leakage in houses and identifying where the problems were in a sense created a whole new industry. It was profitable to the economy and good for the environment. It was a simple and small measure.

We must start to tackle the issues in connection with Kyoto, because like it or not, it is here. We have to do something about this. The lack of leadership and vision from the government has been rather disappointing to many Canadians. We have not seen enough strength, will or coordination of effort.

Here it is a minority government, however long it may or may not last. This is an opportunity to work together to address these issues. This is an opportunity to work collaboratively with the provinces. The parliamentary secretary took great satisfaction in the government's ability to do that with respect to heritage sites.

Imagine the implications if we were able to get the Canadian Federation of Municipalities, the provinces and territories and the federal government working in conjunction with each other. This would avoid any serious shocks to our economic system and would start addressing the effects of climate change on our economy and on future generations.

As a new member I found the process last night to be uplifting and encouraging. Not only were we as a party able to put forward a health bill that will address future generations and the health of Canadians, but we were also able to amend a government bill to the satisfaction of the opposition parties. Although government members may have voted in different directions, they may have obtained some satisfaction as well.

Canadians have consistently said that they want to see this place work better. That is only going to happen when we establish common interests and common goals by pushing the government and holding it to account. We need to find pieces of legislation that we can put forward in the House that will address the concerns and needs of Canadians, that will do things right by the economy and by the environment and health. Those are the foundations of this country and they will be the foundations for future generations.

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley mentioned cooperation in this minority Parliament. I do not think there is any better example of that than on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in which the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley plays an important role.

*Government Orders*

This bill came before our committee. I think it received unanimous consent by the time we made those amendments that we thought were required. It is a technical bill that just transfers Parks Canada Agency from the Minister of Canadian Heritage to Environment Canada. We think that is where it belongs.

As one who lives in the shadow of Banff National Park, I can tell members that my constituents and those who enjoy the parks are much happier to have them back in the hands of the Department of Environment than under the auspices of Sheila Copps.

I did want to say that there were some things we might have expected in the first environment bill that the government brought to this session of Parliament.

We heard reference in the throne speech to additional protected areas, to substantive measures to address issues of ecological integrity in Canada. Those were things we thought might be included in a motion for a bill such as this one. The hon. member and the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie mentioned some of these areas.

We hoped that the government would be forthcoming with amendments to current acts in the legislation with regard to protected areas and also ecological integrity.

I noticed, in researching our thoughts on this bill, that Canada was recently criticized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in its performance review in that our current share of total nationally protected areas is less than the OECD average and certainly less than Canada's current target of 12%. I am sure that hon. members on the environment committee particularly would join me in encouraging the government to bring forth legislation in that regard to improve our protected areas.

In addition, our interest is in having more substantive measures to address the issue of ecological integrity in Canada's national parks. This was also promised in the October Speech from the Throne.

We would support this bill.

● (1705)

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is not a question there but the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley in reply.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, the only comment I would make with respect to the increasing of the parks within Canada is a point that was raised earlier. If we do not resource these things properly, then it will be done poorly. Simply hitting a target may be fine and good, but we have heard stories in the past where ministers would look out of a plane's window and decide that there would be a park in a certain area. This caused a number of Canadians, particularly in the rural areas, because those are generally the areas we are talking about, to have some real negative feelings toward the creation of any parks.

I come from a rural area, a resource based area. There is still a cultural shift going on to recognize the potential economic benefits or the overall impacts of parks being created.

The only thing I would mention is that during the recent PSAC strike, members on the committee noted the number of communities that came forward and said, "Fix this strike because it is hurting us

economically. When these heritage sites and parks are shut down, it really hurts our local economy". It was striking to me just how important these parks had become to our local economies.

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the House is aware, I represent the riding of Oak Ridges—Markham, about half of which is the Oak Ridges moraine.

The Oak Ridges moraine is a very significant landform. The moraine gets its name from its rolling hills, rivers and valleys extending over 160 kilometres from the Niagara Escarpment to Rice Lake. It was formed about 12,000 years ago. The moraine contains the headwaters of 65 river systems, 35 in the GTA, the greater Toronto area. It has a wide diversity of streams, woodlands, wetlands, kettle lakes, kettle bogs, and significant flora and fauna. It is one of the last remaining continuous green corridors in southern Ontario.

That is why I am standing to speak in support of the bill. The Oak Ridges moraine has been enhanced recently, although it is not a national park.

Regrettably I have to say in the House that I have not gone to a national park. I have camped in provincial parks for the last 20 years but have yet to camp in a national park.

The Oak Ridges moraine is not a national park but it does provide general beauty in the area. Recently the Ontario government made its announcement on the greenbelt legislation which protects a lot more land in the GTA which will beautify the Ontario region in years to come.

I just wanted to make those comments and mention that the ecological beauty the Oak Ridges moraine provides in the Ontario region is of significance to our area and in my riding especially.

A member from the opposite side mentioned earlier that there are not enough resources. I would repeat that and add that not only are there not enough resources but there are not enough natural resources. We must continue to be very vigilant and work with natural resources initiatives in Canada.

● (1710)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have much of a reply other than to note the obvious pride which the hon. member has for the natural areas around his riding, and the importance of that place to his constituents. The importance of creating sustainable, new and well resourced protected areas and parks in our country clearly is going to be a benefit to Canadians in future generations.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed very much the presentation of the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

*Government Orders*

The issue has come up of the example that was set by the British Columbia New Democratic Party government to set aside 12% of the land mass over 10 years, which is unequalled in North America. While unfortunately that great environmental policy is now under attack by the provincial government in British Columbia, it is still a shining example for the rest of the country.

I want the member to comment on the issue of the British Columbia NDP government and the establishment of a parks network. I also would like his comment on the issue of underfunding of our national parks. We have a bill before us today that will move us toward putting the kind of infrastructure in place to address these issues. Obviously the parks system has suffered from chronic underfunding by the Liberal government. I would like his comment on that.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked an excellent question.

B.C. was out in front. The New Democratic Party when in government was very strong in pushing forward strong, resolute forums. One of the ways this worked was that there was proper consultation on the land base. Again this speaks to the cultural shift that I mentioned earlier, where at times people considered parks a bad thing, particularly in the rural areas, because they were seen as preventing what possibly could happen on the economic base.

People are starting to realize the benefits. I would point to the stunning parks in the Queen Charlotte Islands and many provincial parks within my riding that have done well for the economy by attracting new tourist dollars. I think they were viewed similar to treaties, that they were going to be bad for the economy, that the land would be lost. We need to shift that culture and continue that shift within Canada so that we can present a strong face to the world and a strong face to future generations.

**Mr. Russ Powers (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we get into discussions about various legislation, we always find the opportunity to have dialogue on a number of issues that are concurrent to particular legislation. One of the wonderful things about Parliament is that we get the opportunity to not only bring forward ideas and issues that are consistent for our own ridings, but things in which we have a common interest.

Tonight, certainly, that has been apparent through the discussions. We have been able to convey issues that are important not only to our children and grandchildren but also to us.

Bill C-7, which is before us for consideration at third reading, can be perceived as an administrative shift; in other words, the appropriate realignment of the duties and responsibilities of these areas, whether it relates to historic sites or the designation of our parks. It is very appropriate that they be so delineated so they can get the resources they deserve.

The parliamentary secretary addressed the legislative components and, from an administrative standpoint, where it was best suited. I want to now delve into an issue that has been alluded to by a number of others, which is the ecological integrity and the realignment of our national parks as it relates to the realignment under Parks Canada.

It gives me great pleasure to address the third reading of Bill C-7, which is the act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act

and the Parks Canada Agency Act and to make related amendments to other acts. The bill would give legislative effect to the government reorganization that was announced on December 12, 2003, as it affects Parks Canada, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of the Environment.

The bill would update existing legislation to reflect two orders in council that came into effect in December 2003 and also in July 2004, which transferred the control and supervision of the Parks Canada Agency from the Minister of Canadian Heritage to the Minister of the Environment. The bill also clarifies that Parks Canada is responsible for historic places in Canada and for the design and implementation of programs that relate to built heritage.

As we are aware, the battlefields, as they are known here in Canada, continue to be under Heritage Canada because of the commission that was established back in 1908 for that purpose.

Permit me to take members back a few years to introduce them to what I mean by ecological integrity in our national parks. In March 2000 the independent panel on ecological integrity of Canada's national parks tabled its report. The panel's report was quite comprehensive and contained more than 120 recommendations for action. As it was intended to be, the report was very frank in pointing out not only the deficiencies but the challenges that face our national parks.

One of the previous members referred to the fact that when we talk about identification, whether it is the Canadian flag, the maple leaf or the beaver, the recognition of our national parks ranks with those as being something that is truly Canadian.

The panel's report confirmed that most of Canada's national parks had been progressively losing precisely those important natural components that we as a government and all of us as members of Parliament were dedicated to protect.

Accordingly, the panel called for a fundamental reaffirmation of the legislative framework that protects the parks, together with policies to conserve these places and the appropriation of funds necessary to support these efforts.

Parks Canada committed itself to implementing the report and its recommendations insofar as it was legislatively and fiscally possible. It is now being done in full dialogue with all affected parties, and helped tremendously by the funding announced in budget 2003. I would anticipate further funding will be committed in budget 2005.

● (1715)

Parks Canada's first priority for national parks is to maintain or restore ecological integrity. This is prescribed by the government legislation, that is the Canada National Parks Act, proclaimed in 2001. Subsection 8(2) reads:

Maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes, shall be the first priority of the Minister when considering all aspects of the management of parks.

*Government Orders*

Why is ecological integrity so important? It is important because the loss of natural features, natural features that are so identified within our national parks and processes, deprive Canadians of the opportunity to use and enjoy these places for the purposes for which they were intended. Loss of ecological integrity contradicts the very purposes for which our parks were set aside and constitute an irreversible loss of heritage to both current and future generations.

Achieving the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity also means putting science first. This includes traditional ecological knowledge.

Our national parks and our national historic sites are very important symbols of Canada. Canadians, through personal visits and other learning mechanisms, can use these places to enhance their pride in, and knowledge of, Canada and of Canadians.

Parks Canada is committed to an expanded public education and outreach program to convey accurate, interesting and up to date information to Canadians and those who are not Canadians, and perhaps those who would like to be Canadians.

The provision of information via the Internet is a priority for Parks Canada. This type of interactive outreach continues to intensify and is aimed at our urban areas. The objective is, in effect, to bring our national parks and their values to people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to visit them or may visit them only infrequently.

Our marketing programs emphasize the primary conservation purposes of our national parks. Accordingly, visitors are encouraged to understand and respect these purposes and to plan their activities and visits to align with them.

Parks Canada, rightfully so, is committed to improving ecological integrity in a number of ways: first, improving our science, particularly research and monitoring the health of our parks; second, through communication, specifically enhanced interpretation and education activities; third, reducing impacts on facilities; and fourth, implementing up to date environmental management practices and technologies.

I would stress that one cannot sustain economic benefits without enhancing both the natural environment of the parks and visitors' enjoyment of them. I would equally stress that any changes must and will be implemented in full consultation with partners, including the provinces and territories, national and regional tourism, non-governmental bodies and, of course, aboriginal people. If indeed town sites and municipal authorities are so involved, they also will be involved in our dialogue.

A priority area of the panel's report concerned the impact of stressors that have their origin in places external to the park's boundaries. To deal with such factors, the panel called for renewed and expanded partnerships. The proposed transfer of lands is one such partnership. In this respect the panel was coming up from a place with which we are all familiar: the notion that what we do in our own backyard can have significant effects in our neighbour's backyard.

I will digress for a moment and talk about my experiences and understandings. I had the pleasure of serving as an elected individual in a municipal setting for close to 22 years. In that capacity I served

as chairman of one of the 38 conservation authorities in the province of Ontario. These were set up in the late 1950s to recognize the major impact of hurricane Hazel which came through and devastated many town sites and certainly our water course system. The legislation that was brought in at the time identified the need for the creation of watersheds. It identified that there were no political or municipal boundaries because a water course begins at its source and ultimately finds itself to its mouth. As a result, it impacts everyone in its course.

We found that dealing with our deliberations in a watershed manner gave us the opportunity to consider all the impacts that would have on our neighbours either internally or externally. This is an approach that we will take with the intervention and involvement of Parks Canada in the program where not only what is within our parks is considered, but also the impacts that are felt from the outside.

● (1720)

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of these issues because our national parks have many concerns that are shared in common by partners, such as the provinces, the territories, aboriginal peoples, private landowners and various other interests. There are so many it is hard to name them.

In particular, I have never known nature to recognize or respect a human boundary. One day a grizzly bear may be in a national park and the next day it is in another jurisdiction. Those who are residents in Jasper or in Banff know of the migration or the impact of the flora and fauna on their lives and as a result adjust accordingly. Rivers, likewise, flow through jurisdictions. Acid rain from many kilometres away becomes a park problem when it impacts national park resources. The list goes on and on.

Fundamentally, renewed and extended cooperation among neighbours who share common concerns is the only option toward maintaining ecological integrity. It is in this spirit that the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation and Parks Canada intend to work together to ensure that the ecological integrity of the Pacific Rim continues to be the first priority.

The bottom line is that we must improve the ways we work together if we are to safeguard the future of our national parks. The nature of the programs we devise to do so will be established in cooperation and consultation with interested partners. Throughout this process the prerogatives of constitutionally defined jurisdictions, as well as the rights of private property owners, will be respected.

I have just sketched for the House a very broad overview of where Parks Canada is coming from and where it hopes to go. In summary, first, the panel report on ecological integrity was an important milestone for the future of the national parks of Canada. Parks Canada has taken it seriously and is moving forward in implementing the directions it recommended. Its implementation in a purposeful yet sensitive way is bringing benefits to us all. Its neglect would have meant untold costs to all Canadians forever.



*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**FOOD AND DRUGS ACT**

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-206, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning labels regarding the consumption of alcohol), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if members know that beverage alcohol is directly or indirectly responsible for: over 19,000 deaths a year; 45% of motor vehicle collisions; 30% of fires; 30% of suicides; 60% of homicides; 50% of family violence; 65% of snowmobile collisions; one in six family breakdowns; 30% of drownings; 65% of child abuse; 40% of falls causing injury; 50% of hospital emergencies; and over \$15 billion of additional costs to Canadians.

That should get Canadians' attention.

Bill C-206 seeks to respond to the need to alert Canadians to the risks associated with the misuse of beverage alcohol. Specifically, it calls for health warning labels on the containers of alcoholic beverages to caution expectant mothers and others of those risks. It should be noted that beverage alcohol is the only consumer product that can harm individuals if misused but does not warn them of that fact.

The intended purpose of warning labels is to act as a consumer lighthouse, sending a signal of impending danger.

When I became a member of Parliament in 1993, I became a member of the health committee. In preparation for my work, I examined the work of the committee in the prior Parliament. To my great interest, I found a 1992 report called "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: The Preventable Tragedy", which recommended health warning labels. The report concluded:

—there is no question that maternal alcohol consumption can have devastating impacts on the fetus. The basic fact is that when a pregnant woman drinks, her unborn child drinks also; that is, the alcohol in the mother's bloodstream circulates through the placenta into the bloodstream of the fetus. It is possible that the blood-alcohol level in the fetus will remain at an elevated level for a longer period than that of the mother because the immature fetal liver metabolizes the alcohol more slowly.

The report affected me significantly because, despite the widespread and devastating impact of alcohol misuse, I had never heard the term fetal alcohol syndrome. As an active member in my community who had spent nine years as a director of our hospital, I was concerned that I was not aware, but more important, I was concerned that it might be the same with many other Canadians.

Let me now turn to some facts. In one week, as many as 10,000 babies are born in Canada. Of these, 3 are born with muscular dystrophy; 4 are born with HIV infection; 8 are born with spina bifida and 10 are born with Down's syndrome, but 20 are born with fetal alcohol syndrome and 100 are born with other alcohol related birth defects. This should give members an idea of the nature and the severity of this problem.

The provinces, territories and aboriginal peoples are and will continue to be significant partners in achieving protection of our national parks. Viewed narrowly, in terms of jurisdiction alone, Canada's national parks and other federally protected areas fall under the stewardship of the federal government, but they really belong to all of us. They are the legacy of each and every Canadian. Let us enable future historians to say that on our watch we protected this precious legacy and even left it in better condition than we found it.

I urge all members to support the passage of Bill C-17.

• (1725)

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to add a note to my previous question. In response to my question to a previous speaker, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, he commented on the efforts of the former NDP government in his province of British Columbia to preserve our natural environment. It brought to memory a visit to the hon. member's riding of Skeena—Bulkley Valley to witness the salmon run. What a glorious sight it is to see millions of thriving salmon swimming upstream to spawn.

Today that salmon stock is threatened. I hope the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley would join us, the Conservative Party of Canada, in our initiative to save the salmon. Canadians will soon hear more of our efforts to protect the west coast salmon. I welcome the support of those opposite.

**Mr. Russ Powers:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the comments of the hon. member. It is very interesting that within my riding, which borders the extreme western end of Lake Ontario, it was only a number of years ago that the salmon were reintroduced to the watersheds in my area. It is an amazing sight even to this day.

The member has alluded to the fact that families have something else that they can relate to from the standpoint of being ecologically impacted. Very clearly, the initiative the member has proposed certainly warrants our interest and involvement.

We have a harbour at the very end of Hamilton that is one of the largest Great Lakes ports. Over the years it became in essence a cesspool of accumulation. Through the intervention of the federal government, with its strategic investment of funds, and with the cooperative efforts of the municipality and the provincial bodies, we have gone a long way toward restoring the integrity of Hamilton harbour. In fact, for over 50 years there were beach areas to which the public had limited access. Now not only are members of the public able to use the beaches for their own purposes, but nature has returned.

• (1730)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business*

Fetal alcohol syndrome, commonly known as FAS, is now called the fetal alcohol spectrum of disorders, FASD. Whatever the name, it refers to a group of physical and mental birth defects. Its primary symptoms include: growth deficiency before and after birth; central nervous system dysfunction, resulting in learning disabilities; and physical malformities in facial and cranial areas. The other alcohol related birth defects I referred to involve central nervous system damage like FAS, but without those physical abnormalities.

Since FAS is incurable, most victims will require special care throughout their lives. Depending on the severity, the estimated lifetime cost for the care of an FAS victim ranges from \$3 million to \$6 million.

The secondary symptoms are also very important: 90% of FAS victims have mental health problems; 60% will be expelled or suspended from school or drop out; 60% will get into trouble with the law; 50% will go to jail or be confined in an institution; 50% will exhibit inappropriate sexual behaviour; 30% will abuse drugs or alcohol; 80% will not be capable of living independently in adulthood; and 80% will have employment problems.

As well, what is very significant is that both the federal and provincial authorities have confirmed their estimates that 50% of the inmates in Canada's jails suffer from fetal alcohol syndrome or other alcohol related birth defects. One-half of the people in our jails are not getting the care and the treatment they require and we have to do something about that as well.

Tragically, these severe problems could have been prevented if the mothers had abstained from alcohol consumption throughout their pregnancies. In September of this year, the *Harvard Mental Health Letter* reported that 30% to 40% of women drink during pregnancy. As well, today the Canadian Addiction Survey reports that 17% of past-year drinkers are considered high risk drinkers and calls for increased awareness in prevention programs like health warning labels.

I also want to stress that harm to the fetus can also occur at any time during the pregnancy, even during the first month when most women do not even know they are pregnant.

•(1735)

Let me quote the mother of an FAS victim, who said:

My son has fetal alcohol syndrome. He was diagnosed at age eight. I got pregnant between high school and college. I was a social drinker and I have never had any problems with alcohol. I did not know I was pregnant until I was three and a half months along. I stopped drinking then, but it was too late. The damage was done. Though I did not set out to harm my child, I did, and now I need to do whatever I can to make things easier for him.

That tells us a lot about this situation we are dealing with.

Research findings suggest that days 15 to 22 during pregnancy are critical for facial and cranial deformities. That is why women should not wait until they find out they are pregnant before they stop drinking. Over 50% of pregnancies are unplanned. Therefore, if a woman is sexually active and pregnancy is possible, she should abstain from consuming alcohol.

To choose not to abstain is the same as playing Russian roulette with the lifelong health and well-being of the child. There is no recommended safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy,

and therefore the prudent choice for women is to abstain. Everyone in Canada should know that fact and they should have ready access to the information they need.

Fetal alcohol syndrome is often described as the leading known cause of mental retardation in Canada and the United States, and while it is true that it is as prevalent as both Down's syndrome and spina bifida, FAS is not the cause. The simple fact is that the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy is the one and only cause.

Fetal alcohol syndrome is a societal issue and we all have a vested interest and a role to play in reducing its incidence. It must become our cultural norm that drinking during pregnancy is inappropriate.

Therefore, when we are in the company of a family member, friend, or acquaintance who is drinking and becoming at risk of harming themselves or others, we should intervene in an appropriate fashion to ensure that they do not become just another tragic statistic.

In 1996, health warning labels on the containers of alcohol beverages, as required in the United States since 1989, were unanimously supported by the 10 provincial ministers of health, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Addiction Research Foundation and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, among others.

I should also point out that Canadian companies which export alcoholic beverages to the United States are required to put on health warning labels, because that is the law in the U.S. These warning labels, however, are not included on the same products that are sold domestically. Why is that?

Fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol related birth defects are a reality in our society and the victims suffer a lifetime of tragic symptoms which rob them of any reasonable quality of life. Their needs place enormous demands not only on the parents but on society as a whole. As such, we all have a vested interest to reduce, as much as possible, the incidence of these incurable but preventable disorders.

In December 1999, the Minister of Justice announced that the government was suing the tobacco industry. In her press conference, she stated that "the defendant's goal of making money is inconsistent with the government's goal of protecting children's health".

The same can be said about the alcohol industry. It is selling a legal product, but since the product can also cause harm, our health objectives should not and must not be compromised.

In December 1995, my private member's bill to require health warning labels for alcohol passed unanimously in the House at second reading and had full committee hearings, but died due to an election call.

*Private Members' Business*

In April 2001, the House considered a motion calling for health warning labels and it passed 220 to 11, a 95% support level from the hon. members of the House of Commons. I am pleased that so many hon. members have shown their knowledge of, interest in and support for this bill, which seeks to reduce the incidence of FAS and other risks associated with the misuse of alcohol.

If we could prevent a small percentage of alcohol related birth defects, the savings in health, social programs and educational and criminal justice costs would be many times more than the cost of our national prevention strategy. More important, we could eliminate so much human misery and suffering, and that is the essence of a caring society.

• (1740)

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that this member has done a lot of good work in this area. He had written a book. I distributed it throughout my riding. It showed that he has a really good handle on the issue. I wonder if he is having any problems in advancing this issue. Does he have any, perhaps, opponents to it? If so, what would they be? What are some of the arguments against this issue?

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, back in 1995, the bill did in fact pass at second reading, went to committee and had full committee hearings. There was support from virtually every non-alcoholic beverage company and stakeholder that appeared.

The alcoholic beverage industry is concerned that health warning labels may not work. In fact, it went so far as to say that warning labels on a bottle of beer or something like that might cause a spontaneous abortion. I think that its reasoning was somewhat based on its corporate objectives and not on the objectives of the health and well-being of the unborn child.

I fully expect that there would be the same kind of reaction. There have been many countries since who have undertaken mandatory labelling of alcoholic beverages. The time has come for Canada to join those countries now.

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Mississauga South for his bill. It certainly fills a need.

Above and beyond labelling, and that may only be one specific way to help prevent fetal alcohol syndrome, are we moving forward on further education? As the hon. member said, an awful lot of fetal alcohol syndrome happens before the woman even knows she is pregnant. There certainly is a need to talk about drinking during pregnancy. Are there educational programs also being brought forward to help with the labelling program?

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, there have been some very good attempts. Unfortunately, they have not been sustained. Health Canada has contributed the last round in the amount of \$11 million in terms of producing educational material.

The most important thing that has happened since the last time I had this bill before the House is that a special research study was done for the government on consumer awareness. Although everybody would think one would know what fetal alcohol syndrome might be, even if they were told the name, it was very

clear that was not the case. In fact, most people thought that fetal alcohol syndrome meant that the child would be born having an addiction to alcohol.

I think the myths about it are coming out. As I recall, the principal recommendation of the research study that was done by Environics was that the public education material should appear in doctors' offices where women generally would go for advice.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would in fact have a question on the last part of the reply. I have listened attentively to the debate on this bill, and had already heard about it. I feel that fetal alcohol syndrome is a sufficiently important problem to warrant more awareness.

I know that the hon. member has written a book on this, but does he feel people are sufficiently informed? Would this bill, for instance, make it possible to raise public awareness simply by informing them of the dangers of drinking on alcohol labels? Is that enough?

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, when we consider that the motion of the member for Winnipeg North passed in this place 220 to 11, that is a consequence of the work and the public education we gave in Parliament to ensure that members of Parliament were aware. I am very confident that the campaign to launch shelf warning labels would have similar impacts for the entire Canadian population.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this important debate. The hon. member has done a remarkable job on this issue. So did the former NDP critic on health, who also tabled a bill on fetal alcohol syndrome.

I think I am speaking on behalf of all my colleagues in saying that, of course, we support this bill, which seeks to promote information and education.

If I may, I would like to make a comparison which, like any comparison, is not perfect. I am inclined to make a comparison with an experience that we had a few years ago in the Standing Committee on Health. The committee was reviewing regulations, as required under the Tobacco Act, on the whole issue of the mandatory warnings to tobacco consumers.

At the time, the goal was quite ambitious. Indeed, 18 different messages had to be presented to consumers. They covered half of a cigarette pack. This was such an important issue that major cigarette companies went all the way to the Supreme Court to challenge what they called commercial expropriation. They partly won their case, but I will not get into the details.

*Private Members' Business*

This is to say that, as parliamentarians, we must recognize that we have a responsibility regarding the information provided to our fellow citizens. Of course, we cannot force people to stop smoking. We cannot decide, in a bill, that people will live a successful life, that they will eat properly, or that they will reduce their alcohol consumption. What we can do is help people develop an awareness, so that they will change their habits over the short, medium and long terms.

This is interesting, because it is the challenge for the coming years. We know that, even if we were to increase health budgets exponentially, the main variables in the costs of our health care system are the determinants of health.

These determinants are linked to healthy behaviour, that is, whether we eat well, have a healthy diet and sleep well at night and what we put into our bodies. It is obvious there is a link between life expectancy and tobacco use, life expectancy and alcohol, life expectancy and physical activity.

More and more, our governments, in Quebec City and in Ottawa, are campaigning to reduce obesity. There is something very striking about the generation of youngsters who are facing worrying problems of obesity. When I was 8, 9, 10, 11 years old, it was a phenomenon that did not exist. Our parents did push us outside to play a lot more than people do today.

Today there are new technologies and video games and the Internet. All these games mean that young people have more information. They are much brighter, with a larger vocabulary, and more aware of their environment, but the trade-off is that they are more sedentary, with all that means for health determinants, and obesity, of course.

Thus, the hon. member for Mississauga South, who has been working on this issue for a considerable time, is right to ask us to adopt his bill. It will oblige the manufacturers of alcoholic products to add standard labels the content of which, I understand, will be determined later by regulation. Of course, we do not claim it will be the magic bullet, nor will it, in itself, change behaviour. But we are entitled to think that, in combination with other factors, it could reduce the problem of fetal alcohol syndrome.

● (1750)

It is interesting to recall that the hon. member for Mississauga South talked about one child out of twenty in Canada. Fetal alcohol syndrome is not like cerebral palsy or other degenerative diseases which are often accidents of nature and are not due to behaviours per se. Fetal alcohol syndrome is due to excessive alcohol consumption by the mother during pregnancy, exposing the child to an abnormally high amount of alcohol. It is not always so, but this can cause all sorts of problems. I know that the link between fetal alcohol and learning disabilities is very well documented, as is its link with certain nervous system disorders.

Once again, the hon. member for Mississauga South has done an outstanding job. For me, the place given to private members' bills is important. I have known this since my early days as a parliamentarian and I have always been consistent on this issue. I may not have been consistent on other issues but it must be recognized that I have always been very consistent on the freedom

members should be given. This is a fine example of the fact that, sometimes, even without the support of civil servants and the various machines such as party machines, it is important that the commitment of members, combined of course with strong convictions, be able to bring about changes.

Last week, we adopted a motion on trans fats put forward by the NDP. I wonder if our colleagues from the NDP had a chance to read the half-page article on trans fats published in *La Presse* today. If Canada made the regulations the NDP is vigorously calling for, it would be the second country, after Denmark, to ban the use of trans fats, with all the savings this would entail for the health care system.

I do not want to get off track so I will get back to the issue before us, which is fetal alcohol syndrome. I know that the hon. member is quite pleased to have the support of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, which is a not-for-profit agency supported by the Government of Canada. As parliamentarians, we have been able to work with this agency, particularly those of us who sat on the Special Committee on Non-Medical Use of Drugs, which considered the whole issue of the use of so-called soft drugs, although we know this term could be tendentious. It is a bit unrealistic to make a distinction between soft drugs and hard drugs.

The fact remains that the hon. member should be pleased with the support from the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. He also has support from nurses, whose contribution in primary care we are well aware of. The hon. member also has support from the Canadian Medical Association, which is a credible association. It sometimes has corporative leanings, but it is credible nonetheless. We have met with representatives of this association many times in our work as parliamentarians.

This bill was already passed at second reading. I would not hesitate to recommend that all my colleagues support it. It has the credit of working for information and awareness purposes.

● (1755)

[*English*]

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the bill brought forward by the hon. member for Mississauga South. Bill C-206 asks the government to enact legislation or regulations requiring mandatory labelling of alcoholic beverages with appropriate warnings, such as, "alcoholic can impair judgment" and "alcohol can be harmful to an unborn child".

I agree with the intent of what the hon. member is trying to accomplish but I have a few reservations about the method. I believe the intent of the bill is to raise awareness about the dangers of alcohol consumption. Although alcohol is widely accepted in most societies around the world, over-consumption for both brief and extended periods of time is recognized as harmful to one's health.

*Private Members' Business*

Consumption of alcohol is also harmful to expectant mothers and their babies. The effects of alcohol ingestion during pregnancy are generally manifested in a disorder called fetal alcohol syndrome. The effects of FAS are tragic. Fetal alcohol syndrome is a series of mental and physical birth defects that include cognitive disabilities, growth deficiencies, central nervous system dysfunction, cranio-facial abnormalities and behavioural maladjustments.

FAS has had, and continues to have, a major impact on our society. According to the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, FAS is the leading known preventable cause of cognitive disabilities and birth defects.

FAS affects one to three children in 1,000 live births. As a matter of fact, it is suspected that at least one child in Canada is born with FAS, with rates potentially higher than that with our first nations people. In 2003 fetal alcohol syndrome cost the United States \$5.4 billion in direct costs and about \$3.9 billion in indirect costs.

As members can see from my previous remarks, FAS has far-reaching implications for Canadians, whether it be their personal health or the resources that FAS takes in our health care system. I think we can all agree in the House that FAS is preventable and that we should work harder toward preventing it.

In relation to Bill C-206, I believe that one of the intentions of the bill is to educate and warn pregnant women who are considering consuming alcohol. That is a very important aspect.

Another very important issue surrounding alcohol consumption is driving while under the influence. In 2001 it was estimated that 3,021 individuals were killed in motor vehicle crashes in Canada. MADD Canada estimates that at a minimum, 1,213 of these fatalities involved impaired driving. Moreover, the 1,213 person figure is a conservative estimate due to the underreporting that results from the inability to test surviving impaired drivers and the reliance on police reports.

Given the limits on the 1,213 fatalities figure and adding in water related deaths, it is estimated that there are somewhere between 1,400 and 1,600 impaired crash fatalities in Canada each year. That is about four or five a day. This is tragically astounding. There is no reason for people to die when there is a simple solution: stop driving while impaired.

FAS and impaired driving are the two most compelling reasons to support the bill put forward by the hon. member for Mississauga South. However, as I said at the outset, I have some reservations on the methods in the bill.

While labelling is a compelling course of action, we also have to consider the consequences any action Parliament takes on the industries which will have to follow our lead. I have not seen any research or compelling arguments saying that warning labels on alcohol bottles are an effective tool to cut down on the amount of alcohol people consume. If that information exists, perhaps the hon. member for Mississauga South could provide it for me.

However, it is crucial in considering the bill that those statistics be examined closely.

● (1800)

I do not think the member is looking for Canadians to stop drinking alcohol. I do not believe that is part of what he is trying to accomplish. What he is trying to accomplish is to raise awareness to the problems around alcohol consumption in Canada. For that I commend the member.

However I am still concerned about the labelling of alcoholic beverage containers. If we are going to devote resources to raise awareness, I think it would be best to work in conjunction with industry to develop a plan of action of how the government and the various companies and the citizens of Canada can better solve the issue the hon. member has raised in this bill.

If we need to raise awareness of FAS, let us invite the stakeholders to the table and talk about what needs to be done, groups like the Canadian Medical Association and the Association for Community Living and the impaired driving associations. We need to invite groups and people who have a stake in the decisions made by government, such as MADD and SADD.

We also have to be willing to listen to industry because I am sure it is not averse to taking measures to curb FAS or impaired driving. I do not feel that Canadians would be best served by the government unilaterally imposing regulations necessarily on an industry that we could potentially harm if it is forced to use labels.

I wish to reiterate my earlier point. I do not believe the hon. member wants to stop Canadians from drinking alcohol or to run breweries out of business. However we need to have an approach where we consider everyone, all the stakeholders.

With that, I am hesitant to support the bill. However I am open to receiving more information that could support the labelling of alcoholic beverages. I want the record to show that I support the intent of what the member is trying to address and I look forward to discussing this matter further with him.

On a personal note, I do not drink. I have never drunk. I do not even know what alcohol tastes like. That is a personal choice and I am pleased to have made that decision. I know that a lot of people who have tragic events in their lives turn to alcohol abuse and other substance abuse. I think that is tragic. Labelling could help address those issues as well. However I do not at any time want to be perceived to be imposing my personal moral beliefs on to Canadian society, particularly in this instance.

I would also like to note that we need to enforce the laws that are currently on the books. Unlike trans fats which we talked about recently, alcohol is supposed to be restricted to those over 18 years in most provinces. There is a higher age limit in other jurisdictions. We need to enforce those laws and make alcohol less accessible to those who are underage. Those laws exist. We need to do a better job in enforcing them. Society needs to do a better job in encouraging our young people and really everyone to reduce their alcohol consumption, particularly when it is used in an abusive manner.

With that, I would like to say that I support the intent of what the hon. member is trying to do. I am open to receiving more information, but at present I do not know that labelling will meet the goal.

*Private Members' Business*

●(1805)

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am delighted to speak in this debate.

However, I have to say that this is a sad day in many ways. We are debating an idea that has already been approved by the House. May I remind members that the essence of Bill C-206 was exactly the intent of the motion passed by the House on April 23, 2001.

The motion I am referring to was introduced by myself, but was the result of previous work done by the member for Mississauga South and reflected a whole history of effort being put into the issue of fetal alcohol syndrome. The motion said that we believe that warning labels are an essential part of a comprehensive strategy for increased public awareness. The motion called on the government to implement the idea of labels on alcohol beverage containers, warning that drinking during pregnancy can cause birth defects.

That motion was overwhelmingly supported by members in this place. The vote was 217 to 11. That was three and a half years ago. Three and a half years ago the government could have acted on the will of this place and the wishes of the Canadian people. It chose not to act. Why?

I appreciate the comments of the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, but I have to take issue with part of his comments. The government did not act because of pressure by the industry. The beer lobby is so great in this country. It does not want anything to mar its perfect product. It has resisted every step of the way any intelligent approach to a very serious problem in our society today.

May I remind members that three and a half years ago when the motion was passed by the House of Commons, the then minister of health, Allan Rock, said, "I want to assure the committee and particularly my friend, the member for Winnipeg North, that we shall follow through with a sense of urgency on this issue".

That followed on the work done by my colleague, the member for Mississauga South, who has championed this issue for many years, which led to a previous bill or two being placed before the House and before the Standing Committee on Health, only to see the Liberal government refuse to take concerted action to implement the will of this place.

I am upset today. I am sad today because in fact we are talking about a breach of parliamentary privilege. We are talking about a denial of democratic rights. We are talking about a snub of the democratic process. It is high time we said to the government: Respect the will of this place. Do not be influenced by the big corporate interests just because it hurts their pocketbook. Do something that makes sense.

In this case, although we do not have reams of data and it is hard to collect empirical research to show the direct link between labels on bottles and the fact that there is less of an incidence of fetal alcohol syndrome, we know that labels work. Even if we do not have reams of data to prove it, we know that even if one person in our society today reads that label and decides not to drink while pregnant and avoids giving birth to a child with fetal alcohol syndrome, we will have done this nation a great service. We will have ensured that that child is able to live in dignity and without costing millions of

dollars to the rest of society because of the supports that would have been needed.

Let us get this straight. This is a complementary policy to a broad range of tools that must be used to combat fetal alcohol syndrome. It is one way as part of a broader strategy to reach out and prevent this tragic incidence of fetal alcohol syndrome in our society today.

Let me remind parliamentarians that roughly 3,000 Canadians are born each year with fetal alcohol syndrome. Surely that is enough for us to act. Simply put a label on a bottle so some people will take note and avoid the foolishness of drinking while pregnant.

It has been done in the United States for 10 years. Look at the ludicrous situation here in Canada. We produce liquor, wine and beer and if we want to export those products to the United States, we have to put a label on them. However, here in this country we say that we cannot do it, that it is impossible, that we are going to put our efforts into other things that might make more of a difference.

We are not saying do not do other things. We are saying do this as part of a package. Do it because it makes sense. Do it because it is good public policy. Do it because it is a humanitarian and compassionate thing to do.

●(1810)

I want to commend the member for Mississauga South for his decade or more of work on this issue. I appreciated his support when I introduced my motion back in 2001. He helped me ensure that we had a majority win in this place. Today he is forced to bring in a bill because his own party did not choose to act on the will of Parliament. I commend him for that courageous stance. I hope that this time we can convince the government to act.

Since that day in April of 2001, when this motion was passed, some new developments have happened. Internationally, other countries have taken action. I want to report on the fact that in France, the government has made it a requirement for alcohol manufacturers to put labels on their products warning of the dangers of drinking during pregnancy. Brewers in Britain have begun a campaign of voluntary health labelling. They have taken it upon themselves because they recognize the importance of this issue. In New Zealand, a parliamentary committee has recommended mandatory labels on alcoholic beverages.

We are not talking about some out of date, quirky idea that just does not have any bearing in reality. We are talking about a very specific, concrete initiative that does make a difference, that must be part of a total package if we are going to look at cracking down on the incidents of fetal alcohol syndrome in our society today.

Since my motion in 2001, the Canadian Medical Association has been very vocal about supporting this idea. On September 9, it said:

Canada's doctors once again called for action to help eliminate the "preventable tragedy" of fetal damage caused by alcohol use... "Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is one of the most frustrating conditions we face," says CMA President Albert Schumacher... "It carries a huge economic burden for society and has a major impact on the quality of life of our patients..." Unfortunately, the tragedy is played out in Canada more than 3,000 times a year... CMA policy calls for: the federal government to require warning labels on all alcoholic beverages sold in Canada; [and] a ban on advertising of alcoholic beverages on radio and television and in print.

It goes on to condemn the government for refusing to act on the will of this place and to put in place an important public health policy.

I am sorry we are here having this debate again. We could be debating another issue, but I am grateful to the member for Mississauga South for using his valuable time and limited access to private members' initiatives for bringing this forward again. Maybe, just maybe, it will make a difference. Maybe this time we will not hear just rhetoric from the Minister of Health.

Last night in the House, the Minister of Health said:

When I got here I felt I should take a look at it. I have been very interested in it. I am very supportive of the approach taken by the hon. member. In fact, I support the efforts of our own member for Mississauga South—

He says he is looking at it and that he is serious about it. Maybe this time we will see this important initiative acted upon and implemented before the end of this Parliament.

•(1815)

**Hon. Robert Thibault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to discuss this important bill and to congratulate the member for Mississauga South who literally wrote the book on this subject. We thank him for bringing this to the House's attention once again.

Today, on the occasion of the second reading of Bill C-206, legislation that proposes warning labels on alcoholic beverages, I am pleased to have this opportunity to share my thoughts about this important initiative.

Our government recognizes that when it comes to alcohol consumption, the majority of adult Canadians drink responsibly and in a manner that is not harmful to their health. These citizens are mindful of the facts about alcohol and of the hazards of drinking excessively. They know, for example, that chronic alcohol abuse is linked to a host of chronic neurological disorders and diseases affecting the heart, liver and other organs.

They also know that alcohol can seriously harm a child born to a woman who consumes alcohol during pregnancy. An expectant mother who drinks during her pregnancy risks exposing her baby to fetal alcohol syndrome disorder. This is a medical term that is used to describe an array of disabilities and diagnoses associated with prenatal exposure to alcohol.

The Government of Canada has been engaged in a number of initiatives and strategies aimed at raising public awareness about the harms related to alcohol consumption so that consumers can make informed choices. With this in mind, I would like to outline for the House the efforts to date of Health Canada in addressing the potential hazards of alcohol consumption.

[*Translation*]

I should point out that, since 1999, Speeches from the Throne have included significant commitments to raising public awareness about the harm of alcohol consumption.

During that period, the Government of Canada has made firm commitments to fight FAS in aboriginal communities and has promised to significantly reduce, by the end of the decade, the incidence of the syndrome in affected communities.

### *Private Members' Business*

I will get back to this in a moment and explain the initiatives undertaken by our government to fulfill its promise to fight FAS.

First, the government's actions regarding alcohol consumption and public health should be put in their proper context.

[*English*]

There are four areas within the federal health portfolio and each one plays a vital role in protecting our citizens: Health Canada's Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch, the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, the Health Products and Food Branch, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Within HECSB resides the drug strategy and controlled substances program. This is the focal point within the federal government for harm reduction, prevention, and treatment and rehabilitation initiatives concerning alcohol, drug use and abuse.

The program works collaboratively with other federal departments, and provincial and territorial governments. It provides national leadership research and coordination on substance use and abuse issues.

The program is responsible for enhancing prevention, education, health promotion and treatment activities. Its efforts seek to reduce the demand for drugs and to address the harmful effects of excessive alcohol consumption. This program also manages the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and its regulations, and plays the lead federal role in the coordination and implementation of Canada's drug strategy.

Health Canada's approach to addressing alcohol abuse has focused on three core areas. First, there have been community-based initiatives undertaken to address prevention, health promotion, treatment and harmful reduction issues.

[*Translation*]

Second, Health Canada has launched public awareness campaigns targeting young people, in particular, on substance use and abuse, to inform Canadians and help them make educated decisions on health and lifestyle.

A round table for young people will be held in February 2005, under the drug strategy and controlled substances program. The purpose of this event is to engage young Canadians in a serious and ongoing dialogue on substance abuse, including issues relating to alcohol consumption and other relevant matters.

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

The third area of activity for the department has been to engage in best practices for front line health and social services providers concerning substance abuse treatment as well as rehabilitation. In addition, the department's alcohol drug treatment and rehabilitation program provides funding to provinces and territories to facilitate access to treatment for vulnerable populations such as women and youth. The department continues to engage in activities to reach out to Canada's young people to discuss this social and public health matter.

• (1820)

Let me now turn to what Health Canada is doing to combat fetal alcohol syndrome disorder. We have taken significant strides to improve the outcomes for individuals, families and communities affected by pre-natal alcohol exposure. In January 2000 the Government of Canada announced a sustained investment, a three year, \$11 million national initiative. The initiative continues at an annual budgetary allocation that is shared between the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch.

There has also been an increase in funding for FASD initiatives. In 2002 the Government of Canada provided an additional \$15 million annually, as part of the five year, \$320 million federal strategy on early childhood development. This investment was further bolstered in 2004 by a \$2 million investment over two years. The funding will help accelerate the implementation of national activities such as screening and diagnostic work on FASD, as well as education and training for health care providers.

These investments to date are making it possible to engage in ongoing public education, increase professional awareness, training and capacity development, as well as develop early identification and diagnostic tools to combat FASD.

[Translation]

If I may, I would like to point out some of the special initiatives designed to fight FAS.

We have undertaken activities to coordinate, cooperate, consult and liaise with our provincial and territorial partners and with non-governmental organizations, aboriginal organizations and other stakeholders.

Canada is also actively involved in the detection, diagnosis, follow up and monitoring of FAS. We are working to improve the diagnostic tools that will help us detect those who may suffer from FAS.

We are also working to develop resources that will help us communicate effectively the lessons learned.

[English]

Canada is also investing in national leadership and policy development on FASD. We want to ensure that our country continues to be recognized for its world leading FASD researchers.

In addition, we are finding ways to build community capacity and develop direct program delivery. Health Canada remains steadfast in its commitment to protecting Canada's most vulnerable citizens from

the harmful effects of alcohol. It remains just as committed to ensuring that all Canadians have the facts they need to make responsible choices when it comes to alcohol consumption.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to take a moment to share with the House some thoughts from an international perspective on the matter of warning labels on alcoholic beverage containers.

Measures to implement some form of warning labels on alcohol have been implemented in nine countries including, Australia, New Zealand, some jurisdictions in the United States, and Canada. The results from these initiatives have not been encouraging. The available data suggests that women at high risk of consuming alcohol during pregnancy do not appear to be influenced by warning labels on alcoholic beverages.

Moreover, while there is still a modest increase in the level of awareness of the labels and their message, they have no impact on either risk perception or on behaviour patterns related to drinking.

That alcohol can be potentially harmful, especially to a child born to a mother who consumes alcohol when pregnant, is not a matter of debate. What remains a matter of much discussion is whether warning labels, be they voluntary or mandatory, are effective in producing measurable and lasting results. That is why the work that awaits the standing committee is so vitally important.

• (1825)

[Translation]

When they review Bill C-206, committee members will have to weigh the benefits of implementing the mandatory or voluntary labelling of warnings about the risks relating to alcohol consumption and they will have to consider initiatives that were taken by other countries, which indicate the measure failed to achieve the expected results.

In any case, I am looking forward to the animated debates that will surely take place in committee on this bill.

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is good to be here this afternoon to speak to the bill. It is important that we continue to discuss it. I hope some of my colleagues will follow up as well when I am done. It has been interesting to listen to the debate, and I hope we see this through to other stages.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have listened to the debate this afternoon, and I would like to compliment the member opposite. As an old police chief and someone who has seen all the issues he has brought forward here today to the House firsthand, whether they be deaths from traffic accidents caused by impaired drivers or the result of fetal alcohol syndrome with young children through into adulthood, I have great sympathy and support for the intent of the bill, which is to bring forward labelling.



All these things are incremental. It is a little here and a little there. My friend on this side has his concerns about whether it is enough. At the end of the day, we will question whether it is enough, but at some point we have to take that first step, which this is. It gives us the opportunity to make people more aware of the danger. It is not that we are without awareness of the dangers of alcohol and all the inherent dangers that come with it.

Whether we can put an end to fetal alcohol syndrome with labelling, I rather doubt it. At the same time, if we do not begin that process, if we do not make some effort, we will not get to the final analysis and put it to rest. It does us no harm to label. It may give some in the industry some difficulty, but I suspect, at the end of the day, equally it will do them no harm to have the mandatory labelling, which will occur if the bill is passed.

At this point in time, I would like to compliment the member for bringing the legislation forward. There is absolutely no doubt he has done a tremendous amount of work in this whole field, and he deserves a lot accolades for that. When this comes to a vote at some time in the future, I am sure many on this side of the House will support the legislation, and perhaps all will support it.

*Private Members' Business*

I think it will be talked out. We will go through different stages in this process. At the end of the day, I think we will all agree that it was a good bill to bring forward.

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to briefly make a few comments.

In my riding, in particular, we have seen some of the effects of fetal alcohol firsthand. We know that it affects many of our communities in Regina—Qu'Appelle, both urban and rural parts.

I am very encouraged to hear the constructive comments about addressing the serious issue in terms of education and in terms of getting the message out to our young people: that drinking during pregnancy can cause such horrible effects.

● (1830)

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

*[For continuation of proceedings see Part B]*

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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, November 24, 2004  
(Part B)**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 24, 2004

## EMERGENCY DEBATE

*[Continuation of proceedings from Part A]*

\* \* \*

*[English]*

### UKRAINE

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** Pursuant to Standing Order 52, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre has obtained leave to move his motion.

• (1830)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.)** moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: Madam Speaker, dear colleagues, fellow Canadians, tonight Ukraine finds herself on the brink.

Last night I came back from Ukraine, having observed the second round of presidential elections. I have to admit that prior to leaving for Ukraine, I was naively optimistic. I was optimistic because, between the two rounds of elections, I had travelled to Ukraine as part of a parliamentary delegation.

The world condemnation after the first round of fraudulent elections, coupled with the vote results, notwithstanding the systemic massive fraud that was committed, when the people chose the opposition leader, Viktor Yushchenko.

As I said, I was naively optimistic. What I saw in the second round was exponentially worse than what took place in the first round. There are hundreds of documented cases of electoral fraud, abuse and intimidation. I would like to categorize what we saw into six broad areas.

The first was intimidation and bribery. During the second round, what we saw was a certain line being crossed. The regime was no longer satisfied with intimidating its own population, its own commissions and election observers. It crossed the line to intimidating Canadian election observers.

On the Friday night that I arrived in Mykolayiv, after having travelled 30 hours, I was given the news that a group of Canadian observers, which included my sister, had been detained hours earlier on the pretext that the group's vehicle was stolen. When I found out, I immediately placed a call to the governor's office and the observers were released.

On the day of the election, one of our first teams headed out at 6:30 in the morning. As they headed out of Mykolayiv toward the

village, for three or four minutes a BMW with tinted windows tried to force their vehicle off the road and into a ditch.

During the day, we had observers whose documents were confiscated. An observer from Toronto had her passport taken away from her by the militia and confiscated. Cars were chased through the day. Our observers were physically removed from vote locations.

The second category is falsifications of lists. On the day of and the day just preceding the election, hundreds of names were added to poll after poll. These have been documented by our Canadian observers.

On the falsification of ballot boxes, this speaks to the systemic fraud that was put in place. There was a detention centre that I visited. In the main hall it appeared that the election was proceeding. As I observed, I noticed the commission head and a sidekick would once in a while go through a side door. I took the opportunity to open that door to see what I could find there. I found three ballot boxes, unsealed, spare seals and a stack of ballots. As we had a vote process taking place, in a side room we had everything prepared for a second vote, a false vote, to be put in place.

• (1835)

I have spoken partially to the deprivation of the rights of observers. Our observers were not allowed to vote locations. For example, the head of the territorial commission, which encompassed polls throughout the city of Mykolayiv, a city of a million people, disallowed commission members who were in support of democratic candidate Viktor Yushchenko, and disallowed Yushchenko observers and international observers. This was immediately referred to the state prosecutor who said that the opinion of the commission head would hold.

When the commission head was pressed, he stated that this was based on the decision of the head of the committee for organization and methodical work of the central electoral commissioner. We see that this was organized and it reached to the top of the actual central electoral commission.

What we saw was the de facto coup d'état committed by the current regime, the corrupt criminal regime of President Kuchma, along with the complicity of the Russian President Putin. In the past 10 years this regime has not only robbed the country blind, it has robbed the people of Ukraine. In its last remaining years it has commenced the process of taking away the freedoms of the people of Ukraine. The press is no longer a free press. In fact, the current outgoing president of Ukraine was caught on tape giving the orders to take care of a journalist. This man disappeared a few days later, and his headless corpse was found soon afterwards.

*S. O. 52*

They have now decided that robbing the country blind was not enough, that they would rob the people of their will. The people have had enough. What I witnessed the day after the vote was what I would like to call the orange uprising. Throughout Kiev, the capital, we saw orange streamers on the antennae on cars. Throughout Kiev, we saw people wearing orange colours, orange arm bands. In the centre of the city, on Monday morning, approximately 100,000 people gathered. By evening, it was 200,000 people. By yesterday, it was 500,000 people. We understand there are approximately two million people protesting in the streets.

Since Ukraine's independence 14 years ago, we have talked about a special relationship between our two countries. Sometimes people misunderstand that term. They think it is based on economics. If we take a look at the economic figures, we quickly realize that it is not based on this. What it is based on is the hundreds of thousands of family ties between our two countries. There are 1.1 million Ukrainian Canadians in Canada. Tonight and in the coming days we have to give meaning to those words "special relationship". We have to make it clear that we do not accept this coup d'état.

Mr. Yushchenko has now become a symbol, just as the colour orange has. It is no longer the man we refer to when we hear the chants of "Yushchenko". He has become a symbol of freedom. The will of the people of Ukraine has been expressed. We should acknowledge Viktor Yushchenko is in fact the president of Ukraine, and there should be consequences.

● (1840)

Prime Minister Yanukovich, President Kuchma, their cronies and their families should face economic and individual sanctions. They should be prevented from travelling the countries of the free world. We should also send a message to Russian President Putin, who directly involved himself in this election campaign and continues to meddle at this very dangerous point in time.

Finally, I would like to express, on behalf of the people of Canada, that tonight and in the days to come we will stand by the people of Ukraine, just as we were the first country in the western world to acknowledge Ukraine's independence in 1991. In the coming days we will take a lead among the circle of democratic nations in the world.

Finally, our prayers are with the people of Ukraine as they stand on the cold, dark streets of Kiev and all the cities where the people have come out to protest. Our prayers are with them during this orange uprising.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is in the best interests of Canadians and of our country that we have a foreign policy that clearly understands that our best interests are served when we support democracy and when we support democracies especially that are at risk.

Tonight, literally as we speak here, a young democracy is at risk. A young democracy is being threatened. We have heard the words of our colleague. What has gone on in the last few days is documented. It is beyond dispute that democracy itself is at risk in Ukraine.

Tonight we need to raise our voices in this chamber and send a democratic shout that will be heard around the world and heard by

the Ukrainian citizens so they will know that they are not alone tonight.

At 5:33 p.m. I received a report, one of the most recent ones, from Ukraine itself. I will reference some of the reports that have come in.

Madam Speaker, I want to indicate to you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Calgary East.

I do want to reference, not just the comment, but the fact that the member for Etobicoke Centre was in Ukraine and has just returned and that one of our colleagues in the Conservative Party, the member for Edmonton East, is still there. Together, in a non-partisan way with all of our colleagues in the House, we are speaking with one voice.

The following are excerpts from the latest reports. Just after 1900 hours, local time in Ukraine, several planes with Russian special military units landed at Boryspil International Airport near Kiev. It is also being reported now that 1,000 Russian special forces known as Vityaz were deployed in Kiev on the eve of the elections and are still there.

Also disturbing to hear, and this is directly from the report, that all members of the Russian special forces are dressed in Ukrainian uniforms and none of them have any identifying documentation on their uniforms.

It is being reported again as of 5:33 p.m. that a three-fold mission has been given to the Russian forces in collaboration with the forces in Ukraine who are thwarting the democratic will of Ukrainians. Apparently the three-fold mission, first, is that these forces should ensure the disappearance of the key opposition leaders; second, isolating, via arrests, several members of Viktor Yushchenko's team; and third, that these forces would provoke violent confrontations and conflicts in the streets of the capital to create conditions for introducing an emergency situation.

It has also been reported from the citizens living in Irpen city, which is outside of Kiev, that another unit of Russian Vityaz special forces are being deployed near the Ukrainian capital. These local residents have witnessed that Russian special forces are being equipped with Ukrainian special force uniforms as well as civilian dress. According to experts on the ground, these particular Russian forces specialize in carrying out special operations abroad.

It is a violation of the Ukrainian constitution for foreign forces to be on its soil without being invited by Parliament, and those forces have not been invited by their Parliament.

One member of Parliament in this report. Yulia Tymoshenko, is reporting that foreign armed forces are now located in the courtyards of the presidential administration. Mr. Tymoshenko has also witnessed Russian special forces backing Ukrainian police.

Today another Ukrainian MP and colonel of the secret service of Ukraine, Hryhoriy Omelchenko has demanded that the head of the SSU, the secret service of Ukraine, uncover all information on these foreign troops presently illegally in Ukraine. He goes on to say in this report, which we just received, "If this is not done, Ukraine and Russia will be involved in an international scandal with unpredictable international consequences". This is a very serious moment. These are serious hours for the people of Ukraine.

S. O. 52

● (1845)

It was in the early 1990s, just after the fall of the Soviet empire, that I had the opportunity and the honour to be in Kiev and to meet with newly elected officials of the city and new elected national officials. After Ukraine being under the iron fist and the boot of the Soviet Union for over 40 years, it was the first time I was able to meet with people who were duly elected in a democratic process.

It was a time of excitement and of optimism but yet the sense was very clear that the challenges would be daunting and that this would not be an easy task. There was a sense of exhilaration that at long last they were no longer under the suffocating effect of what had been known as the Soviet Union, a totalitarian Communist empire that had suffocated people for 70 years and had resulted in the deaths of millions of Ukrainians, imprisonment, loss of rights and on and on it goes.

History is very clear on how devastating a time that was for the Ukrainian people and then, about 10 years ago, they experienced for the first time the first results of a duly elected process. Those were exciting days. The dreams they had then are literally now at risk.

We have just heard very clear documentation of what has been going on in the last few days, in terms of a true coup of the freedoms, that the very foundations of an emerging democracy are at risk of being toppled as we speak.

We cannot be silent. The reports are telling us that this time, as Ukrainian citizens in Kiev see foreign uniforms and are faced with intimidation and violence, and we have heard some of the cases of that from the member for Etobicoke Centre, they are not running from the streets and into the countryside. This time they are standing in the streets and in the public squares and not just in Kiev but in other cities around the country, at risk of who knows what may befall them. They are standing and they are speaking.

Our colleague, the member for Edmonton East, called me from Kiev several hours ago. He had just spoken to a crowd of over 400,000 people in the public squares of Kiev, just as our colleague did yesterday. When he told those people that we in Canada knew what was going on and that we would not let them down, they cheered a mighty cheer.

The United States secretary of state said that his country was not accepting the results of this election. Other European countries are joining in that chorus. Our voice must also be clear.

The reason the Ukrainian people are standing their ground is that over the last 10 years they have tasted that sweet nectar of freedom. They have breathed the breezes of democracy and have heard the sounds of freedom of speech and this time they are not standing down. They are standing up and we in this House must stand up with them and let them know tonight that they do not stand alone. We stand with them.

● (1850)

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as my other colleagues have indicated, what is happening in Ukraine is a serious concern and a major world issue that faces all of us. We all have to take a very strong stance in the House in sending a united message to the people of Ukraine saying, as my colleague from

Okanagan—Coquihalla said, that we are with the people of Ukraine during this hour of need.

When the cold war came to an end, when Ukraine became independent 14 years ago, there was hope all around that region and in Canada as well that democracy was coming to that country and that people would be able to speak out and have the choices that democracy gives.

Canada has a long history of accepting refugees from Ukraine who left because there was no freedom in Ukraine. They came to settle in this country. They have made a great contribution to this country, including in the House of Commons for democracy. Naturally their cousins in Ukraine, after the fall of the Soviet Union and Ukraine becoming independent, also had high hopes. As such, they have 14 years of democratic experience.

But with what is happening over there right now, one would have to ask if the cold war is coming back. What we are seeing, as my colleagues have said, is that the Russian president has said they are landing there. I can quote Russian President Putin saying that Ukraine does not need a lecture and congratulating the winner already when there are demonstrations taking place on the streets of Ukraine.

Not only that, but as has been pointed out, independent observers, including Canadian observers and members from my party and other parties, have said with no uncertainty that absolutely clearly this was not a fair election, that this was a hijacked election.

Let me go back. Are we seeing the return of the cold war? I do not think so, but what has happened is that the people of Ukraine have been robbed, as my colleagues have said. They have been robbed of democracy. They have been robbed by fraudulent means because of outside intervention from the Soviet Union, which is trying to keep its sphere of influence over this region because it does not want Ukraine to go.

The challenger, who was not declared the winner, is pro-western. That is okay. There is no such thing as a pro-western or Russian influence, but apparently the Russians feel that they somehow still after 14 years control Ukraine. We cannot allow that. Ukraine is not controlled by the Soviet Union. Ukraine is controlled by the people of Ukraine and they, during this exercise of democracy, made it very clear what they wanted.

We do not know what happened. The results are not fair. It has been hijacked. I do not need to go into the reasons for how this hijacking took place, but all observers are saying that this is what is going on over there. And now we are moving into a very dangerous situation where there are people on the streets. We pray at this time and we are asking the authorities in Ukraine that there not be any violence and that they let the people speak.

We have seen this happen time after time. Civil revolutions have taken place. An example is Serbia. The people took over parliament. That ended peacefully and now Serbia is moving ahead.

*S. O. 52*

We are asking the authorities to make sure there is no violence as people express their disgust at what has happened there. I am very happy and pleased to see that the Government of Canada has condemned this vote rigging and has taken a very strong stand on this.

• (1855)

I am pleased to see that my party, as my leader said during question period, is standing behind the stance that the Government of Canada has taken to send one strong clear message: that an election cannot be hijacked, that no one will be allowed to hijack an election, and that we will not accept this kind of nonsense that has taken place in Ukraine.

We want to say this in no uncertain terms to the Russians. The only leader that is accepting this election is the Russian president, no one else, despite the fact that there independent observers over here. Does the Russian president not listen to the independent observers who are saying quite clearly that what has happened in Ukraine is not a fair election?

Therefore, we want to send a very strong message. Although we have strong relations with Russia, Russia is our friend and there is no more cold war, we must tell the Russian president this. I hope the Prime Minister will tell the Russian president that we hope he will exercise his influence so that there is no violence on the streets of Ukraine and at the same time use his influence to say that this election is not a fair election and we call upon the parliament of Ukraine to dissolve and call again for a new election. In the strongest words, we wish to relay this message and stand with the people of Ukraine.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am delighted today to have this opportunity to speak, late in the Parliamentary day, on the current situation in Ukraine.

I would like to begin by expressing my complete solidarity and fraternity with the members of the Montreal Ukrainian community, in particular those residing in the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. We have a sizeable Ukrainian community numbering over 700.

Today I would like to join with the rest of my colleagues in the House of Commons in expressing solidarity and the desire to assist in any way I can. The people of Ukraine need to know that, in the difficulties they are experiencing, I am behind them all the way, as the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

I feel it is important to start with a bit of an historic overview. On November 24, the Ukrainian central electoral commission officially proclaimed the victory of the pro-Russian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich in the Ukrainian presidential election of Sunday. Chief elections commissioner Sergei Kivalov declared Mr. Yanukovich elected.

The commission claims that Mr. Yanukovich was close to three percentage points ahead of his rival, with 49.46% of the votes, compared with the opposition candidate, Mr. Yushchenko, considered to be pro-western, at 46.61%. The latter, who feels he was

the winner, immediately called for a general strike. In his opinion, he was robbed of the victory, and he has the power to place Ukraine on the brink of civil conflict.

The opposition has, moreover, called upon the population to block airports, railways and highways. Mr. Yushchenko has declared the proclamation of Mr. Yanukovich's victory illegal. Mr. Yushchenko made the following statement: "We are going to seek a solution in an open struggle. The party in power is escalating the conflict. Any possibility of a political dialogue has been rejected."

Shortly before the statements were made on state television, Mr. Yanukovich declared that he would initiate negotiations with the opposition as early as Thursday with a view to reconciling Ukrainians. This is a proposal that the opposition is very likely to find sorely lacking.

This morning, the Ukrainian opposition refused to negotiate with the party in power anything short of mechanisms for handing over power. It also announced its intention of challenging the Yanukovich victory in the supreme court this Thursday.

We must remember that the United States and the European Union have spoken with a single voice to denounce this election campaign peppered with incidents, including pressure on the media. Just before the first round of voting in the presidential election, on October 31, 2004, the opposition candidate, Mr. Yushchenko, said it was possible that the election would be neither free nor democratic. The first round of voting, which gave a small lead to the prime minister, was found not to meet democratic standards by the international observers who monitored the election. Since then, Mr. Yushchenko has accused the authorities of manipulating the results in favour of Mr. Yanukovich, chosen by those in power to succeed the outgoing president, Leonid Kuchma, leader of the former Soviet republic since 1994.

On November 22, the day after the election, the electoral commission put the prime minister in the lead, after a partial count. For several days, thousands of people in the west of the country, where nationalists and the opposition prevail, have demonstrated in the streets against the electoral process.

The OSCE international election observation mission, which has 563 observers, has found many irregularities in the vote held on November 21. The mission is made up of members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

• (1905)

Following the second ballot, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported that the observers had noticed several disturbing elements, including an abnormally high turnout in certain regions, multiple voting using absentee voter certificates, irregularities with respect to the number of ballots, new people being added to the voters list at the last minute, on the day of the election, and restrictions imposed on voters in the way they were to vote.

*S. O. 52*

This afternoon, in the House of Commons, the Deputy Prime Minister outlined the government's position, which can be summarized as follows: "Considering the allegations of serious and significant electoral fraud from international and Canadian election observers, the Government of Canada cannot accept that the announced results by the central election commission reflect the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people".

The press had reported that Russian President Putin had already selected his protege, whom he supported very strongly and impressively by displaying pictures in Moscow and setting up hundreds of polling stations in Russia for expatriates. It was obvious from the intervention of Patriarch Alexis II that the Russian president very clearly supported his protege and was directly influencing the upcoming vote.

The Bloc Québécois proposes that, since the whole world recognizes that fraud was committed, we cannot accept the election of either candidate. The government must demand an investigation—internationally secured under the auspices of the OSCE—into the fraud and the electoral process, with international observers, since we cannot rely on a commission or a government being accused of fraudulent action to guarantee an impartial and transparent investigation.

Should the Ukrainian government's response be unsatisfactory, the Bloc Québécois finds that Canada should re-evaluate its relations with the Ukraine. Canada must demand an investigation with international guarantees, as this is the only way to prevent the situation from getting worse.

I remind hon. members that the Bloc Québécois supported the motion presented by an hon. member in this House, to encourage the government to ensure a transparent and democratic electoral process.

With all the difficulties the Ukrainian people are currently going through, we naturally want an investigation to be held under the auspices of an international organization, since we cannot continue to trust the current electoral commission, which has made these results public.

Nor can we trust any longer a government that has repeatedly demonstrated the existence of fraud. We have to make sure there is a transparent process, and only an investigation under the auspices of an international organization with independent observers can help us shed light on this issue.

● (1910)

In the meantime, I want my Ukrainian constituents from Rosemont to know that I stand behind them in solidarity and fraternity.

[*English*]

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I think it is important tonight to say:

[*Member spoke in Ukrainian*]

[*English*]

This is a very important night for us. It is a chance for us to speak clearly with one voice in response to a very grave international

situation, that being the outcome of the elections just held in Ukraine.

It is an important debate for those of us of Ukrainian descent because of what we have learned over the years from our ancestors. It is also important for all Canadians who care about democracy. It is important for all freedom-loving people around the world.

The debate tonight is of grave concern to all of us, particularly for the members of the New Democratic Party. We are strongly in support of actions in the face of the fraudulent electoral results in Ukraine. We all know that the future of democracy in Ukraine and therefore the future of democracy worldwide is at stake.

I want to thank my colleague, the member for Etobicoke Centre, for his work leading up to the elections. He brought forward a motion in the House on October 28 calling for a free and fair transparent process in Ukraine elections. The motion was supported by all parties in this House, the New Democratic Party included.

I want to thank the member for Etobicoke Centre for the days he spent in Ukraine as an observer of the electoral process. I am sure it was an exhausting voyage and a very difficult time emotionally for him. Yet he is here in the House tonight and is prepared to debate this very important issue and to provide constructive observations and suggestions for all of us.

I also want to reference the work of the government today. It is an important development for the Canadian government to be straightforward and come out in a clear way against the election results in Ukraine. The Deputy Prime Minister stood in the House today and said that the Canadian government does not recognize the official results of the election in Ukraine. She called for an immediate review of the electoral process and actions to be taken depending on the results of that review.

Those were decisive words. We appreciate that the government has taken such a decisive initiative so early on in the process. Some may have wished for it a day earlier. Perhaps yesterday we expected such a statement from the government, but we are grateful that today we are dealing with something very clear and very detailed.

The responsibility for us in this emergency debate is to assist the government in outlining the appropriate actions to be taken in the aftermath of this tragic situation. The fact that we are having an emergency debate tonight denotes accurately the urgency of this situation in Ukraine as we speak.

By all news reports thousands of people are demonstrating peacefully for democracy for yet another day. Riot police and troops are evident throughout the country. There has been a call for a general strike. At the centre are two candidates both claiming victory in the recent election.

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We know from the observations of colleagues in this House and other international monitors who voyaged to Ukraine that in fact the election in Ukraine was fraudulent. As my colleague, the member for Ottawa Centre said yesterday in the House, we have clear reports from neutral international monitors, including Canadians, indicating that Sunday's election was neither fair nor transparent. The problems cited by observers include voter harassment, intimidation, biased television coverage by state owned stations, vote rigging and ballot box switching.

There has been intimidation. There has been corruption. There has been a denial of the democratic right to vote.

We all know how important the right to vote is, but we take it for granted. We cannot imagine what it is like for a country to have fought for that right year after year, only to see that freedom taken away as the result of an autocratic regime determined to fix this election in line with that regime's predetermined notion of society. It is nothing close to civil society, nothing resembling what we mean by civil society, but a regime that destroys those aspirations of freedom-loving people.

● (1915)

We are dealing with a situation today in Ukraine that is tense, explosive and terrifying. People are literally putting their lives on the line for the democratic values and rights that we have here in this country and are exercising in this place at this very moment. We owe them our full and unqualified support. We have to make it clear to those who would stand in the way of democracy that our support will be meaningful, it will deliberate and it will be strong.

As I just said, the Canadian government has indicated that based on the widespread incidence of fraud, it will not recognize the results of the recent election. It has called for a full review of the election results and has said that it will have to examine its relations with Ukraine unless corrective action is taken.

A full range of options must be considered in that examination. I would hope in this situation which has developed rapidly over the past number of weeks that we will move forward addressing this crisis with a comprehensive and well thought out strategy for an active role in resolving this difficult situation.

I think we can understand people taking to the streets when that basic right and freedom is taken away. I think we can understand the determination of people to fight for that freedom. We pray and hope for a peaceful resolution of this matter, but we surely can understand their response when an autocratic dictator moves in and denies the results exercised freely and willingly and democratically. As the member for Etobicoke Centre said earlier today in our discussions with the media, we must put our arms out and show compassion to the people of Ukraine who are experiencing such grief at this very moment. We as Canadians have a special responsibility to do that.

Madam Speaker, I should indicate that I am splitting my time with the member for Churchill.

Canada has a special relationship with Ukraine. We were the first nation to recognize its modern independence. The close family ties between those in Ukraine and Canada have created over the decades a unique bond.

We have a very special responsibility. I saw the fervour of that determination by Canadians just this past weekend in Winnipeg when we participated in a symbolic polling station at the legislative grounds beneath the monument of Taras Shevchenko. This event was organized by the Ukrainian students union at the University of Manitoba, who are determined to show to the world what civil society is all about and why it is so important for this country to take a stand.

● (1920)

Those demonstrations are happening everywhere in Canada. We will see more in the days to come. Let me just conclude by repeating the words of Taras Shevchenko whose monument was towering over us in Winnipeg on Sunday. He said in 1860:

Will there be punishment of all the Czarson the land? Will there be truth among people? There must be, otherwise the sun will rise and set on fire the whole land.

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak during this debate tonight. First, I wish to thank my colleague from Winnipeg North as well as the member for Etobicoke Centre who has been very much a part of keeping parliamentarians informed as to what was taking place in Ukraine. I am sure it has been mentioned already that he has been personally involved having a good part of his family still in Ukraine.

For many of us that is not the case. A number of us have grandparents or great-grandparents who came over from Austria but who were of Ukrainian descent, and a good number came over from Ukraine. In the last number of years as Ukraine went to a democracy, or we hoped it was going to a democracy, thousands of Canadian-Ukrainians have taken the opportunity to return to Ukraine to join up with family members from generations back and reconnect with their history.

I have not gone back. My grandparents on my father's side were Ukrainian. I did not have close ties to Ukraine, but as we were growing up we were always embedded with a pride of all the cultures that made us what we are, and made us Canadians. It has been very interesting for me to be part of the conversations with a number of people from my community and throughout my riding who have had the opportunity to go back to Ukraine, to bring back the stories of how the country wanted to rebuild and wanted to be part of democracy, and have the same opportunities as we do in democratic Canada.

We thought, with this election, that we were going to see real change and a real strive forward. It is like a roller coaster. There has been this up and down, but there was this big up over the last few months and then about a week ago, or maybe even two weeks, people started to get a little nervous because it seemed like things were getting a bit shady, and the reality was that it got extremely bad.

I think what we have seen among Ukrainian-Canadians is an outpouring of feeling for their homeland, but also from other Canadians who have seen what has happened. They know that there are family members here and what they are going through. They have just been devastated to see this happen.

It becomes even more of a heart-rending moment when we see the possibility of violence and injury to those people in Ukraine who want to continue fighting for democracy, and are not willing to just throw in the towel right now. Rightfully so, they should not.

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Canadians and western democracies throughout the world must ensure that we are there to give all the support that we can. It is important that we let the government that has put itself in place, and certainly those backers of that government, know that we are not going to leave Ukraine on its own, that we are going to stand firm with the people of Ukraine. We are going to be there for them to ensure that they get through this challenging time and we are going to take it one step at a time.

I was extremely hopeful this afternoon in the House when the government came out with a very strong statement. For the first time in a long time it was a strong statement against an election that was obviously flawed and against a government that was obviously not democratic.

I am pleased that the government took that position. I am a little bit concerned that often there is a tendency with the governing party to say the words and not follow through, and that just cannot happen in this instance. It absolutely cannot happen. We must immediately get those supports to the Ukrainian people. We must let them know that we are here standing beside them. We are going to be there when they start to feel like it is becoming an overwhelming challenge and the loss of lives might happen. I hope it does not. I hope we do not reach that point. I hope there is enough pressure put on from outside governments that it does not happen.

It is extremely important that the government follows through. This is one of those times where it cannot be allowed to happen. We have the opportunity to be proactive, to ensure that we do not let it digress and get much worse. It is crucially important that we offer that support to Ukraine.

●(1925)

As my colleague from Etobicoke Centre mentioned, and I had the opportunity to speak to him this morning, he returned from Ukraine yesterday evening and was very much a part of what was taking place. He, as well as numerous others, saw ballot boxes being stuffed with numerous votes and saw situations where people who legitimately should have been able to vote were not. They were witness, a good number of them, to people being forced and threatened not to vote.

It is not as if this really did not happen and these are not just a few stories here and there. This was blatant, outright skullduggery. I am trying not to be more forceful in my words with regard to the fellow who has placed himself as leader, but it was just blatant. For the world to accept that blatant, outright attack on democracy is not okay. Certainly, it is not okay for Canada to accept that without being strong behind our words.

To all the people in Canada who have relatives in Ukraine, and friends with whom they have reunited with over the last number of years upon returning, our prayers are with them all. It must be a very emotional time for them. Our prayers are with the people of Ukraine. We want to offer whatever support we can. I certainly hope that the government makes the point of being there for the people of Ukraine.

**Hon. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak tonight, especially on the topic of the elections in Ukraine. Earlier today in the House the

Deputy Prime Minister made the following statement on behalf of the Prime Minister, "Considering the allegations of serious and significant electoral fraud from international and Canadian election observers, the Government of Canada cannot accept the announced results by the Central Election Commission to reflect the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people".

Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Parkdale—High Park.

Canada rejects the announced final results. The Government of Canada calls for a full, open and transparent review of the election process. Canada will have no choice but to examine its relations with Ukraine if the authorities fail to provide election results that reflect the democratic will of the people.

Canadians are shocked and dismayed at what has transpired in Ukraine. There is disbelief that a country which has striven so hard to become free and democratic could have an election with such a questionable outcome. The international election observers mission had 563 observers in Ukraine. They have cited countless problems and they believe Ukraine's presidential poll was not fully free and fair.

Here are some examples of what the election observers have seen. During the election campaign the state's resources were blatantly directed to the support of Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich. The state-funded media overtly favoured the prime minister in all of its news coverage of the campaign. One independent station was restricted in coverage, in fact, not being able to cover Ukraine.

There was also interference in his favour by the state administration through state directives and through government officials. Media directives issued by unknown persons, it seems, restricted the public's free access to balanced information. Inflammatory campaign material of an ominous and questionable origin was sent out against the opposition. Individuals were subject to pressure and intimidation by those who supported Mr. Yanukovich. Citizens whose livelihood depended directly or indirectly upon the state were placed under duress to acquire and relinquish their absentee voting certificates to their superiors.

Former minister David Collenette, who was in Ukraine to monitor the vote Sunday, was just one of the many observers who concluded that the election was seriously flawed. "We do not have time to go through the whole litany of things", he told CTV *Canada AM* in an interview from Ottawa on Wednesday. He said:

There were people bused in, there was mass use of absentee ballots, there were people removed from the list, there was physical intimidation. In the poll that I was in, there was invisible ink used in the pens before Yushchenko's people discovered it, and we've got one of the pens.

My nephew, Harry Ewaschuk, has one of those pens.

Mr. Yanukovich did not make a clear separation between resources owned or managed by the incumbent political forces and those resources of the state and the resources of big brother, Russia, and these are only a few examples. Taken together these crooked and unprincipled actions will not be tolerated.

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For 70 years the Ukrainian people in Canada prayed for Ukrainian independence. At the steps of city hall, at cenotaphs, and in front of monuments like the great Ukrainian poet, Taras Shevchenko, we prayed for a peaceful transition to an independent state of Ukraine, independent so that the ordinary people of Ukraine could decide their fate and their future.

Independence in 1991 was to provide Ukraine with a better future. What we have today is a tragedy, another fixed election with Russia's interference and a return to the old communist rule. The state decides and not the people. How can so many international observers document so many infractions and the state still casts these observations aside?

With Mr. Kuchma's remarks, his meddling, restricting free independent broadcasting, directing officials to harass and threaten the ordinary people of Ukraine, he has obviously returned to the old communist way of conducting restricted elections.

Mr. Kuchma and company cannot hide from the world. The world is watching and will not stand for it any more. More importantly, Ukrainians are watching and millions of ordinary Ukrainian people are in the streets. The government can run. The electoral commission must accept that the election was flawed, unfair, undemocratic, and robbed Ukraine of its true choice by the people for a democratically elected president.

The possibility of bloodshed in the streets could emerge at any time. People in Ukraine are sick and tired of being put down by people like Mr. Kuchma and big brother from Russia. The people of Ukraine want freedom, justice and a truly democratic election. Canada has, through CIDA, promoted democratic development in Ukraine to the strengthening of government institutions and civil society.

• (1930)

The actions of this past week indicate very clearly that the Government of Canada must do more to help Ukraine. Likewise, we must more than ever support RCI broadcasts to help Ukraine to get good news.

My family left Ukraine because of the loss of democracy and the takeover by Russia. My father Michael and my father Pauline and my three sisters Millie, Mary and Phyllis came to Canada for freedom, for justice and for democracy.

Once again Ukraine is hurting, a loss of opportunity for a better future. The world must act swiftly for the good of the people of Ukraine.

I want to thank the member for Etobicoke Centre for all his work. I want to congratulate Ambassador Robinson for his excellent work in Ukraine before, during and after the election. I thank the Prime Minister, through the Deputy Prime Minister, for speaking today. I thank all my colleagues in the House and all the parties for their support.

Just like Canada supports Ukraine, the Ukrainian people need Canadians to help them on their road to true democracy. As they say in Ukrainian, *Slava Ukraini*.

• (1935)

**Hon. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to participate in this emergency debate for two reasons. There is a significant number of Ukrainian Canadians who live in my riding. I believe there are more than one million Canadians of Ukrainian descent living throughout Canada. Over the last few days, I have had numerous e-mails from my constituents and other members of the Ukrainian community concerned about the illegalities that have occurred in Ukraine during the election. I have brought some of those e-mails with me to share with everyone.

Last night there was a protest in front of the Canadian consulate, which is situated in my riding of Parkdale—High Park on Bloor Street West. I received an e-mail from a doctor who advised me, "We will be demonstrating tonight in our riding in front of the Ukrainian consulate on Bloor Street West. I have even managed to get my emergency shift covered at the Hospital for Sick Children tonight by one of my colleagues so I can go out and protest for the democratic process".

I cannot express how I felt when I read that. Many of us in Canada take democracy for granted. This brought home to me just how important and necessary proper are elections in Ukraine.

Second, I am not Ukrainian or of Ukrainian descent. I am of Latvian descent. I am the first member from a Baltic country to take a seat in the House of Commons. My parents came to Canada from Latvia in 1951, after World War II and the occupation of Latvia by the Soviet Union. I truly believe that what has happened and is currently happening in Ukraine may indeed have profound effects throughout all of central and eastern Europe and, dare I say, the world.

It was *The Economist* which noted that the election could change the world by helping to map out the future shape of Europe. However, what I fear the most is that if these election results go unchallenged, there will be a foreboding return to an eastern and central Europe pre-1991, an eastern and central Europe that once again is occupied by the old Soviet Union.

I would like to thank the Prime Minister, through the Deputy Prime Minister today, for unequivocally rejecting the announced final results and calling for a full, open and transparent review of the electoral process. Specifically, the Deputy Prime Minister today announced during question period that considering the allegations of serious and significant electoral fraud from international and Canadian election observers, the Government of Canada could not accept that the announced results by the Central Election Commission reflected the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people. She went on to say that Canada would have no choice but to examine its relations with Ukraine if the authority failed to provide election results that reflect the democratic will of the people.

While participating in this debate, in my capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, I would like to advise the House of Commons that Canada's public broadcaster, the CBC, is committed to ensuring that during this difficult time, Canadians get the information they need about events in Ukraine.



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This morning CBC Radio-Canada Vice-President Sylvain Lafrance informed the staff of Radio Canada International, better known as RCI, and key stakeholders that given the extraordinary circumstances in the Ukraine, RCI has put on hold planned programming changes and will instead continue broadcasting its 30-minute 7 days a week programming in Ukrainian. This will help ensure important support to the Ukrainian community during this crisis. I thank CBC for doing so.

I am also pleased to report to my constituents that Canada is contributing to the OSCE election observer missions to Ukraine by sending 15 long term and up to 34 short term observers. I know we have been monitoring the events in the Ukraine very closely. As we know, The Government of Canada has sent a number of Canadian parliamentarians to the Ukraine to observe elections, including the first round elections. Moreover, during the last month, a parliamentary delegation travelled to Ukraine to observe and support the electoral process. In fact, Canada has sent its largest ever contingent of election observers to Ukraine, more than 50 election observers to support the conduct of free and fair elections in the presidential vote.

● (1940)

Let me share with members some of the massive irregularities and fraud that we received from credible sources, people who participated in the observation, and they are quite frightening. At this time, I too would like to thank the member of Parliament for Etobicoke Centre for being part of our caucus and for providing firsthand knowledge of what he saw transpiring there, as one of our election observers. He just returned last night.

For example, observers noted that post-secondary students were offered a range of bribes to vote for the prime minister, including higher grades, money, and two months free rent. Some voters in eastern Ukraine, the stronghold of the incumbent prime minister, voted in the morning at the local polling station. Then they were bused to Kiev and other locations to vote again, sometimes more than once, using absentee ballots.

It is hard to believe we hear of these things going on in the year 2004. What I find amazing, and which was confirmed by the member for Etobicoke Centre, is that international observers and opposition scrutinizers were denied access to polling stations. Some Canadian observers were followed and threatened. We were told today that some people had their Canadian passports taken away.

The Prime Minister has been monitoring the situation very carefully. In fact, the Prime Minister stated in Brazil that the preliminary reports of electoral violations were disturbing, and if they were accurate, the international community would want to examine its options. This was way before the election results were announced.

The deputy minister of foreign affairs, in the absence of the foreign affairs minister, who is travelling with the Prime Minister right now, summoned the Ukrainian ambassador to express Canada's deep concerns over reports of serious election violations. The foreign affairs minister called for an immediate investigation of allegations of serious fraud, full transparency and an election result that truly reflects the democratic choice of Ukrainians.

I also want to commend our ambassador in Kiev who, in meeting with the media, has stressed Canada's long-standing support for democracy and a civic society in Ukraine, and for free, fair and transparent elections.

I have received e-mail after e-mail over the last two days that talk about the illegalities and the fraud. The most moving e-mail I received, which had been attached to one from my constituent, was from a Canadian who was in Ukraine just hours after the election results had been announced. I would like to share that with members of the House. She writes:

Dear friends in Canada,

As many of you already know, approximately 2 hours ago Ukraine's Central Election announced the official and final results of the second round of voting that took place November 21. Although the result was clearly grossly falsified, it is now official, and according to the Ukrainian Constitution, Viktor Yanukovich will be sworn in as president within 30 days.

The reaction on the streets of Kyiv has been one of shock. There are currently anywhere from 700 thousand to a million people on Maidan Nezalezhnosti, and near the Presidential Administration on Bankova St. Rumours abound: Russian troops have apparently been seen moving towards Kyiv (this information has not been independently confirmed); Russian troops were apparently seen by Yulia Tymoshenko last night inside the Presidential Administration itself. During the next couple of days things might get a little scary.

● (1945)

Madam Speaker, they are scary. For me this brought to mind being a teenager watching the Soviet tanks roll into Czechoslovakia and being a young adult watching the Soviets try to take over Solidarity in Poland.

Our hearts and prayers go out to the people in Ukraine, the people who want to have their will recognized, and to my constituents and their many relatives. Let us work together and ensure that democracy is indeed returned to Ukraine.

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very thankful for this opportunity to speak. Many of my constituents are of Ukrainian descent. Some came to this country almost 100 years ago while others are of more recent immigration.

Although I am not an ethnic Ukrainian, both of my parents were born in Ukraine. Indeed, my grandparents and countless members of my family and people were murdered by the Soviets during the last century, so in a small way, many years later, I feel personally connected to the potential tragedy that is unfolding in Ukraine.

I received a letter from a person I will not name, but indeed he spent some years studying here in Canada and has now returned home to Ukraine to work. I would like to read portions of his letter to the House. He states:

My Dear Friends,

You have probably heard about the very heated situation in Ukraine. Ukraine is on the verge of Revolution. In the second round of presidential elections the figures were falsified and the nation was deceived. A pro-government candidate and the current government have openly rejected the will of the people, the will to choose.

Today in all the many cities of Ukraine people came out on the streets to protect their choice. [A] Majority of the Ukrainians believe their next president is, now, Viktor Yushenko. He is the man from the opposition. People believe that only he can lead Ukraine to the future. The western world supports him, where Russia supports the current prime minister of Ukraine.

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I want to stop there for a moment while I am reading. I am not here to choose sides. I do not think any member of the House is here to choose sides in that election. That is a choice for Ukrainian people to make. I am simply reiterating the concern that this one individual is relating to the people of Canada.

He continues with his letter:

About 4 hours ago I have just returned from the 5-hour meeting that took place at the Kharkiv's Square of Freedom, the second largest square in Europe (some say the largest). The meeting was in support of Viktor Yushenko, whom I support too. We had about 100,000 people who protested against the false results of the elections. We know that this is a huge test of democracy for Ukrainians. In Kyiv the meeting is 24-hour-7 and has about 500,000 people all the time.

I think this corresponds to what my colleague across the way was just saying. The letter continues:

There are numerous meetings that have been taking place all over Ukraine [in] support of Viktor Yushenko.

With this letter I urgently request you to have a special day of prayers in your schools, churches, work places, homes. The situation in Ukraine is on the edge of catastrophe. The nation does not want to be subjected and deceived anymore. Ukraine says NO to thieves, criminals and corruption. Please uphold me and my people in your prayers. This is a very urgent cry to you, my friends. We have a chance to show the world that our democracy is not just on paper, but we need your prayers and your encouragement. I do not want to have another USSR, where we are told what to do and what to believe in.

Please follow the news and keep us in your mind. Tomorrow is another meeting to continue to protect our freedom. Help us God.

He concludes by saying "with sincere love to all of you", and he writes from Kharkiv, Ukraine.

The western world for the most part stood silently by as the Soviets starved and butchered the inhabitants of Ukraine during the 20th century. Some from the western world, I am ashamed to say, were even apologists for that horrid regime.

The western world has the duty to ensure that a new totalitarian government does not take the place of the Soviet system. Canada must do everything it can to prevent this from happening.

First, we must not be silent the way the western world was silent in the early 20th century when so many people were murdered, when so many people starved to death in the breadbasket of the world, Ukraine.

Second, we must act. We must act diplomatically and Canada must be very clear where it stands on this issue.

● (1950)

I was so very pleased to hear the parliamentary secretary convey what this government's position is. We saw in the House today on this issue a very rare unanimous support of the government's position. I am proud that our government stood up and indicated where it stands.

We must act diplomatically, but secondly, if our concerns and our voice are not heard, we must act economically against an illegitimate government. We must ensure that the Ukrainian people have the right to make the choice to democratically elect their government.

We should not make the mistakes of the 20th century. Some say that time is past, that it will never happen again. Democracy and freedom are values that we take so for granted here in this country. We do not believe that democracy and our values cherishing

freedoms will ever be compromised, but they can be, so we must stand with democratic forces across this world, across the globe. We must stand to tell those who want to destroy democracy in Ukraine that it will not happen again.

I am sharing my time with my colleague from Edmonton. Those are my comments. I wish all the very best, God's richest blessings, to the people of Ukraine.

● (1955)

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I cherish tonight's opportunity to be a part of a democracy where I can stand and speak to people right across the country about an issue that is so important to me, to Canadians, to the people of Ukraine and to people of Ukrainian descent right around the world. The very issue we are talking about demonstrates that we should not take these rights and these freedoms for granted.

It is a dark day in Ukraine, a dark day indeed. After so many years and so many decades of Russian persecution, finally in 1989 the wall came down and there was great hope for the people of Ukraine. Since then they have struggled to build a free and democratic nation. The results have been very mixed, without a doubt, but there was hope and progress was being made.

Now, with the process of this election, with the corruption surrounding this election, all of that could well be lost. Ukraine could be returning soon to the grip of Russia, which it finally shed 15 years ago. That is the reality. That is how dark a day this is for Ukraine. That is why we have to take this issue extremely seriously.

I was somewhat encouraged today when the Deputy Prime Minister stood in the House and made quite a strong statement about how Canada views what has happened. She made it clear that Canada will not recognize the result of this election as it stands because of the cheating that has gone on during this campaign, during the vote count and on voting day. She made that clear. She also said that Canada will take certain steps immediately to send a very clear message to those in power in Ukraine that we will not tolerate this.

I hope that the extent of the position and the action that the Government of Canada has talked about so far is enough to influence those in power in Ukraine, to make them recognize that the world will not tolerate what has happened here and that we will demand this on behalf of the people of Ukraine, on behalf of people so closely tied to Ukraine. They are people like so many of my constituents, my neighbours and my friends, the people I grew up with, the people whose neighbourhood I moved into, who have such close ties to Ukraine. They travel regularly to meet with family in Ukraine and did so even when the wall was still up.

That connection is so strong that only someone who has emigrated from another country and from such a different situation, or who has had parents or grandchildren emigrate from a situation like that, and where they have talked about it and told their children and grandchildren just what reality is to live in a situation like that, only those people can really understand why these ties are as strong as they are. But they are there and we cannot ignore that.

Not just the people in my constituency but people of Ukrainian background around the world and in fact all Canadians have to be very concerned with what has happened, because we truly could be at the start of a major step back in that whole part of the world. Whether it is done through arms or whether it is done through cheating in an election campaign, the end result could be the same.

We cannot stand by. We have to take whatever action is necessary to deal with this. Canadians know that. I know that members of the House know just how important our behaviour as a nation is at this time.

• (2000)

I want to recognize those who have gone from Canada as observers to monitor, to watch and then to report back on what has happened during this election campaign. The member of the Conservative Party from Edmonton East was there as an observer. He spoke to a crowd that was demonstrating after the bogus results came in. He understands what has happened. The role he played was important. Without those observers from countries around the world, and all of the observers from Canada, we could not possibly have known for sure what happened during that campaign.

I would like to thank the member for Edmonton East. I would also like to thank our party's foreign affairs critic who has been following this issue closely. He has been talking about it and taking whatever action he could to bring the government's attention to this issue over the past few weeks. I want to thank him for the action he has taken not only on behalf of our party, but on behalf of constituents from constituencies represented by the Conservative Party and on behalf of Canadians as a whole. Being an observer or taking a stand on an issue like this one is not easy to do. I thank those members for doing that. It means an awful lot and it should be recognized.

Where do we go from here? The government took the position that it will not stand by idly. That is an important first step, but it may not be enough. Tonight if we learn anything from listening to our colleagues speak and from thinking and talking about this issue, I hope what we get out of this is that we have the resolve to do whatever is necessary to deal with this situation.

The action the government has announced is appropriate for now. If it requires tough economic action in the future, then we have to be prepared to do that. We have to be prepared to take whatever action is necessary in the weeks and months to come.

All of us are hoping and praying that the powers in Ukraine will recognize that the world will make them suffer if they do not allow another election to take place or somehow deal with the fraudulent situation that is in place right now. I hope and pray they learn that, but it is anybody's guess whether or not they will. I am not at all convinced that will happen without much tougher action.

For the last four or five years, I have been fortunate to have four interns from Ukraine in my Ottawa office. The young man who was in my office this year left only two weeks ago. I took him to my constituency for a long weekend. We went to a fascinating event, the 100th anniversary of the first Ukrainian settlement in a particular community. It was a marvellous event for him. He spoke English and Ukrainian. All of the babas spoke to him in Ukrainian. They were delighted to have a young man from Ukraine to talk to. Many of

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them had visited Ukraine. It meant so much to them but it meant more to him to see the lives they built here in our wonderful country.

As I said in my comments to that group, this young man, Taras, was not here to stay in our country. He wants to do what is necessary to make Ukraine the kind of country that is free and democratic and that can become more like Canada. He wants that with all his heart.

I asked him what he thought the outcome of the election would be and he predicted it accurately. He also predicted that the result would be like that because of fraud and cheating and because the media reported only one side of the election. I am sure he was among the crowds demonstrating in Ukraine yesterday and today calling for a complete turnaround of this situation, a new election, whatever is required to fix this situation. My heart and my prayers are with him.

• (2005)

I hope and pray that two or three months from now, the world, with resolve, can turn this around and he can start to rebuild democracy and freedom in Ukraine.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Canada—U.S), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am quite honoured to take part in this debate and to share my views on the issue.

There may be many people who are watching the debate and asking why the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine is taking part in the debate on the elections in Ukraine. Why does this woman who is clearly of African descent care about this?

I only have a very small Ukrainian community in my riding, less than 1,000 people. It is a very active community. It is a community that has contributed much, on the NDG side, but most particularly on the Lachine side. However it is not determinant, in terms of my election for instance, at least not today.

The hon. member across the way made a very important point by saying that anyone who knows Ukrainians could not help but be engaged in this issue. I want to say that anyone who has had experience of the human condition, of the mistakes of the 20th century, the mistakes of the 19th century, the mistakes of the 18th, 17th, 16th and 13th centuries, long back, that carry into the 21st century cannot help but be engaged in the issue of free and democratic elections in Ukraine and the fact that it did not happen.

It has been explained quite clearly what happened in Ukraine in these elections. These elections were filled with egregious wrongdoings and that the results announced by the Central Election Commission of Ukraine simply cannot be accepted and are not being accepted by the people of Ukraine.

We can turn on our televisions daily, hourly, and see the hundreds of thousands of people who have massed in Kiev to demonstrate the fact that they do not accept the results. They feel that this election has been stolen from them. They are expressing their will for free, transparent, democratic elections that express the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people.

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My father was an immigrant to this country. He came from the United States. When my father immigrated to Canada, he emigrated from the state of Alabama. In the state of Alabama, indeed in most states in the United States in the mid-1940s, people of African descent were not allowed to vote. Further to that, lynchings took place. Any person of the black race, of African descent, in many of the southern states in the United States, put their lives on the line if they demonstrated, verbally or otherwise, for their freedoms.

I do not have to have Ukrainian ancestry within me in order to be engaged in this issue. I could not have been prouder than today during question period when our Deputy Prime Minister stood and I will quote what she said:

“Considering the allegations of serious and significant electoral fraud from international and Canadian election observers, the Government of Canada cannot accept that the announced result by the Central Election Commission reflects the true, democratic will of the Ukrainian people. Therefore, Canada rejects the announced final results. The Government of Canada calls for a full, open and transparent review of the election process and Canada will have no choice but to examine its relations with Ukraine if the authorities fail to provide election results that reflect the democratic will of the people of that country”.

That was the statement of the Deputy Prime Minister today in question period in response to a question directed to her by the leader of the official opposition. I was proud.

However, the point has been made that Canada needs to monitor the response of Ukraine to the call by Canada and by other members of the international community and by the Ukrainian people themselves that these election results be reviewed. Ukraine must ensure that a free, transparent, democratic election process takes place that will allow the results to be the true reflection of the democratic will of the Ukrainian people so that the results can be seen as credible and worthy of acceptance and recognition and the international community and the Ukrainian people can embrace those results.

● (2010)

If that should not happen, I will certainly be one of the many voices calling on our government to take the next steps that would need to be taken, whether those steps be diplomatic or economic sanctions. It is clear. We have a responsibility. We are in the 21st century. Ours is a country that will support the emerging democracies and the fundamental freedoms of each and every person.

The way we do so is to support the emerging democracies. Ukraine is such a democracy. Ukraine has less than two decades under its belt as a free, democratic society. The mark of a true democratic society is the ability of that society and its institutions to put into place free, transparent election processes where people of the society accept the results.

We are talking about possible election reform within our country, but that reform does not come out of a view, of any Canadian, that the results of our elections are not a true reflection of the democratic will of this society. In no instance has anyone ever suggested that. What has been suggested is that, as a mature democracy, we may

wish to explore other options in order to ensure a further diversity of views that will come out of election results. That is a debate for another day.

Constituents of Ukrainian descent here in Canada have participated as members of Canada's delegation of election observers, both in the previous election and in the present election. We are being told by the international community, and also by our own election observers, that they witnessed with their very eyes ballot stuffing, absentee voter certificates, repeated voting, irregularities in the ballot counting, last minute additions to voter lists on election day, and restrictions placed on voters' abilities to cast their ballots.

That is only a number of the egregious irregularities that our own election observers witnessed. Canada had no choice but to reject the election results announced by the central election commission of the Ukraine and call on Ukraine to undertake a true, transparent review of its election process and results, and ensure that election results reflect the true democratic will as expressed by the Ukrainian people in the election.

If that means calling another election, then so be it. If those mistakes are so egregious that we cannot accept the results, then it may be that Ukraine will need to call another election. Hopefully that will be decided by the supreme court of Ukraine and hopefully that court will be sufficiently independent, and objective that its decision will be accepted by the people of Ukraine.

The one true test of democracy is a society's ability to conduct elections in a transparent, rules based fashion and in so doing, demonstrate to both its people and to the international audience that the true democratic will of its people has been reflected in the election results. When the process is so tainted that the very validity of the results are called into serious repute, the government has no choice but to conduct a full open and transparent review of its election process and undertake an election process that will reflect the true will of its people.

I, our government, and every member in the House call on Ukraine to do it.

● (2015)

**Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, tonight's debate represents the very best in the House of Commons. In spite of our partisan differences, we have come together to stand up for what we see as human rights and human rights abuses that are taking place.

There was a debate in this chamber almost 48 years ago which centred on the Hungarian revolution. Unfortunately, at the time that the debate took place, the Hungarian revolution was already crushed by Soviet tanks. The person leading the debate was the Hon. Jack Pickersgill, the minister of citizenship and immigration. Some 25,000 people were killed. Hundreds of thousands were wounded and 200,000 people fled Hungary.

Having come to Canada as part of 40,000 refugees that were admitted to this country, I spent a good part of my adult life fighting for human rights, not just in Canada but also behind the Iron Curtain. I was part of a group called the black ribbon day committee. We were dreamers. We were people who came from former Iron Curtain countries and we dared to dream that some day the wall would come crumbling down.

That happened 14 or 15 years ago. Every one of us remembers the crumbling of the Berlin Wall. Everyone remembers when Ukraine gained its independence. Canada was the first country to officially recognize it and it is only proper that in this dark hour of the assault on democracy we as Canadians are at the forefront in fighting to set right what is taking place in Ukraine right now.

We all learned some Russian words. I know when I was a student I had to learn some and I hated it, but I loved hearing the Russian words: perestroika and glasnost. They meant the falling of the Soviet Union, where the system opened itself up, and emptied its gulags where it got rid of its political prisoners.

What we are seeing happen now is a return to the past. This is a test for all the nations in the free world, indeed the world itself. As we speak in this chamber, it is the middle of the night in Ukraine where it is getting close to morning. There are hundreds of thousands of people demonstrating with their orange colour hoping beyond hope that the world will not let their evolution into a democracy be crushed.

The government said that we will not recognize the results of this election. We will no doubt take whatever appropriate action is necessary. I cannot emphasize enough that we are not just going to take action against the Ukrainian government. We must challenge the Russian government itself because it has interfered in this election. Russian troops are at the borders. Russian troops have crushed revolutions in the past. This is a real test for the free world, a test for Russia itself on whether perestroika and glasnost still exist in the former Soviet Union.

We are speaking in concert with the rest of the free world. Everyone in the free world has condemned the elections. Beyond calling for investigations, we must ensure that the will of the people of Ukraine to elect their own government is respected. It means that we, in alliance with our western allies, as a member of the OSCE, as a member of NATO, and having friends in the European Union and the United Nations, must seize this opportunity to fight for democracy that will so much define the 21st century. If we fail, I despair not only for the people of Ukraine but for all those places that are still struggling to realize the fruits of democracy.

Our hopes and prayers are with the Ukrainian people. We are a country which has an abundance of people who have fled dictatorships. Many of them have come from a Soviet dictatorship. We stand in solidarity with our fellow Ukrainians in Canada. We stand in solidarity with Ukrainians in Ukraine.

● (2020)

I have learned that tomorrow at 3:00 there will be a demonstration on Parliament Hill and it will end with a march to the Ukrainian embassy. It will be calling for free democratic elections that are respected. This burden is not the burden of Ukrainians alone. This is

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a burden for everyone who believes in human rights, who believes in freedom, and who inhabits this very fragile planet.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, we are here this evening to discuss the serious breaches of democracy, irregularities and frauds that have been committed in connection with the election in Ukraine.

What is happening in that country in the aftermath of that election, the reactions of the other international actors, and the position Canada needs to take with respect to the recognition or non-recognition of a new government in Ukraine, are all aspects that absolutely must be discussed.

I would like to remind those listening of certain facts. Ukraine is a country that used to be part of the former Soviet Republic, and its retiring president is Mr. Kuchma.

An election was held, and a successor hand-picked to replace the retiring president, who had been at the head of the former Soviet republic since 1994. Even on the eve of the first round of polling for the presidential election which was held on October 31, 2004, the opposition candidate had raised the possibility of the election being neither free nor democratic.

The first ballot gave a slight lead to the designated candidate, and was judged by the international observers monitoring the election process not to comply with democratic standards.

It was a highly controversial election. The OSCE international election observation mission, with its 563 observers, has already found many irregularities in the vote held on November 21. The mission, I will remind the House, is made up of members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

The mission found a number of troubling matters: first, a suspiciously high turnout in some regions; multiple ballots based on presentation of absentee voting certificates; irregularities in the numbering of ballots; voters added to the lists at the last minute on election day; and finally, restrictions imposed on voters exercising their voting rights.

We saw the reactions from the European Union immediately. The Dutch presidency of the European Union, which is preparing to send a special emissary to Ukraine—a former ambassador—indicated at the time that the result of the Ukraine election would have to be reviewed, emphasizing that the 25 countries would not accept a fraudulent election. The Secretary General of NATO also demanded a recount. Finally, we know that the European Union was preparing to ask Ukraine to recount the votes in the presidential election.

The red warning light had already gone on in Europe. People were already realizing that there were irregularities and improprieties and were demanding changes.

Then the United States also reacted. The U.S. immediately made it known that it would not recognize the legitimacy of the election, saying that it was not too late for the authorities to find a solution that would respect the wishes of the Ukrainian people.

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For several days now, thousands of people in the west of the country, where nationalists and the opposition prevail, have demonstrated in the streets against the electoral process.

● (2025)

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that the United States could not accept this result as legitimate, because it did not meet international standards and because there had not been any investigation of the numerous and credible reports of fraud and abuse. He also warned the Ukrainian leadership about the potential consequences of their actions for the two countries' relationship.

As for Canada's position, we know what it is. It was outlined this afternoon in the House of Commons, when the Deputy Prime Minister said that the Government of Canada could not accept that the announced results by the central election commission reflected the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people.

She added that Canada rejects the final results announced today and is calling for a full, open and transparent review of the election process. Finally, she said that Canada will have no choice but to examine its relations with Ukraine if the authorities fail to provide election results that reflect the democratic will of the people of that country.

We know what the people of this country want. It is obvious by the current reaction in every Ukrainian community in the world. They want to live in a democratic country where people have freedom of expression and choice. I think this is their basic right.

If power has been put into the hands of someone who rigged the election, or if the entire democratic process was mishandled, I think the international community has the right to take a stand.

The Bloc Québécois has always defended democracy. It has always said that democracy is extremely important. In our sovereignist history, we have had people like René Lévesque, who always put democracy first and gave us electoral systems that may not have been perfect but they were very sophisticated.

The Bloc Québécois proposes that since the whole world recognizes that fraud was committed, we cannot accept the election of either candidate. The government must demand an investigation—internationally secured under the auspices of the OSCE—into the fraud and the electoral process, with international observers, since we cannot rely on a commission or a government being accused of fraudulent action to guarantee an impartial and transparent investigation.

Should the Ukrainian government's response be unsatisfactory, Canada will have to re-evaluate its relations with Ukraine. Canada must demand an investigation with international guarantees, as this is the best way to prevent the situation from getting worse.

I remind hon. members that the Bloc Québécois supported the motion presented by a Liberal member to encourage Canada to ensure a transparent and democratic electoral process. The Bloc Québécois wants to offer its support to Ukrainians in Canada and Quebec and assure them of our full cooperation.

● (2030)

[*English*]

**Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

Ukrainians are today living through a historic moment. The election was a great opportunity for Ukraine to show that it has developed into a fully democratic country. Unfortunately, the events we witnessed have made a mockery of that election. The problems that occurred were not minor, nor were they technical, and thus the international community has been led to conclude that they were a daring attempt by Ukrainian authorities to steal the election for their candidate, the current prime minister.

The list of electoral violations is long. Here are only some of the things that international monitors saw: fraudulent proxy voting; multiple voting; ballot box stuffing; violence, threats and intimidation against voters; voter list manipulation; and ballot box destruction and vandalism. These are only the most blatant examples of fraud that were reported by international observers, including Canadian observers.

In view of these many instances of serious and significant electoral fraud, Canada has announced that we cannot accept that the results announced today represent the democratic will of the Ukrainian people.

Before the election it became increasingly obvious that the opposition leader was the people's choice. No matter how much the government tried to undermine his campaign, he seemed to lead all credible polls leading up to the first round of voting on October 31.

During that round of voting only three weeks ago, we saw the same sort of fraud going on but not as much of it or as bad as what we witnessed this weekend. What was the result of the first round? The result was that Yushchenko was still the leading candidate, despite the fraud, even though local observers estimated that the government's actions had denied him about 5% of the vote.

The second round of voting saw even more blatant fraudulent practices, but this time the people's choice was thwarted. We cannot easily dismiss what we saw as technical problems. The irregularities I cited are neither minor nor technical; they are serious and significant.

The fraud we witnessed resulted in votes stolen in at least the hundreds of thousands but perhaps in the millions out of a total of approximately 25 million votes cast. The official result declaring Prime Minister Yanukovich the winner was a close one. This suggests, in fact, that if the authorities had not done what they did, opposition leader Yushchenko would have won by a wide margin. In fact, all the exit polls on election day showed Yushchenko winning the election by anywhere between 5% and 19%.

Canada has been a long-time friend of Ukraine and was the first western country to recognize its independence in 1991. We provide more than \$18 billion in technical assistance through CIDA. The more than one million Canadians of Ukrainian origin provide financial, technical and emotional support to their relatives in their former homeland. Now more than ever, the people of Ukraine need to know that Canada and Canadians support them in this difficult time.

Canada has now said clearly that we cannot accept the final results announced today because they do not represent the democratic will of the people. I call on the Ukrainian authorities to investigate the many instances of fraud and I call on them to ensure that the results of the election reflect the true will of Ukrainian people. If they cannot accomplish this, perhaps they need another election. In this way, we hope that Ukraine continues on its path to democracy.

It is reassuring to note that more and more nations in the international community are drawing the same conclusion that Canada has drawn. Even this level of comment is unusual. There have been other elections which have seemed lacking, some in emerging countries just beginning democratic processes. At that time, little comment was made, but this level of international condemnation is unprecedented, probably because the world recognizes the aspirations of Ukrainians and their desire for true democracy.

As Canadians we still have to be careful on two fronts. We must try not to become too judgmental of others, because Canada would like to retain its reputation as a peace seeker and a broker of peaceful solutions between opposing views. We always act in a multilateral manner, as we are doing today, and we try to bring people together to find the middle ground.

• (2035)

As a nation of immigrants we also have to be careful that we focus on building our new country and that we not get too caught up or spend too much energy on the troubles of the very homelands that so many of us have fled.

Only if we focus on our future as Canadians and the building of this country will we provide the peaceful and prosperous future we all want for our children and their children.

• (2040)

**Hon. David Kilgour (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the election that has just taken place in Ukraine.

In the media the current contest has been portrayed as a geopolitical struggle with the result set to determine whether Ukraine continues to move toward integration with Europe and the democratic world or whether it pulls back from this engagement and is slowly re-absorbed into Russia's sphere of influence as part of the east.

There is no doubt this is an important element of what is occurring right now. Certainly it helps to explain the inexcusable interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs by President Putin, something I condemned when I was in Kiev on November 4, as did other members of our caucus.

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When we think like this, however, we tend to lose sight of the real stakes, which are democracy, dignity, freedom and better lives for the 50 million people of Ukraine and their right to determine on their own terms the national future that they most desire.

Today Ukraine is at a critical juncture in its modern history with this election standing as a potential turning point. Since independence in 1991, Ukraine has made steady progress toward greater prosperity and democracy, to the point that organizations such as Freedom House and their annual country rankings list the degree of freedom experienced in Ukraine today as more approximate to countries like Turkey than it is to its immediate neighbour, Russia.

If the results of this stolen election are allowed to stand, this admirable progression will be reversed and the cause of human dignity in Ukraine will be set back years or even, terribly, decades.

There can be no doubt in the mind of any member of the House that the elections in Ukraine were stolen. I will just give two examples of the massive fraud that was perpetrated over the course of the election right from the first round of voting a few weeks ago.

Some voters in eastern Ukraine, the stronghold of the incumbent prime minister, voted in the morning in their own resident polls and then were bussed to Kiev and other locations to vote again, sometimes more than once, using absentee ballots.

The following is the worst that I have heard. The Donetsk oblast is reported to have recorded a voter turnout of over 99%, 19% higher than the national average and well beyond the normal deviation from the mean. It is alleged at the time the balloting closed that the recorded turnout was only 74%, meaning that 843,000 voters were added after the balloting ended.

Canada's response to the situation is of the utmost importance and must be designed carefully. We must ensure that our response is more than a visceral reaction against an appalling, wholesale ballot stuffing, but that it actually serves to advance the cause of democracy in Ukraine which I have called often one of the founding countries of modern Canada.

This is critical. No one who has seen the pictures at the rallies in Independence Square in Kiev can doubt that there is a strong and determined democratic movement there that will not be defeated by scoundrel's and oligarchs, and they will not go quietly or meekly back to another darker day in the country's history.

Whatever we do now as a nation and as a government should be designed to support those democrats for they are the future of Ukraine whether the current leadership of that country accepts it willingly or not.

What then must be done? Rejecting the announced results is a good beginning but we must do more. The people's president, Viktor Yushchenko, has called on Ukrainian democrats to assemble in Kiev and continue to assemble en masse until the results are overturned. Momentum is building.

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Like many members, I receive e-mails from people in Ukraine. One, until two weeks ago, was an intern here in our Parliament. The first message she sent came immediately after the election was stolen and people were gathering in Kiev and around the country. The subject line of her message was "It is beginning". She was talking about a revolution in Ukrainian politics on the line of Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution. She said that she was not defeated but inspired.

Yesterday she sent an e-mail and said that there were reports that members of the Ukrainian special armed forces had been seen wearing orange arm bands, signifying support for Yushchenko. Indeed it has begun but it is not too late for it to be stopped. There are disturbing and, frankly, terrifying reports that Prime Minister Yanukovich has released busloads of criminals from jails who may well be armed. Presumably this has been done to disperse the crowds peaceful demonstrators and create disorder.

This may be to create a pretext for unleashing the power of the Ukrainian, and perhaps even the Russian, army on the people, the democrats, who are gathered in Kiev.

Violence in this situation would compound exponentially the tragedy of these elections. Canada must speak loudly and clearly to Ukraine and the world to say that we will not tolerate the use of force to suppress the peaceful protest that is currently going on. We must back up our words with action.

● (2045)

Canada should immediately dispatch war observers to Ukraine to monitor the situation firsthand so that we may bear witness to anything that may happen in the important days to follow. We should encourage other countries to do the same.

We must also use our diplomats who are there to directly and forcefully tell the Governments of Ukraine and Russia that we are watching their actions closely and that no violence will be tolerated.

In doing this, we must be clear that our quarrel is not with the people of Ukraine but with the corrupt leadership that has illegitimately subverted the will of a population. In practical terms, this means that we must build bridges quickly with the democrats who are leading the struggle for change in Ukraine, as we did in South Africa during apartheid and elsewhere. We must let them know that we are in solidarity with them and urging them to success at this important time.

If the announced result of this election is not overturned and the government of Ukraine insists on carrying through with this theft to the last moment, every aspect of our relationship with the government of Ukraine must be examined. I hope this would include expressing an ironclad determination to hold all officials who perpetrated or benefited from this fraud and theft personally responsible for what has occurred and to enact targeted sanctions against them as a result.

The situation in Ukraine is very fluid right now as everybody here knows. We should not focus too much on an uncertain and unhappy future when we still have the opportunity to produce a correct and just result today.

I am grateful that the Government of Canada has seen the wisdom of rejecting the announced results. I call upon it and all of us as concerned Canadians to act quickly, to act decisively and to act firmly to ensure that there are brighter days ahead for our friends, families and allies in Ukraine.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC):**  
Mr. Speaker, I do not have any prepared notes. I am just going to speak from my heart and say what I feel.

I also want to say to all hon. members that I believe this is one of the first times, if not the only time, on which all of us in this chamber tonight are in agreement on an issue. It is undeniable that there has been some egregious behaviour. Some things that have been done in Ukraine need to be undone. I think for the first time we can count on all members of this chamber to stand and speak the truth because we all believe that we know the truth.

In this case it is undeniable. The truth is that there was an election in Ukraine that was not held fairly or equally. It did not represent the voters' will. It did not represent those people in Ukraine who wanted to see a true democracy and a true democratic election.

I should say that I come from Ukrainian stock. My grandfather immigrated to Canada in the early 1900s. My father and I were born in this country. I am proud to say that I am Ukrainian but I do not really have any knowledge of what it is like to be a citizen of the Ukraine. I am starting to get a sense of that now because I see what has happened in the homeland of my grandfather, a part of the world for which I still feel very strongly and to which I feel connected in some manner.

I must say that this is one of the most egregious and blatant manipulations of the electoral process that I have seen in recent democratic history. We have seen actions taken by those in power currently in the Ukraine that defy description. If the actions that we have seen taken in Ukraine to manipulate the results of its election were taken in any other western country or any other democratic country, the outrage would be worldwide. I think we will see that outrage eventually.

Let me try to recapture some of the things that we know happened during the recent Ukraine elections. If one lives in a western civilization or in a country, a province or a state that is used to having elections, whether or not we like the results we trust the election officials. We know that from time to time there may be a slight irregularity but we trust the results.

I only have to look back to the recent U.S. elections where so many people were disappointed with the election results. Did the people say that the election was rigged? Did they rebel on the streets? Did they take to arms? No, because they know that inherently the electoral system in most democracies, certainly within the western world, is inherently fair. Just because we do not like the results does not mean that the elections were not conducted fairly, honestly and above board.

However that was not the case in the latest Ukraine elections. Let us take a look at some of the things that happened. For anyone who sits in this assembly and who has been through elections on many different levels for years and years, it is almost unfathomable, almost unbelievable that some of these things could happen but they did.



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We have reports, as one example, that when the results of one poll were tallied the results were 3,000 to 0 for one of the candidates. That cannot happen. That is undeniably fraudulent because in no election in any corner of the world will we ever find, in any poll in a democratic election, a result like that, yet it happened in Ukraine. The government in power is saying that it was legitimate, fair and honest. It is saying that it does not want the results overturned and certainly does not want any kind of an independent review because that poll result might be questioned.

A review may also question things such as military police at polling stations questioning potential voters and turning away potential voters. A review may question things like military police and other officials talking to students and offering them bribes, such as free tuition or money in exchange for their vote for the right candidate. Those are but a few examples of what happened in this election.

● (2050)

My hon. colleague across the floor has just come back from observing what happened in Ukraine. One of our colleagues, the hon. member for Edmonton East, is currently there. It does not matter from which political ideology we come. Every member from every party from whom I have heard, whether it be in this country, south of the border or in European countries, has come back with the same stories. This election was a sham.

I believe there is only one thing that can force the current administration into accepting and agreeing to an independent review. That is with unanimity worldwide. We need all leaders, not only of the free world but in every country, small or large, to stand up and say that they are offended by the blatant abuse of power to try to overturn the democratic will of a people who want to elect a democratic government.

I was truly proud of the Prime Minister's words today. I do not see eye to eye with the Prime Minister or members opposite on many issues, and that is fair. However, I was proud of the words of the Prime Minister, even though he could not be here today, that we, the Canadian people, would not accept the results of this election.

I was proud of not only the members opposite but every member of the House regardless of political affiliation who stood up as one and applauded the Prime Minister's words. I believe that across this great country of ours we all agree with one thing: the democratic right to elect governments is something we should never take lightly and it is something that should be enshrined, as it is, in our Constitution.

When we see abuses throughout the world, we must stand as one and say no, that we will not accept the results. Not that it is for us to say who should be the winner, because it is not. It is the right of the Ukraine people to determine the winner. However, we should stand up when we see obvious and blatant attempts to overturn the democratic principles of an election. That is what this assembly has done and that is why I am so proud of every member of this assembly, because we spoke in unison. We said that we would not accept this. Quite frankly, I hope the Prime Minister and members opposite do not say this because it is topical, relevant and timely.

If this matter continues to carry on over weeks, months and close to a year and there is still no resolve with appointing an independent judicial review or independent review to determine whether this election in Ukraine was held in a proper manner, I hope the members opposite and their leader will continue to press the Ukraine government and every other leader of the free world and every industrialized nation to stand up and say no, that they will not accept what happened in the Ukraine. If that happens, then I truly will be one of the happiest Ukrainian Canadians in the world.

I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt. I should have said that at the outset.

In conclusion, everyone in a democracy should understand that the right to vote is one of the most inalienable rights people have and a right that we should take seriously. I am very concerned that in Canada the level of voter turnout in federal, provincial and municipal elections has gone down because people think for one reason or another it does not matter. It does matter.

We only need to look at what has happened in Ukraine to understand that the right to vote in a democracy is one of the greatest rights and responsibilities of every citizen of every country. We must stand up as one and protect the rights of the people in Ukraine to exercise their democratic right and their democratic will.

● (2055)

**Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an important issue that we deal with tonight. As I begin my speech, let me first say that it will not be Churchillian eloquence. It will not be another cross of gold. It will be a speech, as my hon. colleague said, from the heart.

First, tonight, as I rise to address this question, I want to address ultimately why we have the right as Canadians, not as citizens of the Ukraine, not as people directly involved, to address this issue and speak on why we have the moral imperative, the duty, to deal with this issue.

What we are talking about tonight is a fundamental issue, an issue that we must not let rest, an issue that is more than just of concern to Canadians of Ukrainian descent, but is of concern to all Canadians who believe in freedom.

We in this country have a government based upon unalienable rights, rights that are not derived because of our ethnicity, our class, our gender or our country of birth, but rights, that are, as I said, inalienable, rights that are an endowment at birth. Specifically, we have the rights to life, liberty and property, and these are not just for Canadians. We, as Canadians, believe they are the rights of the whole world.

That is why we must address this issue in Ukraine because the inalienable rights of the citizens of Ukraine have been deprived. The citizens of Ukraine have had their inalienable right to liberty deprived, inalienable rights to speak freely, to address the problems of their nation and to a free and open democratic election.

*S. O. 52*

It is not for us to choose sides. Let me emphasize and reiterate, tonight not one member of the House is calling for one candidate or another to be elected. We are calling clearly and eloquently, we are calling with singleness of voice for a free election, for an open accounting.

We must look at the evidence. We must look to decide if has it been free and fair. From all reports coming out of Ukraine, I think it is clear it has not been.

Having personal acquaintances and friends of the family who live there, may I draw on some of their recollections and advice. In specific, let me read a letter my office received just the other day from an acquaintance in Ukraine. I will take the liberty to adjust and disguise a few of the features of the letter for security purposes. For the record, this is what they are facing in the country.

Ukraine is swayed in demonstrations of protest against the unlawful results of the runoff election. The level of violations is just immense and unthinkable.

As this writer notes, look at the website, [www.zurnc.org.ua/](http://www.zurnc.org.ua/) election for English translation of some of irregularities that have been noted.

The writer continues:

In short, the pro-government candidate...won according to the official data from the Central Election Commission (the head of which was drunk!!! during election night). And violations are unprecedented—people voting several times using absentee ballots, the observers from the opposition and international observers were not let into polling stations on the East and South of Ukraine. 7 boxes with ballots were set on fire in the Lviv region alone!!!

In Kyiv ballots were destroyed by throwing acid in the voting boxes on several polling stations. Many Yushchenko observers were beaten up on the East. Level of people requesting to vote from home due to health reasons rose between 200% to 500% on polling stations of all the regions, which points to either an abnormal health deterioration or obvious violation.

The writer of the letter also notes that 99% of these votes went for one candidate. It is amazing. The writer continues:

Turnout rates on some of the polling stations was 105% (all of those on the lists + those using absentee ballots). 96% turnout rate in [one] region [home of one of the candidates]—there have never been anything like this before, even in Soviet times!!! Also several notes of bombs being planted were registered—none of them was true.

The author was volunteering during the election night, helping to put the election information site together. They were cut off from electricity for two hours. There were three polling stations in their area. They experienced information blocks from the east since 11 p. m.

● (2100)

The writer continues:

All the exit polls show a Yushchenko victory with a gap of between 5 to 11% (depending on the exit poll). Situation as of 10 pm on Monday in Ukraine: more than 300,000 people gathered on the central street of Kyiv to protest the official...returns holding orange stripes and banners (colour of Yushchenko).

Demonstrations are held in the most of the cities; in Lviv yesterday... more than 100,000 people were protesting...Buses are heading to Kyiv from all over Ukraine to support those standing in Kyiv, despite all the hedges on their way...

I believe the author is saying problems and encumbrances, but with limited English expressed it that way. The writer goes on:

—(tires are punctured by little things thrown around on the road leading to Kyiv, cars and buses are not let into the city, and yet they go there; several mayor city and oblast city councils pronounced Yushchenko [the second candidate] as legitimate president of Ukraine.

Ukrainian elections didn't meet any democratic standards, they were condemned by the EU and the USA. Now we truly need the help of international community.

Today Yushchenko was sworn in as the new president in some areas. Yanikovych gang did not agree, 1.5 million people are on the streets of Kyiv, many more ALL the regions of Ukraine.

I think that's enough of the information as for right now. Just wanted to brief you on what is going on, it is important that information flows to other countries.

That is direct evidence from an eye witness, an eye witness now observing the irregularities and the problems in the Ukraine, a witness demonstrating the severity of the problem there.

I am ultimately most concerned about this problem because it is a violation of the inalienable rights of the citizens of Ukraine. For those who know the history of Ukraine, it is a sad thing that they have had their rights violated again and again.

We have seen the famines that Stalin imposed upon the nation in the thirties. The Russian-Soviet civil war was most severe in the Ukraine with the red, white and green armies all fighting for control of it and then the ravages of the Second World War. This is a country that needs the world's help in defending its inalienable rights. It has had its rights violated repeatedly through the course of history.

Let me note the final reason why I care so deeply about what happens in that country. I spent time there. I spent Christmas there and I have friends there, real people who I know. I care for them. We as Canadians must all care for them, even the ones we do not know.

As someone whose grandmother was born in the region of Chortiza, south Ukraine, I can envision the territory having personally visited it and having talked with the people. All Canadians, not just Canadians whose ancestors were born in the Ukraine, care deeply about this election. We care deeply because we believe in the rule of law, representative of responsible government. We care deeply and believe that it is their absolute right.

I have been most gladdened and heartened to hear the unanimity of the House, standing behind the Ukrainian people and their quest for freedom. I call on all members not to tire of the efforts we must put forward in the next days, weeks and perhaps next months to call for and urge for what we can do to have Ukraine continue and grow to be free. I call on all members to continue, both in the government and the opposition, to unite as Canadians, Canadians who stand for freedom, not just in Canada but in Ukraine. I call for an open and free count of the votes in Ukraine, an open and free election, and I call on Canada to support it.

● (2105)

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

At the end of World War I, my mother, a very young girl, and her family left the province of Galicia in Ukraine and boarded a vessel. They went to England to be processed. They eventually found themselves in Fort William, now known as the City of Thunder Bay. She and thousands of families of Ukrainian and Polish ancestry started their new lives in this country of their choosing.

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My mother's future husband, as it turned out, quite romantically was also on that very same boat. He, a strapping lad of 14 who left Bulgaria and walked across Europe at the end of the war, and she, a young girl of 10, actually did not meet until 10 years later. I can only imagine the sparks when they found out that they had come to this new land together on the same boat.

People such as these built this country. Literally, our ancestors, these immigrants, completed and expanded our railways. They laboured on our first transcontinental highway. They came here to a better life and they built this country.

Eighty-five years after they left, Eastern Europe discovered the world of democracy, which blessed many countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It has been brief and the road has not been so smooth, but countries such as Ukraine have embraced the democratic route, as awkward and as cumbersome as it sometimes may seem. But they have made it.

Canada was the first country to recognize Ukraine as a new nation, only a very few years ago, and today we must be the first nation to stand with our democratic cousins.

Canadians all over our nation are encouraged by the show of solidarity demonstrated tonight in this House. It confirms that although we argue sometimes over the fine points and sometimes over other points, when it comes to survival of the democratic process we will stand together.

It is very difficult not to get emotional over the precarious brinkmanship occurring at this very moment in Ukraine. It is actually quite frightening. That is because each and every one of us shares the benefits of the Ukrainian legacy and heritage in this country. We are familiar with it. We are bonded with it.

Ukrainian culture in Canada is as fundamental to our way of life as breath itself. The spiritual and the artistic contributions are significant. We all love the food, the dances and the music. These are all things we have grown to love. Our work ethic, compassion and pride in nationhood, all of these are gifts of people of Ukrainian descent. And now they need us.

Tonight this House stands united. It is a very proud moment in Canadian democracy. Our beacon of unity must shine on those threatened with having their power cut off, with having their water supply ended, with their transit system stopped, with all of those amenities that we take for granted now in very precarious brinkmanship and in freezing weather. Democracy truly is very much at risk.

This is our time as Canadians. It is so pleasant to see this House, each and every speaker and all four parties speaking with one voice, reinforcing each other and standing strong. In my community and my riding, in the Ukrainian presence, everyone is feeling the same anxiety as we are, whether it be in the churches, in the community halls or the organizations, again, the societies that helped to build this country, each and every one of those organizations is feeling this stress.

Tonight we have this opportunity to make the strongest possible statement. I am very glad that we can see people standing together to do so.

●(2110)

Today the Deputy Prime Minister did not speak only for the government from the standpoint of the fact that all members of the House rose to applaud her statement. Her words are certainly worth repeating, because they really do emphasize the Canadian position. The Deputy Prime Minister said:

Considering the allegations of serious and significant electoral fraud from international and Canadian election observers, the Government of Canada cannot accept that the announced results by the central election commission reflect the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people. Therefore Canada rejects the announced final results.

The Government of Canada calls for a full, open and transparent review of the election process. Canada will have no choice but to examine its relations with Ukraine if the authorities fail to provide election results that reflect the democratic will of the people of that country.

In summary, before I turn this time over to the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, let me say that this is our moment to reflect. It is also Canada's moment to commence a whole series of actions that will reflect the needs of those people over the ocean. They are looking to us for help. I know we will not fail them. Canada will be there for Ukraine.

**Hon. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too want to speak tonight in this emergency debate on the situation in Ukraine. I want to take the opportunity to speak directly to my constituents in their community centres, their credit unions and their community churches, and to all those who care very deeply about Ukraine and the Ukrainian community. They are saddened and concerned at this particular time, as we are in this House.

I also want to compliment all the members on all sides of the House who today stood in solidarity. Not very often in the House do we have members from all parties on all sides of the House agreeing on one specific issue.

We have given some clear messages. There are four key messages from us: first, we cannot accept the election results as announced by Ukraine's central election commission; second, the Canadian government has called for a full investigation of the results of the Ukrainian election; third, we believe that no announcement of a winner should be made before that full investigation has happened; and last, Canada has no choice but to examine its relations with Ukraine if the authorities are unable to demonstrate that the result of the election reflects the democratic will of the people.

Looking at those four key messages as delivered today by our Deputy Prime Minister saddens me even more, simply because whatever the sanctions, diplomatic, economic or otherwise, they will affect people on the ground. They will affect individuals who had aspirations, who had hopes for a democratic future for themselves, their children and their country.

The election was indeed seriously flawed. Tonight member after member gave us evidence of that.

To those with relatives and friends who are on the streets of Ukraine at this time, who are standing up and protesting what has happened, who are calling for an opportunity to live in a democracy, to those relatives and friends we say to them that as Canadians we stand with them.

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We want to see that peaceful transition. We want to see that better future for them. We want to see freedom and justice, so we as Canadians cannot be silent. We must act. We must respond. We must work with all democratic forces in the international community to bring about the kind of resolution that each and every one of those individuals wants for themselves and for their country. It is important that we see the alliances with the OSCE, NATO, the UN, the EU and the U.S. and that the international community comes together in a strong response to the present situation.

Over the many years that I have been in this place, I have had Ukrainian students come from universities in the Ukraine to spend time or do internships in my office. They are young people who come here and ask questions and explore all the possibilities among us so that on their return to their colleges, their jobs, their places in society, they can in turn share the Canadian experience. We were building and working together to ensure that future in a democratic Ukraine.

• (2115)

When we ask for a full, open, transparent review, it is precisely what those words are, full, open and transparent. It is important for us and for all those who believe in democracy to ensure that a full, open, transparent review takes place. Tonight several members have said that this must not be just words, that action, determination and consistency must follow the commitment that we made today.

There are the sentiments expressed by all of us in the House and the courage shown by the people who are on the streets and who are standing up right now, and the support of all of our communities. We must work in such a way that we see a fast resolution to the current situation.

We watch conflicts in other areas. We are at a point in our history where we encourage people to resolve conflict and problems without bloodshed. It is the hope of all of us that there will be a resolution with no loss of lives, no bloodshed and no disruption in that society beyond what we have seen today.

Let us work with all of our communities in Canada. Let us continue to ensure that our commitment for that open transparent review does take place. Let us commit ourselves to help Ukraine move into a fair, just, democratic society, which is where it was heading. We hope it will continue to progress to that.

We have no choice but to examine our relations. As we talk about that examination, my thoughts go to the men, women and children on the ground. Canada cannot turn its back. Canada cannot allow the suffering of individuals in Ukraine. Economic sanctions, diplomatic sanctions, whatever they are, will hurt the ordinary individuals, which is something most people would not want to happen.

Again, I call on all those at this point in time to listen to Canada, to listen to the voice of the international community and ensure that there is a just, fair, open and transparent review.

• (2120)

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate at the outset that I intend to share my time with the member for Timmins—James Bay.

I want to begin as my colleagues have done throughout this debate by thanking and congratulating the member for Etobicoke Centre for bringing forward tonight's motion. This is one of those rare occasions when there is a high degree of consensus, what would appear to be near unanimity, among all parliamentarians. This is a moment in history when we are bound together and share in common cause a responsibility to take a stand and do so in solidarity with the people who need our support.

Canadian Ukrainians and all Canadians have good reason to be worried about the situation that is unfolding in Ukraine. Just a short while ago Viktor Yushchenko, the Ukrainian opposition leader, called for a national strike after the country's Central Electoral Commission declared his rival, Viktor Yanukovich, the incumbent prime minister, the winner of last weekend's disputed presidential election.

Speaking to hundreds of thousands of his supporters at a mass rally in the streets of Kiev, Mr. Yushchenko rejected the Central Electoral Commission verdict saying that it put Ukraine "on the path to civil war". Mr. Yushchenko's ally urged that the crowds avoid violence, to wrest power at the local, district and regional levels, that the situation was grave. However President Leonid Kuchma has made the situation worse still by accusing the opposition of preparing "to throw their own people into a bloody fratricidal whirlpool for the sake of power".

The world simply cannot sit by without signalling its strong displeasure at last weekend's election farce. As the first nation in the world to recognize Ukraine after it split from the former Soviet Union, Canada made the right decision today to refuse to lend legitimacy to the farcical election outcome.

Tonight's parliamentary debate reflects Canadians' concerns with an election that violates the Ukrainian people's right to a fair and transparent election process. Today we join the European Commission and the United States in signalling our rejection of that election outcome.

Years ago the global community, spurred on by Canada, came together and said no to South Africa's apartheid. Canadians are justly proud of the role that we played in bringing about an end to that brutal, vicious apartheid regime. The global pressure that built led to the end of apartheid and the democratization of that proud country today.

When the global community comes together within a multilateral context and speaks with one voice on the need to bring forth open and transparent democracy, that pressure can and will be felt.

Ukraine is not immune from such pressure. We have an opportunity here and in the global community to press for true democracy in that country before the situation disintegrates into further instability and civil strife. We owe it to Ukrainian Canadians here at home who are deeply worried about the future of their homeland. We owe it to the majority of Canadians who believe, as I and my colleagues do, that true democracy is absolutely critical to achieve equality and justice for all citizens.

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Regrettably my colleague from Churchill was right earlier this evening when she said that sometimes the government has a history of being strong on rhetoric but not so strong in following through with deeds. This is an important test. Canada's rejection of the Ukrainian election results must not end here with tonight's debate. Parliamentarians from all political parties will be looking to see exactly what consequences Canada will impose to signal our rejection of those results.

I want briefly to share the following true story with my colleagues in the House this evening.

A constituent of mine came to Nova Scotia from Lebanon 24 years ago while that country was still in the midst of its devastating civil war. He was a young teenager at the time. Years later at the age of 18 he made a decision to join a political party in Canada, and it was not my political party at the time.

Upon hearing that news, his grandmother, who was on a visit to Canada at the time, literally broke down in tears and became hysterical, begging him not to involve himself in the political process. She was absolutely convinced that it would lead to nothing but penalties and punishment and even believed in the possibility that it could lead to his untimely death. Such had been her experience in Lebanon.

• (2125)

I am proud to stand in the House and say that today, that young man is my parliamentary assistant. He is working passionately to try to support the quest and the pursuit of democracy and free, fair and transparent elections everywhere in the world where we can have even the tiniest bit of influence.

Democracy, hon. colleagues, is not as prevalent as we hope and dream it should be. No one wants to see the situation in Ukraine disintegrate into violence and bloodshed as it has in many regions of the world. There is no reason to believe that civil disobedience by those who reject the results of this fraudulent election will inevitably lead to or result in violence. But do we want to do nothing, hoping against hope that there will be no violence? I think not.

We must stand in solidarity with Ukrainians who are exercising their democratic right to protest. We must work to ensure that their courage is rewarded. We must let them know by our debate here tonight but more important by our deeds that will follow that they are not alone. We must take action to ensure that one day, sooner rather than later, they will wake up in a democratic Ukraine. Canada can help. We are in a position to help. Therefore, we are bound to help.

As parliamentarians who enjoy the privilege and benefits of living in a democracy, we have a responsibility to roll up our sleeves and work with the international community to find ways to ensure that the abomination of the democratic process that happened last weekend in Ukraine is reversed and never happens in that country again.

• (2130)

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to speak to the motion brought forth by the hon. member, who I like to say sits up here in the cheap seats with us. I have seen his commitment and passion for this issue. To see it brought forth to the floor so quickly is a real testament to the House.

It is an honour to be in Canada, being the grandchild of immigrants. My grandmother was a mining widow in Timmins and we spent our summers in the graveyard because that is where the widows went. They were all immigrant women. I grew up with an understanding of Canadian history that was not in the books because we spent our days in the graveyard, big long fields of the dead, and old women would walk among the graves.

Row after row were Ukrainian and Yugoslavian names. The men were all dead by the age of 41. That was a fact of life in the mining camps of Timmins, Kirkland Lake and Sudbury. They died of silicosis. In every one of those families, their children ended up becoming schoolteachers, doctors or lawyers because the first generation that came here, who lived hard and died hard in very difficult conditions, knew that their children could have a better life. The families that I know who came from that are what made Canada what it is today. It is a real testament to what we are looking at in terms of the situation in Ukraine.

As a new member, I am new at so many things. One of the very first things I found myself dealing with was the issue of interns. It happened very soon after I got in my office. There was a young woman from Ukraine who came to work for us who could hardly speak English on her first day. I remember when I first met her, how committed those young people from Ukraine were on this trip. They followed us around to what sometimes seemed like long and pointless meetings.

They would sit up in the gallery and watch us. Sometimes we are not the most dignified place, and sometimes I wonder what exactly we accomplish here, but I realized that they believed. They believed that this House could teach them something to bring back with them. They believed that this parliamentary system worked. They believed perhaps more than a lot of our own young people.

Night after night when I would come back to the office, I would hear about what was happening in Ukraine because of the concerns they had about the democratic elections, and whether they were going to be able to reproduce it there. In our business here we are so busy we do not have a chance to sit and talk. I remember the interns talking again and again about this upcoming election. I think of them now because they are back in Ukraine. What are they taking from the experience they saw here?

There are days when we sit here in the House, four parties. We have one party that is dedicated to breaking up the country. We have at least four parties that have sometimes very different views on where we should be going. There are days when we are not the most dignified and there are days the insults are hurled, but this is a place where the whole country can trust that we can come and debate. Sometimes that might not seem like a great amount, but it is a fundamental of human society. We have a forum where we can come despite our political differences and work together.

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What we are called to do at a moment like this is to witness. We are at a crucial moment in history. The Ukrainian community is looking for support around the world. They are looking, at a time of great crisis, for democracies like Canada to stand with them. I feel very proud to stand in the House and see the unanimity that exists between all parties on this issue because it does not matter what our particular views are on spending, saving or tax cuts. We are agreed on the right to free and open debate. It is a fundamental of our society and it is a fundamental of the human condition.

I am very honoured to be part of a system that respects that. We must do everything we can as a Parliament. We must make it as clear as we can on the international stage that we support the people of Ukraine for a free and democratic society. That is their right; that is what they voted for. That is what they are looking for and we must stand with them.

● (2135)

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak with a heavy heart about something that is very sad. It is the irregularities in the election in Ukraine. My heart goes out to the citizens of Ukraine tonight who are either in their homes or out in the squares demanding their rights.

When I was minister of international cooperation, I had the privilege of visiting Ukraine. I found a country that was full of promise and hope. As we know, Canada has had for a long time and continues to have a special relationship with Ukraine. Meeting with officials, while I was there, showed me a society that was working very hard to rebuild, a society full of promise, and a society and a government working together for the future.

Canada's programs were working very hard in partnership with the Ukrainian people to strengthen the governance structures, institutions and civil society structures. I found a country with enormous potential, a country that had a very highly educated population, but also a country that was in need of reform of its institutions. We as Canadians worked very closely with the Ukrainian people.

Canada was involved in helping Ukraine write and create for the first time its civil law, which was not part of the Ukrainian experience up until then. We were involved in working very closely with the Ukrainian government and other organizations to work with land reform in the agriculture field. There was a tremendous amount of work to be done there because Ukrainian farms have the potential of being the bread basket of Europe and of the world, and the Ukrainian people know that.

We were sharing the knowledge that we had from our farmers in the agricultural community with the Ukrainian people to reform and build a very modern agricultural industry in Ukraine. These are very positive things that were happening in Ukraine. The work and partnerships that we had are continuing.

As I said before, the population of Ukraine is well educated and is on its way to building a very modern, strong economy, and to becoming a strong partner in the World Trade Organization, the European market, et cetera. It is all the more saddening this evening to have to talk about the setback in the democratic process of

Ukraine, which could put all of these successes at risk. I hope and pray that none of this in fact will come to pass.

I am also thinking tonight of the young people who have been interns in my office and for many of my colleagues here for the last 11 years. I believe there are well over 300 of them at this point who have come to Canada and spent three or four months with us. In the last election some of them worked on our campaigns to learn about the democratic process in this country.

They worked side by side with our office staff just recently to learn about the democratic process, about our institutions, how our legislative process works, how our judiciary works, and to learn all of the things they wanted to take back with them. There was so much hope and pride in these young people. They were going to be the future of their country. They are the future of their country. They went back with such hope, vision and enthusiasm.

Before the last group left only a few weeks ago, some of them said they were going back to organize and work hard for their country, to make a difference. They were the generation that was going to make the difference in their country. I am thinking of these young people tonight. Some of them, I am sure, are out there as well fighting for their country and the democracy that they love and believe in.

I call on the leadership of Ukraine not to blow out the light that has been burning bright in that country, but to allow it to continue to burn bright, and to do the right thing and allow for a transparent review of the electoral process. Democracy is a very difficult and fragile thing. We cannot allow for it to be diminished because without it we are all diminished. The rule of law must be respected because without it we have no hope. There are no human rights and there is no respect for humanity.

● (2140)

I encourage and I ask the Ukrainian government tonight to respect the human rights of its people, the demonstrators that are out there in the street, not to do anything that would harm or hurt them in any way but to listen to their voices. They are the voices of democracy. They are the voices of their country. They are the voices of tomorrow. Listen to them and do the right thing. Open up the transparent process and do not declare a winner until such time as a proper transparent review of the process has been taken.

Not too long ago we took time on Remembrance Day, November 11, to remember the people who died and fought for the rights of freedom and democracy, and to give that privilege to all of us. In that war, many Ukrainians as well lost their lives in the big fight.

We remember November 11 and we keep saying "Lest we forget". Tonight I want to remind the government of Ukraine that we must never forget. We must never go back. People who fought hard for democracy and for the respect of the rule of law must be listened to.

I also want to call on the UN. It is important that the United Nations visit Ukraine. I think it needs to send representatives to Ukraine to meet with the leadership of Ukraine, and discuss the situation and the crisis that is taking place in that country right now.

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We must not allow it to escalate. We must have a dialogue with the leadership of Ukraine. I would recommend to the UN and to the House that the leadership of the UN take the initiative at this particular time because without the involvement of the multilateral institutions, each one of us can do our best, but we are strongest when we are united.

We want to send the message to the Ukrainian people that we love them, that we care for them, that we respect them, and that we want them to be prosperous. We want them to continue down the road that they have started to work with us as partners, to build a fantastic future for themselves in a country that is free, a country that is full of democracy, and a country that has a tremendous amount of hope and promise. It is all there. Ukraine is on the verge of becoming one of the most successful countries. It has all of the ingredients that are needed.

When I was there, I can tell the House that the people I met with were very active and extremely involved with the development of their country. Those things cannot be lost because if they take a step back it will be a long time before they get back to where they are and it would be such a sad situation.

Tonight my message is for the leadership of Ukraine to respect its citizens, to not announce the results of the election, but to allow for an open and transparent review of the situation. My message is also for the United Nations, to please send emissaries immediately to open a dialogue to ensure that there is a discussion as opposed to a show of force of any sort.

It is extremely important that our multilateral institutions act right now. We do not want what happened in the past and that is why we remember November 11 every year. It is a very sad time for me when I think of the millions of people who lost their lives to give us the freedom of speech that we have in the House today, the freedom that the world has today, and the freedom that Ukrainians have today.

Therefore, I ask again that the UN send emissaries and representatives to Ukraine to start a dialogue immediately so that we can discuss and work our way through this as intelligent people.

• (2145)

**Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's Parliament is holding an emergency debate tonight on the issue of the Ukraine election. I am participating in tonight's debate because all Canadians, especially my constituents in the riding of Welland, are concerned about the international ramifications of these events.

Let us not forget that Canada was the first country to acknowledge Ukraine's independence in 1991. These last few days the events which have taken place see Ukraine slipping back into a realm of dictatorship. We must stand by Ukraine once again.

With so much at stake, it is inexcusable that these elections were marred by massive irregularities and fraud. Credible reports have indicated that situations like the following took place in lead up to and during both rounds of the election.

For example, post-secondary students were offered a range of bribes to vote for the prime minister, including higher grades, money and two month's free rent. Students were threatened with expulsion for supporting the opposing candidates. At one polling station at a

technical college, all 1,894 votes were for the incumbent prime minister. Not surprising.

Another situation of ballot box manipulation where 10% of the ballots were disqualified. They then disqualified the entire ballot box. Acid was dropped into ballot boxes. Members may not believe this but invisible ink was known to be used in some polling stations to mark ballots.

Some voters in the eastern Ukraine, the stronghold of the incumbent prime minister, voted in the morning at their local polling station and then were bused to Kiev and other locations to vote again, sometimes more than once, using absentee ballots.

One region is reported to have recorded a voter turnout of over 99%, 19% higher than the national average and well beyond the normal deviation from the mean. It is alleged that at the time balloting closed the recorded turnout was only 74.3%, meaning that 843,000 voters were added after balloting ended.

International observers and opposition scrutineers were denied access to polling stations. Some Canadian observers were followed and threatened. Others were detained and their passports seized. Such intimidation is unacceptable.

Militia members were posted in polling stations, contrary to the elections act, some standing by the ballot box to observe the name on the ballot as it was cast unfolded into the box.

Our colleague, the Liberal member for Etobicoke Centre, addressed an estimated crowd of more than 100,000 people in Kiev's Independence Square. It is his view, as a Canadian MP, that Viktor Yushchenko should be accepted as the people's president.

The runoff election was worse than the first round elections, which were widely criticized for falling below international standards. These are not technical discrepancies. These are gross violations of the democratic process. This is wholesale fraud, a coup d'état by a failing and falling regime.

Popular protests against the stolen election have sprung up across Ukraine as people take to the streets to demand that their votes be fairly counted. We all hold our breath in fear of harm to these peaceful protesters that might spark a violent response throughout the country. Ukraine is on the brink of a civil crisis with foreboding and possibly bloody consequences.

Considering these allegations of serious and significant electoral fraud from international and Canadian election observers, the Government of Canada cannot accept the announced election results by the central election commission reflect the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people.

Today in question period, the Deputy Prime Minister announced that Canada rejects the announced final results. The Government of Canada calls for a full, open and transparent review of the election process. Canada will have no choice but to examine its relations with the Ukraine if the authorities fail to provide election results that reflect the democratic will of the people of that country.

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The western community has been unanimous in its condemnation of the results. The White House has urged Ukrainian authorities not to certify results until investigations of organized fraud are resolved. The United States did not accept the election results as legitimate and called for immediate action. The European Union and individual member states have also issued statements similar to our country's.

Not surprisingly, Russia has adopted an opposite attitude. President Putin has congratulated Yanukovich on the results. Is this the first step to a new U.S.S.R.? My response is simple: Yanukovich, no. Democracy, yes.

We are monitoring developments to determine whether Ukraine addresses the concerns of international observers and ensures that the election outcome reflects the democratic will of the Ukrainian people. This is also a lesson for Canada. We must consider the importance of continuing to foster democratic practices in Ukraine. Canada has been strongly committed to the development of democracy in this country, in particular through CIDA. Since 1991 we have provided over \$235 million in assistance to Ukraine. The current election provides evidence that the civic society is indeed getting stronger in that country. Assistance and guidance through CIDA must continue, indeed must increase.

● (2150)

Canada must not lose sight of the fact that the people of Ukraine are the greatest victims of this tragedy. We must affirm our solidarity with them. In practical terms, this means that we must remain engaged with our popular democratic elements within the general population to ensure Ukraine does not become isolated within the world.

These are important days ahead and Canada must remain resolute to its commitment to freedom and democracy for the people of Ukraine. We in this Parliament tonight symbolically stand shoulder to shoulder with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters in the streets of Ukraine as we speak.

**Mr. Jim Prentice (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Ukraine is on the verge of a revolution this evening. It is important that we, as Canadians, stand in support of democracy and in opposition to tyranny and the repression of the free will of the Ukrainian people.

The relationship between Canada and Ukraine is a close one and an historic one. Several members this evening have spoken to this. The hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre has spoken eloquently of that relationship, as has the hon. member for Provencher.

Let us not forget at the outset that Ukrainian Canadians have contributed enormously to the construction of this country. Ukrainian Canadians have been important to Canada, not only in terms of their absolute numbers, but also in the immense contribution they have made to the cultural, economic and social fabric of Canada. In many respects they have helped define this country into what it is today.

This, then, is not a dispute in a far off land which is unrelated to us as Canadians. It is very much our dispute for we stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people tonight in this emergency debate. Their fight is our fight and I am proud this evening to stand as the member

of Parliament for Calgary Centre-North to speak on behalf of the constituents in my riding.

The situation appears to worsen in Ukraine by the hour. The recent news reports from the *New York Times*, and other newswire services only hours ago, note that the anointed Kuchma, the outgoing president of the Ukraine, has now certified the election of Viktor Yanukovich. He has done so in the face of massive public unrest, to which many hon. members from both sides of the House have spoken this evening, and he has done so in the face of opposition from western democracies.

The White House, for instance, had publicly called for Mr. Kuchma to refrain from certifying the election, which he has done, and he has done so in the face of the opposition of Viktor Yushchenko, who some have described as a pro-western liberal who was left on the streets of Kiev with somewhere in excess of 500,000 citizens of his country.

The condemnation from the world community at this point in response to the certification has been very clear. Colin Powell, the United States secretary of state, is quoted as saying:

We cannot accept this result as legitimate because it does not meet international standards and because there has not been an investigation of the numerous and credible reports of fraud and abuse.

The foreign secretary of the United Kingdom, Jack Straw, is quoted as saying:

As far as we can see, EU monitors can see, these elections have been flawed. We will continue to take a very close interest indeed in the process and we will certainly not accept this as the final result, at least until all the legal processes and challenges are through.

Yesterday I was proud to hear our own Prime Minister's say "...we feel that an investigation has to take place to determine what the facts are.

Earlier today we heard the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada state that Canada had rejected the results of the Ukrainian election, called it serious and significant electoral fraud and warned that Canadian relations with Ukraine could be cut off if authorities there did not produce non-fraudulent election results.

As we look at the situation in Ukraine, the first question that we must ask ourselves is: What is the evidence of persistent electoral fraud? What is the evidence of fraud, intimidation and detriment in the electoral process, because it is a significant step for us as Canadians to intercede in the democratic process in another country?

First, it is worth noting that all international monitors, including those with the Canadian teams, have substantiated the electoral fraud that has taken place.

● (2155)

I have also listened intently during this debate as other members of this honourable House have documented their own observations and personal experiences. We have as well the record of the personal observations of a member of our own caucus who has personally observed ballot fraud.



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Essentially, when the evidence is considered it appears to go this far. There are documented incidents of intimidation in the polls. The *Washington Post* has recounted how thugs have been mobilized to harass voters. In the Sumy region, members of the electoral commission were attacked and beaten by thugs. In the Chertoviy region at a single polling site, an inspector was in fact murdered.

There have also been incidents of double-counting, documented by observers. As well, there have been documented incidents of faulty voter lists that have disenfranchised certain citizens in Ukraine. There have been documented incidents of government resources being dedicated to candidates considered to be favourable to the state, and there are recorded incidents of the use of absentee ballot boxes in a fraudulent manner.

Equally disturbing, there has been criminal disruption of voting stations and destruction of ballot boxes by fire, by acid and by destruction with baseball bats, and there has been an abuse of the mobile ballot box system, which has been documented by other observers.

There has been state control of the media through the election process. It seems that there can be no doubt at this point that in the final analysis the election results were falsified, and indeed blatantly falsified, and that in fact there has been computer manipulation of the vote count itself.

Finally, in terms of the documentation of the incidents of electoral fraud and intimidation, in several provinces there have been observed incidents of mobile buses of voters who have been moved from one polling station to another. All of this in the interests of procuring an electoral outcome secured by fraud. Senator Richard Lugar of the United States senate, the chair of the senate foreign relations committee, described this as a concerted and forceful program of election day fraud and abuse.

The condemnation of this has been universal. Leading officials in Europe have criticized and announced the results as fraudulent. I point out first that in respect of the European Union the new president of the European Commission has warned Ukraine of unspecified consequences unless a serious and objective review of this electoral fraud is undertaken. Also, Poland has called for a recount of the electoral results.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has concluded that massive electoral fraud took place. The chancellor of Germany has himself spoken to the German parliament and endorsed this position. As I noted, the United States secretary of state has called upon the Ukrainian government to act immediately and responsibly, indicating that there will be consequences if it does not.

In the face of all of this, and I have not recounted a second time the position of our Government of Canada, there has really been only one voice which has been supportive of this fraudulent election and that has been the voice of President Putin of Russia, who has called the election open and honest. President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus, whom some describe as the last dictator in Europe, has said quite straightforwardly that the Belarusians do not want western values imposed upon them.

The condemnation, then, has been universal. Canada has been part of that. Our own country has rejected the results of the Ukrainian

election and we have termed those results "serious and significant electoral fraud".

What, then, is to be done in these circumstances? Clearly we must stand up for freedom and democracy. All Canadians, our Prime Minister, our government and members of this House must stand up in unison. I am proud tonight to be a member of the House of Commons and to be speaking in concert with members from other parties in the House of Commons on this issue in respect of which we seem to agree for the most part.

It is worth reflecting that 1946 was the year in which Winston Churchill gave his celebrated speech describing the Iron Curtain, the Iron Curtain which had descended across Europe. That year, 1946, really marked the onset of the cold war.

● (2200)

We must be cautious to ensure that a new Iron Curtain does not descend across the European continent at this point. We must not be silent. We must not be complicit through our silence. We must stand up and be counted in support of the citizens of the Ukraine.

There is every prospect that there will be a new barrier in Europe dividing the continent along the eastern Polish border, to the west consisting of the democracies of western and central Europe as stable members of the European Union and NATO and contributing members of western democratic forces. To the east, Russia, which attempts to manage the democracies of the former U.S.S.R. with allegations of constrained and state-controlled media, manipulated elections and oligopolistic economies marked by corruption.

At issue in this election and in the days ahead is the place of Ukraine in the future and the right of the Ukrainian people to define their own future as we move forward.

On the one hand, there is a presidential candidate who has been described as a democratic reformer seeking to reform the political and economic structure of Ukrainian society, eager over the course of the campaign to break the power of the state.

On the other hand, there is a campaign which really is part of what is taking place in Belarus, in Ukraine and in Kazakhstan, because these have not been isolated occurrences of electoral manipulation. There have been three such situations within the Russian sphere of influence over the last several years, not only in Ukraine but also in the separate province of Abkhazia and thirdly in the state of Belarus.

Therefore, this is a situation that has connotations and implications which go well beyond the Ukraine itself and really deal with the onset of a new regime in the world, the amassing of a new world order of which we are not supportive.

There is, however, hope, because freedom will not be constrained. In the modern world of telecommunications and instantaneous communication, the idea of freedom cannot be constrained. Freedom and democracy once unfurled are not easily cabined.

*S. O. 52*

The position of the House and the voices of all members of the House will resonate across the Atlantic. They will resonate in the Ukraine tonight and tomorrow and in the days after. As elected houses of parliament, as the representatives of western democracies across the world, we must stand up in unison to support the Ukrainian people.

As Mr. Yushchenko said in Independence Square yesterday, I believe, "A wall had been torn down. It was the wall between dictatorship and democracy". In the days ahead, the issue will be whether that wall is resurrected or whether the wall is broken down and the Ukrainian people are able to embrace the benefits of western democracy and the freedom that will bring in terms of their marketplace and their society.

In all of this Canadians must stand for democracy. It is best that this issue not be resolved on the streets of Kiev in a violent way. As Canadians, we must speak loudly to that effect. As Canadians we have distinguished ourselves with faith in international law, in the power of diplomacy, in the strength of the United Nations and in the importance of multilateralism. These are values which we have taken to the world stage and values which we will continue to endorse as a nation.

We must bring to the table and bring to bear those very thoughts and those very values at this very difficult time in the Ukraine. We must stand for democracy. We must reject as undemocratic the certification of this election.

• (2205)

Every observer who has examined this election or has observed or has been involved in it has decried the fraud by which the electoral result was procured. It is an undemocratic result and it is a result which is unworthy of certification by the president of the Ukrainian state.

We must press for a new election, one with proper independent monitoring. We must stand with the Ukrainian people. They must know that we share their resolve and determination to ensure that there is a new election and that it is an election which is conducted in a democratic manner, in which the world community participates and ensures that there is compliance with democratic norms and values.

We must ensure that this happens. That must be our position. We must have resolve as we go forward to ensure that this is the result. This is something in respect of which we need to be steadfast and in which we need to be cautious, because we must ensure that the situation does not deteriorate further into bloodshed and anarchy on the streets of Kiev.

Once again let me say that I am proud to be a member of the House of Commons at this time. I am proud to participate in this emergency debate and, like the other Canadians here tonight, I am proud to stand in favour of the Ukrainian people, in favour of democracy and in favour of freedom.

• (2210)

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Justice.

I am very pleased to participate in this important debate on the Ukraine presidential election. It was a very proud day for me today when the Deputy Prime Minister stood in the House earlier and rejected the announced final results and called for a full, open and transparent review of the election.

The Deputy Prime Minister, speaking on behalf of the government, also stated that if the authorities failed to provide election results that reflected the democratic will of the people, the Government of Canada would have no choice but to examine our relations with Ukraine.

I am also proud of the fact that in the House this evening we have had a largely non-partisan debate, and so it should be because this is an issue that goes beyond partisanship. This is an issue about the future of the Ukrainian people and indeed of the world at large.

I also congratulate my colleague, my neighbour from Etobicoke Centre, and other Canadian parliamentarians, for speaking out for democracy in Ukraine, for going to Ukraine to witness the election and for coming back and informing members of the House and our caucus of the travesty that took place in the election.

The election was horribly flawed. Canadian and international observers have reported numerous voting and counting violations, voter intimidation and obvious ballot stuffing. There was an inappropriate abuse of state controlled media. Exit interviews gave a clear indication that Viktor Yushchenko was the clear winner but the Central Electoral Commission has reported Viktor Yanukovich as the new president.

The people of Ukraine deserve much better, as do the citizens of the world, those who are committed to democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Ukraine is doing its utmost to build democratic institutions and to build a market economy. There are many challenges facing the people in Ukraine. Corruption is one of the plagues that faces that country. An independent organization, Transparency International, has consistently ranked Ukraine as one of the most corrupt nations in the world.

Many Ukrainians, to their credit, are saying this has to come to an end. They are realizing the problems that corruption creates for their society. There is no definitive statistics on this but there is a general consensus that high levels of corruption can deprive the citizens of about 8% of their GDP annually. It also causes huge problems with income distribution where the very many look to the very few who are taking the lion's share of the benefits of a growing economy, and they are taking more than their share by a long shot of the wealth that might be created by that economy and by the people in that country.

There is an organization globally, which was initiated actually here in Canada, called the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption. It is a group of parliamentarians worldwide that is working together to see if we cannot stamp out, perhaps not completely, perhaps not next year, perhaps not in 10 years, but to limit the growth certainly of corruption and to reduce its impact in absolute terms. It is a big challenge but what we are finding is that there are parliamentarians around the world who are committed to the fight against corruption, many at great risk to themselves.

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I recall meeting a parliamentarian from Zimbabwe. She was speaking out about the corruption in that country. Every other weekend she was arrested, taken to a jail and interrogated. She never knew really from one day to the next what her fate might be. I congratulate her and so many others who have the courage to take on this issue. It is not an easy issue. There is so much corruption entrenched, regrettably, in so many of our societies. It is simply not the way to go.

I had the opportunity a few years ago to visit Kiev. I was invited by NATO to speak. The topic was essentially corruption and money laundering, a threat to international security. I had never actually seen the connection in those terms, that corruption and money laundering were an international threat but we are seeing it today in Ukraine, the threat to international peace by the actions of some corrupt people in Ukraine and by a very corrupt election, no matter how one defines it. It might have been vote buying. There clearly seems to have been vote buying. The very nature of the election and the way it was conducted was corrupt.

● (2215)

We can see the effect of corruption and money laundering. It permeates the culture of a society. It begins to attack the very democratic institutions and the human rights that many in Ukraine are fighting for. I was very happy to hear that many people in Ukraine are saying, "We have had enough and we are not going to take it anymore. We are going to make sure that the democratic choice of the people is respected".

It is most unfortunate if Russia involves itself in the results of this election, which it obviously appears to be doing at this time. I have met members of the Russian State Duma and the Federation Council. They should be standing up and holding the executive branch of the Russian government to account for the way that it is getting involved in this election. The executive branch has a right to indicate a preference, but to get involved in any kind of militaristic way or in any way that goes beyond stating its opinion is totally wrong in my judgment. I know that many people in the Russian State Duma and the Federation Council are working very hard to build democratic institutions in that country and to build a market economy. This would be a huge step backward for the Russian government to involve itself in any kind of militaristic way in this election.

Canada has a long, long history with Ukraine. I have been told that there are over a million people in Canada who have some ties to Ukraine. My next door neighbour is from Ukraine, and we can probably all say that. They are very proud people. They are very industrious people. They have added great things to our country. We mourn the fact that they look to their country of birth and witness what is happening, after taking five or ten steps forward, to be burdened with this fraudulent activity and this fraud of an election in Ukraine.

I repeat that it was a very proud moment for me today when I heard our Deputy Prime Minister stake out our position very clearly and unequivocally. Canada is taking a leadership role and rightly so. More nations are following and will follow. It is through the collective work now of the nations of the world that have an interest in democracy, that have an interest in human rights, and a vast majority of people on this planet do, to stand together to make sure

that this election is rejected, that there is a full investigation and that there is a new election which follows a process that is fair and transparent and respected by the world community.

We should be working with our partners internationally to make sure that happens. If it does not happen, we should be looking at collective action, collective sanctions, and as our Deputy Prime Minister said today, revisiting our relationships with Ukraine. That would be a very unfortunate turn of events, but it so happens that in life we sometimes have to make very tough decisions, and if Ukraine's election results stand, as is being touted now, I do not think Canada or the rest of the world would have any choice.

● (2220)

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everyone has spoken here this evening about the travesty of democracy which occurred in Ukraine on Monday, November 22 when, in the second round of voting in the presidential elections, it was declared that the winner was Viktor Yanukovich in spite of the fact that exit polls showed that Yushchenko had in fact won.

International observers at that election have all said repeatedly that the election fell far short of acceptable democratic standards. Our own Canadian observers, and we sent the largest contingent ever of Canadian observers to any election, all said the same thing. They said that there were suspiciously high voter turnouts in some regions, that there was repeat voting using absentee voter certificates, that there were irregularities in ballot counting, that there were restrictions placed on voters' ability to cast ballots. We have heard this over and over. The Canadian ambassador has also reported on these things happening within the process.

We have seen what the result of that was. Ukrainians have reacted swiftly and passionately in this subversion of democracy. We have seen the reaction of people who now for the third day are protesting in the streets of Kiev. Here in Canada we have one million ethnic Ukrainian Canadians. They are equally outraged and have added their protests.

Considering the allegations by so many neutral observers, considering the passionate protests of the people there who are on the ground, Canada can do nothing more than regard this as significant and serious fraud. We have no choice but to reject the results of the election and to call for a full, open, transparent review of the electoral process. The European Union, the United States, Australia and other democratic nations have also rejected the election results as illegitimate and have issued statements similar to Canada's.

Yet we heard tonight and we have heard before that Russia's President Putin has congratulated Yanukovich on his win and has accepted the results. One does not have to be a rocket scientist to understand that something is amiss when Russia is backing the winner and that the independence of Ukraine is very well in jeopardy. This is an independence that Ukraine has fought very hard for and won from the Soviet Union and hopefully it is not going to be short-lived.

*S. O. 52*

The Ukrainian people confirmed their desire for independence from Russia in a 90% win in a referendum on December 1, 1991. Since then they have made slow but very steady progress in democratization, in economic development, in developing a free market economy. They have had for the last three years in fact pulled out and shown strong economic growth.

Ukraine is on its way to becoming a strong player in Europe's economy, preparing for admission into the World Trade Organization, looking forward one day to joining perhaps the European Union and becoming part of the world's free democratic group of societies.

Canada's bond with Ukraine over recent years has been a very strong one. We have worked very hard to assist that nation with economic aid, with developing public and democratic institutions, with engaging civil society. That has obviously been successful because we see that civil society taking to the streets, protesting, showing that they believe in the right of the people to speak out when they need to, and to stand firm and to stand fast.

Canada can do no less but support those very people and those very institutions. We must speak out loudly and firmly that we will continue to work with the Ukrainian people to allow that free democratic society to take place and to do whatever we can to support them in their struggle and in their time of need.

We take for granted, as we have heard over and over, our own democratic society, our ability to stand up anywhere we wish and to say exactly what we want to say, and to defy each other and to have a difference of opinions and to protest openly. We see people every day standing on the grounds outside the House of Commons protesting decisions that duly elected governments have made. That is their right. We believe in this and we take it for granted.

There are people who are struggling to find their place in this democratic society of nations. We must help them. We take pride in the fact that we have fought long and hard, that Canadians in fact have died for the right of people to live in free societies, for the right of people to decide their future, to decide what path they will take, to decide firmly that they will be a self-governing and an independent group of people. We must stand now as a country that believes in the rule of law, as a country that believes strongly in democratic institutions, as a country that goes out and engages civil society at every step of the way.

● (2225)

This is the final step in democracy, not just for a duly elected government to make decisions but for that government to go out and engage the people and listen to them. Many Ukrainians have come here over the years, students and public servants who are trying to learn and build. They are fighting hard for the chance to become a free people. Every one of us in the House has stood tonight in agreement, regardless of what political party a member belongs to or in what ideology a member believes. We have in common those very strong values of democracy.

I stand firmly with everyone in the House, as does the government, that we will stand with the people of Ukrainian. We will ensure that we will continue to challenge and review the process until democratic elections take place and until a winner is decided on to govern by the people of Ukraine.

**Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I too want to rise tonight to speak about what we are here for this evening. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Ukraine.

Some communities in my riding are watching this debate and are thinking as well of their families and colleagues back in Ukraine. Our own colleague, the member for Edmonton East who went as an observer said, "The people of Ukraine are telling the world that they have been robbed, and they want their country back. We have seen buses filled with soldiers stationed in the suburbs waiting for the order to go in". The member for Edmonton East has said, "He personally saw examples of ballot fraud while touring polling stations over the past few days".

I am pleased that our own government and our Prime Minister acknowledged the allegations of intimidation, double counting and double voting and that these allegations will be taken very seriously. I am pleased that today our Deputy Prime Minister also stated that Canada rejected the results of the Ukrainian election, calling it a serious and significant electoral fraud, and warned that Canadian relations with Ukraine could be cut off if authorities they did not produce non-fraudulent election results.

As we talk this evening, and I hear members from all sides of the House speak on this serious issue, I am pleased that we are all together when we say that Canada has now rejected the Ukraine election results and warned that diplomatic relations could be cut. This is a threat of diplomatic sanctions which consequences translate into the threat to recall the Canadian ambassador from Ukraine or worse and to close the Canadian diplomatic mission in the Ukraine.

Canada has not yet warned of economic sanctions, which is the higher level of consequences. Economic sanctions can range from travel bans and armed embargoes to complete trade bans. Usually economic sanctions are threatened only after diplomatic channels have been exhausted. I hope, in conclusion, that these will not be some of the measures we will be compelled to take.

I would like to, as Pope John Paul II told Ukrainian pilgrims, say that we are praying for the country in a very special way.

● (2230)

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Ukrainian democracy itself, if not the future shape of Europe, as well as the results of an unfair and unfree election, are on the line. For what we are witnessing is an attempt not only to deny the democratic will of the people but to impose, even if by force, the undemocratic control by undemocratic government elements.

This massive electoral fraud did not begin with or take place only in the course of the election. Rather it was already present in the electoral campaign itself.

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Indeed, the international Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, a distinguished NGO which had been monitoring the electoral campaign, was warning as early as August 3 that international standards for the holding of free and fair elections were already being denied. Reliable evidence indicated then that Ukrainian government officials were illegally abusing the public trust to manipulate the outcome of the elections. Citizens were being intimidated by authorities if they demonstrated their support for the opposition candidate. Factory workers were being pressure into supporting Mr. Victor Yanukovich with threats to their jobs if they did not cooperate. Heads of regional administrative bodies were threatened with dismissal if election results did not meet prescribed goals. University students were being threatened by university deans to support Mr. Yanukovich and to avoid attending electoral rallies of opposition candidates. Telephone communications of opposition supporters were monitored and eavesdropped upon. State controlled TV consistently misinformed the public on the views of the candidates promoting a positive view of Mr. Yanukovich and a largely negative coverage of Mr. Yushchenko.

There was indeed massive discrimination against the opposition in the period from May to August, with the government candidate receiving eight times more air time on national TV than his opponent.

Moreover, the opposition was accused of harbouring extremist views or being allied with extremist organizations even to the point of being presented as “terrorists” and “criminals”, thereby delegitimizing the opposition even before the election was to take place. Most disturbingly, the IHF appealed to the Ukrainian authorities to remedy these widespread violations in the electoral campaign long before the election itself was summarily dismissed.

In particular, the International Helsinki Federation for human rights had appealed to the Ukrainian authorities to ensure equal access to all candidates of the state controlled media; to ensure full freedom for all candidates to address voters and to present their platform; to prohibit the use of state resources to support the campaign of the incumbent and to obstruct that of any opposition candidate; and to permit access by independent Ukrainian observers to monitor the elections at all stages.

Not only were all these pre-electoral appeals rejected, but these violations then found expression in the actual conduct and on the days of the elections themselves.

Indeed an analysis of the witness testimony and the documentary evidence, the combined evidence of independent observers, which included the observer mission from the OSCE office for democracy and human rights, the OSCE parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary assembly, all disclosed a widespread pattern of electoral fraud, intimidation and abuse in clear breach of OSCE standards and commitments.

What must be realized is that these massive electoral violations of OSCE undertakings and commitments constitute a violation of undertakings and commitments made to Canada as a country member of the OSCE and a co-signatory to the Helsinki process.

These massive violations by Ukrainian authorities and the corresponding breach of Ukrainian obligations to Canada and Canadians include, and I will cite some of them. The flagrant abuse of state resources in favour of the government candidate thereby demonstrating an utter disregard for the fundamental and necessary distinction between state authorities and partisan political forces. The denial to citizens of their right to their electoral franchise by obtaining, under duress, their absentee voting certificate. The use and abuse of these absentee voting certificates so as to facilitate multiple voting and thereby undermine the integrity of the electoral process. The patterns of electoral intimidation that were directed not only toward voters but also to polling commission members themselves. The presence in almost 40% of the polling stations of unauthorized persons including police and government officials, while authorized persons were excluded or rejected including a significant number of polling station commission members.

Accordingly, having regard to this massive electoral fraud and assault on democracy, may I conclude with a set of recommended guidelines and initiatives for Canada and the international community.

First, Canada cannot countenance the massive electoral fraud and denial of the democratic will of the Ukrainian people. We call for a full, transparent and democratic review of the election process with a view to having this electoral fraud redressed and remedied.

Second, if these fraudulent election results are not remedied, then we will have no choice but to re-examine our relations with the Ukrainian government with whatever adverse consequences may ensue for our bilateral relationship.

• (2235)

Third, we call on the OSCE, where we are a founding member, to take the lead in securing recognition and respect for OSCE undertakings and commitments, including the right to free and fair elections and the protection of a democratic Ukraine.

Fourth, we call upon the Russian authorities to help restore and protect the democratic will and not indulge or acquiesce in any process that will subvert that democratic will.

Fifth, we call upon the various bodies and institutions from whom the international election observer missions were drawn, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the NATO's Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, to join together with Canada, which also supplied an electoral mission, and bring our voice and vision together to secure the democratic process in Ukraine, and to realize the democratic will of the Ukrainian people.

Sixth, we call upon these bodies to put the perpetrators of electoral fraud on notice that they will be held accountable for their actions.

We say to the Ukrainian people that we will stand with them, that we will raise our voice together with them, that they are not alone and that in the end those who struggle for human rights will ultimately prevail over those who seek to repress human rights.

S. O. 52

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are here at the end of a very crucial and timely debate, one which I think signals the ability for this Parliament to remain ever relevant to the current challenges that we face, not only here in Canada but around the world.

I want to compliment each and every member of Parliament who has taken the time to express most intimately, most passionately and most appropriately the concerns that we share as a country on a matter that affects not only the virtues and values that we have in Canada, but those which will obviously reflect very clearly on what is occurring today in Ukraine.

This past Sunday, Ukraine held the second round of its presidential election. This contest was between the current prime minister, Viktor Yanukovich, and the leader of the opposition, Viktor Yushchenko. There was a lot at stake on the outcome of this election, whether Ukraine would continue forging closer relations with the west and whether much needed reforms would finally be enacted, ensuring the development of Ukraine into a prosperous and stable country. However, the most important stake of all in this election is the future of democracy itself in this vast country situated in the heart of Europe. A free and fair election would provide the very foundation upon which to build the future of that country. We know a flawed election could set Ukraine's progress back several years, perhaps decades.

Regrettably, Canadian and international observers and the House of Commons have reported electoral fraud on a massive scale. Intimidation, acts of violence and numerous serious illegal voting practices have been reported. Millions of votes have been cast illegally. These credible reports can only lead us to conclude that this election was neither free nor fair. In fact, it was fraudulent. It is particularly disturbing to note that the Ukrainian authorities and leadership may have played a role in these electoral violations.

[Translation]

Canada reacted very strongly to this unacceptable situation.

First, the Prime Minister declared that, if these numerous reports of fraud proved to be accurate, the international community would have to examine its options.

The Minister of External Affairs then called for an immediate investigation of these allegations of serious fraud, and today the Deputy Prime Minister rose in this House to announce that, considering the allegations of serious and significant electoral fraud, Canada rejects the announced final results, and calls for a full, open and transparent review of the election process.

The Deputy Prime Minister went on to say that Canada will have no choice but to examine its relations with Ukraine if the authorities fail to provide election results that reflect the democratic will of the people of that country.

I should also point out, since this is a matter that was raised this morning, as well as earlier on in this important debate, that the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the absence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has called in the Ukrainian ambassador in order to make our very serious concerns about this alleged fraud very clear to him.

● (2240)

[English]

Canada is not the only country to react so firmly to the election results. It is very clear to say and fair to say that the whole western community is unanimous in denouncing this flawed election. The United States declared that it cannot accept, as legitimate, the results of this election as the numerous reports of fraud have not been investigated. Likewise, the European Union and several of its member states have denounced the election results and called for a review.

Ukraine matters very deeply to Canada. We were of course, as has been suggested here on numerous occasions, the first country to recognize an independent Ukraine in 1991. Since then we have invested large amounts of energy and resources to assist Ukraine to develop into a stable, democratic and independent country.

The Government of Canada's encouragement of democracy in Ukraine has taken a very tangible form. The minister responsible for the Canadian International Development Agency has involved this nation for many years with Ukraine by funding projects in areas of good government, democratic development and strengthening a civil society. In fact, CIDA's present program in Ukraine, valued at \$18 million per year, is one of our largest development programs in Europe. Since 1991 Canada has provided over \$235 million in assistance to Ukraine.

Canada has also been very much involved in supporting a free and fair presidential election. The Government of Canada sent, as has been expressed by many members in this House, a delegation that included the member for Etobicoke Centre and the member from Edmonton. They were part of a group of observers as part of a mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE, to monitor the vote.

The contingent of approximately 50 long and short term observers was significantly larger than missions sent by Canada to monitor elections in other countries. This is evidence of the great importance that Canada attaches to its relationship with Ukraine and the importance it attaches to the election being fair and of course being honest.

Our embassy in Kiev has also been playing a key role in efforts by like minded countries in support of free and fair elections by leading a group of foreign missions which have been monitoring developments leading to the vote. This group led by Canada has conveyed on many occasions to Ukrainian authorities the importance of a clean vote.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Robinson in Ukraine for his excellent efforts without which much of the information that we have received of late would have certainly been to some extent anecdotal.

Canada's commitment to a democratic Ukraine and the ties that strongly bind our two countries have very much to do with the resolve of our fellow Canadians of Ukrainian origins. They have steadfastly supported the independence and development of this country. We must applaud the efforts of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress who in its own right sent several observers to monitor the presidential election.

S. O. 52

[Translation]

By demonstrating in the streets demanding that their democratic choice be respected, the people of Ukraine are providing clear proof that democracy is now deeply rooted in their country.

Canada intends to continue to support the development of democracy in Ukraine, a country with which we have close and deep ties.

[English]

Let me echo the declaration made by the Deputy Prime Minister today and say that Canada cannot accept these results as they do not reflect the true and democratic will of the Ukrainian people. Canada rejects these results and calls for a full and transparent review of the election process.

A challenge has been given to this Parliament and a challenge has been given to the free world. There will always be those who will defy the imperatives of freedom. No matter how vain such an attempt may be, the reality is that this nation will not tolerate electoral malfeasance.

We share much in common with the people of Ukraine, but we also share much in common with their desire for freedom and for their desire to be free from the kind of obstructions which they have had to confront over the past few days.

I have for several years sponsored and been pleased to have members of the Ukrainian community, students who have worked with me and given me much to learn about that part of the world. We share not only much in common, but I believe that there is a bond between ourselves and the Ukrainian people that requires us and necessitates Canadians to take action in a way that reflects the consensus and the unanimity of our spirit with those who are there this evening who are protesting at this time at six o'clock in the morning local time in Ukraine.

This government takes this challenge very seriously. This Parliament has certainly given an indication that is rare to see in these times, a position where there is cooperation, where there is consensus and we will in the next few days provide greater evidence of our determination to see a free people continue to prosper in Ukraine.

• (2245)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the constituents of Fleetwood—Port Kells to participate in the debate this evening.

Very few topics that come up for debate in this place are more important than democracy. The debate this evening is about the very heart of the democratic process itself, the free and fair election of a nation's leader.

We are all watching the drama in Ukraine unfold before us. What began a few weeks ago with the first round of presidential elections has brought us to today with tens of thousands of Ukrainian citizens in Independent Square and elsewhere demanding that their democratically chosen president be recognized.

Most of us understand the background here. The media has provided ample coverage of the events in Ukraine over the past

number of days. The first round of elections was strongly criticized for falling below international standards for free and fair elections. International observers, including Canadians, warned that this run-off round had been even worse.

Among the international observers on the ground in Ukraine were our own colleagues, the member for Edmonton East and the member for Etobicoke Centre as well as David Collenette and other former members who have called the results everything from outright robbery to outright theft and fraud.

This situation is very disturbing. Democracy is a fragile thing. In order for it to succeed, it requires a kind of social contract. It requires that all the participants agree to be bound by the results regardless of who wins. The key to this wonderful process is that in addition to everyone agreeing to be bound by the results, everyone must be assured that the process is free, fair and open.

We may not give it a great deal of extra thought here in Canada, but running free, fair and open elections is not as easy as it sounds. All we have to do is think back to the 1995 referendum in Quebec to remind ourselves just how important each and every vote is and how important it is that the process be seen to be legitimate.

We are hearing reports of all manners of abuse in Ukraine. We are hearing of ballot box stuffing, widespread abuse of absentee ballots, large scale busing of voters to other districts, the use of pens with disappearing ink, the use of acid in ballot boxes to destroy ballots, militia stationed inside polling places in contravention of election laws, attempts to substitute fake ballot boxes, and the list goes on. We are also hearing about 100% turnouts in other districts which were outside the bounds of the statistical mean.

It is abundantly clear from enough different and impartial sources, both Canadian and international, that there is no way in which we can interpret the results of the Ukrainian presidential election as anything but unacceptable.

There is an important point to be made here about these observers. As David Collenette noted this afternoon in an interview from London on CBC Newsworld, the observers have no preference for either candidate. They have no job at stake, they have nothing to gain or lose, and no power hangs in the balance for them. Their only interest is in seeing that the process is conducted fairly and openly without interference, and that the result can be said to be legitimate, regardless of the outcome.

In other words, their only job was to give a thumbs-up or a thumbs down on how the mechanics of the election was run. In this case it is pretty clear that it was a thumbs down.

I would like to thank the Deputy Prime Minister for making it perfectly clear to us this afternoon that Canada in no way recognizes the result in Ukraine. With one million Ukrainian Canadians watching this situation closely, many with family involved on the ground, it was important that the government send a crystal clear signal to Canada and the world that we stand with the Ukrainian people and their desire for a free, open and fair electoral result.

*S. O. 52*

This is about more than a stolen election however. The implications of the results in this situation have global implications. As my colleagues have noted, we are concerned that the process in Ukraine could have consequences well beyond Ukraine itself.

After over a decade of steady progress in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, we have observed that the trend is toward greater democracy and integration with the rest of the world.

● (2250)

There is a hope for reform of institutions at all levels in the wider region as a whole. It is clear from all available evidence that the citizens of Ukraine themselves agreed and were expressing their will to continue the move in that direction.

This result is clearly an attempt by the sitting prime minister to reverse that trend by manipulating the process to get himself elected president. Rather than embrace democracy by campaigning fairly and openly for the position, this pretender has attempted to subvert the process and steal the election.

The truly sad thing about the state of affairs is that it is the nation and the people of Ukraine who will ultimately suffer. Their desire for a better and more prosperous future either as part of the European Union or simply as a more advanced and stable democracy is in serious jeopardy.

At this point we do not yet know what the consequences for Ukraine will be, but if the situation is unresolved the fallout could be very serious indeed.

World opinion has largely condemned the results. The European leaders are unanimous as is the United States that these results are unacceptable. All have warned Ukraine that unless the results are overturned and an acceptable solution is found, Ukraine will find itself isolated and alone.

In addition to the damage this is doing to Ukraine and its reputation this could have serious repercussions for Russia as well. It is clear that Russian President Putin has allied himself with the side accused of orchestrating the electoral fraud. Far from being the bad old days of the Soviet era, this is supposed to be the new and enlightened era for the former Soviet Union.

President Putin himself was democratically elected by a fairly comfortable margin and the world congratulated him for it at the time. However, indicating his preference as he has done, President Putin risks putting in jeopardy his own country's fragile economy as well as its standing in world affairs. I would think that Russia has enough internal problems of its own that it would scrupulously avoid passing judgment or try to influence the elections of its neighbour.

I am glad that Canada is taking a stand on this very important issue. This is the time to defend the core principles of democracy that we hold so dear. We cannot permit the fragile seed of democracy that has taken hold in eastern Europe to be uprooted and destroyed by the base desires of a small group.

As I said earlier, this is about more than Ukraine. This is about democracy and how we view it. This is about whether we as Canadians are willing to stand with Ukrainians and defend their right to choose their own leaders. This is about whether Canada is willing

to stand with the world community in condemning the conduct of this election. This is about whether we are willing to do more than pay lip service to the cause of democracy. This is as much about who we are as democrats as it is about democracy in Ukraine.

To the more than one million Canadians of Ukrainian descent, I urge them to keep the faith and let their relatives in Ukraine know they are not alone. Let them know that Canada stands with them in deploring the outcome of this election.

To our own government, I again say thank you for taking a stand on this very important issue. The House stands with the government and we support its efforts to find a solution that recognizes the democratic will of the Ukrainian people.

● (2255)

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Newton—North Delta, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the constituents of Newton—North Delta to participate in this emergency debate on the Ukrainian election.

The constituency of Newton—North Delta is a very multicultural riding and has a huge population of Ukrainians who, I am sure, would want their member of Parliament to participate in this debate on their behalf.

On Sunday the people of Ukraine went to the polls in an historic election to choose a new president and determine the direction of their nation. Unfortunately, it appears that government authorities denied the Ukrainian people a free choice. The first round of elections, which took place on October 31, was marred by fraud and ballot irregularities.

Rather than correcting those serious deficiencies, reports indicate that things only worsened on the second ballot. My colleague, the member for Edmonton East, is taking part in a University of Alberta project observing Ukraine's election. He personally saw examples of ballot fraud while touring polling stations over the past few days.

According to other international observers, including the International Republican Institute, IRI, and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, election day was marred by voter list problems, multiple voting, interference by unauthorized persons in the electoral process and expulsion of observers and journalists from the polling stations.

The IRI found that in a number of polling stations the percentage of votes certified by the central elections commission exceeded 100% of the total votes. How can the votes cast exceed 100%? It naturally shows that there are some irregularities going on. These are serious irregularities that can call into question the election result which has seen Ukraine's elections commission declare Viktor Yanukovich the winner of the presidential runoff election.

Yanukovich had 49.46% of the vote, while Viktor Yushchenko was named on 46.6% of the ballots. Thousands of Yushchenko's voters have packed the capital for the past three days in freezing temperatures. Kiev, Lviv and several other cities announced that they would not accept the result of the vote and would recognize only Yushchenko as the winner.



*S. O. 52*

Ukraine's outgoing president has offered to hold talks to end the crisis but a Yushchenko ally said that the only thing to discuss was a transfer of power to the opposition leader.

Ukraine, a country of about 50 million people, is a parliamentary democracy with separate executive, judicial and legislative branches. Previous presidential elections have gone relatively smoothly. In July 1994, Leonid Kuchma was elected as Ukraine's second president in a free and fair election. Kuchma was re-elected in November 1999 to another five year term with 56% of the votes.

International observers criticized aspects of that election, especially slanted media coverage, however the outcome of the vote was not called into question. Regrettably, this year's election has not gone so smoothly.

International condemnation has been swift. American secretary of state, Colin Powell, said that if the Ukrainian government does not act immediately and responsibly, there will be consequences for the two countries' relationship and for Ukraine's hopes for a Euro-Atlantic integration and for individuals responsible for perpetrating fraud.

European commission president, Jose Manuel Barroso, warned of consequences for the European Union's political and trade relations with Ukraine if its government does not allow a serious, objective review of the election.

We also note that the Pope has commented on the election.

Today I received a letter from Mychailo Wynnyckyj, PhD who writes from Kiev. He said that during the last 12 hours he had been asked by five people why the Canadian government was not saying anything.

• (2300)

He said, "My fellow Canadians. I am ashamed that I have few answers. Where is our government now? It is not enough to say that the election was a fraud. Ukraine's election was stolen by Prime Minister Yanukovich and his band of thugs. And now there is a very real possibility that this man may be proclaimed Ukraine's president during the next few days".

Dr. Wynnyckyj continued, "Canada must mobilize the international community. The Canadian government must not only condemn the widespread fraud of the election, but must also state that Canada does not recognize Yanukovich as Ukraine's legitimate president. During this morning's demonstration on Kiev's central square, Viktor Yushchenko publicly stated that he was prepared to hold a second runoff election if a new Central Electoral Commission is appointed, and Ukraine's election law is rewritten to make fraud impossible. Yushchenko's olive branch was met with cynicism this evening by the Central Electoral Commission".

He went on to say, "My dear Canadians, Ukraine needs your help. Mobilize. The Canadian government can and should help, but only you can pressure Ottawa to do the right thing. Refuse to recognize Yanukovich as Ukraine's president".

Today the Deputy Prime Minister stated that Canada has rejected the results of Ukraine's election, calling it serious and significant electoral fraud. She warned that Canadian relations with Ukraine

could be cut off if authorities there do not produce non-fraudulent election results.

It is generally a mistake for the Canadian government to interfere in the internal affairs of independent states. However, we have a duty to promote democracy.

In Canada we are very fortunate that we have democracy, even though we are disturbed by the way the current Prime Minister pushed out former Prime Minister Chrétien. Some political scientists call it a civilized coup. These things do happen in Canada as well.

I remember when I spoke to the Elections Canada bill in the previous parliament how the governing party, which had a majority, tried to stop the smaller parties through that legislation. I spoke to that. On the other hand, I still think Canadians are generally fortunate to live in a democracy, particularly so, having lived in the west African country of Liberia. My family and I lived in that country for many years before migrating to Canada. Before that, I lived in the largest democracy in the world, India. I went from living in the largest democracy to living in a third world dictatorship and then back to living in a democracy. I can relate to what is the value of democracy and to what is the value of free, fair and transparent elections.

History teaches that the surest way to ensure peace is through democracy, good governance and rule of law, not by men.

I would state in conclusion that for the first time in human history, more than half of the world's nations are democratic or moving toward republican government. We have witnessed the swiftest advance of freedom in the 2,500 year history of democracy. There are 40 functional democracies and almost 100 established or emerging democracies in the world.

Despite the efforts of the few to deny democracy in Ukraine, freedom is not dead in that country. We are a democratic country and the lawmakers in this country. Most participate in democracy in action and encourage democracy around the world.

• (2305)

**Hon. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Development (Social Economy), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Yukon.

Ukrainians are living through an historic moment and we are living that moment with them. The presidential election was a great opportunity for Ukraine to show that it had developed into a fully democratic country.

Unfortunately, the events we witnessed on the weekend have made a mockery of the election. The voting can in no way be considered democratic. The problems that occurred were not minor, nor were they technical. The international community has been led to conclude that it was a daring attempt by the Ukrainian authorities to steal the election for their candidate, Prime Minister Yanukovich.

*S. O. 52*

The list of electoral violations is long. A lot of the hon. members in the House have listed them. The following are some of the things the international election monitors saw: fraudulent proxy voting; multiple voting; ballot box stuffing by administrative officials and electoral commission members; violence, threats and intimidations against voters and international election observers; voter list manipulation; and ballot box destruction and vandalism.

Those are only the most blatant examples of fraud that were reported by international observers, including our colleagues in the House, especially the member for Etobicoke Centre who saw firsthand the lack of respect for the democratic process.

These many instances of serious and significant electoral fraud I just cited are neither minor nor technical. They are serious and significant. Why am I speaking on this topic? Because I sat in the Chair as an assistant deputy speaker and as one of the assistant deputy speakers I was involved in a process in which, through our CIDA project, we were trying to equip the Ukrainian parliament with certain tools to help them along in terms of procedure and democratic practices in the House.

I visited the Ukraine parliament on at least two occasions and had discussions with some of the Ukrainian parliamentarians and staff who worked for the parliament of the Ukraine. It was a very enlightening experience. There was a mood in the Ukraine parliament to move along the democratic process. It looked to Canada as a model of the type of parliament, the type of democratic process and system that it wanted in its own country.

I can now visualize all the young people who worked with me on that Canada-Ukraine project. Some members have said that they were in touch with some of those young people who had actually come on another program in this Parliament, the parliamentary internship program. I also have had two students from the Ukraine in my office. I have had some experience with these young people and know of the hope these young people had that their country, Ukraine, was on the right road toward democracy.

I received an e-mail from one of those young students who, unfortunately, feels lost at the moment. After all the effort he put into learning about our democratic process and how his country could move along and become perhaps much like Canada, a country where democracy and elections are held in a democratic way, he felt that he had no hope for his country.

I feel sad tonight, as do a lot of my colleagues who had invested their time in terms of teaching these young students in the internship program about how we do things in the House. I feel sad today for that young man and all the young people with whom I worked over the last two and a half years. That is why I am here speaking on behalf of what the young people are looking for in terms of the future, what they want for their country, Ukraine. There was so much hope but these elections, unfortunately, cut that hope down. That is a sad thing.

I want Canadians to know that we have worked as a country, as a government and as a Parliament with the parliament of Ukraine to give all parliamentarians, as well as the administrative staff and some of the young people, the tools they needed to have a properly run democratic parliament.

Today I am sad for all of those young people and the hundreds of Canadians of Ukrainian origin who also share our anger and frustration that the investment we have made over the years, in terms of helping Ukraine along the democratic road, was stolen away from the young people, the people of Ukraine and from all of us.

● (2310)

[*Translation*]

I am really very disappointed. I am disappointed that these election results show that there has been fraud, so much fraud that Canada must react immediately.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has declared that the election does not meet democratic standards. The Canadian international observers have listed many offences committed during the voting and in the counting of ballots. They noted cases of violence, widespread intimidation and an improbably high turnout in certain regions.

I am troubled by this because for years this is exactly what we have been trying to do: reach an agreement with Ukraine to establish democratic standards.

What should we do? That is the purpose of our debate here tonight. What should Canada do? CIDA has provided \$235 million in aid since 1991. We should not abandon this investment. We must invest in democracy and the Ukrainian parliament.

We must act and, tonight, as parliamentarians, we demand that Canada respond. And the Deputy Prime Minister said today in the House that Canada would be doing just that.

Tonight, we are going to do something for the good of the young people who came here in the hopes of having a fully democratic country. These young people are counting on us, counting on Canada. We have a democratic system that we often take for granted. These young people are counting on us; they are counting on us to do what is necessary with our international partners.

I also mentioned that we often work with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. We must continue to work with the organizations that are already on the ground and who have helped Ukraine get to the point it was at before this election.

As the Minister of Justice said, we cannot countenance the fraudulent actions in this election. We must continue to work with Ukraine.

[*English*]

Canada has been a long-time friend of Ukraine, as I said earlier. That friendship we hold dearly. We hold it dearly because there are Canadians of Ukrainian origin who have contributed to the fact that we have as great a democracy as we have and who counted on Canada to help their country of origin move along the road of democracy.

For Canadians and for those young people I have worked with, we have to continue to push for a multilateral force, in my opinion, both in the legal part of it and perhaps in other measures. I am hoping that perhaps there will be some discussion at NATO, at the OECD and at the United Nations and that we as the community that Canada is a part of can work together with certain other bodies to assure that these elections are declared undemocratic, that the proper results of this election are in fact brought to light.

It is for the Ukrainian people, especially the young people who have been to our country and have visited our Parliament and who have been working very hard to ensure that there will be a democracy in their country, that I stand in the House today. I want to tell them that I hope they know, and I will make sure they know, that Canadian parliamentarians will help them to ensure that democracy does return to their country and we will continue to assist them.

● (2315)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this evening I would like to give a message to Viktor Yanukovich. If he has any friends who are watching us tonight, I would ask them to put a cassette in the TV, record this and pass on this message him.

While they are doing that, I again would like to commend all the members of the House, as I think others have, who worked very quickly. Often government cannot work quickly, but in a very important human situation all the members of the House put aside any differences and have unanimously supported Canada's view on this very difficult situation.

I thank those people I implored a few months ago to free up as many observers from our caucus as possible. They worked toward that. Of course I thank the member for Etobicoke Centre, our caucus chair and the Deputy Prime Minister for working so quickly on this.

I would say to Mr. Yanukovich that I assume he would like to be a leader of a great nation and to be a great leader. Of course Ukraine is a great nation of wonderful people and anyone would be proud to be their leader. I know that if things were not as they should be, he would certainly want to distance himself from that, find out what was wrong and fix it so he would be known as a great leader of a great people.

Therefore, I have to say that there are problems he may not be aware of that the people surrounding him may not have told him about, but certainly I assume he would want to fix them.

First of all, in the recent election, intimidation went on in very many places. That included the detention of observers from my country who had volunteered to help and the confiscation of their passports. In any nation in the world this would be totally abhorrent activity, and I am sure Mr. Yanukovich would want to distance himself from such activity.

More than that, during this election that just occurred there was actually falsification of lists. The names of people who had no legal right to vote were added to those lists. I know that if Mr. Yanukovich were aware of that he would want to fix it and search out who might have done that. It was not a small number. As well, there were hundreds of names added to those lists in poll after poll. If he adds that up, he would see that thousands and thousands of names

were added to lists illegally. I know that no leader would ever want to be associated with that.

Any leader would know that it would result in a totally illegal election where there would be no credibility for the leader. Any leader would certainly want to find out what was wrong and find out who was putting such a blight on the electoral process of a great people and a great nation.

But that is not all. Now evidence has come of which Mr. Yanukovich may not be aware. There was actually falsification of ballot boxes. There were ballot boxes that were not legally part of the election. They were added so that more votes could be put in. More than that, there were mobile ballot boxes that were taken without the correct objective. Election observers and people who should have been monitoring them were taken around, and who knows what happened to them? I know that Mr. Yanukovich would be just aghast to find that out. There are so many things that I have already mentioned that he must be sickened at how this has gone awry in a totally incredible illegal process that of course will never stand up and that he would never want to be associated with.

There is more than that. In the next instance, the observers, the legal people asked to come in and help, have found that—and it is almost too hard to repeat it because it is almost incredible that this could happen in the modern world—people actually put disappearing ink on ballots in areas where a particular candidate would be known to do well. It disappeared, all those ballots did not count and of course that particular candidate was terribly disadvantaged.

Then there is the printing. This is another thing that I know Mr. Yanukovich will want to fix when he dissolves this whole process to start again. It is the fact that there were absentee ballots made for people to vote with who could not vote there. On the surface, it sounds like a very logical thing to do. But the thousands and thousands of these absentee ballots that were made were under no control so that they could just be put in the boxes in great numbers. I am sure Mr. Yanukovich would be aghast to hear that it actually happened in the election in his country. He certainly would not want that reflection on himself or his people.

● (2320)

I am sure Mr. Yanukovich would find it hard to believe, now that it has been verified, that there were busloads of people with voting credentials going from poll to poll and voting again and again.

Then there is the deprivation of the rights of observers. They volunteered in good faith for the Ukrainian people. People came from around the world to help out. They were physically removed from the locations they were supposed to be in. Under those circumstances, obviously, there was not even a real election.

However, most of all, I think Mr. Yanukovich will be most upset to find out that this was not fraud by a few rogue individuals he is now going to be looking for. I know he is going to try to root them out, but it was not simply a few fanatical helpers of a candidate trying to do this in isolation. It has now been proven that there was central coordination of all this fraud.

*S. O. 52*

If Mr. Yanukovich needs help when he is trying to find the people who have tried to disgrace him, we can help with the head of the committee for the organization and methodical work of the central electoral commission.

Let me say to Mr. Yanukovich that I know this may be very disappointing for him that this might have happened in his country, but when we add all these things together, which is an incredible, almost unbelievable list, the experts calculate that this could be over three million illegal votes.

I know that if Mr. Yanukovich wants to be a great leader what he will be doing is trying to root out those who caused and perpetuated such a catastrophe on his nation. I know he will want to bring them before the criminal justice system and let it deal with them. Then I know he will want to reconstitute an electoral process, having learned from all these mistakes and having found ways to prevent the possibility of such fraud ever occurring again.

I know that anyone who wants to be a great leader of a nation and a champion would put in that type of process with observers again, but with systems where that could not possibly happen again, now that we have learned what happened. It would be done so that a fair and democratic election commensurate with the fairness of the people of Ukraine could happen. All the candidates, including Mr. Yanukovich, if he chose to enter such an election, could be great candidates because, win or lose, they would participate in a fair process.

In closing, I want to say one thing to the people of the Ukraine. No matter what our heritage is, no matter what people's religions are, no matter what our history, we all have something in common: we love freedom.

Let me say to the people of the Ukraine, including the young students who have written to my colleague by e-mail and the young students who dream of democracy, they can rest assured that as long as they want it they will ultimately have that freedom. In their darkest days, when it is hard to overcome the tragedies and carry on, I say to them to keep up their strength knowing that the free people of the whole world are behind them and that they will overcome and will one day soon be free.

• (2325)

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be relatively brief. I will be sharing my time with the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

I felt it was important to add my voice to what has been said in this House respecting the grave travesty and tragedy that is taking place in Ukraine today.

I was very heartened to see in this House the non-partisan stand this afternoon in question period. Both sides rose to speak to the issue and to endorse free elections and democracy. The very essence and fundamentals of democracy is that each person has an opportunity to vote and to make that vote count, to ensure that the elections are free, that they are not interfered with and that the end result can be accepted by the people. The people must decide and not something that is done that is unusual.

We find and we hear all types of reports where there were not just simple or technical breaches, but there were substantive breaches. These were breaches that essentially changed the end numbers and what could be the result.

It is my view that what happens has to be transparent, open and accepted by all the people. We find not only the people of Ukraine rejecting what happened, but also the people of this House are. Nationally and internationally voices are added together. One voice will not easily be heard. A number of voices will be heard. When nations speak they will have an effect.

It is heartening for me to see that this House has taken such a positive stand and has been a positive voice in what is about to happen. When history is in the making, one never knows what the end result will be. However, we do know that what is unfolding is very significant and important and it will have a lot of impact in that region. Either democracy will prevail or it will fail. If the people there resist, if they work hard and if they are on the right track, they will succeed. It will be only a matter of time.

We want the people of Ukraine to know that they ought to be encouraged, and we are here speaking to encourage them. We are taking a firm stand. We are working hard with journalists, politicians and within the system to effect change.

I know there are tanks and soldiers there. However, I would suspect that they would use channels of persuasion, negotiation and public, international and government pressure to change the results of what happened, even if it means another election. I must ask the people there to continue to press on.

The young people of that nation have a future and that future is rooted in democracy. There is hope. That hope must not be lost and we want them to know that we stand with them in their battle for democracy and for what is right.

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I too want to add my voice to the unanimous sentiments of the House in condemning the actions of those who would usurp the democratic process in Ukraine.

As anyone in Saskatchewan knows, there is a large Ukrainian community there. A very large number of immigrants came to Saskatchewan and helped build that province. As Saskatchewan celebrates its centenary in 2005, we recognize that community in particular played such a key role in building Saskatchewan. Almost every small town in Saskatchewan has some link with the Ukrainian community, so there is a very significant emotional attachment with the people. In my riding in particular, across Canada and in large cities like Toronto, the Ukrainian population has come out. I know back home people are very concerned as well, and that is important for us to realize.

Canada needs to stand and protect democracy around the world. That is why I am encouraged by the debate tonight. We need to send a clear message to the world and to those who would usurp the democratic process, like in Ukraine, that they stand alone. Those people who would take away the rights of voters, who would usurp the process, regardless of the country in which they are, need to know from the government and the country that they stand alone in that.

People of eastern Europe and Ukraine have for generations lived under the cloud of tyranny and dictatorship, going back throughout the Soviet years and during the war when the threat of fascism was so close. Finally, for the past couple of decades, we have seen democracy get a toehold and start to entrench itself there. This is a direct threat on those accomplishments.

On that note, I want to reiterate that Canada needs to send a clear message to the world and to those in Ukraine who would usurp the democratic process that we are opposed to that. We believe in due process. To those people of Ukrainian descent living in Saskatchewan, in Regina—Qu'Appelle and throughout Canada, everyone in the House thinks this is a matter of great importance.

*S. O. 52*

● (2330)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am satisfied that the debate has now been concluded. I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11:31 p.m.)

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