



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, March 9, 2005**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 9, 2005

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1400)

[*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 Essex.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

### AURÈLE FERLATTE

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize the distinction bestowed last week on Aurèle Ferlatte of Dalhousie, New Brunswick.

Mr. Ferlatte received the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation from the Minister of Veterans Affairs. This decoration, awarded to individuals who have performed commendable service to the Veteran community and/or individuals who represent commendable role models for their fellow veterans, was awarded to Mr. Ferlatte for his invaluable contribution to veterans.

I want to publicly thank Mr. Ferlatte today and congratulate him on this exceptional honour.

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[*English*]

### CURLING

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand in the House today to congratulate the Jennifer Jones team from Manitoba on their victory last week at the Scott Tournament of Hearts.

Jones, third Cathy Overton-Clapham, lead Cathy Gauthier, and fifth Trisha Eck, along with a constituent of mine, second Jill Officer, won Manitoba's first national women's title since Connie Laliberte did in 1995.

Behind for most of the game, the pressure was on with Jones' last shot in the 10th end. A virtually impossible shot in front of her, Jones came through and nailed it. One analyst called it "the best game-winning shot" he had ever seen.

In addition to the Scott title, Jones and her rink also won the right to represent Canada at the world championships in Scotland next month.

On behalf of all Manitobans and Canadians, I would like to say congratulations to the Jennifer Jones rink on a job well done. They made us very proud.

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### EASTER SEALS CAMPAIGN

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Prince Edward Islanders have a long and proud history of generosity and when the need arises Islanders are prepared to contribute. Last Monday night was a good example. During the three-hour Easter Seals telethon, \$132,000 was pledged.

I want to pay a special tribute to this year's Easter Seals ambassador, 12 year old Carolyn Gallant, and to the students and staff of her school, Ecole François-Buote, which raised \$1,200. A lighthearted moment occurred when an autographed golf ball and hat donated by former prime minister Jean Chrétien were auctioned off for \$720.

The Easter Seals Society of P.E.I. has a proud history of raising funds to assist young people with disabilities. Easter Seals Ambassador Gallant will continue to tour Island schools until Easter.

On behalf of all members I want to express my thanks to all those who have contributed their time and money to make this year's Easter Seals campaign a success.

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[*Translation*]

### PATRO DE JONQUIÈRE

**Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the extraordinary support provided by a community agency in my riding called the Patro de Jonquière.

This community support and recreation centre for youth has been around for almost 60 years, and hundreds of volunteers have worked there over the years to provide our young people with a wide range of activities to help them develop their full potential.

*S.O. 31*

This centre also offers adults and seniors an opportunity to participate in social and recreational activities. The Patro provides invaluable services to our people.

In acknowledging the excellent work of the Patro de Jonquière volunteers, I want to take this opportunity to underscore the importance of volunteering in the development of our communities and the limited resources we have to support it.

Once again, bravo to the Patro de Jonquière.

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[*English*]

#### HAMILTON FIREFIGHTERS

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my riding of Hamilton Mountain a memorial service recognized nine fallen firefighters: Wayne H. Murray, Charles Waterman, Alexander Maxwell, Joseph Cheeseman, William Cooke, William Carson, Milton Kindree, Ian Gray and Neil McFadyen. These courageous professionals chose to regularly risk their own lives to save the lives of others.

Unfortunately, they contracted occupational diseases and succumbed to their illnesses during retirement. It is important to recognize that while there is an immediate risk of death in every blaze that is fought, occupational disease is the number one killer of firefighters in Ontario.

The deaths of these fallen firefighters were not in vain and compensation is fortunately now available for many. These nine individuals will forever be remembered for their service and dedication to the Hamilton community.

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#### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last night we had another emergency agriculture debate in this House. If words were dollars, farming would be profitable by now, but they are not. In fact, we are in a “perfect storm”: a combination of low prices, a weather disaster and serious international trade disruptions.

This government has once again failed agriculture. After 12 years and four terms, it still has no coherent way of dealing with agriculture issues.

One week after the R-CALF debacle there is no plan B. One month before spring seeding there is no plan to help hard hit grain farmers. At the WTO talks we have no clear position that would liberalize trade and make it more transparent and effective.

This government could make a difference. Farm plans do not have to collapse under their own bureaucratic weight. Trade agreements can be reached that are effective. Regulation can be lessened. The markets can work for producers and processors.

However, that would take solid leadership. When will this government quit talking and actually start to bring forward producer oriented solutions?

● (1410)

#### COLORECTAL CANCER

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, colorectal cancer is one of the least talked about forms of cancer. As a result, many Canadians are unaware of its prevalence and its symptoms.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer related death among men and women in Canada.

Regular screening can help prevent over 90% of colorectal cancer by allowing for treatment in the earliest stages. There is also a need for greater access to treatment and faster approvals for new medications.

March is Colorectal Cancer Month. The Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada is pleased to invite all members of Parliament and senators to an awareness breakfast tomorrow morning, Thursday, March 10, in the parliamentary restaurant beginning at 7:30 a.m.

I encourage all members of the House to attend this important event.

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[*Translation*]

#### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, again yesterday, in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, the minister repeated that the refugee appeal division was not necessary.

However, this take has been condemned by Amnesty International and the Canadian Council for Refugees, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has voiced strong criticism.

I remind the House it adopted legislation establishing the appeal division. The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration unanimously called for it and the director of the IRB says he is waiting only for a cabinet decision before going forward.

A recent ruling by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights confirms that there is no appeal process for asylum seekers in Canada. Despite everything, there is still no appeal division.

This minister has the responsibility to honour the word of Parliament and protect the human rights of all individuals on Canadian soil.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

#### MARTIAL ARTS

**Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the city of Thunder Bay on its recent designation as the martial arts capital of Canada.

Thunder Bay established a Martial Arts Council in 2000 with the mission of fostering awareness of the benefits of training in these arts, encouraging participation to make the community a healthier place, and generating economic activity.

The Martial Arts Council has been very successful in its endeavours. It hosted a martial arts championship in April 2002 and staged a celebration of martial arts in September 2002. In July 2006 Thunder Bay will host an international forum on Tai Chi with hundreds of delegates from Asia, China, Europe and North America expected to attend.

I ask my fellow parliamentarians to join me in congratulating Thunder Bay on its designation as Canada's martial arts capital.

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#### AGE OF CONSENT

**Mr. Randy White (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again I see a situation in Ottawa where a young 14-year-old boy was lured into a serious situation by a predator.

Since following the age of sexual consent issue, I have been increasingly aware of the terrible consequences of politicians changing laws with a narrow understanding of the future impact.

How many times must I see 14-year-old and 15-year-old kids in crack houses with 30-year-old and 40-year-old criminals, while the criminals send the children out to sell drugs, prostitute them and use them for sex? Parents anguish at the fact that police cannot remove them from the scene because the age of sexual consent was lowered from 16 to 14.

Politicians must do a better job of defining when a child becomes an adult. The Liberal government wants anyone over the age of 11 to be able to possess marijuana, and a 14-year-old to have sex with a 30-year-old.

The government must get its act together with the age of sexual consent.

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#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize Canada's inspiring, creative and hardworking women.

Canadians are celebrating International Women's Week this week with the theme, "You are Here: Women, Canada and the World".

Last Friday I was proud to host the eighth annual international women's day breakfast in partnership with the women's leadership committee of the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce.

International Women's Week is a celebration of women's contributions to Canada and the world. Through this breakfast event, women have the opportunity to meet ordinary women who have interesting and extraordinary stories to share.

This year my special guests were Elen Steinberg, an entrepreneur who provides marketing kiosks in airports, and Carolyn Stark, a young woman who has participated in professional HIV-AIDS internships in India and Toronto. Both women shared their experiences, their challenges and their successes.

*S.O. 31*

Canadian women have made tremendous contributions in the home, in the workplace, and in the community to make Canada a better place for all.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

#### TELUS COMMUNICATIONS

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, workers at TELUS Communications have been without a contract for four years. These are TWU members who are supporting families in communities like Burnaby and Vancouver, B.C.

The five B.C. NDP MPs are standing up together for these workers because the treatment that they have received from their employer is shameful. They have been without a raise for five years and are being held hostage by unfair labour practices. These workers have the right to be treated fairly. They have the right to a respectful contract that maintains pensions, stops contracting out and ensures that grievance procedures are upheld.

While the Canada Industrial Relations Board has clearly stated that TELUS was guilty of unfair labour practices and in violation of federal law, the board has backtracked on its order that TELUS undergo binding arbitration.

On behalf of these workers and their families, we are calling on the federal government to immediately order TELUS into binding arbitration and to stop this injustice.

\* \* \*

#### LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a new poll has just been released which shows that 99% of women know that drinking alcohol while pregnant can cause birth defects, yet the Liberals along with their big government friends want to force costly mandatory labelling on our brewers and distilleries.

Telling people what they already know is a waste of money. What is next, the Liberals forcing mandatory labels on bottles of pepper spray saying, "May irritate eyes"?

This measure will end up costing Canadian businesses millions of dollars with no results. The issue of birth defects is too serious for misplaced government intervention. We should be focusing our efforts on educational prevention programs which have actually proven to be effective.

The only label I am in favour of is a label on Liberal politicians which states, "Electing this politician to office will affect the health of our economy and cost people their jobs".

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**EPILEPSY**

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, March is epilepsy awareness month. Epilepsy is a neurological disorder affecting 120,000 Quebecers.

Epilepsy is not a disease but a symptom resulting from abnormal, involuntary electrical discharges in the brain, which cause seizures. Most people with epilepsy lead active and productive lives, thanks to medical advances. The greatest challenge that people with epilepsy face is being accepted by a society full of fear, myths and misconceptions about this disorder. Epilepsy does not shorten life span. Epilepsy does not cause brain damage. Epilepsy does not affect intelligence. Epilepsy is not contagious.

I invite everyone to wear a lavender ribbon during the month of March to raise community awareness about the needs of people living with epilepsy, including their need for respect.

\* \* \*

[English]

**RCMP OFFICERS GORDON AND MYROL**

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, two of the victims in the tragic killing of four RCMP officers were from my home city of Red Deer. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and friends of the four victims.

Anthony Gordon was born in Edmonton and grew up and was educated in Red Deer. This good-natured man leaves behind his wife who is expecting her second child. He will be buried on Friday.

Brock Myrol and his family are well known in our community. Brock had only been in the force a few weeks and was engaged to be married. He will be buried on Saturday.

The murderer was a troubled and dangerous person. His lawyer knew this. His neighbours knew this. The RCMP knew this. The only ones who seemed not to have paid attention to this work in the justice system. We must protect society from dangerous repeat offenders.

In the words of Colleen Myrol, mother of Brock, "Take a stand on evil. Prime Minister, we depend on you and expect you to change the laws and give the courts real power. Give the RCMP real power".

\* \* \*

**HAROLD CULBERT**

**Mr. Andy Savoy (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize a friend and colleague of many in this House who passed away last week, the late Harold Culbert, former member of Parliament for Carleton—Charlotte from 1993 to 1997.

He held office with distinction and was a committed parliamentarian. Harold will be remembered for his selfless dedication to his church, his community and his country. A civic minded volunteer until his death last week at the age of 60, Harold served four terms as mayor of the town of Woodstock, New Brunswick and was the current national director and provincial president of the Kidney Foundation of Canada.

Harold leaves a rich legacy of untiring service to others. He was a family man and a loyal friend. We will benefit from his contributions to society for years to come.

On behalf of the House I wish to express my deepest condolences to his wife Doreena and children Eugene, Angela and Timothy on the sudden loss of a devoted husband and father.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

● (1420)

[English]

**JUSTICE**

**Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the days pass, more information is coming to light about last week's shooting of four Mounties in Alberta.

This appears to be another example of an individual with a long history of criminal charges, complaints and convictions, but who rarely found himself in prison.

The justice minister has said that mandatory minimum sentencing is not an option for such individuals. I wonder if this opinion is shared by the Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what occurred is obviously a tremendous human tragedy. All of us, the Leader of the Opposition, many members here and I will have the opportunity in Edmonton tomorrow to say to the families just how deeply troubled and deeply sorrowful we feel.

As the hon. member knows, there is an investigation ongoing by the RCMP on this particular matter and we obviously should wait for the results of that.

That being said, it does raise a number of wider issues. Those wider issues are ones that are being addressed by the minister.

**Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all the information to this point certainly suggests that in this case the individual in question had a long history of dangerous and threatening behaviour.

He was viewed as dangerous not just by the authorities, but he was viewed as dangerous by anyone who came into contact with him, by the entire community and by his own family. At the same time, it appears no one ever considered registering him as a dangerous offender because of the difficulty in doing so.

Is the government prepared to look at dangerous offender legislation to see if it can be made somewhat more effective?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the recent meeting of the federal, provincial and territorial ministers of justice, we referred the matter of dangerous offenders to a working group in that regard. They will be reporting back to us in June 2005.

**Hon. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me ask one final question.

*Oral Questions*

It is self-evident that last week's multiple murder tragedy was not in any way prevented or impeded by the gun registry, although the gun registry was brought into effect primarily to deal with precisely this kind of tragedy.

After spending \$1 billion, does the government have any evidence at all that the registry would prevent this kind of tragedy in the future?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first let me say that obviously this is a very tragic event and there is a criminal investigation ongoing. As well, the RCMP is looking internally at what happened.

It is incumbent upon all of us to await the outcome of those investigations and reviews before we start leaping to conclusions. It is unfortunate that the opposition has chosen at this time to leap to conclusions before we have all the facts.

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**TERRORISM**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** We have come to the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that the gun registry is a colossal failure and does not save lives.

Last week the director of CSIS, Jim Judd, told a Senate committee that the agency was considering recommending outlawing the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist organization in Canada. The United States, Great Britain and Australia have all done so.

Judd says Canada is hesitating because the foreign affairs minister is concerned that listing the Tigers might upset a peace process in Sri Lanka.

Could the Minister of Public Safety tell us what is more important, shutting down a terrorist organization in Canada or offending somebody outside the country? Who makes the final decision, her or the foreign affairs minister?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first let me make it absolutely plain, if any organization in this country carries out any terrorist activity as defined in the Criminal Code, we will proceed against that organization. Let me be absolutely clear about that.

We review on a regular and ongoing basis the possibility of listing organizations. That review process continues.

I take very seriously the input I receive and the risk assessments I receive from organizations such as CSIS and the RCMP.

• (1425)

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in some cases dithering causes death.

[*Translation*]

Yesterday the Minister of Transport did not want to explain why a computer system could not be set up in airports to monitor terrorists.

Would the Minister of Transport explain why police agencies have to rely on luck, when a computerized system could ensure the safety of Canadians?

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had a hard time understanding the question in French. I can tell you that airport security is assured with as many means as possible. However, we are also developing a special list to keep certain people off flights. If that is what the hon. member wanted to know, this is absolutely the case. We are currently working on a no fly list.

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**SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, from the generous sponsorship contracts awarded to Jean Lafleur to the forced political contributions by his staff, we now have a picture of the entire Liberal Party food chain. Given the Liberals' claims of promises kept, will the Minister of Transport, who made promise, be reimbursing the tainted sponsorship money?

When will he be able to rise in this House and say "promise made, promise kept"?

[*English*]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have seen, even this week, one day's testimony contradicted by another day's testimony.

The hon. member is commenting on daily testimony and he should avoid commenting on the shifting sands of daily testimony because he runs the risk of making errors.

The fact is the Prime Minister promised to get to the bottom of this issue and he appointed Justice Gomery. We are supporting Justice Gomery. Promise made, promise kept.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, we were getting that same answer from Alfonso Gagliano.

The Liberal crony food chain is very clear. In 1996, Jean Lapierre, Jean Lafleur, rather, was awarded his first contracts—maybe the other one did too! Alfonso Gagliano and the Liberal Party immediately invited him to donate to the Liberal Party, to donate to himself, and to have—

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

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie made a mistake and named a person he did not mean to name, then compounded the error by adding a gratuitous comment.

I am sure he would like to withdraw any suggestion that the hon. minister might have done anything inappropriate in this connection. In fact, the question does not concern the Minister of Transport, whom he named by mistake I am sure, in the lead up to his question.

He might therefore wish to withdraw his remarks and continue with his question.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the unfortunate attempt at humour, though it does prove that, when Jean Lafleur is mentioned, things seem to get serious because they claim not to be like him.

*Oral Questions*

So, will the Minister of Transport admit that the Liberal Party was being funded by the public purse, which is what the sponsorship scandal is all about, and that it is high time the tainted money was paid back so that they will at least be able to say “promise made, promise kept”?

• (1430)

[*English*]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been clear, the minister has been clear and the party has been clear that if there were political contributions that resulted from illicitly gained funds, those funds will be returned to the Canadian taxpayer through the Receiver General. That is a promise made and that will be a promise kept. However we cannot keep that promise unless we let Justice Gomery do his work.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, now we know how the organizers of the Quebec section of the Liberal Party of Canada finance their election campaign. Jacques Corriveau had only to complain at a supper with Jean Pelletier and Alfonso Gagliano in December 1997 to end up with millions of dollars in government subcontracts, which enabled him to get paid for the Liberal campaign signs he had made for the 1997 campaign.

Can the Minister of Transport deny that the sponsorship money went to cancel out the Liberal Party debt with Jacques Corriveau for those campaign signs?

[*English*]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have already discussed that issue. I have already discussed the idea that we are not going to, and that it is inappropriate to comment on daily testimony.

Let us talk for a moment about the leadership role that Public Works and Government Services Canada is playing in creating better value for taxpayers and better services for Canadians. In the recent budget, Public Works and Government Services will deliver \$3.5 billion in savings to the Canadian people over the next five years, savings that will be invested in health care, in child care, in the Canadian military, in the environment and in building a better Canada.

I am proud of the role that Public Works and Government Services Canada has been playing in—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have seen the definition of better value during Jean Lafleur's testimony before the Gomery commission. He kept on saying for four days that the Government of Canada had got value for money.

For two weeks now, we have watched the process emerging. We have government contracts being awarded to cronies, direct solicitation of funds, and requests to organize fundraising. In short, we see the process.

I am putting this question to the Minister of Transport, because he is the one who spoke about tainted money. Does he include the tainted money that went to finance the Liberal Party in this?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we must avoid prejudging Justice Gomery's work. I am anxious to see his report but we must wait for it.

[*English*]

We know the Conservative Party does not understand the importance of judicial independence but I would hope the Bloc understands the importance of the independence of a judicial inquiry and would allow Justice Gomery to do his work.

This is another case where the Prime Minister has made a promise. We are keeping that promise and we are getting to the bottom of this issue.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## HEALTH

**Mr. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

During the last election, he asked the citizens of Canada to vote for the Liberal Party in order to put an end to credit-card medicine. Can he explain clearly and simply why, today, there are more doctors in Quebec who prefer VISA and MasterCard to the health insurance card than when he became Prime Minister?

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is why I am so proud the Liberal government signed an agreement with the provinces to invest more than \$41 billion over a 10-year period. It was done in order to reduce waiting lists and find a way to have more nurses and physicians.

I am very pleased to say that this government, the product of the party that created health insurance in Canada has invested the largest amount of money in Canadians' health in the country's history.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is the very party that is destroying public health care in this country because it has overseen the largest expansion of private medicine ever seen before in Canada since the Canada Health Act was brought into place, and yet it constantly promises the contrary.

In 2000 the Liberals promised that they would shut down Ralph Klein's private hospitals. Those hospitals are still on the go today. In 2004 they baited the Conservatives by saying that credit card medicine was something they would stop and yet we see it expanding in Quebec today.

Why is the Prime Minister breaking this fundamental promise?



*Oral Questions*

●(1435)

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona was the critic for health he indicated that the kind of clinics that the hon. member is talking about were outside the ambit of the Canada Health Act and have been outside the practice around health care in Canada since the days of Tommy Douglas. I want the hon. member to remember the words of the member for Elmwood—Transcona.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as everyone on earth knows, the Prime Minister does not make quick decisions. He was made aware of all the details surrounding the sponsorship scandal in November 2003, and it was not until three months later that he had his famous fit of anger. The Minister of Transport himself promised that the Liberals would not campaign using dirty money. We now know that is not true.

When will he pay back the tens of thousands of dollars in dirty money Jean Lafleur gave the Liberal Party?

[English]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has already made that commitment. We do not need to take lessons on transparency and openness from the alliance Conservative Party, a party that muzzles its members of Parliament by not allowing them to speak their mind on the floor of the House of Commons and a party that is censoring debate at its own policy conference.

Liberals are not afraid of debate and we are not afraid of the truth, which is why we are allowing Justice Gomery to do his work.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if those talking points apply to the ballistic missile debate that was supposed to take place here.

In referring to ad scam, the transport minister made a promise when he said, “We have no intention of campaigning with tainted money”.

We know now that they did. In fact, employees of Jean Lafleur were clearly intimidated by their boss into laundering dirty money back into the Liberal Party. This clearly contradicts a Liberal Party audit that claimed there was no dirty money and the transport minister's promise to pay back this money.

Why has the government not paid back the money the Liberal Party siphoned from Canadian taxpayers?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the commitment is very clear and it will be kept. The fact is that we believe very strongly in the work that Justice Gomery is doing, which is why the Prime Minister appointed Justice Gomery and why, on an ongoing basis, we are supporting Justice Gomery. We believe in the work he is doing.

Even Preston Manning wrote last week in the *Globe and Mail* that he supports and believes in the work of Justice Gomery. I would urge

the hon. members opposite to listen to Preston Manning if they will not listen to us and let Justice Gomery do his work.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in 2003, when the finance minister was the minister of public works, he was aware of an internal audit showing that taxpayers were being ripped off by \$146 million. The four year \$146 million rip-off was due to a poorly managed contract between Compaq and the Department of National Defence managed by the Department of Public Works. Government auditors had repeatedly raised red flags on this file as far back as 1999 but the Liberals, no surprise, did nothing.

Could the Minister of Finance tell us why the government was so irresponsible with this contract and why for four years the government failed to protect the interests of taxpayers?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that as soon as officials of the Department of Public Works became aware of this issue they acted and all \$146 million were recovered for the Canadian taxpayer. Promise made, promise kept.

\* \* \*

**CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS**

**Ms. Belinda Stronach (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following are the recent ramblings of the parliamentary secretary for Canada-U.S. relations, “let's embarrass the hell out of the Americans. They want to expand their markets and other countries are going to be leery”.

Could the Prime Minister explain how this will foster stronger Canada-U.S. relations to get the border open?

●(1440)

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the attention the hon. member is giving to the Canada-U.S. relationship because it is truly an important one. We realize that as a trading nation we have to pursue our commercial interests with the United States and with the rest of the world.

In this regard, I am very pleased that we are proceeding on the softwood lumber file, a file on which we have had a longstanding dispute for some 20 years, and that we have achieved a position for the territories and the provinces of Canada that has the potential for negotiating a settlement.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, just as the softwood lumber issue is about to come to a positive conclusion by legal means, the industry is extremely vulnerable, because the government has not put in place a real aid package.

*Oral Questions*

Instead of floating a proposed settlement in Washington, which does not have the support of all the parties involved, should the government not be assuming the industry's legal costs, thereby allowing the industry to hold on until the legal process has concluded, as it is about to?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, we had allocated over \$350 million in aid to the industry.

Frankly, the hon. member is incorrect on several of the points he mentioned. Our proposal to the United States has received the support of every Canadian province and territory, for the first time.

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will meet with President Bush on March 23, and it is rumoured that he will not raise the issue of softwood lumber at this meeting. In fact, no trade dispute appears to be on the agenda.

Will the Prime Minister admit that it would be completely irresponsible of him not to discuss softwood lumber with President Bush, given the importance of this issue and the importance of a return to full free trade in softwood lumber?

**Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during a recent conversation with President Bush, I raised the issue of softwood lumber. Each time I have met with the President, I have raised this issue and that of mad cow, and I intend to do so again at our meeting two weeks from now.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Guy Côté (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the 21 Liberals from Quebec, including the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, the Minister of Transport and the Prime Minister himself, continue to deny the existence of the fiscal imbalance. Yet, all the Liberals in the National Assembly and all the other parties voted unanimously in favour of a resolution confirming its existence.

I want the ministers who claim to be representing Quebec to tell me this: how can they go against a unanimous decision of the National Assembly of Quebec?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had a very good conversation with the Quebec minister of finance a number of days ago about issues related to fiscal matters in Quebec and in Canada. We agreed that we would respectfully disagree on certain theories about fiscal balances or imbalances and that it would be far better for all of us to focus on the practical solutions to real problems, moving forward in such a way that we improve the living conditions of Quebecers and Canadians, and that we do that constructively in partnership together.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Côté (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the political lieutenant in Quebec seems to have a great fondness for rainbow coalitions. Such a coalition exists at the National Assembly.

Before being elected he said that Ottawa was swimming in surpluses. How would he respond to the Quebec finance minister,

who said the only one to deny the fiscal imbalance is the one that benefits from it directly and that is the federal government?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in dealing with fiscal issues between Canada and the provinces, I am very pleased to say that federal transfers to the provinces are now at an all time record high, and they are rising. In some of those transfers, like health, for example, we have a built-in escalator at 6% a year. With respect to equalization, we also have a built-in escalator at 3.5% per year.

On all fronts, the transfers of the federal government to the provinces are now at a higher level than they have ever been in history, and they will continue to rise year over year.

\* \* \*

● (1445)

**CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the bungling on the Canada-U.S. file just continues on and on. The parliamentary secretary for Canada-U.S. relations has stated publicly that we are going to embarrass the hell out of the Americans so other countries will not buy from them.

The parliamentary secretary has been kicked out of the House. When will she be kicked out of her position?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada and the United States enjoy today the largest trading relationship that this world has ever seen. In spite of very high profile disputes, such as softwood lumber, BSE, live swine, more than 95% of that trading relationship is dispute free and those of us on this side of the House will work to ensure that it is 100% dispute free.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's inability to get the border open to live cattle exports has claimed another victim. A rancher in my riding phoned to say that the bank had called in their loan. Their before-tax income was only \$4,000. They have no money left on which to live.

How can the agriculture minister believe in his programs when farmers are going bankrupt?

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think all members in the House are very much touched by a story such as this about a particular producer. The reality is there has been substantial assistance provided to producers, particularly in respect to the BSE, some \$1.9 billion.

As the finance minister and I have said, we will continue to work with the industry and with the individual producers to provide them the kind of assistance that they require in light of the circumstances surrounding the border.

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard the stories of despair coming from families across Canada, yet the government continues to ignore the needs of its farmers.

We know that the finance minister has been asked to use the emergency reserve to help our producers. This is a real emergency. There are funds available and an immediate response is required.

Will the finance minister stop dithering, promise to use the emergency reserve fund and keep that promise?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, long before this issue was raised in the House, I indicated that in appropriate circumstances the emergency reserves of the Government of Canada could be used. In fact, we did that last year. We have already demonstrated the principle.

I am working with the Minister of Agriculture and my cabinet colleagues to determine the appropriate response. We will be timely in our reply.

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our leader, producers and Canadians have called on the government to use the emergency fund to give real aid to producers. Sadly, the finance minister from Saskatchewan has turned a blind eye to the suffering.

Today we heard the stories. Last night we heard the stories. When will the finance minister use the reserve fund for the purpose it was intended and help the farm crisis in Canada?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the contrast is really striking between the kind of partisanship that one sees in this chamber and the meeting I was privileged to have over the noon hour, when I sat down with the executive of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. We had a very useful discussion about circumstances on Canadian farms and how the Government of Canada might assist.

I want to thank President Friesen and the members of his executive for being very constructive and helpful in the advice they offered at noon hour today.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

We have learned today that a Montreal company founded by three former Canadian Forces fighter pilots has obtained a large contract with National Defence.

Can the minister tell us the role to be played by Top Aces Consulting and explain why this contract is a first in this country?

• (1450)

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and for his interest in the aeronautical industry in Montreal.

I am proud to announce today that the government has chosen Top Aces Consulting of Montreal to provide flight training services to the

Canadian Forces. This \$93 million contract will significantly improve the quality of flight training provided to the members of our military family.

This is great news for the Canadian Forces and great news for the aeronautical industry in Montreal.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### HEALTH

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Which is it? Two weeks ago he said “just watch me” about privatization. Today he says that this is outside of the Canada Health Act.

If the Canada Health Act does not stop privatization, what does?

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are enforcing the Canada Health Act. We shall enforce the Canada Health Act.

We need to remember that the kind of clinic the hon. member talks about, her predecessor said that those kinds of clinics, which are totally outside of the system, were outside the ambit of the act. I agree with her predecessor on that issue. That is how I have looked at the act and that is how I understand it.

We have provided \$41 billion for the next 10 years to the provinces on this issue. We stand for public delivery of health care and public pay for health care.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the Canada Health Act is not addressing what is happening with privatization. For years we have heard the Liberals say that they are going to stop it.

Let me talk about something else here. The warning gets clearer, the wolf is at the door. We can expect an influenza pandemic that will rival the one in 1919. Our own military experts believe that this avian flu could be used as a terrorist weapon.

We look to our doctors as the first stop. How is this Liberal government preparing family doctors for the pandemic?

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the director general of the WHO was here last year. The WHO has looked at our preparedness and has said, “Canada is the best prepared country in the world by far to deal with this issue”.

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#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today in a rare show of solidarity, MPs from all parties held a news conference with Friends of Sudan. We are trying to encourage our government and the United Nations to get the focus back on to Darfur. A genocide continues to unfold there. Our own General Roméo Dallaire spoke about it today in another setting.

*Oral Questions*

Will the government please send not just a voice of hope but take some actions that will give hope to the people in Darfur as they see the horror of another genocide unfolding upon them?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his interest in this very important issue. Yes, I have seen the solidarity of all parties calling to the attention of all of us the situation in Darfur.

We have been very active since October 2003. We have invested \$26 million for humanitarian aid, protection and peace building measures. We have given \$70 million since 2000 for humanitarian aid in Sudan. We have invested \$20 million to help the African Union to do a better job.

Next week I will call on our envoy, Mobina Jaffer, the senator—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the indication is that we only have three troops in the area.

China is once again showing aggressive action toward Taiwan through its anti-secession law, threatening military action as a possibility. Some of Taiwan's allies, Japan, the United States, have publicly raised their voice of concern.

When a democracy is threatened by a dictatorship, should we not be speaking up for the democracy? Why the silence?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what my colleague refers to when he talks about the silence. We have never lost an opportunity of engaging with the Chinese leadership. The Prime Minister was just in China and raised the issue of the human rights situation.

The government has been committed to the promotion of democracy and human rights around the world. We are a country that believes in the rule of law. We are a country that supports democracy everywhere. We never shy away from our responsibilities, engaging the actual leaders in it.

I did exactly the same thing when I was in Syria last week, and in Lebanon at the same time. We always do it.

• (1455)

**Mr. Ted Menzies (MacLeod, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, next Monday, China will pass a law authorizing the use of its massive military, including 700 missiles pointed at Taiwan, to enforce its one-China policy.

In the past decade the Liberal government has spent a billion dollars in foreign aid to China, despite its violent human rights record and authoritarian regime. This does not reflect Canadian values of good governance or respect for human rights.

Will the minister promise to remove China from CIDA's list of targeted countries today?

**Hon. Aileen Carroll (Minister of International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, no I will not. The reason I will not is China is the force that the hon. member has described. China influences hugely and will continue to influence the international scene. As such, it is very much incumbent on Canada to continue to work with the groups to build freedom in that country, to develop human rights and to develop a rules based society. We are doing that with the Canadian

Bar Association. We are helping China grow and influence it in the right way.

**Mr. Ted Menzies (MacLeod, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that concerns me greatly that missiles play into international aid policy.

The government also argues that China should not take responsibility for its own poor. Even the UN says China is eliminating poverty on its own. China is a nation that can and should take responsibility for its own development efforts.

Will the minister take the hint and promise to remove China from CIDA's list of targeted countries today?

**Hon. Aileen Carroll (Minister of International Cooperation, Lib.):** I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Chinese government is becoming more and more responsible to the fact that 25% of the world's poor live in China.

However, the Canadian government, through its development programs, is able to assist China to deal more and more with those issues by helping it, through sending experts, to improve its judicial and legislative system and to enable that government to build the capacity to accomplish the objectives the hon. member would have it accomplish.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Ms. Denise Poirier-Rivard (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, grain producers are suffering huge losses following the collapse of world prices. Our producers are faced not only with the federal government's withdrawal, but also with European and American governments' generous subsidies to their own producers. As a result, our producers are at a clear disadvantage and have been for years.

Does the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food intend to review the Canadian agricultural income stabilization program in order to provide support for our grain producers as rival countries do for theirs?

[English]

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, assisting our grains and oilseeds sector is a priority for the government. That is why we have in place an income stabilization program. That is why we have a spring and fall advance program. That is why we are working within the World Trade Organization to create a level playing field between the various trading partners so that our producers have an opportunity to compete in a fair and equitable situation.

[Translation]

**Ms. Denise Poirier-Rivard (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government cannot remain indifferent to the financial drama in which grain producers find themselves. They are victims of unfair competition and they need our support.

Why does the minister refuse to help them compete with producers who receive assistance from their governments?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since it obviously was not heard the first time, let me say it clearly the second time.

The Government of Canada does help our producers, including grains and oilseeds producers. We have an income support program. We have production insurance. We have a spring advance program. We have a fall advance program.

We are working within the WTO to deal with the structural issues, so that our producers can compete on a level playing field in the international market.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**CANADIAN SPACE PROGRAM**

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in December 2002 changes were made in the way the United States and Canada structured North American defence. The Prime Minister unilaterally decided not to have ballistic missile defence debated openly in Parliament as agreed to in the throne speech. Canada may no longer have privileged access to the U.S. space program.

Has the government received assurances that Canadian companies will still be able to bid on contracts for the United States space program?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have a very strong defence procurement arrangement with the United States which has been working for many years. I am sure that with the very strong Canadian technology that exists in this country that the Americans will always go and get the best possible technology that is available, some of it being in Canada.

We are confident that with the defence procurement arrangement that has served our industry and the defence realities in North America very well over the last few years, we will be there.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the United States space command, SPACECOM, was merged with strategic command, STRATCOM, which is integrated with its missile defence program. The Prime Minister's broken promise to have a full discussion on ballistic missile defence prior to a decision being made may have ended joint Canada-U.S. outerspace development.

Can the Minister of Industry guarantee that no Canadian jobs will be lost?

**Hon. David Emerson (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our trade relationship with the United States has hit a few bumps along the road, but it is stronger than ever. NAFTA has created hundreds of thousands of jobs in this country. It continues to do so and it will continue for years to come.

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**CANADIAN FORCES**

**Mr. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in light of today's announcement by the Governor General of the awarding of the Pearson Peace Medal to Lieutenant General

Roméo Dallaire for his contributions to peace, can the Minister of National Defence update the House on what the Government of Canada is doing to promote peace and stability around the world?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to be present this morning at the ceremony when the Governor General presented the Pearson Peace Medal to Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire. I was touched by his dignity and his simplicity as he received this much deserved honour and recognition for his service not only to Canada but to the world. As force commander in Rwanda he risked his life daily for those of others, and he represented the best of Canada and of Canadians.

I am proud to say that there are more than 1,500 Canadian Forces members around the world following in General Dallaire's footsteps as they work in Afghanistan, Bosnia, the Golan Heights and elsewhere in the world, bringing stability and allowing people to work in peace and develop democracies.

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**EQUALIZATION PROGRAM**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the finance minister declared that he had delivered \$710 million to the province of Saskatchewan. What the finance minister fails to understand is that this was not his money to deliver. This was not the government's money to deliver. This money belonged to the people of Saskatchewan. Simply put, the failure of the government to eliminate the clawback provisions on non-renewable natural resources is a betrayal to the people of Saskatchewan.

Will the minister stand today, stop betraying the people of Saskatchewan and commit to the elimination of the clawback provision?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that effectively for the current fiscal year we have in fact done just that. We have eliminated the clawback provision and because of that, Saskatchewan has benefited by \$590 million. On top of that, we have corrected some of the old anomalies in the calculation. That has added another \$120 million. Indeed it is true. Under the tenure of this finance minister, we have delivered to Saskatchewan an extra \$710 million.

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**BORDER SECURITY**

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a CBC report yesterday focused on illegal border crossings in my riding. People are just walking across the border at the Peace Arch crossing while the new border service is powerless to do anything. Officers cannot arrest suspects more than 100 feet away and so must call the police, who face the challenge of arriving before these illegals vanish.

*Points of Order*

The U.S. border service has doubled the enforcement on its side and the power to arrest people anywhere. How many more dangerous weapons and narcotics is the Deputy Prime Minister going to allow across the border before she acts?

● (1505)

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in fact we have acted. The amount of money that we have put into the newly created CBSA, Canada Border Services Agency, speaks to the government's commitment. In fact, the Minister of Finance provided significant additional resources in this budget to ensure that we can increase the number of officers on our borders.

I also want to reassure the hon. member that we do ongoing job safety and hazard analysis to ensure that our border agents have the tools they need to keep—

**The Speaker:** The time for question period has expired.

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**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Honour Sergey Gaplikov, Prime Minister and Chair of the Cabinet; His Honour Peter Krasnov, Chief of the President's Administration and Minister of Culture; and Her Honour Nina Souslonova, Minister of Health, all from the Chuvash Republic of the Russian Federation.

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

**The Speaker:** I would also like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Richard Neufeld, Minister of Energy and Mines of British Columbia.

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

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**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Canada—U.S.), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that the member for Medicine Hat, while asking a question in the House, said that I had been kicked out of the House. I find it interesting but not surprising.

I absented myself from the House for an urgent call from my office which had nothing to do with the proceedings of the this House, but it is not surprising—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor on a point of order. We will hear the hon. parliamentary secretary. I am sure she appreciates all the help, but she has the floor and we will want to hear her.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that the member for Medicine Hat, given the party that he belongs to, would prejudge a situation without having all of the facts at hand. We have seen this time after time on the part of the members of the Conservative Party who continually have one or two facts, prejudice, and come to a conclusion.

We know that it is improper for a member of the House to call attention to the absence of another. Therefore, the member for Medicine Hat committed unparliamentary behaviour in my view. In addition, for that member to come to the conclusion that my absence in this House was due to my being kicked out is amazing. That is my first point of order.

I have a second point of order and it concerns the member for Newmarket—Aurora, who asked a question in the House in which she purported to relate accurately comments that I made in the subcommittee on international trade in its public hearing yesterday. In fact, I would encourage the member for Newmarket—Aurora, that if she wishes to quote me, that she use the entire statement that I made in that committee.

The statement that I made in that committee was to agree with the witnesses that Canada should use chapter 20 of NAFTA in order to conduct a public review on chapter 19 and the irritants of 19. I agreed with the witnesses that this would embarrass the United States when the United States has as its main objective to negotiate binational trade agreements with other countries. Other countries would possibly be leery of signing a binational with the United States given Canada's experience of the United States not respecting chapter 19.

● (1510)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. At least we now know why the hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora did not quote the entire statement of the parliamentary secretary. She could not have got it in on the 35 second limit on the question.

With respect to the parliamentary secretary allegedly having been kicked out of the House, as was stated, I agree that the hon. member for Medicine Hat may have stepped over the line. I was not sure which house he was referring to and since he did not say the hon. member was not here, I was not sure whether he meant this one so I did not let the matter attract my attention.

However, if he meant that the hon. parliamentary secretary was kicked out of this House, I know he will want to retract that part of the statement because he knows that making reference to that only causes disorder in the House, as happened at the time during the hon. member's question. Other than that, I do not know whether he is intending to respond in some way to this. I will hear briefly from the hon. member for Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and imagine, all of that without taking a breath. I assume that phone call was not from George Bush.

I want to make it very clear that I certainly did not want to leave the House with the impression that the member was called outside the House just because I was getting up to ask a tough question.

**The Speaker:** We will deal now with the hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

**Ms. Belinda Stronach (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to repeat the quote: “let's embarrass the hell out of the Americans. They want to expand their markets and other countries are going to be leery” if they hear of Canada's experience.

**The Speaker:** I had not intended to give the member a chance to repeat what we have heard a few times already, but perhaps the matter has now been sufficiently clarified.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** Mr. Speaker, I only wish to state I find it unfortunate that the member for Medicine Hat is not big enough to simply say he is sorry.

**The Speaker:** I caution hon. members from referring to the absence of members. I have done that before. It is out of order. Whether it is something that requires a retraction is another matter, but I would hope the hon. member will not repeat that performance and all hon. members will follow the example we try to set in this regard.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

### CANADIAN LANDMINE FUND

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report on the Canadian Landmine Fund on completing the task.

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•(1515)

[*English*]

### CERTIFICATE OF NOMINATION

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 110(2) I am tabling a certificate of nomination with respect to the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This certificate stands referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

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[*Translation*]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, the APF, on the meeting of the APF in Hue, Vietnam, on January 29 and 30, 2005.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, respecting its participation in the meeting of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, held in London, England, January 20 and 21, 2005, and its participation in the first part of the 2005 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held in Strasbourg, France, January 24 to 28, 2005.

## Routine Proceedings

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on supplementary estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005.

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[*Translation*]

### PETITIONS

#### IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition signed by individuals in Montreal, including in my riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard, on the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

The petitioners are calling on the Canadian Parliament to increase quotas for family class sponsorships and reduce the time it takes to process such applications.

[*English*]

#### AUTISM

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and present this petition on behalf of many families in the riding of South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale. The petitioners ask Parliament to amend the Canada Health Act to include as medically necessary therapy for children suffering from autism. The petitioners also ask Parliament to contribute to the creation of academic chairs at Canadian universities, chairs dedicated to the research and treatment of this disease.

#### IMMIGRATION

**Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today which has been signed by over 200 people from my riding of Thornhill. The petitioners are asking that pursuant to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, and in the spirit of Canada's commitment to humanitarian assistance, Parliament increase the total of parental sponsorship admissions and reduce the waiting times of such applicants.

[*Translation*]

#### MARRIAGE

**Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I hereby table a petition on behalf of constituents in my riding. This petition expresses their opposition to Bill C-38.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the petition I have here the petitioners recognize that traditional marriage is the best foundation for society, families and the raising of children. Therefore, they ask that Parliament uphold the traditional definition of marriage, that being the union of one man and one man to the exclusion of all others.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

## TEXTILE AND CLOTHING INDUSTRY

**Hon. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to submit a petition on behalf of clothing and textile workers in the ridings of Beauce and Mégantic—L'Érable.

• (1520)

[English]

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present two petitions containing several hundred names of people in my riding. These petitioners pray that Parliament will ensure that marriage is defined as Canadians wish it to be defined, that is, the legal union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, and that Parliament would use section 33 of the charter, the notwithstanding clause, if necessary, to preserve and protect the definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, these petitioners from my riding are very concerned that women who are contemplating an abortion procedure should have full access to knowledge from their physician so that they understand the risks of the procedure. The petitioners request that Parliament bring in a women's right to know act that would guarantee this.

## MARRIAGE

**Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the following petition in which the petitioners call upon Parliament to enact legislation against redefining marriage. They would like to express their view that marriage should be protected and remain as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions from the people of Kildonan—St. Paul. They pray that Parliament will define marriage in federal law as being a lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a group of eight petitions containing hundreds of names from people in my riding and across this country who are concerned, as we have heard today, about the definition of marriage. They call on Parliament to preserve and protect the current definition of marriage, which is the lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

## CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition as well. People are concerned about child pornography and they call on Parliament to take all necessary measures to ensure protection for children from child pornography and sexual exploitation.

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Newton—North Delta, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the constituents of Newton—North Delta to present petitions calling upon Parliament

to use all possible legislative and administrative measures to preserve and protect the current definition of marriage as being the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others and to recognize that marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition on behalf of members of the South Shore—St. Margaret's constituency and the towns specifically of Bridgewater, Blockhouse, Lunenburg, New Germany and the Walden area. The petitioners pray that Parliament define marriage in federal law as being a lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

## AUTISM

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions signed by about 100 Canadians who are concerned about children suffering from autism spectrum disorder. They call upon Parliament to amend the Canada Health Act and corresponding regulations to include IBI and ABA therapy for children with autism as a medically necessary treatment and to contribute as well to the creation of academic chairs at universities in each province to teach this therapy.

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present two petitions here today. These petitions were presented to our Langley riding, and the petitioners strongly oppose any legislation that would in any way change the traditional definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman and excluding all others.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 64, 65, 67 and 71.

[Text]

Question No. 64—**Mr. Bill Casey:**

With regard to the number of foreign nationals, if any, working on Canadian navy vessels on the East Coast of Canada: (a) how many are currently engaged in repairing, upgrading or refitting of Canadian navy vessels on the East Coast of Canada; (b) on which vessels, or class of vessels are these workers assigned; (c) what are the countries of origin of said workers; (d) excluding BAE Systems, what other foreign-owned corporations have employees engaged in the repairing, upgrading or refitting of Canadian navy vessels on the East Coast of Canada?



*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in responding to parts a) through d), the Department of National Defence applied the following definitions. First, “engaged” refers to workers employed in performing physical work on site onboard Canadian navy vessels. Second, “foreign national” refers to all non-Canadian citizens. Finally, only contractors directly contracted by the Department were solicited for information and only with respect to their own employees. National Defence contracts (as well as those contracts issued by the Department of Public Works and Government Services on behalf of National Defence) permit subcontracting. It is ultimately the prime contractor that decides whether or not to subcontract. Since the Crown is not privy to these subcontracts, no contractual relationship is created between the Crown and third party subcontractors. As a result, records are neither created nor retained by National Defence concerning contractual arrangements between a prime contractor and its subcontractors.

a) On 27 January 2005, 18 foreign nationals were working on repairing, upgrading, or refitting Canadian navy vessels on the east coast of Canada.

b) The 18 foreign nationals were working on the following ships:

a. HMCS Fredericton – 15

b. HMCS Halifax – 1

c. Two other foreign nationals are dividing their time between HMCS Fredericton and HMCS Charlottetown, half days on each ship.

c) The country of origin of the 18 foreign nationals was as follows:

a. HMCS Fredericton - 8 Portuguese, 5 French, and 2 British

b. HMCS Halifax – 1 American

c. The two other foreign nationals dividing their time between HMCS Fredericton and HMCS Charlottetown, half days on each ship, were, respectively, British and of unknown origin, the country was not specified by the employer, Canadian Maritime Engineering.

d) The following foreign-owned corporations have employees engaged in the repairing, upgrading or refitting of Canadian navy vessels on the east coast of Canada: SEMT Pielstick, and L3 Wescam. All other companies employing foreign nationals in the repairing, upgrading or refitting of Canadian navy vessels on the east coast of Canada are Canadian owned.

**Question No. 65—Mr. Bill Casey:**

With regards to the refit of HMCS Fredericton in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Halifax Shipyards): (a) what will the total cost of the refit be for HMCS Fredericton; (b) when does the Canadian Armed Forces expect HMCS Fredericton to complete her current maintenance cycle and return to full operations with the fleet; (c) in regards to the maintenance and improvement aboard HMCS Fredericton, are there any technicians from France involved in the overall refit process and if any, from what corporation do they originate; (d) should the refit for HMCS Fredericton reveal that other work or maintenance is needed, what is the expected percentage or amount of “work arising” costs?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the response is as follows:

a) The total cost of the HMCS Fredericton docking work period, 23 April to 10 September 2004, including work arisings, was \$7.35 million.

b) The docking work period is complete. HMCS Fredericton is now in a “technical readiness phase” designed to bring the ship up to maximum operational readiness, that is, trials, training, and second level maintenance.

c) National Defence conducted an extensive search of the records and did not find evidence of any technicians from France involved in the docking work period for HMCS Fredericton between 23 April and 10 September 2004.

It should be noted that National Defence contracts, as well as those contracts issued by the Department of Public Works and Government Services on behalf of National Defence, permit subcontracting. It is ultimately the prime contractor that decides whether or not to subcontract. Since the Crown is not privy to these subcontracts, no contractual relationship is created between the Crown and third party subcontractors. As a result, records are neither created nor retained by National Defence concerning contractual arrangements between a prime contractor and its subcontractors.

d) The “work arisings” cost for HMCS Fredericton was approximately 23%, which is typical for Halifax class ships.

**Question No. 67—Mr. John Reynolds:**

Have student loans been settled for an amount less than the actual amount owing and, if so, how often did this occur?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, during fiscal year 2003-2004, the Canada student loan portfolio consisted of 250,000 accounts, of which we received 349 requests for compromise settlement. Of these, we settled only 51 accounts for the following reasons: hardship; statute-barred; medical reasons; and balance remaining following receipt of proceeds from deceased client's estate.

**Question No. 71—Mr. Joe Preston:**

With regard to the government fuel taxes: (a) what formula, if any at all, does the government plan to use for sharing the fuel taxes; (b) if such formula is employed, how many cents per litre of fuel taxes collected would flow directly to municipalities; and (c) does the government plan to set aside any funds for distribution and, if any (i) what would be their amounts, (ii) how would they be allocated among Canada's municipalities, (iii) when would the money be allocated?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on February 1, 2005, the Government of Canada announced how it plans to share a portion of federal gas tax revenues with municipalities to make investments in sustainable infrastructure. Beginning in 2005-06, the funding will ramp up over five years, for a total of \$5 billion. By 2009-2010 the funding flowing to municipalities will amount to \$2 billion, the equivalent of 5 cents-per-litre of the federal gas tax. This represents a strategic investment in Canada's cities and communities.

*The Budget*

Funding will be allocated to the provinces, territories, and First Nations, on a per capita basis, with \$37.5 million, equivalent to 0.75% of total funding, assured for each of Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Prince Edward Island. This recognizes the need for less-populated jurisdictions to have sufficient funds for significant infrastructure investments, and the increased costs associated with infrastructure in northern and remote areas.

The Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities) is presently negotiating bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories, which will further outline details of how the federal gas tax funds will be spent within each jurisdiction, including the allocation to municipalities.

The 5-year funding profile for the sharing of the gas tax revenues was announced in the budget presented to the House of Commons on February 23, 2005.

\* \* \*

• (1525)

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 68 and 75 could be made orders for return, the returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 68—**Mr. Rob Anders:**

With regard to the transportation of armed forces personnel: (a) did the government rent Antonov planes to transport the DART Team to South Asia for disaster relief, and, if so, how much did it cost and for how long were they rented; (b) what type of planes were used, how much did their rental cost, and who were they were rented from, to transport Canadian Forces to Manitoba for assistance during the 1997 floods; and (c) what type of planes were used, how much did their rental cost, and who were they were rented from, to transport Canadian Forces to Quebec for assistance during the 1998 ice storm?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 75—**Mr. Rob Anders:**

For each year since 2000, did the government use any rented aircraft to transport Canadian Forces to Afghanistan and, if so: (a) what type of aircraft was rented; (b) who were they rented from; and (c) how much did each rental cost the government?

(Return tabled)

[Translation]

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** I ask, Mr. Speaker, that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[English]

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-2, in the name of the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar, is acceptable to the government and the documents are tabled immediately.

That an Order of this House do issue for a copy of the letter that the Chairman of the Board of the Canada Post Corporation wrote to Mr. André Ouellet on September 21, 2004, requesting receipts that the Minister of National Revenue referred to during the Oral Question period on Wednesday, October 6, 2004.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-2 be deemed to have been adopted?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** I would ask that other Notices of Motion for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed that the remaining Notices of Motion be allowed to stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**THE BUDGET**

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from March 8 consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my valued colleague from Ottawa—Orléans.

I am extremely pleased to have the opportunity today to speak to what I see is an outstanding budget. Budget 2005 has in it specific measures that will benefit my riding of Kitchener Centre.

I am proud of the new initiatives announced in the recent budget. It points our nation in the right direction, a direction that will benefit all Canadians.

Budget 2005, entitled “Delivering on Commitments”, responds to Canadian priorities with responsible measures that invest in people and achieve a stronger environmentally responsible economy.

I happened to be parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment when Canada ratified the Kyoto protocol in 2002. Canada's changing climate is simply everyone's responsibility. In my opinion, nothing is more essential to our health and to the quality of life than clean air and clean water.

*The Budget*

Climate change is a global problem and it requires a global solution. This solution is reachable through our Kyoto accord agreement. There is no doubt that this change will be a challenge, but dealing with climate change while ensuring a robust economic growth is something we can do together.

How we address climate change can help us meet policy objectives in the areas of innovation, energy efficiency, clean air, mass public transportation, agriculture and forestry.

Good climate change policy will contribute to a better quality of life and better health for Canadians today and for future generations.

Canadians have demonstrated, whether it is at work in industry or in their homes, that they are ready to be part of the efforts to preserve our natural environment and to address climate change. That is why it makes good sense to expand on the successful EnerGuide for houses retrofit incentive program so more Canadians can renovate their homes for future energy savings.

Kitchener's business community as part of Canada's technology triangle is very keen to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented in developing energy efficient technologies.

Industry has already demonstrated that greenhouse gas emissions can substantially be reduced in ways that are cost effective and that generate ancillary benefits to improve companies' competitive positions.

Across Waterloo region, companies such as Teleflex GFI, Arise Technologies and ATS Automation Tooling Systems have become industry leaders in developing technologies that address our environmental responsibilities while improving productivity.

Our government's strategic investments in ideas and enabling technologies, \$810 million in this year's budget, will continue to contribute and support research and the development, and new technologies.

Businesses across Waterloo region spent over \$277 million in research and development in 2002 according to an industrial research and development study that was prepared for Canada's Technology Triangle Inc.

Budget 2005 continues to reflect the federal government's commitment to building a world-class research environment. It has measures such as \$375 million over five years for three federal research granting councils; an additional \$165 million to Genome Canada to sustain its support for breakthrough genomics research; and \$75 million over five years to help meet the indirect costs of federally supported research in hospitals and universities.

Education and health care have continued to be two priorities in my community and across Canada since 1997.

Business growth is a critical part of any economy. Small businesses across Canada but especially in Kitchener attract investment to stimulate economic growth as well as job creation.

Last year I had the opportunity to meet some of Canada's most dynamic women when I travelled with the Prime Minister's task force on women entrepreneurs. We met women in every province and territory of this great nation.

●(1530)

Many businesses are succeeding through hard work and good ideas, but there are other businesses that require government resources in order to thrive. I am pleased to see that budget 2005 includes a commitment to work with business organizations to further improve the productivity environment for Canadian small businesses. Small business is the fastest growing sector in our economy and the one that is creating jobs at the fastest rate.

To support business development, budget 2005 proposes to reduce the statutory corporate income tax rate by two percentage points by 2010 and to end the corporate surtax. This is good news for the economy of Canada.

Kitchener's manufacturing sector is pleased to see measures in budget 2005 that ensure equipment cost analysis rates are better aligned with the useful life of these assets. More realistic depreciation rates will encourage companies to continue to invest and grow. What is good for business is good for Kitchener and is good for Canada. Budget 2005 includes important initiatives to achieve productive and sustainable economic bases.

The success of an economy can be judged on its ability to secure its social foundations. The government's prudence in managing Canada's public purse has provided the opportunity continued investment in order to meet our social needs and to ensure a greater equality of opportunity in every community across Canada.

During the last Parliament I was a member of the Prime Minister's task force that looked at seniors issues. I met with seniors in Kitchener and across this great nation. It was clear that Canada's seniors needed support from the government in order to ensure a quality of life in their golden years.

Budget 2005 responds to these needs with improved support through the guaranteed income supplement program. This program benefits low income seniors and it will be increased by \$2.7 billion over the next five years. The result will be monthly benefits that are increased by \$36 for single seniors and by \$58 for couples by January 2007.

Further, budget 2005 commits funding for the redevelopment of the new horizons program for seniors, to promote voluntary sector activities and to support seniors. If I heard one thing across Canada during my task force work dealing with seniors issues, the reinvestment and reinvigoration of the new horizons program was a key theme.

There is no greater investment a government can make than in our children. A good start in their earliest years can level the playing field, inspire confidence, foster life skills, encourage ambition and make possible greater goals for our greatest asset, our children.

*The Budget*

Budget 2005 delivers on the Liberal government's commitment to work with Ontario to build high quality, universally inclusive and accessible early learning and child care. This commitment translates to \$5 billion for early learning and child care initiatives across the country.

I have a great appreciation for the kind of vibrancy that the arts community contributes to Kitchener. Whether it is the Waterloo Regional Children's Museum or our incredible Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery or Theatre & Company or the kinds of productions that we see at Centre in the Square, we see through these initiatives our artistic heritage, our creativity and our national identity played out for us.

The tomorrow starts today program is an essential part of ensuring that Canada's arts and culture is given a voice, a stage and a venue. Budget 2005 extends this important program for another five years.

I have seen the kind of investment and creativity when the government partners on the ground with the arts community which is alive and well. For example, there is the Waterloo Regional Arts Council, as well as the Open Ears festival of music and sound.

As we look forward, the investments in this budget of an additional \$300 million over the next five years to support immigration settlement and integration services across Canada can be no more appreciated or better reflected than in the services that are provided by a multitude of agencies in my riding of Kitchener Centre.

In conclusion, budget 2005 is both a responsible and a visionary document. I am proud of the Liberal government's track record. I am proud of these commitments that we are delivering on.

• (1535)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member extolled the virtues of the great government babysitting bureaucracy that her government is proposing at the expense of the choices of women and families. I am wondering why the government feels it has the right to take the choice away from women and families on how to raise their own children.

Let us face it. This new babysitting bureaucracy is going to involve massive new costs well beyond the \$5 billion laid out in the budget. Those new costs are going to be picked up in the long term through higher taxes for middle class working families. This means those families will have even less capacity to make their own child care decisions. They will have fewer dollars in their pockets and will be required to work longer hours. It will force them into a system of child care that they do not want.

The Vanier Institute conducted a comprehensive study. The Vanier Institute by the way supports the government's child care initiative. In that study, 70% of the parents questioned, and this is especially true of women, said that they would rather have the option of keeping one parent in the home with the children instead of having a government bureaucracy raise their kids for them. In fact government day care was the second last option, the fifth out of six, for the vast majority of Canadian parents.

The minister responsible has said that the decision and the sacrifice of keeping one parent in the home is nothing more than a frivolous luxury akin to having ice cream once a week or chocolate twice a day. In light of that fact, how does the member feel about her colleague and this initiative which will take choice away from women and families and put it in the hands of government bureaucrats and politicians?

**Hon. Karen Redman:** Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my colleague opposite that as the mother of four children I did have the choice of staying home, which I did until our youngest son entered grade one.

• (1540)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** So why do you want to take that away?

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** Order. We are trying to listen to the answer. The chief government whip has the floor.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** Mr. Speaker, I concur with the hon. member opposite, who someday may have the life experience that I have had. Choice is absolutely fundamental. All parents whether they choose to work inside the home or outside the home should have a choice.

When I was a trustee with the Waterloo County Board of Education I happened to be president of seven child care centres. I acknowledged that regulated, consistently high quality, education focused child care allowed parents exactly the kind of choice that the member opposite is asking for.

Our investment in child care will be tailored in partnership with the provinces. There is some amazing work being done right across the country.

There is a child care centre in Waterloo region called the Butterfly Learning Centre which is non-profit and has been invested in by Conestoga-Rovers. "Let's talk science" is a syllabus which is now being taught to two-year-old children and older. Junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten teachers are rotated through the centre so the children are not displaced.

This provides the peace of mind to those parents who for whatever their motivation choose to work, that they will have high quality regulated child care to choose from.

I would also point out that yes, this is a women's issue, but it is also a community and a societal issue. If we look at the kind of remuneration early childhood education providers get, there needs to be capacity building so that the workers who are taking care of children in regulated child care centres earn decent money so that they too can realize their dreams.

We are offering choice to Canadian parents.

**Mr. Marc Godbout (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the chief government whip for sharing her time with me.

[*Translation*]

As the member for Ottawa—Orléans, it is a privilege for me to have the opportunity today to speak on behalf of my constituents on the recent budget tabled by our government.

*The Budget*

More specifically, I want to elaborate on the highlights of the budget and the provisions that apply more to the challenges faced by several Canadian communities, such as Ottawa—Orléans, which are in full growth.

In my opinion, we have a solid, balanced and responsible budget. It is a budget of vision, audacity and fiscal prudence. In keeping its promises, our government is ensuring our economic and social future by providing a realistic strategic framework applicable over a 10-year period.

[English]

Budget 2005 proposes an equitable and competitive tax system without endangering our productivity and economic growth. Under the measures set out in the budget, the amount of income that Canadians may earn without paying federal income tax will increase to \$10,000, which means that 860,000 taxpayers will be removed from the tax rolls, including 240,000 seniors.

RRSP annual contribution limits will also be increased to \$22,000. The corporate surtax will be eliminated and the 21% general corporate income tax will be reduced to 19%, maintaining our tax rate advantage relative to the United States.

These measures that have been taken are by no means small. We must recognize that our government is working hard at prudently paving the way toward the reduction of the Canadian fiscal burden.

I also consider the budget as a green budget. The preservation of our environment is an important issue for all of us, and especially for the people Ottawa—Orléans. In order to address climate change and ensure a sustainable environment, I am pleased that the government is making a major investment of more than \$5 billion over the next five years for initiatives such as the clean fund, the wind power production incentive and the green municipal funds.

I believe that an initiative such as the green municipal funds perfectly illustrates the strong partnership that has been established between our government and the municipalities. Indeed, we trust that the municipalities are more qualified in identifying and developing projects that will help keep our cities clean and green. It is a fact and we took steps to recognize it.

In the same vein, I was also pleased to note in the budget that our government demonstrates that we have a people's agenda we intend to follow. Several commitments have been made in this regard.

Our government, for instance, has always been committed to health. It represents the one social policy Canadians constantly identify as their number one priority. Accordingly, under the Liberal government's 10 year plan to strengthen health care, Ontario will receive \$16 billion in additional health care funding. Of this amount, \$13.9 billion will be for core health programs, \$194 million for medical equipment and \$2.1 billion for reducing waiting times. I must admit that such commitments to strengthen and secure Canada's social foundation make me proud to be part of this government.

What social foundation could be more important than our children? Our government rightly recognized that high quality child care and early learning opportunities are essential to support children's physical, emotional, social, linguistic and intellectual

development. In that regard, the budget is granting \$5 billion over five years to start building, in cooperation with the provinces and territories, a framework for an early learning and child care initiative.

This is quite an achievement. Imagine that every dollar spent in this program could save up to \$7 in the long term. As a trained educator, I believe this is an important way of supporting young parents of Ottawa—Orléans in the care of their children.

This budget also includes good news for our seniors. Guaranteed income supplement benefits for low income seniors will be increased by \$2.7 billion over five years. Funding for the new horizons program for seniors will also be increased from \$10 million to \$25 million a year to promote voluntary sector activities by and in support of seniors. There is little doubt in my mind that our community will benefit from this, Ottawa—Orléans being considered by many as a wonderful community in which to retire.

As for our many welcome and appreciated newcomers, budget 2005 provides an increase of \$298 million over five years for settlement and integration programs for immigrants. Ontario alone will receive approximately 60% of this funding.

● (1545)

[Translation]

Ottawa—Orléans is a bustling community. It boasts a high level of skill, dynamism and leadership and benefits from broad cultural and linguistic diversity, which is not only one of the true jewels of the Ottawa Valley but a gemstone of our Canadian mosaic.

However, like so many other Canadian communities, Ottawa—Orléans is currently in a context of rapid growth and change and must face many challenges. That is why, with the participation of my provincial and municipal counterparts—whom I wish to thank—we have set up a public partnership so that the different levels of government can work together.

That concept is behind team Ottawa—Orléans, a joint initiative that—I am proud to say—was launched with great success a little over a week ago. I know this type of innovative partnership will benefit from the programs and initiatives available in this budget.

We have shown clearly that we are listening to the needs expressed by the cities and communities. We know they need additional funding. We need simply to recall that in the 2004 budget, we adopted important measures to give the municipalities \$7 billion over the next few years in the form of a full GST rebate.

[English]

I applaud the fact that Ontario will receive \$1.9 billion over the next five years as a result of our decision to transfer a portion of the federal gas tax revenue to municipalities. By year five, Ontario will receive \$746 million per year in stable and predictable funding representing 5¢ per litre. This means better roads, an improved transit system and more sustainable infrastructure.

*The Budget*

Although Ottawa—Orléans is more than ready to assume its rightful place in the national capital region and at the federal level, I strongly believe that it is still far from having reached its full potential. The incredible population growth the region has been facing for the past 20 years has created enormous economic, social and cultural needs that must be addressed.

As previously mentioned, I am more than pleased by the government's budget commitment toward Canadians and especially toward their communities. I think it is a faithful reflection of our election promises, both nationally and locally.

I can be counted on to work hard so that the rural parts of Ottawa—Orléans may eventually benefit from the municipal rural infrastructure program. I also hope that a portion of the funds allocated to the municipality through Canada's strategic infrastructure program will be reserved for social infrastructure. For instance, in Ottawa—Orléans such an investment could be used for the creation of an arts and culture centre, an athletic complex and a multi-service centre for seniors.

I was also pleased to note that the Canadian Forces will benefit from a \$12 billion investment over five years, the largest increase in a five year period in the last 20 years. Another \$1 billion over five years will be delivered in support of key national security initiatives. In addition, the government is committed to expanding the forces by 5,000 troops and the reserves by 3,000. What a great way to back our troops here and overseas.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, I would have liked to see more attention paid to other needs, such as the development of official language communities or post secondary education. However, rest assured, I will defend the next budget.

Although we are all aware that we can do even more in the years to come, I truly believe that the budget presented by the hon. Minister of Finance reflects the integrity and sense of responsibility of our government. You will agree that he has illustrated our determination to meet our commitments while maintaining a balanced budget.

[*English*]

As the member of Parliament for Ottawa—Orléans, I am proud and feel privileged to represent and serve my constituents. Under the leadership of our Prime Minister, we are more than ever dedicated to improving the well-being of all Canadians. I strongly believe that this budget is a step further in the right direction. Therefore it has my full support and I congratulate the Minister of Finance on a job well done.

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over the last several days I have been listening to the budget presentations and particularly to government members who are getting their speeches from the PMO. This is pretty well the mantra of the Liberal Party.

The Prime Minister told Canadians that this would be a budget for all Canadians. He also told Canadians that the alienation of different parts of the country would end under his rule.

This budget is absolutely discriminatory to the province of British Columbia. Nowhere in the budget is there mention of the pine beetle crisis that is in B.C. right now and which is devastating the forests and threatening the forest industry in British Columbia. There is not one cent in that budget. It is almost like the government does not care.

In 2002 the Prime Minister, who was then the finance minister, was in Prince George at a Liberal fundraising event and he told the world that the pine beetle crisis had to be considered a national issue and that the federal government would be there to do its share. He said that it would be a priority for his government.

I guess one gets altitude amnesia when one flies back over the Rockies because that was all we heard about it.

I have to tell the members opposite that I honestly expected the Liberal government would have at least recognized in the budget, first, that there is a province called British Columbia, and second, that a huge natural disaster is going on called the pine beetle crisis. If it had been recognized I would have expected the government to commit a realistic amount of funding to help out in the fight against the disaster and help mitigate the damage.

How can the member stand there and talk about how great the budget is when the Prime Minister made promises regarding British Columbia and did not keep them?

• (1555)

**Mr. Marc Godbout:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the member that I wrote my speech, not the PMO. I do not know where he gets his information but he is wrong on that.

The member said that British Columbia will not benefit from this budget. The transfer payments in the budget to the municipalities will see more than \$22 billion being transferred to cities such as Vancouver, Victoria and the other magnificent cities of British Columbia.

For the member to say that we have not addressed the needs of British Columbia is saying that we have not addressed the needs of cities, such as the one the hon. member represents. I take offence to that.

As for the pine beetle, the minister has already said that we are working very closely with the Government of British Columbia to study the best way to eradicate that problem.

I think our record stands. We are the government representing all of Canada.

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was very shocked to hear the member even bring up the matter of gas taxes.

I assume the member campaigned in his riding during the election on a promise to deliver, through transfer payments, 5¢ a litre in gas taxes back to the cities for infrastructure and road upkeep. That is a promise made and a promise broken. We saw the finance minister stand up and talk about 1.5¢ a litre.

*The Budget*

How does the member intend to explain to the people who trusted him to deliver 5¢ a litre, when he comes back with a paltry 1.5¢? This amount falls far short of his commitment, the finance minister's commitment and the Liberal Party's commitment in general.

**Mr. Marc Godbout (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am more than proud of what we have accomplished in that respect. I have a letter here from the mayor of Ottawa, and I do represent the city of Ottawa—

**Mr. Andrew Scheer:** What part?

**Mr. Marc Godbout:** Orléans, which is just east of Ottawa. The mayor said:

The 2005 Federal Budget is historic for Canada's cities because it confirms your commitment to ensure municipalities have a seat at the table in nation building.

As Mayor of Canada's fourth largest city, I am pleased with your government's plan to flow through a portion of the federal gas tax starting at \$600 million and ramping up to \$2 billion a year by 2009-10.

If the mayor of Ottawa is satisfied, and I do represent the people of Ottawa, I think it is promise made and promise kept again.

**Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the budget and what it means for us as Canadians and the residents of Simcoe—Grey.

I would like to begin by saying that the Conservative Party of Canada does not believe the Canadian public wishes to go to an election, at a cost of close to \$300 million, less than 12 months after the last one. Therefore, we will not defeat the government at this time.

It is interesting to note that positive items in the budget are taken from the Conservative platform and the government is following the Conservative Party's lead on areas that are important to Canadians. Such areas include: tax relief for low and middle income Canadians, as per the Conservative amendment to the throne speech; reduction of corporate taxes to help stimulate the economy, create jobs and raise government revenue, as per the Conservative platform; the caregiver tax credit, which again comes directly from our Conservative platform; and the removal of the CAIS cash deposit requirement, part of a Conservative supply day motion, supported by everyone except the Liberals.

I would like to add that our agricultural critic, the member for Haldimand—Norfolk, did an excellent job in identifying how the government could bring immediate support to our farmers, rather than the continued broken promises we see from the government that continues to ignore the brutal reality our farmers are facing on a daily basis.

Although the current government has taken some of the Conservative steps we have introduced, the Liberal budget does not go far enough or occur fast enough to have a substantial impact on the well-being of Canadians. As usual, we see a great deal of dithering. Most of the money is delayed until the decade, with no real plan. Lots of promises, with no intent to deliver. For example, the tax break I mentioned just a minute ago amounts to a savings of about \$16 per person this year. What to do with all that cash?

The lack of immediate commitment in the budget illustrates the government is not taking warning signs that Canada's high priority

programs could be put in jeopardy if comprehensive steps are not taken to grow the economy before the demographic crunch.

The facts with respect to the demographic crunch are very simple. In 2004 seniors, Canadians aged 65 or older, comprised about 13.1% of Canada's population. By 2030, this number will nearly double to about 25% of Canada's population.

The Conservative Party of Canada devised a standard of living strategy in a prebudget submission that if implemented, would have ensured that high priority social programs would be available to Canadians when they required them. These social programs include health care, agricultural support programs, national defence, environment, women's initiatives, affordable housing, infrastructure and senior's programs. Unfortunately, the Liberals did not adopt our policies.

The key components of the Conservative Party's standard of living strategy are: the encouragement of investment in Canada's productive capacity; a reduction of corporate, capital and payroll taxes; a streamlined regulatory environment; a more rapid reduction of the national debt; a reduction of federal spending to sustainable levels; the encouragement of education and training; and the promotion and stimulation of affordable housing development.

It is unfortunate that while the Liberals had a majority government, we saw nothing more than waste, mismanagement and scandal. I firmly believe the billions of tax dollars that were sent to Ottawa would have been better managed if they were left in the pockets of Canadians.

The facts are absolutely astounding. Did members know that Canadians have seen their real take-home pay increase by only 3.6% over the past 15 years? This amounts to a person earning \$35,000 a year receiving an annual take-home pay increase of roughly \$1.60 a week. However, since 1996-97, government revenue has soared by 40%.

A family of four in Canada has \$24,000 less to spend per year than the same size family living in the United States. That amounts to \$2,000 a month that could be paying down a mortgage, providing for a child's education or for investing in retirement.

I remind members of the billions of tax dollars that were mismanaged by this Liberal government that should have been put back into Canadians' pockets. Some examples of the mismanaged funds include the long gun registry, \$1 billion and counting, wasted on a program that has done absolutely nothing to make us more safe as we see and hear on the news every day. I support gun control and I support gun safety, but I do not support the long gun registry that only penalizes law-abiding Canadians.

*The Budget*

•(1600)

With respect to the sponsorship scandal, \$100 million was misspent. Canadians are truly embarrassed by their government's behaviour and what angers most of us is the arrogance dripping from the Liberals. For example, the former MP for Simcoe—Grey insisted that the \$100 million really was not much to be concerned about when we thought about how much the federal government was responsible for spending.

That \$100 million would have made a world of difference in my riding to help with infrastructure costs and to support our farmers. The towns of Collingwood and New Tecumseth want and need recreation centres. Water and sewer systems and roads throughout the riding need upgrading. Residents of Simcoe—Grey would have liked to have seen a plan for infrastructure, but the budget failed to deliver the promise on infrastructure funding. Another promise made; another promise broken.

That \$100 million is not a drop in the bucket. To top it off, we have seen an outstanding increase in bureaucracy. The cost of bureaucracy has increased by 77% since 1996-97, yet Canadians are not getting better customer service. Canadians are still forced to wait in long lines to fill out incomprehensible forms and to speak with numerous representatives before they get to the right person, if at all.

I believe that when programs fail to deliver promised value for money, it is cruel to those who depend on them and unfair to taxpayers who fund them. Canadians work hard to contribute their taxes for government services. Canadians do not mind paying taxes. We are a very caring people and happily accept our responsibilities to care for each other with pride, but Canadians do mind being overtaxed and underserved, and clearly they are. The waste and mismanagement must come to an end. It is about time Canadians received value for their hard earned tax dollars.

I would like to tell the House what Canadians should have seen in the budget.

Canadians would have liked to have seen a plan for our aging population, not just a few measly dollars thrown their way. A large group of seniors are living on such low levels of income that it is embarrassing for the government because it has done nothing about it. I consider it a human rights violation that such a large number of our seniors, who have given so much to our country, wonder how they will make ends meet. While we do welcome the promised increase in GIS, it is too little too late and it will take too long to get to our seniors. This is an empty promise.

To qualify for GIS, a senior needs to be making less than \$13,000 a year. The fact that so many of our seniors have an income of only \$13,000 is outrageous. Out of all those seniors receiving GIS, only 10% will qualify for the full increase about which the Liberals keep bragging. The remaining 90% will only see a portion of the increase. Ontario has GAINS. When GIS is increased by \$1, GAINS is decreased by 50¢.

What I find most disturbing is that seniors will have to wait until January 2006 to receive the first half of the increase. They have to wait until January 2007 before they become eligible for all of it. The government brags about the \$35 a month when in reality we know that is not the case.

I asked the minister if the government had consulted with the provinces about a possible GAINS clawback prior to delivering the budget to ensure that seniors actually saw the promised dollars. I did not get a sufficient answer.

Our seniors cannot afford to wait. The government should forward the money immediately and it should have assured us that provinces, like Ontario, would not claw back any of the additional funds.

My riding of Simcoe—Grey had what once was the largest training base in Canada. How it has deteriorated over the past decade. My home town of Angus, which is immediately beside Base Borden, and the entire riding were very proud that we had such a strong base. Now we find it embarrassing.

Residents of Simcoe—Grey want to know what an increase will mean for their community.

After having some time to review the budget, we have discovered that it really is not true. The government has bragged about the increased funding to the military of \$12.8 billion, but the reality is it will only be \$1.1 billion. This is not a good budget for the military. It is all about preparing the Liberals for the next election. Of this \$12.8 billion, \$5.8 billion is recycled money. Of the remaining \$7 billion, approximately \$5.9 billion is shown in the third, fourth and fifth years. This will never happen. We already know what the Liberals' track record is on our military spending, and they are asking us to trust them. Quite frankly, residents of Simcoe—Grey are having a hard time doing that.

•(1605)

**Mr. Richard Harris:** Promise broken.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** That is correct. It is pure public relations. The real increase is \$500 million this year and \$600 million next year, for a total of \$1.1 billion. The rest is pure fiction, and \$1.1 billion over two years is not enough to get the military out of its hole. During the recent election campaign we promised twice as much, \$2.5 billion over the same period.

I would like to read the amendment that was presented by the official opposition and my leader and voted on yesterday to remind people what the Conservative Party stands for. It states:



*The Budget*

—but however [the Conservative Party] regrets that the budget does not reflect conservative principles since it fails to immediately implement the proposed tax reductions for Canadians; proposes spending to implement the fatally flawed Kyoto Accord instead of addressing real environmental issues; contemplates massive spending on a bureaucratic childcare program instead of delivering childcare dollars directly to parents; makes no commitment to the Agriculture sector and rural Canada to provide aid at a time when Canada's regions need it most; does not eliminate the wasteful spending on the long-gun registry; does not immediately provide adequate resources for Canada's military, so that our armed forces can become fully combat-capable as well as equipped for peacekeeping duties; continues to place billions of dollars in foundations and trusts contrary to the express recommendations of the Auditor General and indulges in a massive increase in bureaucratic spending.

The Conservative Party has said that we believe Canadians do not want to go back to the polls at this time. Therefore, we will not defeat the government.

• (1610)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, maybe I will start out with a bit of a refresher. There is a great book on the stands now. It might be worthwhile for the member for Simcoe—Grey to pick it up. It is the recent release by General Roméo Dallaire called *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*. He talks early in the book about his experience back through the late eighties when, under Conservative rule and during Conservative times, the military was gutted. Military budgets were hacked and slashed. It was the single most demoralizing time that he can remember senior officials going through. He said that he left Ottawa in total disgust.

Would the people who she represents in Borden be a little more pleased with this budget, more so than when the military was under Conservative rule?

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member that this is a new Conservative Party of Canada. I also would remind him, as I stand in this great House, that the residents of Simcoe—Grey elected a Conservative member of Parliament. Why? Because they believed the Conservative Party during the election. They understood that the Conservative Party meant business when it said it would increase military spending.

Let us talk about the campaign for a minute. In the last election, the Liberals campaigned against many of the Conservative initiatives, which they so happily now accept. The Liberals very much criticized our platform as being fiscally irresponsible.

**Mr. Brian Pallister:** It is unbelievable.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Yes, it is unbelievable.

Our platform committed to \$58 billion in new spending and tax reductions over five years. The Liberals now have made \$55 billion in new commitments over the same time period. What has changed?

We told the truth. We knew what the surplus was. We knew the numbers. We will always know the numbers. We will always be honest with Canadians. The Liberal government was dishonest. It did not know the numbers, although I remember the Prime Minister saying time and again that he knew the numbers, that it was \$1.9 billion. It is \$9.1 billion in surplus.

Canadians and residents of Simcoe—Grey know that the Conservative Party means what it says. They know that if a promise is made by a Conservative government, the promise will be kept.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know time is short but I would like to thank you for allowing my colleague a little flexibility in the time which permitted her to speak to all the important points. I hope you will grant me the same flexibility in the future.

I want to recognize my colleague for her expertise on seniors issues. She also has a lot of experience in women's crises and those types of issues. I want her to comment on some of the things in the budget which address that area, which is so crucial to women across the country.

**Ms. Helena Guergis:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. I have a great deal of experience in working in issues of violence against women and children. For seven and a half years I worked at a rape crisis centre. In fact I walked through three ridings to raise awareness of violence against women and children. This goes back about 10 years and I am really sad to say that nothing has changed on the issue of violence against women and children. We are seeing statistics that indicate it is even more prevalent.

Unfortunately, the government has failed. It has actually put a great deal of money into this serious issue through Status of Women Canada, but it has failed to actually address the issue. Without the department providing any clear evidence that women's programs are working to reduce violence against women and children, all we see are statistics indicating that violence is going up. There should be a program in place that provides measurable results in terms of reducing the rates of violence against women and children.

Also, I would like to note that the member for Calgary—Nose Hill has continually exposed the government for continuing with its strippergate program, which, as a woman, I find very offensive. I am also very concerned that aboriginal women still do not have their matrimonial home rights. This is appalling. In this day and age that should not be the case.

I can assure the House and the residents of Simcoe—Grey that at any given opportunity I will work as hard as I possibly can to eradicate violence against women and children.

• (1615)

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Surrey South—White Rock, Justice; the hon. member for Calgary Centre-North, Aboriginal Affairs; the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Citizenship and Immigration.

*The Budget**[English]*

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me say that I very much appreciate the comments by the member for Simcoe—Grey and congratulate her on them. I also want to say that the focused comments she made and the strength of those comments is a reflection of the strength of the Conservative Party and the number of new members that we have. They have been such a source of new strength to this political organization. They will be such a source of strength to Canadians in the future.

Two weeks ago the annual budget circus came through town. I want to make some comments about it. It is an annual event in Ottawa. It is promoted with the newest version of the red book. Special interest groups come down to the midway out here looking for free rides. The media act as carnival barkers hyping the newest Liberal act or the newest Liberal special concession. All that is missing is a big red-nosed clown with a pair of oversized shoes. Perhaps that is an idea for the finance minister next year, something he could do to dress up more appropriately.

What passes for dramatic, high quality theatre in this insular little community, this little backwater, has long ago worn thin in the more civilized metropolitan areas across the country where this budget exercise is seen accurately for what it truly is: the dull, monotonous, repetitive noise of a theatrical troupe that long ago lost its capacity for original thinking. If it inspires at all, it only inspires tired yawns, because everyone knows that when the circus leaves town, it takes our money and we are left to pick up the garbage. There is an old song that goes like this:

It's a Barnum and Bailey world,  
Just as phony as it can be,  
But it wouldn't be make believe,  
If you believed in me.

What is there to believe in with the government? The same Foghorn Leghorn hoopla about fixing health care, day care and the dirty air that we have heard for over a decade since those guys came in. Is anybody out there still buying this? Have my fellow citizens not caught on to the deception yet? Do they not realize that the midway is full of con men and pickpockets bent on relieving them of their hard-earned wages?

P.T. Barnum may have been right; maybe there is a sucker born every minute. The government certainly has placed its faith in that philosophy. It will fix our roads, later. It will fix our military, later. It will help our students, later. It will sharpen its pencils, much later. It is not even trying to buy Canadians with their own money any more. It is trying to buy them with a promise to return a portion of their own money at some indistinct time in the future. It is trying to buy Canadians' votes with a postdated cheque.

It is pretty clear that the Liberal government has as much respect for Canadian taxpayers as a loud-mouthed, top-hatted carnival barker luring the hayseed, gap-toothed farm boys down to the midway so they can part with their hard-earned chore money on a cannot miss proposition, a cannot miss game of ring toss, a cannot miss game of chance. "Try again, sucker, you can't lose. You're a guaranteed winner". That is the philosophy the government has revealed by this year's budget.

What I despise about the government's budget spin is the sheer phoniness of it. All the caring words have been clearly driven by polls, clearly crafted by communicators who know and who will tell us if we care to listen that Canadians do not care much about what we know; they only care about how much we care. The Liberal budget and its promotional documents are all about caring, but they are not much about knowing.

There is an old adage from the business I come from, estate planning, that estate planning is about caring and caring enough to act. The Liberals care; they just do not care enough to act. They have constructed a house of mirrors designed to show compassion, but the images are distortions of the truth.

The Liberals promise a more generous employment insurance program, pouring hundreds more millions into a program to make EI more easily accessible, sooner, for longer, with more generous benefits. We are supposed to see an image of caring for an unfortunate laid off worker, but the reality of the government is \$45 billion overcharged, excessively high premiums that have been misappropriated year after year from working people and from small business people from coast to coast. That money could have helped to create real jobs. It is money that could have helped to provide sustenance to real, deserving, low income Canadians.

• (1620)

The reality is that the government's mismanagement of EI has become an inducement for people to become dependent on the program. The reality is mothers cannot get their teenagers to study. They cannot get them to continue their education. Why? Because it is too easy for them to go on the dole.

The reality is it is harder for businesses in the very regions the Liberals pretend to help to find willing workers, to find trained workers, to find trainable workers. The reality is elevated unemployment because of the program itself. But it does result in more repeat customers for next year's carnival and that is the government's objective.

Liberal social policies are like a fire that creates its own wind. They are like the circus promoter whose marketing strategy consists of nothing but yelling louder into a bigger megaphone.

Maybe we should lure people to come to the compassionate aboriginal tent where they can view the captive noble Indian. The Liberals care so much about aboriginal people. We can tell because they are spending \$700 million more this year on new houses and \$10 billion in total on aboriginal programs out of two dozen government departments. They must care. Here is the biggest shell game of all because every person in Canada knows the big lie: spending more equals better results. It never has and never will, except on budget day.

*The Budget*

Here is the problem with throwing more money toward aboriginal houses. Aboriginal homes are a myth on almost all reserves in Canada. There are no aboriginal homes. There are only houses. Why? Because no one owns them. They will cost twice as much to build. They will last half as long. Why? Because no one owns them.

A few first nations communities have independently established their own programs for personal home ownership with exciting results. There is better maintenance, better security, better neighbourhoods, reduced crime, reduced vandalism. People do not vandalize their neighbour's house when they have responsibly managed their own. When people grow up with property rights, as most of us in the House have had the privilege of doing, they tend to understand certain things about managing property and they tend to develop respect for others.

Too many aboriginal young people have not had that right given to them. It needs to happen and aboriginal people in some reserves are taking the lead. If the Liberals really cared, why would they not have years ago encouraged the development of such uplifting programs across Canada? Because they want us to see how compassionate they are every year at budget time. That is made much more difficult when aboriginal communities are well governed and independent.

The definition of insanity is doing things the same way as in the past and expecting different results. This is an insane government. It asks Canadians to spend more on expensive canvas and paint every year but the expensive veneer of caring hides the reality of welfare and drug addicted Indian reserves, crime ravaged neighbourhoods, unaccountable bureaucracies and yes, unaccountable chiefs, and abused women with no rights.

As my colleague from Simcoe—Grey alluded to, after 12 years one would think that a compassionate government would at least have acted to provide matrimonial property rights, but apparently \$10 billion a year only buys so much. It certainly does not buy results.

What would our wild west show be without cowboys? The BSE crisis has made these previously independent frontiersmen of the cattle industry prime candidates for Liberal caring. Promises of bailout packages, promises of increased slaughter capacity, the Liberal government must really care. Yet again, the reality is quite different.

When the polls have it that it would be a more popular approach for the government to put a stick in the eyes of the American trading partner, particularly the Quebec polls, let us watch how the Liberals care. Let them show us how much they care. After all, why would they risk their popularity and help the Americans of all people?

Why would we who are so secure and so fiercely independent not help Americans protect themselves against a North Korean missile? There are two reasons. One, the government needs the anti-American vote. Two, we are only compassionate domestically.

The real reason the Liberal circus has retained its patrons is that its patrons have no choice. The big top is the only one in town. The MPs ride around on the bumper cars, careening and occasionally colliding, shouting at one another and forming committees.

●(1625)

The media report on the ups and downs from the Ferris wheel. Unbeknownst to them, though it occasionally provides a somewhat different perspective, it is not really moving, while the special interest groups go for the brass ring on the merry-go-round.

“Get your tickets and step right up”, they say. Sure, it is not the greatest show on earth, and it probably never was, but hey, the Liberals gave us \$16 back on our taxes. Buy some cotton candy. The show is about to start. Here come the clowns. Or is that a mirror?

The Conservative Party is going to close down the old Liberal carnival. We have new ideas. We have integrity. We have new energy. We are willing to keep our promises, something this government has not ever learned how to do.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciated the speech our colleague has just given. I will, however, have just one question for him.

His speech demonstrates clearly that the Conservative Party is opposed to the budget we will be voting on about 63 minutes from now. Do all of his colleagues think the way he does, and will they be voting against the budget this evening? If they did, we would be having another election, and the Liberals would at last end up in opposition.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Pallister:** Unlike my colleague, Mr. Speaker, who has the luxury of languishing under the eavestrough down there and cannot bring the government down, unlike my colleague who is here based on a commitment not to support Canada in any way, shape or form but rather to simply support his own portion of Canada, unlike my colleague, I care very much for the proper management of taxpayers' dollars. So much so that I would not want to see \$300 million thrown away on an election that virtually no Canadian wants, including him, if he had the courage to admit it, but he does not.

Unlike that member, I have every desire to see the government brought down and will make sure that it is done at the appropriate time.

**An hon. member:** You'll have your chance in two hours.

**Mr. Brian Pallister:** Let me address another issue. The member for the NDP who is heckling me, the member from Winnipeg, the member for sackcloth, I believe it is, has intimated that he would like to see the government brought down. I think that is only because he knows he will not have to run against the former mayor of Winnipeg who received a patronage appointment last week from this government.

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Portage—Lisgar commented in his speech on post-dated cheques and the phoniness of the budget.

*The Budget*

When we look at almost all the expenditure promises that the government has made, the promises for Kyoto, defence and child care, they are all spread over five years, are they not? It is quite remarkable to look at the fact that 1998 was the first year the Liberals balanced the books and by 2005 spending will have increased by 82%. That is quite remarkable. I do not know how future governments, whether they are on this side or that side, are going to be able to have budgets, because there is no money left. The Liberals have spent it all.

Can the member make any predictions as to where in the world the government is going to find the revenue over the next five years to pay for all of these promises?

• (1630)

**Mr. Brian Pallister:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is not unreasonable to assume, although one might be accused of cynicism, that the government will not keep its promises given its record of not doing so.

That said, of course in the budget documents much is made about the expenditure review process that the government engaged in this time. Only in the federal government, of this government's mismanagement, would the idea of reviewing priorities of expenditures be seen as original thinking. Everyone in their own home does this all the time. Every successful and most unsuccessful small businesses across the country do this all the time. Virtually anyone who has ever had a modicum of business acumen does this all the time.

However, here we have to read pages after pages. There are two pages in the budget documents on agriculture and 29 pages on how the government is going to review its expenditures. Methinks much ado about nothing. Methinks the Liberals make too big a case for doing something they should have been doing for a decade.

I was the minister of government services in Manitoba when we were forced by this government's downloading to the provincial governments to take an extremely sharp pencil to a lot of our expenditures. One of the areas that we in Manitoba, along with most of the other provincial governments, really took a strong look at was the area of procurement, purchasing, tendering, management of properties and so on. There are actually literally billions of dollars in savings to be derived in that category alone through better government management. Those billions in savings have been derived by provincial governments and the MUSH sector as well.

However, here we have a government 13 years after the fact saying it is going to do the same thing now. It is follow the leader. We have not had to follow the example of the federal government. We have proceeded at the provincial and local levels to manage better not because of their example but because of their downloading to us. Only in the federal government would government services efficiencies be considered a new, novel, original and creative way to manage government expenditures.

The government has said that well over half its committed reductions in expenditure will come through better purchasing of things like computers, centralized order placing, special orders and things like this. This is so funny and so pathetic because these are things that provincial governments were doing a decade ago, as I have said.

The federal government and this Prime Minister like to talk about what prudent fiscal managers they are, but it is clearly evident that any credit belongs to the Canadian taxpayers on whose backs this government has based its own undeserved reputation.

**Hon. Tony Ianno (Minister of State (Families and Caregivers), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak in support of the budget today, especially for me as Minister of State for Families and Caregivers, because this budget is designed to better the lives of Canadians.

This is a budget that says strongly and clearly, "Our priority is people". Our goal is to make sure that everyone in this country has the chance to live a decent quality of life. Our mission is to ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity to make the most of their lives.

The budget sends a clear statement. As Canadians, we care. We care about children and we want them to share in every opportunity. We care about seniors and we want them to live in dignity. We care about our fellow Canadians who are sick or suffering and need support and healing.

I would like to congratulate my colleague, the Minister of Finance, for making this commitment, in working to ensure that no Canadian is left behind, and in following through on it.

This budget builds on a strong economic plan. Three million Canadians are working more today than 10 years ago and over three million Canadians will be off the federal tax rolls when this is fully implemented. It ensures greater equality of opportunity. It will help shape a more inclusive country.

As a budget that continues to address the needs of Canadians, it reflects the character of our nation. It is compassionate. It demonstrates a commitment to help those who need it and provides opportunity for those who lack it.

That is why it deals with one of the most important concerns people have: making sure they have access to health care. The budget builds on the plan to provide \$41 billion over 10 years. It adds \$805 million over five years in new direct federal health investments. That includes: an integrated strategy to encourage healthy living and prevent and control chronic diseases; support for improved waiting times and health performance information; enhancing the safety and effectiveness of drugs and other therapeutic products; key investments in pandemic influenza preparedness; and environmental health.

There are aboriginal health programs addressing urgent needs, focusing on children, youth and their families. Over five years we will be investing over \$700 million for aboriginal health, \$345 million for aboriginal early learning and child care and other services, \$340 million for aboriginal housing and \$120 million for education on reserves. We continue to work toward meeting the housing needs of Canadians through investments and programs for our national housing initiatives, affordable housing, including RRAP programs, and other initiatives that are ongoing with money still unspent.

This budget also addresses the literacy needs of Canadians. That is why the government has created a National Literacy Secretariat and is investing \$30 million in funding over three years.

*The Budget*

People care about each other. That is a fundamental Canadian value. Across the country, Canadians are caring for members of their families and friends. For some the demands are overwhelming. We have to help make it manageable for everyone. Budget 2005 doubles the amount of medical and disability expenses that Canadians can claim on behalf of a dependent relative, from \$5,000 to \$10,000. By further strengthening health care and equalization payments, the federal government will support provinces and territories in their efforts to deliver much needed home care and respite programs.

• (1635)

[Translation]

We know there is still a lot to be done, which is why we will be working with the provinces and territories in designing an overall strategy for caregivers.

[English]

This budget recognizes the need to meet our obligations to future generations. One of the ways we do this is by securing a healthy and sustainable environment. We are determined to help shape a green economy.

Budget 2005 supports that with a five year, \$5 billion package. This includes a \$4 billion action plan on climate change and a \$1 billion clean fund, which will invest in cost effective projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This budget will help Canadians make Kyoto a reality and take advantage of the economic opportunity it presents.

Another Canadian priority is meeting our global responsibilities. That is why the government made a commitment to strengthen Canada's contribution to peace, prosperity and security in the world. We are doubling our international assistance by 2010-11. We will help Africa achieve greater health and prosperity.

As a people's budget, it looks to the future, just like Canadians look to the future of building a better tomorrow. Looking to the future includes a commitment to early learning and child care. The government is providing \$5 billion in new investments to give our children the best possible start.

Looking to the future includes support for immigrants. Almost \$400 million has been committed to help make services more responsive and integrate newcomers to Canada more quickly where they can contribute in meaningful ways.

The people's budget provides support for Canada's cultural development, helping to ensure that Canadian voices are able to tell Canada's story. Our cultural community is the soul of our nation and we continue to give much support to those who continue to describe who we are to the world.

The people's budget must do something else. It must reduce the tax burden on those least able to bear it. This budget will take an additional 860,000 people off the tax rolls, including almost 250,000 seniors. It implements the recommendations of the technical advisory committee on tax measures for persons with disabilities. I am especially glad that the budget addresses many needs of Canada's senior citizens.

At the request of the Prime Minister, I was pleased to lead the task force on active living and dignity for seniors. My report, "Creating a National Seniors Agenda", made recommendations to improve the quality of life for seniors, addressing the needs of today's most vulnerable seniors.

The people's budget includes a key recommendation of the task force report, namely, increased support for low income seniors who receive the guaranteed income supplement, the allowance, and the allowance for the survivor. This represents the biggest income hike in a generation for seniors who need it most. This is the first increase to the GIS since 1984, other than inflation indexing, and totals \$2.7 billion over the next five years. When the transition year is taken away, it will be \$3.5 billion and ongoing.

By 2007 the increase will add up to approximately \$433 a year for single seniors and \$700 a year for couples. These amounts will make a real difference in their lives and will also make up to 50,000 more seniors eligible for partial GIS benefits.

This budget makes it easier for Canadians to save for their retirement with annual contribution limits rising to \$22,000 by 2010. This gives us the additional opportunity to help those most in need.

The people's budget provides a mechanism to bring us together on seniors issues. A national seniors secretariat within the Department of Social Development will work with partners in and out of government to find ways to meet the needs of current and future generations of seniors working together. It will also look for opportunities to mobilize the energies and efforts of seniors who have already spent a lifetime contributing to Canadian society.

One of the ways we pursue that is through additional support for the new horizons program for seniors. It encourages seniors active living and social participation, enabling older Canadians to continue contributing to their communities. Tens of thousands more Canadians will be able to take part in projects that build vibrant communities by including and empowering seniors.

This budget recognizes the need to build strong communities. It delivers long term, stable and predictable funding as part of the commitment to a new deal for cities and communities. Under the new deal, federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments will work together with other stakeholders to develop long term strategies for improving our communities so that Canadians have better lives.

• (1640)

Let us not forget that people depend on an innovative, robust economy. The 2005 budget provides for significant strategic investments to build a highly skilled and adaptable workforce, and a world class research environment.

Working with the University of Toronto in my riding and the research hospitals, I know the importance of their work to ensuring that Canadians enjoy the quality of life we seek for our families. Over \$11 billion has been invested since the 1997-98 budget and an additional \$800 million has been added this time around for research and development.

*The Budget*

We know more work needs to be done. We are determined to keep moving forward, for many budgets are about numbers but equally as important they are about people. Our budget underscores our unwavering commitment to build strong social foundations where no Canadian is left behind.

Budget 2005 reinforces that we live in a caring society. It underscores that we live in a society where we care about each other and care about the rest of the world, a society that ensures full inclusion of all its members where opportunity and fairness is assured for all. This is just an ongoing process. We will continue working to put the building blocks of our society together. I am proud to be a member of this Liberal government that will continue to ensure that no one is left behind.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister a question.

We know that 54% of single mothers, 42% of women over the age of 65, and 38% of women under the age of 65 are still living below the poverty line in Canada, according to the statistics for 2002.

I am a member of the new committee in my capacity as critic for the status of women. Since we started sitting, we have had more than 40 women's groups come asking for basic funding for these groups, which work with the society's most disadvantaged women.

How can this government, with all the surplus funds it has, be so indifferent to the erosion of the middle class and the impoverishment of women in Canada? How can it not come up with some supplementary measure in this budget to help those in our society who are the least well off?

• (1645)

[*English*]

**Hon. Tony Ianno:** Mr. Speaker, I neglected to mention that I am sharing my time with the member for Kitchener—Waterloo.

The reason I was addressing this budget on the basis of it being one of the best budgets in the last 12 years is because it deals with women and of course low income Canadians.

When we are dealing with child care, it is an opportunity for children to enhance their opportunities in life. When we take into account the need, whether it be from the Bloc or other parties, we must ensure that single parents have the chance to send their children to an enriching institution that will allow them to continue to grow. When we take into account that it is often single women who will be dealing with this issue, whether it be in Quebec or the rest of Canada, it is something that we care very much about.

When we take into account low income seniors, it is was often, due to our history, women who were staying home, being homemakers, and contributing to society in many meaningful ways. However, they were not receiving additional pensions, such as CPP, and other opportunities did not arise for them. In terms of low income single seniors, mainly women, they will be receiving an additional \$433 when fully implemented and \$700 per couple.

This continues to set the agenda with the national senior secretariat, allowing us to do research and have a focal point to work with other levels of government and stakeholders, so that we

can enhance the needs of seniors as they continue to expand on the demographic side in our society.

I know that some of the members in her party that I have spoken with continue to support us on this. For many years this was not a highlight. Now, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, who, as soon as he took over in December, named me to chair the task force. It has put 17 recommendations forward. We will continue to work with other ministers like the Minister of Labour and Housing in terms of dealing with housing issues, rent supplements for low income seniors, and especially with reverse mortgages. We will be speaking with stakeholders that will allow for opportunities to enhance low income seniors so that they can live with additional dignity. We will be dealing with private landlords so that they can contribute to the equation, as well as provincial governments, municipal governments and of course the federal government to ensure that Canadians have the quality of life that we all wish for them.

There are many things in this budget that we will continue to work on to ensure that low income Canadians have the opportunities so that they can continue to enhance their lives in a society that we all call Canada and of which we are all proud.

**Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to partake in this debate on the budget. I think most members will agree and demonstrate by their votes that it is a solid budget for the people of Canada, and we look forward to that acceptance tonight.

I could be talking about health care and improvements made there. The secretary of state just talked about seniors. We have great improvements in the environment and environmental technologies, heritage and the military. However, given the nature of my riding of Kitchener—Waterloo, I will focus on three areas: immigration, students and post-secondary education, and research and development.

My constituency of Kitchener—Waterloo is part of Canada's technology triangle. Within Canada's technology triangle there are 554 technology enterprises plus 404 others that provide related services. The technology sector provides 10% of the employment in the Waterloo-Guelph region and accounts for 45% of job growth.

The post-secondary institutions in my riding include Conestoga College, which is the number one college in Ontario. The college has 65 full or part time programs in applied arts, business, health sciences, engineering technology and trades.

The University of Waterloo is known worldwide for its leading computer science, mathematics and engineering programs. It has the world's largest enrollment in mathematics, 10% of Canada's engineering graduates, 15% of mathematics and computer science Ph.D.s in Canada, and 30% of all mathematics graduates in Ontario. The university has the world's largest co-op education program with over 10,000 co-op students each year. It was the University of Waterloo that pioneered cooperative education in Canada.

*The Budget*

Wilfrid Laurier University is best known for its excellence in business and economics programs. Its faculties include arts, science, business and economics, graduate studies and social work. Since 1984 The Laurier Institute has designed and delivered management development programs to organizations in and around Canada's technology triangle.

There are 53 research institutes at the University of Waterloo: fifteen in information and communication technology, seven in engineering, six in science, five in life sciences, three in environment, three in education, three in mathematics, two in business, one in biotechnology and eight others. The Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology hosts one centre of excellence in engineering.

There are other research institutions in the Waterloo-Guelph region including the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, the Centre for International Governance Innovation, and the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre. In addition, institutes for technology transfers include Guelph Food Technology Centre and the Waterloo Biotechnology Research Centre.

I would like to point out that when I first came into this House in 1993 and I listened to the first Speech from the Throne that was put forward by the government, there was no mention of post-secondary education or research and development.

At that time I, along with the member for Peterborough and John English who was the member for Kitchener, started up the post-secondary education caucus. We were pushing for research and development in our post-secondary institutions. We really believed that the future of Canada lay in our innovation, and to that end, technology research funding in post-secondary education is very important. The member who chairs this committee for our caucus is the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. I might add that this is one of the strongest caucuses we have in the Liberal Party.

• (1650)

If I go back to the whole area where we as a federal government got involved in research, which was probably in 1998 and 1999. At that time the cumulative money that we put in that year was \$165 million. This year we are putting in a total of \$2.085 billion or a total from 1998-99 of \$9.97 billion. This is an incredible investment. I think members have seen from the budget and from our economic performance that it reflects the reality that innovation has been driving the economy in Canada.

When I compare the realities of what happened prior to the Liberal government assuming office and now and when we look at those figures, it clearly is good news. The national debt left to us by the previous Conservative government amounted to \$562 billion before we were able to turn it around by balancing the budget.

This year we will for the first time be under \$500 billion on the national debt. This is important. When we had a huge debt, as we had back then, 37.6% of every dollar went to finance that debt. The debt financing charges even today are too high. They are 19%. We are working on bringing them down and because we have done that, we are able to invest in programs for people in our communities across Canada.

The unemployment rate before we assumed office was 11.2%. At the present time nationally it is below 7%. I might add that Kitchener-Waterloo recorded the lowest unemployment rate in the last census. We were in the 5.4% category. All of this is very important. The best social program we can have in the country is to ensure that those people who want to work are able to find jobs and find meaningful employment.

Another issue I want to touch on in the budget relates to immigration. I commend the government for putting in an extra \$298 million for settlement services, as well as \$100 million over five years to target investment in the department. Also, \$75 million has been put in to ensure that internationally trained health workers have an opportunity to become engaged in a sector where we really have a manpower shortage, and I commend the government for that. I look forward in future budgets to have the refugee appeal division as a budget line item in the budget so we can put the refugee appeal division in place.

As we look to the future, Canada is one of the leading economies in terms of having a budgetary surplus, paying down debt, being able to invest in programs and reducing the amount of money spent on interest payments. Ultimately it is our investment in people, our investment in our young people, our post-secondary institutions and our investment in research and development that will ensure we have an innovative economy that can provide the kind of standard of living that Canadians have come to expect.

• (1655)

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member opposite on the work he has done in the immigration area. It is nothing less than astounding.

One thing I would like to point out to the member and ask him about is this. Conestoga College, which he mentioned, is in his riding. I want to let the House know that the college competes with private educators because of unfair holes left in the programs by the member's very own party. Also, the member failed to mention that the University of Waterloo also has an astounding kinesiology, psychology and a general sciences program.

The member also has failed to mention that his government has increased its own spending by 77%.

The member mentioned money for health care. It has been seven months since that promise was made. Recently, near the member's riding and my riding of Cambridge, a beautiful young woman died because she could not wait nine hours to get health care.

Finally, his government and this budget offers 50¢ per Canadian for an accreditation process of which we have never heard.

First, what is the accreditation process that the budget offers to accelerate? Second, does the member really feel that 50¢ toward speeding up the accreditation process, which apparently exists, is all the government feels the lives and health of his constituents are worth?

*The Budget*

• (1700)

**Hon. Andrew Telegdi:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I am quite aware of the kinesiology program at the University of Waterloo. There are many other programs that I was unable to mention such as psychology, from which I graduated at the University of Waterloo while undertaking courses in history and political science. I agree with him that clearly this is one of the top universities.

Look back 10 years at all the traditional industries that closed down in our region such as Van Dresser, Seagram and Labatt. All sorts of industries related to knitting also closed down in other places in Cambridge and Kitchener. He knows well that we now have one of the fastest growing and most prosperous economies. This is because our labour force is highly educated and we have a great deal of innovation.

Companies have started up in our region, many of them high tech companies. No one even dreamt of them being in existence 15 years ago. The member well knows that this is one community that proves to all other places across the country that investing in education and innovation makes a huge difference.

The member mentioned some unfortunate situations that happened at the hospital. The government has put in billions of dollars to try to secure the health care for people in the Waterloo region as well as all Canadians. One important thing has to happen in health care, and that is we have to rationalize services. The member, as a health care provider, knows the importance of that, particularly when he practised as a chiropractor. He knows we have to have a whole range of services available in health care to the Canadian public.

**Mr. Jim Prentice (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the limited time available to me, how can the hon. member possibly defend the budget and the absence of any tax cuts for regular Canadians? It is correct that we have made progress in Canada in the reduction of debt, but this has been done at the expense of taxpayers. The budget does absolutely nothing for taxpayers of Canada.

Tax freedom day in the country is on July 1. By comparison, in the United States it is April 30. How could the member possibly defend this budget in relation to tax cuts for everyday Canadians?

**Hon. Andrew Telegdi:** Mr. Speaker, first, the government has instituted and just finished off a \$100 billion over five years tax cut, which is the biggest tax cut in the history of the country. We are also raising the personal exemptions to \$10,000.

There is one area that very much benefits every Canadian. All we have to do is look at the interest rates paid on borrowed money today. Many people take out mortgages for their houses. They are at a record low. They were at a record high when we took over from the Conservative Party.

**Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate speaking to the federal budget on behalf of the constituents of my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. I am also happy to be sharing my time with my colleague for Windsor West.

Budgets first and last should be about people. The test of any budget is what it does for every Canadian in every walk of life. Budgets are not only a statement on the economy. They also are intended as a statement of vision, where we want to go as Canadians.

Frankly, this budget vision becomes a nightmare for too many Canadians. The people in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie heard the Prime Minister warn them during the election about the Leader of the Opposition and his party's politics and how they needed to vote Liberal for a progressive agenda and stop the Conservatives, but the budget delivered Conservative priorities.

Promises made; promises kept. The refrain of the Liberals last week is more like promises made; promises delayed. So much of the spending on urgent issues such as cities, child care and the environment are back loaded to the end of the five year funding cycle. Farmers and students get nothing in the budget.

Anything progressive that the government has promised and is delivering on, after not doing so for three consecutive majority governments, is due to this minority Parliament and especially the work of our party.

For two decades federal budgets have forced working Canadians to make sacrifices to eliminate the country's deficit through stagnant wages, cuts to health care and other social programs, and through insecure pensions. We have to move away from rewarding wealth and back to rewarding work in the country. It is time to reward hard-working Canadians for the years of sacrifice they have made.

Instead the government delivered a budget of which the Conservatives are proud. The Liberals delivered \$4.9 billion in corporate tax cuts. The Liberals have put \$28 billion away in the consolidated revenue fund, and the Liberals have built up a \$46 billion surplus in employment insurance.

People in my riding have shared their disappointment. Progressive voters wanted relief from tuition fees. The Liberal-Conservative budget delivered nothing.

On housing, progressive voters wanted to restart a 20 year national housing program to build 200,000 affordable and co-op housing units, a commitment to renovate 100,000 existing units and to provide rent supplements to 40,000 low income tenants. The Liberal-Conservative budget delivered nothing.

As the social policy critic for my party, I cannot begin to tell the House how disappointed I am and how disappointed many advocates are in the lack of a comprehensive vision and social policy.

As important surpluses are predicted by the government for at least the next five years, the budget could have been the one which really began to chart a brave new course to making poverty history. Some of that \$28 billion rainy day fund could have been allocated more productively to increase social investments.



*The Budget*

No new money is added to the child tax benefit, which is far below the \$4,900 per year per child which is needed to help many poor families escape poverty. The scandalous clawback of the child tax benefit supplement continues.

No new improvements are made to employment insurance, in spite of major recent recommendations by a parliamentary committee to do that.

On child care, over the next year \$700 million of the funding will go to the provinces without any need for accountability as to how they spend this money. What kind of deal can the federal government sign with the provinces in the next month which can ensure the real application of the QUAD principles to the building of a quality national system?

On FedNor, I am disappointed with the place of northern Ontario within FedNor and FedNor's place within government. FedNor is the regional development agency that was created, initially, exclusively for northern Ontario. I have nothing but praise for FedNor, its staff and the projects in northern Ontario that do a lot of good. However over the years its budget has been reduced. What was truly FedNor, an economic development agency for northern Ontario, has now become in fact "FedOntario".

The minister from northern Ontario has been upset with our party's criticism questioning the government's claim that the FedNor budget has increased 250%. We have yet to see that claim backed up.

The northern Ontario development fund gets reduced from \$36 million according to the supplements in 2004-05 to \$9 million for the next fiscal year. The community futures partnership program that funds rural development corporations in southern and northern Ontario has its spending estimates reduced from \$20 million to \$10 million in 2005-06

• (1705)

New Democrats in northern Ontario are fighting for the north and I am fighting for Sault Ste. Marie. My party is not here just to be in opposition. Our platform in the recent election laid out a different social democratic vision for all Canadians. Our commitment to a balanced budget is the record of the NDP governments in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

This minority Parliament budget beats the past majority budgets of the government but Canadians deserve much better. We will never tire of fighting for working Canadians to get their fair share. All Canadians should matter. The Soo has to matter to the government.

• (1710)

**Mr. Jim Prentice (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my hon. friend comes from a particularly beautiful part of the country. He speaks of everyday working Canadians. I speak of everyday Canadians.

I wonder if he would be prepared to join cause with us, at least this far, in terms of tax cuts. What is clear is that in Canada today, productivity, although increasing, runs into the fact that tax cuts have stalled, real disposable income is slipping and the overall tax burden on Canadians has been increasing.

Canadians make about 78% of what Americans do on a pre-tax basis and only about 70% of what Americans make on a post-tax

basis. Even though our economic output rose by 25% between 1989 and 2004, our after tax income has increased by only 9.3%.

The budget is scandalous in the sense that the Liberals in the last election committed to an expenditure program of \$28.3 billion. The spending promises contained in the budget over five years are \$75.7 billion, three times what they said they would do in the election. This is classic tax and spend liberalism.

The lost opportunity is that if we had kept our spending in this nation since the year 2000 to annual increases of approximately 3%, today we could justify a tax cut for Canadians of close to \$30 billion, almost a 20% to 25% tax cut. Instead, we have a profligate government that is spending more and more money on bureaucrats and on social services and not helping everyday Canadians.

Would my friend be prepared to join cause with us in saying that the budget does not help everyday Canadians with tax relief?

**Mr. Tony Martin:** Madam Speaker, I could not disagree more, practically or fundamentally, than I will with the member and with the Conservative Party on that front.

The reason we are in deficit in housing, in health care, with farmers and with students is because of the tax cuts laid on the people by the federal Liberal government and the Conservative government in Ontario, for example, a place where I served for a number of years. We do not have the money to help our farmers through probably the most difficult challenge that they face because we have given the money away.

For the member to suggest more corporate tax cuts when banks are making historically record high profits, when corporations, quarter after quarter, are announcing historically record high profits, and to continue to come here and say that they need more relief, excuse me, but I do not accept that nor do I go along with that.

The people in my community are struggling with an economy in northern Ontario that has been sputtering for about 10 years and it needs huge investment, such as the one the government made into the auto strategy or the one it made toward expanding the casino in Windsor. We want to see those kinds of investments in northern Ontario. We need that kind of money, not the piddly amounts that have been announced here by way of FedNor in the budget. The estimates show that in fact that fund has gone down significantly.

If we think for a second that will jumpstart the economy of northern Ontario and those parts of the country that need that kind of infusion to actually get people back to work and making money, then we are sadly mistaken.

*The Budget*

We, as New Democrats, are committed to the kinds of things that create a level playing field for everybody. We would go a long distance to reducing the gap that is growing between the rich and the poor. Canada now has two societies. The hon. member has not seen the record of commitment, work and effort that New Democrat governments have put forth in province after province as we have balance budgets and have found money to invest in health care, education, social programs and infrastructure across the country.

What we need in the budget is a commitment to invest in those programs and services that we know will create a level playing field for all our citizens, including the citizens of Windsor, Sault Ste. Marie and northern Ontario.

• (1715)

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the Ways and Means Motion No. 3.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** All those opposed will say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** Call in the members.

[*Translation*]

• (1745)

*During the taking of the vote:*

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Mississauga—Erindale seemed to be standing up a number of times. Perhaps she could clarify how she is voting.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Carolyn Parrish:** Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the motion.

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

(*Division No. 43*)

YEAS

Members

Adams  
Anderson (Victoria)  
Bagnell

Alcock  
Augustine  
Bains

Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Bell  
Bevilacqua  
Boivin  
Boshcoff  
Bradshaw  
Brown (Oakville)  
Byrne  
Carr  
Catterall  
Chan  
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Dosanjh  
Dryden  
Efford  
Eyking  
Fontana  
Fry  
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Macklin  
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Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Matthews  
McGuinty  
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)  
McTeague  
Mitchell  
Myers  
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Scott  
Silva  
Simms  
St. Amand  
Steckle  
Telegdi  
Thibault (West Nova)  
Torsney  
Valeri  
Volpe  
Wilfert

Barnes  
Bélangier  
Bennett  
Blondin-Andrew  
Bonin  
Boudria  
Brison  
Bulte  
Cannis  
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Malhi  
Marleau  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
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McGuire  
McLellan  
Minna  
Murphy  
Neville  
Owen  
Paradis  
Patry  
Pettigrew  
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Hearn  
Hill  
Jaffer  
Jennings  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
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Scheer  
Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country)  
Simard (Beauport—Limoilou)  
Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)  
Sorenson  
Steckle  
Stronach  
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les  
Toews  
Trost  
Van Loan  
Vincent  
Warawa  
Watson

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT**

The House resumed from February 24 consideration of the motion that Bill C-283, an act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-283 under private members' business.

• (1800)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 44)

YEAS

Members

Abbott  
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)  
Angus  
Bachand  
Batters  
Bellavance  
Bergeron  
Bigras  
Blais  
Bonsant  
Boulianne  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Cardin  
Carrier  
Casson  
Christopherson  
Cleary  
Côté  
Crowder

Ablonczy  
André  
Asselin  
Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Benoit  
Bezan  
Blaikie  
Boire  
Bouchard  
Bourgeois  
Broadbent  
Brunelle  
Carrie  
Casey  
Chong  
Clavet  
Comartin  
Crête  
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)

NAYS

Members

Adams  
Anders  
Bagnell  
Barnes  
Bell  
Bevilacqua  
Boivin  
Boshcoff  
Bradshaw  
Brown (Oakville)  
Byrne  
Carroll  
Chan  
Comuzzi

Alcock  
Anderson (Victoria)  
Bains  
Bélangier  
Bennett  
Blondin-Andrew  
Bonin  
Boudria  
Brisson  
Bulte  
Carr  
Catterall  
Coderre  
Cotler

*Private Members' Business*

Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cuzner
D'Amours	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dion
Dosanjh	Drouin
Dryden	Easter
Efford	Emerson
Eyking	Folco
Fontana	Frulla
Fry	Godbout
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Guarnieri
Holland	Hubbard
Ianno	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Khan
Lapierre (Outremont)	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Longfield
Macklin	Maloney
Marleau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Matthews
McCallum	McGuinty
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLellan	McTeague
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Neville
O'Brien	Owen
Pacetti	Paradis
Patry	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex)	Powers
Proulx	Ratansi
Redman	Regan
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rota	Saada
Savage	Savoy
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sgro	Simard (Saint Boniface)
Simms	Smith (Pontiac)
St. Amand	St. Denis
Temelkovski	Thibault (West Nova)
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Valley
Volpe	Wilfert — 112

I want to state right off that my party will vote in favour of the bill to amend the Food and Drugs Act, but on certain conditions. During the short time I have now, I will present the conditions for our support for this bill at second reading.

First, it is essential, in our opinion, to amend the current Food and Drugs Act. Why? So that these new concerns, these new types of uses of natural products, for example, can be included in the Canada Health Act and the Food and Drugs Act.

In recent years, we have seen a significant increase in the use of these natural health products by people in Quebec and Canada. According to a study by Health Canada in 1997, more than 56% of Canadians had taken a natural health product during the previous six months.

More and more, Quebecers and Canadians believe that we must take a complementary approach and not just limit ourselves to traditional medicine. We must, however, also ensure that the aspects of alternative medicine, complementary medicine, or holistic medicine can be integrated into our decision-making processes. If we observe that our fellow citizens are taking more natural health products, then legislation must be in place.

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Consequently the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[*English*]

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

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[*Translation*]

**FOOD AND DRUGS ACT**

The House resumed from November 29, 2004, consideration of the motion that Bill C-420, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased today to speak on Bill C-420 to amend the Food and Drugs Act.

The aim of this bill, which was introduced and read the first time on October 21, 2004, is to ensure that natural health products are no longer designated as drugs but rather as food.

What has the government done in recent years with respect to natural health products? Instead of amending the Food and Drug Act as it should have done, and as the Standing Committee on Health recommended back in 1998, the government simply adopted or had adopted regulations on natural health products. This of course is a step in the right direction. It was time for the government to acknowledge, through regulation, that the Canadian public is using these products more and more.

However, what do the regulations that came into effect in January 2004 actually do? They cover definitions, licences for marketing, and good manufacturing practices. Still, even with regulations, natural health products will continue to be defined as drugs, or sometimes even as foods. So, depending on the product, these products will not necessarily be considered foods or drugs. There is ambiguity in the way these natural health products are categorized in the legislation.

That is a problem the bill does not solve. Should all natural health products be considered foods? Of course not. Is there not a characteristic, a value, specific to natural health products? Are natural health products necessarily foods or even drugs? The answer is no, not necessarily.

*Private Members' Business*

●(1805)

This is why we need to create a new category in the Food and Drugs Act. Why? Because natural health products could, to some degree in the years to come end up excluded from the market. Why so? Because, if considered drugs, these products would be subject to a comparable accreditation process.

Is a natural health product a drug? The answer is no. Consequently, if these products are not drugs, why would they have to be subject to the same registration and approval process as drugs? The danger in the present legislation lies in the fact that these products are at risk of being eliminated from the market. A better balance needs to be struck, therefore, between access and the possibility of access by the public to these natural health products, while assuring the people of Quebec and of Canada of their quality and safety.

The Food and Drugs Act therefore needs to be changed. That is what Bill C-420, which we have before us, permits. This bill would have natural health products considered foods, except where safety and proper labelling obligations are concerned. They would continue to be under the umbrella, if I can put it that way, of drugs.

It must be remembered that this House and its members have analyzed this matter and reflected on it. They have heard a number of witnesses and a number of questions concerning this new issue—a new concern—that is, the use of natural health products.

In a report from the Standing Committee on Health, which contained over fifty recommendations to the government, parliamentarians asked the government for better management of these natural health products because sometimes these can—it must be admitted—deviate from acceptable safety standards.

We have to strike a balance between our obligation as parliamentarians to protect public health and, our allowing people who believe in a new complementary approach to medicine to have access to these natural health products. We have to make sure these people, who also believe in a preventive approach to health, can have access to this type of product that aims at better complementarity.

This is one of the major conclusions the Standing Committee on Health came to. I sat on the committee and was a signatory to the report in 1988, with my colleague from Drummond, who asked to create a new distinct category of natural health products in order to recognize the unique and intrinsic values of the natural health care products.

During the minute I have remaining, I want to say in this House and to the sponsor of this bill that we will support Bill C-420 at this stage. However, we plan to present an amendment at the parliamentary committee to create a new unique and separate category called natural health products. This will be done so that the recommendations made by parliamentarians in 1988, which were included in a report by the Standing Committee on Health, will be heard in this House.

Our support for Bill C-420 is far from definitive. However, at this stage, we will support it, but we will be sure to propose amendments at committee.

●(1810)

*[English]*

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of the principle behind the bill. We support Canadians having reasonable and safe access to these products. However, we are concerned that some aspects of the bill may have unintended consequences, and I will speak to that shortly.

Canadians use a lot of natural health products. In 2003 Canadians spent over \$1.2 billion on products, including vitamins, minerals, herbs and so on. Add in more than \$3.5 billion spent on organic food products, natural personal care products and functional food and we have a sense of the size of this sector and how important it is to Canadians.

We support the safe access of Canadians to these products. With this much money being spent, it is critical that Canadians feel confident about the products presented, their safety and the efficacy.

I depend on the work of my colleague, the member for Winnipeg North, who sat on the health committee in 1998 and helped prepare the report on natural health products, from which I have taken a great deal of information.

We believe that natural health products do not fit in either the food category or the drug category and that Health Canada must move toward a third category that has already been referenced. The definition of food would not cover natural health products that are applied topically, such as a cream, or others that are injected.

The Canadian Health Food Association, in its report to members on Bill C-420, states that:

Pursuing the former Standing Committee on Health's recommendation for a distinct third category would better serve the industry at this time than would redefining NHPs as foods.

The current definition of food prohibits claims, other than basic nutritional information and a few generic health claims for food products. Under the new NHP Regulations industry has the ability to make a wide range of claims for its products based upon appropriate evidence. Without extensive amendments to the food definition and regulations this ability to make claims would likely be lost if NHPs were redefined as foods.

Further, food labelling regulations do not allow for dosing information or for the listing of warnings and contraindications, information needed by consumers to make appropriate product choices.

Industry has invested significant resources, both financial and human, in developing and now complying with the Natural Health Products Regulations. We do not want to see this effort go to waste if NHPs are redefined as "foods". The existing NDP Regulations may not be transferred over to the food side and may actually have to be recreated in line with existing food regulations if NHPs are redefined as foods.

I think the explanation from the Canadian Health Food Association is pretty clear as to why redefining NHPs as food may have unintended consequences.

*Private Members' Business*

However, other parts of the bill deserve some serious consideration. Both CHFA and the Canadian Medical Association would like Health Canada to revisit schedule A of the Food and Drugs Act.

Its definitions of diseases and conditions is too broad. A product that could help regulate blood pressure could not make that assertion because heart disease is one of the conditions under schedule A.

There are still many conditions for which we do not believe people should be encouraged to self-medicate, so we do not believe schedule A should be completely repealed.

Schedule 3 is also important to the NDP. Recent events, like the Vioxx recall, point to the direct-to-consumer advertising as part of the problem. People saw so many advertisements about this wonderful drug, which would make them pain free, that they pressured their doctors to prescribe Vioxx. We need to continue to regulate direct to consumer advertising as part of overall consumer safety and to reduce over-prescribing that increases health care costs.

I would like to turn to the 1998 report from our previous health committee on "Natural Health Products: A New Vision". It has a succinct definition of health claims. It states:

Health claims, meanwhile, are statements of the effect of a product on the health of an individual made by the manufacturer or distributor, and displayed on the product label or literature. The Committee was told that there were generally three different categories of health claims. According to the APNHP, they are defined as follows. Structure-function claims report the effect of a product on a structure or physiological function in the human body and are based on the maintenance or promotion of good health. Risk-reduction claims relate consumption of a product to significant reduction in the risk of developing a disease or abnormal physiological state. Risk reduction may occur in two ways. One, the product may alter a recognized major health risk factor or factors of a disease or abnormal state. Two, it may affect a body function or system so as to improve the body's capacity to resist the disease or abnormal state.

● (1815)

Therapeutic or treatment claims report the effects of a product on the actions of a specific disease or its symptoms. Treatment can include the cure or alleviation of either the disease or its symptoms.

There are a couple of examples of health claims, one under structure: "calcium builds strong bones". Another under risk reduction is that "garlic decreases the risk of cardiovascular diseases". A therapeutic or treatment claim says that "St. John's Wort is useful in the treatment of mild to moderate depression". This is all from the final report of the advisory panel on natural health products in May 1998.

The NDP agrees with the committee's report, which stated that no health claim should be allowed without evidence to back it up. Their recommendations are reasonable when it comes to making health claims about natural health products. These are some of the report's recommendations:

NHPs be allowed to make health claims, including structure-function claims, risk-reduction claims and treatment claims;

Claims be assessed to ensure that there is reasonable evidence supporting the claim;

The evidence not be limited to double blind clinical trials but also include other types of evidence such as generally accepted and traditional references, professional consensus, other types of clinical trials and other clinical or scientific evidence;

The evidence required vary depending on the type of claim being made, with different evidence being required for structure-function claims and risk-reduction claims for minor self-limiting conditions than for therapeutic or treatment claims;

The label indicates clearly the type of evidence used to support the claim.

We want this bill to come forward to the committee so we can look at the regulations and the recent changes that Health Canada has made to enable natural health product suppliers to move more quickly to get their products approved. We would encourage the House to support the bill going forward to committee so we can have a much fuller debate around these critical issues.

● (1820)

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise in debate on Bill C-420.

Just as an aside before I begin my remarks on the bill, members may be aware that for years I fought for the votability of private members' business. I must say that the quality of debate now is at a much higher level than it used to be years ago.

It is very interesting to listen to the different points of view. The two speakers I have listened to today have me almost convinced. I am hoping that all members of the House of Commons are listening to this debate, because we have to vote on these bills now. I think some very good legislation is proposed here, legislation that we should take note of. I say that as a prelude to commenting on this bill.

This is really a very important bill. Many of us are very busy, but we should take note of what is happening here today because this bill would provide a viable choice for Canadians who find natural health products helpful. There are many in my constituency and across Canada who use natural health products and find them useful and helpful in maintaining health.

Many Canadians are upset that, for reasons they feel are inadequate, the bureaucrats and the politicians are excessively regulating products they find helpful. I stand here today and agree with those Canadians who do not like the excessive regulation that is taking place.

We spend a lot of money treating illnesses in our health care system, yet when there is an opportunity to prevent health problems and reduce costs, we throw roadblocks in the way. That is not acceptable.

People have been using many of these health products throughout human history. Often they are simply the packaging of herbs or other natural substances found in nature.

Bill C-420 should be supported by members on both sides of Parliament because it would advance effectiveness and cost effectiveness of personal health care and, in the end, improve the personal health of Canadians.

Even if members do not believe that we should allow our citizens to have a choice in personal health care, members should support what we are doing. It would bring down the costs. In effect, if we do not support this bill we could be forcing Canadians to use a health care system they would rather avoid.

I was a grower of echinacea. Echinacea is a natural prairie flower called the purple coneflower. It has helped boost the immune systems of many people. It reduces the length and seriousness of illnesses.

It is not possible to patent this herb. Why then does it have to be treated as a drug? Yes, it could be regulated to ensure its purity, but it should be treated more like a food than a drug. That is what Bill C-420 tries to do. To treat it as a drug makes it harder for ordinary people to obtain. It drives up the cost. Those on low or fixed incomes have a more difficult time because it becomes too expensive.

In 1988, the parliamentary health committee, with members from all parties supporting it, put out a report with 53 recommendations. The government accepted all of them. Included was a recommendation that the Food and Drugs Act include natural health products and that the companies be allowed to make health claims.

A team of 17 experts was then assembled to take the committee's work, expand on it and clarify it where necessary. That was the mandate they were given, but let us look at what happened.

In 2001 the government ignored the committee's recommendations, treating natural health products as pharmaceutical drugs with all kinds of hoops and hurdles for natural health products to jump through and over before they could get the approval, just like drugs. That, we know, can take years. For the companies or the people who put out these products, this make them more expensive in the end, and we have improved virtually nothing by doing this.

Canadians rightfully were upset when this happened. The result was that many of the most effective natural health products were removed from the market and were not available to Canadians to improve their health. This urgent situation needs to be corrected.

• (1825)

We should support Bill C-420 and send it to committee to be dealt with as soon as possible. Bill C-420 would treat herbs, dietary supplements and other natural health products as a food rather than have them fall under the definition of a drug or we could create some amendments to have a separate category.

Lest members think there are no regulations that food producers have to comply with, let me give an example of some of the safeguards. I am quoting from our food regulatory system:

4. No person shall sell an article of food that
  - (a) has in or on it any poisonous or harmful substance;
  - (b) is unfit for human consumption
  - (c) consists in whole or in part of any filthy, putrid, disgusting, rotten, decomposed or diseased animal or vegetable substance;
  - (d) is adulterated; or
  - (e) was manufactured, prepared, preserved, packaged or stored under unsanitary conditions...
5. (1) No person shall label, package, treat, process, sell or advertise any food in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character, value, quantity, composition, merit or safety.

We obviously have controls already. It is not like we are asking that everything be thrown wide open so that there is no control over what people buy.

Let me give an example of another terrible thing that has happened. This is something that all members here should note. A

### *Private Members' Business*

vitamin-mineral product was developed in Canada that was having a phenomenal effect on people with a mental disorder called bipolar disorder. The results were published in reputable, peer reviewed scientific journals. Health Canada moved in, however, took the success of this natural product as a violation of the law it created. There was absolutely no evidence that the product was harming anyone.

In July 2003 Health Canada shut down everything. It blocked all access to this natural health product. How many people today are suffering because of this act? Health Canada went in just like the KGB, raided offices, confiscated computers, et cetera. Health Canada told the users of this natural health product to go back on expensive drugs that did not work effectively for them.

This was a low cost solution and is a solution that could relieve great human suffering, yet it was denied to many Canadians. This is just one example of where the rubber hits the road on how harmful our present situation is with the way natural health products are treated.

Bill C-420 can put the brakes on a bureaucracy that is out of control. We need to restore the freedom of choice. It is not like there are no controls if we put it back into the category of food or some separate grouping, as I explained earlier. The Department of Health that should be trying to improve the health of Canadians is doing the opposite.

In conclusion, I appeal to all members of the House to support Bill C-420 because it is designed to do something about a department that does not have as its primary interest the health of Canadians when it comes to the use of natural health products. I have had experience with it. I know of what I speak and I hope all members will take note of this, approve the bill, and send it to committee.

• (1830)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. members for their remarks in the House this evening.

Since the first reading in November 2004, I have received an overwhelming amount of support in my riding of Oshawa and from across the country, including thousands of petitions, letters and e-mails. As many know, Bill C-420 was first introduced in the 37th session of Parliament by the member for Nanaimo—Alberni. During that session, Bill C-420 had the support of hundreds of thousands of Canadians who demanded greater freedom in their choice of complementary treatments, dietary supplements, herbs and other natural health products. The only thing that has changed today is the dramatic increase in support.

With health care being one of the biggest concerns for Canadians, we have to stop dithering and take action. The government has spent the last decade talking about endorsing better wellness and prevention. The time for talk is over. Bill C-420 is a significant move toward promoting healthier and safer choices for Canadians.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

This bill would amend the Food and Drugs Act to include herbs, dietary supplements and other natural health products under the definition of food as opposed to drugs, and repealing subsections 3(1) and 3(2) in schedule A of the Food and Drugs Act.

To date, questions have been raised about the actual effects this bill would have on consumer safety and protection. Bill C-420 would simply recategorize natural health products so that they fall under a food-style directorate rather than under a drug-style directorate while continuing to ensure effective manufacturing processes and inspections. We would recommend establishing a team of experts to review and provide a quality assessment of health claims, ensuring that such claims have scientific validity, such as a long history of traditional use without evidence of harm, some scientific merit or established scientific benefit.

It is generally acknowledged that natural health products are low risk, low cost and offer significant benefits to a wide range of costly health problems. Risk must always be addressed in terms of other risks. Even over the counter drugs could be potentially fatal if taken incorrectly, or sometimes even correctly. For example, such things as cough syrup, Aspirin and Tylenol are responsible for deaths in Canada every year. Even common foods such as peanut butter can cause a great deal of harm. Allergies to peanuts result in approximately 5 to 10 deaths in Canada each year. By comparison, since 1960 not one death in Canada has been attributed to a natural health product.

We must keep all these issues in the correct perspective. As my colleague stated in a news release, "In a day of skyrocketing health costs, all avenues of promoting healthier Canadians need to be explored". By regulating dietary supplements, herbs and natural health products under Health Canada's food directorate, the government would ensure that these products are free of the limitations they face under the current drug directorate.

I would also like to draw attention to the 1998 report "Natural Health Products: A New Vision", which included a recommendation to review schedule A and subsections 3(1) and 3(2). Former minister of health Allan Rock and the natural health products directorate also echoed this recommendation in 1999, stating that subsections 3(1) and (2) in schedule A of the act are no longer relevant and do not serve a purpose that cannot otherwise be accomplished through other sections of the legislation or regulations.

In closing, I would like to bring up some personal cases about health supplements. In my career as a chiropractor, I saw many people who took drugs for years that caused serious harms to their own bodies. I recall H.B., a wonderful senior suffering from fibromyalgia and arthritis. She took non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for so long she developed a serious allergy to the medication which caused severe allergic reactions. There was P.M., a patient with a similar reaction. His last reaction sent him to the hospital. Thank goodness for natural alternatives to these potentially dangerous drugs.

Bill C-420 will put health freedom back into the hands of individual Canadians. It will help provide a more holistic approach and encourage Canadians to take a more responsible and active role in their own health care.

We need to free up our overburdened resources and enhance the availability of potentially curative resources already in the community. I encourage all my colleagues to support Bill C-420 and help move dietary supplements in the right direction, the direction that Canadians want.

•(1835)

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** There being no other members rising, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Jim Prentice (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise with respect to a question that was posed in the House on November 17, 2004. At that time I asked the Deputy Prime Minister why dozens of contracts had been issued suspiciously, each in the amount of \$88,460 for management consulting services. I believe it would be fair to say that there were close to 100 contracts issued by the Government of Canada in relation to the residential school controversy.

To this point in time, the government has not come clean with Canadians on why those contracts were issued, who they were issued to, what the amounts of the services related to, or how those contracts related to the paltry sums of money which aboriginal victims are receiving under the residential school project.

The House was horrified in November to learn that 80¢ on each dollar which is spent on the residential school program is not going to victims. It is making its way to bureaucrats, lawyers, and experts, but not finding its way to the aboriginal victims who deserve these moneys.

At this point the Government of Canada has expended somewhere close to \$125 million on this program, most of that spent on the ADR process which the Deputy Prime Minister takes so much pride in and which she displays to the House of Commons.



This program is a complete, unmitigated disaster. There are approximately 86,000 victims in this country who qualify under the aboriginal residential school program. After the expenditure of over \$125 million, the ADR process, of which the Deputy Prime Minister speaks so fondly of, has accounted for something in the order of 27 settlements. That is 27 settlements out of 86,000 victims. The numbers are paltry. The settlements have been extraordinarily low. Canadians are asking how the government could possibly justify a continuation of this program.

The committee of the House that is dealing with this matter has been investigating this question over the last several weeks and has received no answers. The AFN is critical of the government's program. It calls the ADR process abusive. It will take 53 years to resolve these claims and will cost \$2.3 billion in bureaucratic costs alone, let alone the costs of the settlement.

The Canadian Bar Association has recently waded in and published a report relating to this matter. Its report is a scathing condemnation of how the Government of Canada has handled this matter.

At this point it will take generations for these issues to be resolved. Billions of dollars will be spent on bureaucrats and lawyers. I am told that the Department of Justice has entire floors of lawyers at work in Ottawa, Saskatoon, and some other major Canadian cities. Those costs are not even accounted for in the dollars to which I have referred.

Our party has asked that the Auditor General be asked to investigate this matter. We have asked that she specifically inquire into the contracts that were issued for \$88,640 to determine where they were issued, why they were issued, to whom they were issued, and for what services. We have also asked that the Auditor General investigate other questions of nonfeasance and malfeasance surrounding this program.

I would ask my friend to explain to Canadians why more than 100 contracts have been issued in the amount that I have referred to for these services.

• (1840)

[Translation]

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today I am answering the question asked in the House by my hon. colleague from Calgary Centre-North on the aboriginal residential school program.

[English]

The government is committed to fast and fair compensation for residential school victims of abuse. We are pleased with the uptake of the alternative dispute resolution process since it was launched by the government in November 2003. To date, more than 1,300 former students have chosen ADR to resolve their abuse claims relating specifically to sexual or physical abuse or wrongful confinement. Each month 100 additional survivors apply.

This process is about providing choice to claimants. The ADR process is focused on resolving claims in a timely, private and humane manner. We are giving priority to elderly claimants who are

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

70 years and older and to those in failing health. The underpinning of the ADR process is to resolve a significant number of outstanding claims within seven years and provide compensation to claimants. In addition, significant resources have been earmarked to ensure claimants will have access to counselling services and commemoration activities and that validation of claims occurs.

Of course, moneys will also be spent by the government on our operations and the government will continue to respond to litigation as it is obligated to do. It is unclear to me where the hon. member has obtained his cost estimates but they are clearly wrong.

Further, as my hon. colleague may not be aware, approximately 87,000 former students are alive today according to Statistics Canada. Of this number, over 13,000 former students have filed abuse claims against the government.

To date, nearly 2,000 claims has been resolved, the vast majority through out of court processes. Over 1,300 individuals have now chosen to resolve their claims through the new ADR process.

[Translation]

Furthermore, my hon. colleague seems to be suggesting that these claims should not be validated. The Government of Canada is committed to validating complaints of abuse. We are trying to establish an equitable process for all parties.

[English]

As part of that, we are hiring consultants to find alleged abusers to inform them that they have been identified in a claim. These consultants will not be researching former students who have filed a claim.

This work is not new. Locating persons of interest, alleged abusers, assists us in validating abuse claims and protects the rights of individuals by informing them that they have been identified by a claimant. Consultants will also inquire whether these individuals are interested in obtaining additional information or participating in hearings.

We have a year's experience in house locating these individuals. However we want to speed up the process by contracting these services to professionals. We are using the services of consultants on an as and when required basis.

We are sensitive to the fact that persons of interest are elderly. We are working with church entities to develop protocol and standards for this work.

• (1845)

[Translation]

When dealing with claims of abuse, rights are paramount with regard to proving the merits of claims, protecting the rights of claimants and ensuring accountability to Canadian taxpayers.

**Mr. Jim Prentice:** Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada did not protect the aboriginals in this case.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[English]

My hon. friend says that 1,300 cases are being resolved through the adjudication process. I have just received the numbers directly off the government's website and it refers to a total of 72 cases being resolved through the ADR process after the expenditure of over \$125 million. That is 72 cases out of a pool of 86,000 people. Even his 1,300 person figure is less than 1.5% of the cases that exist.

Let me put this in comparison. Some 15 years ago a Conservative government dealt with a similar program in relation to the Japanese internment situation. That government resolved over 15,000 cases within one year. Within one year over 65% of the cases had been settled and within five years the entire program was opened and shut.

The present government, by contrast, after one year has expended over \$125 million and it only has 1.5% of the cases in the process. That is paltry and pathetic and the Auditor General needs to find out what is really going on.

**Hon. Roy Cullen:** Madam Speaker, we believe that we are on track to resolve the majority of the claims through ADR. In little over a year, over 1,200 people have chosen the ADR process as the means for resolving their claims. Each week the government receives more applicants for ADR and the adjudication secretariat continues to conduct its hearings.

What is most important to understand is that the program has really just completed its initial phase. We had to focus on consultations and program development before we could receive, let alone resolve, claims through the ADR. The government is confident that as more claims are settled, trust in the ADR process will grow.

At the same time, we know that our approach is not perfect. As members know, the Assembly of First Nations has renewed its engagement in the issue of compensating former students. Indeed, we invited and financed its recent review of our ADR process.

We think the program is working well and we look forward to resolving these claims in a fair and equitable manner.

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am rising today to follow up on a matter that has been before this House since October 2002.

On October 24, 2002, the House voted unanimously to support the following motion which I had placed before it:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Prime Minister should take advantage of his upcoming meeting with President Jiang Zemin of China at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC] conference to privately raise the issue of the continued imprisonment in China of thirteen [13] Falun Gong practitioners who have close family ties to Canada and to emphasize that Canadians would be more willing to strengthen existing ties between Canada and China if these individuals...were reunited with their families in Canada.

The motion named the 13 individuals, one of whom, Mingli Lin, is the subject of my special concern today.

Following the passage of this motion, many of the prisoners were freed and were issued visas to join their families here in Canada.

One of the 13 was denied a visa. Mingli Lin was freed by the Chinese authorities in 2003. Since that time, however, our consulate

in Shanghai has repeatedly denied him a visa to come to Canada. The reason offered for the refusal by the officials responsible is that Mr. Lin might wish to stay here permanently.

I cannot say whether he would want to stay permanently in Canada. Frankly, if I were Mingli Lin, I would certainly want to stay in this country until such time as the danger of persecution in my native country had passed.

I should mention that no other Falun Gong practitioner among the 13 named in the motion passed unanimously in 2002 has been denied entry into Canada on this basis.

I note that every single one of the practitioners who has been admitted to Canada has been a model citizen of this country. This includes Mingli Lin's brother, Shenli Lin, who is also a Falun Gong practitioner who was arrested and imprisoned in China and was admitted to this country nearly three years ago.

For this reason, I asked the former immigration minister in a letter last March and again in the House in November if she would consider issuing a ministerial permit to admit Mingli Lin to rejoin his family here in Canada.

Each time I asked her, she gave me a vague response and then did nothing. I note that the lack of compassion shown by the former minister, who resigned in disgrace two months ago, does not reflect the general will of her cabinet colleagues.

In a letter written in March 2003, the Minister of Canadian Heritage wrote:

—I would like to add my voice to...other Canadians from across the country who are demanding the immediate release of all Falun Gong prisoners in China, and decry the continuing violation of human rights that Mingli Lin's imprisonment represents.

In a speech before this House on February 28, 2003, the Minister of Justice said:

—I call upon the Chinese authorities: to release the...Falun Gong practitioners with a Canadian and family connection from their imprisonment, and permit them to be reunited with their loved ones here in Canada....

The irony here is that although Mingli Lin still lives in fear of the Chinese government in China, it is the Government of Canada that for the past two years has been responsible for putting him in harm's way, subject to ongoing persecution in China.

Let me read to you from a letter that was sent to me last month in which a friend outlines Mingli Lin's current state, as reported by his brother Shenli in Toronto: "Mingli is still in a very difficult situation. As you may recall, while he was incarcerated in the forced labour camp they ruptured his esophagus while trying to force-feed him. He endured a lot of suffering during the two years of incarceration he was forced to go through. After his release, he was still kept under constant surveillance, routinely harassed and intimidated by the Communist authorities. He has no personal freedom to talk about".

Mingli Lin still wants to come to Canada. His family in Canada wants to be reunited with him. Parliament voted unanimously to bring him here. Ministers of the Crown have spoken in favour, in this House, of bringing him here.

Will the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration do the right thing and issue a ministerial permit to permit Mingli Lin to rejoin his family on our shores?

• (1850)

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows that Canada's privacy laws prevent me from discussing the details of individual cases. However I do appreciate this opportunity to clarify several points regarding this issue.

The hon. member will recall that the motion passed by this House in 2002 mentioned nothing about automatically granting the individuals in question permits to come to Canada. Nor did it suggest that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada should in any way personally intervene in this matter.

The hon. member is now asking the Government of Canada to disregard the will of this House and proceed in a manner that will help to undermine the integrity of the immigration and refugee program. This is clearly not in the best interests of Canadians or of the individuals involved.

There are numerous ways for people to come to Canada, all of which are based on the principles of fairness, transparency, balance and compassion. The Government of Canada recognizes that in some cases refugees might need to make a claim from within their own country, which is why Canada allows them to do so in some cases through a resettlement application.

The Government of Canada also recognizes that family reunification is one of the cornerstones of the immigration program, which is why we have taken steps to ensure this important component of the immigration program remains flexible and expansive in a balanced and sustainable way.

We also recognize that many individuals might wish to come to Canada as visitors, which is why the rules make it easy for tens of thousands of individuals to do so each year.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada believes in having an equitable and open immigration program, which provides for the consideration of each application based on its own merits and not on the applicant's political affiliation or membership in any particular group. That is how we have proceeded in the past and that is how we will continue to proceed.

[English]

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Madam Speaker, I am appalled by that shameful response.

I am talking about a man who was tortured while he was in a prison in China. No one doubts the facts of his case. No one doubts that he was tortured, that he was in pain and that he is under intimidation by the Chinese authorities today. No one doubts that if a ministerial permit were issued on compassionate grounds and the compassionate grounds were there for all to see, that he would make a model citizen.

No one doubts that this House did talk in the motion about the reuniting of families. What does the parliamentary secretary think we

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

meant, that the family should be shipped back to China? Of course we meant that they should be reunited here in Canada.

He talked about somehow bringing Mingli Lin to Canada and about issuing a permit. I am just so angry at this attitude, as if issuing a ministerial permit on compassionate grounds is in contempt of the House. That is a contemptuous answer.

Mingli Lin should be allowed to re-enter this country. He should be allowed to join his family here on these shores as Parliament unanimously decided he should be allowed. He should be allowed to do this for the compassionate reasons that are the very foundation of ministerial permits.

• (1855)

[Translation]

**Hon. Roy Cullen:** Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that on the one hand, certain members are suggesting that the Government of Canada should de-politicize its immigration decisions and on the other hand, they are saying that the minister should, in certain cases, flout the rules and institutions that have been established to keep the system impartial and fair.

[English]

The Government of Canada is determined in this regard to preserve the integrity of the immigration program by ensuring that all applications are reviewed on merit alone. We are committed to finding ways to ensure it continues to function in a fair, impartial and expeditious manner.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** For shame. You should hang your head in shame.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** I am sure that outburst is not characteristic of that member.

JUSTICE

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to follow up on a question I asked last fall regarding the government's plans to deal with the crisis in marijuana grow operations that has exploded out of control across Canada in recent years.

Specifically I asked the Minister of Justice about mandatory minimum sentences for those convicted of cultivating marijuana. I noted that the offenders were getting slaps on the wrist even for repeat offences. While we knew that to be true from many individual cases, we are now seeing harder evidence come forward in the form of actual statistics from the Vancouver police, which were leaked to my colleague, the member for Abbotsford, the official opposition's illegal drug critic.

Here is what he found: The average grow op was worth \$300,000 at the street level. Only two-thirds of operators charged were convicted. That is unbelievable. Of those convicted the average sentence was four months, although with our lenient parole system the time served behind bars was actually much less. The longest sentence handed out was just 18 months. With parole, that convict likely only served six months. It makes a total mockery of the minister's plan to double the maximum sentence for production to 14 years when the longest sentence given is 18 months.

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If the government's hand-picked appointee judges will not even consider a maximum sentence, then clearly the time has come to send the judges a message by imposing mandatory minimums. Can the minister give me a reason why we should not go this route?

Let me recite for the minister some of the cases which are typical. In November 1997 a suspect was caught with an estimated \$440,000 worth of marijuana and was sentenced to a 30 day conditional sentence and a \$5,300 fine. In September 1999 a suspect caught with an estimated \$514,000 worth of marijuana was sentenced to a four month conditional sentence in the community.

The study further highlights a number of offenders who were given light or stayed sentences despite having long rap sheets. For example, in 1999 a grower was given a \$10,000 fine and two years of probation despite having compiled previous charges involving assaults and kidnapping. What happened? He paid the fine and was later arrested on weapons charges. How is that for a justice system? In fact, what Canadians find most disturbing about the lack of concern shown by the Liberal government is the potential for violence.

We saw a war fought on the streets of Montreal a few years ago among organized criminals. Most people still remember that a 10-year-old boy was killed in the crossfire. Canadians are also aware that marijuana grow houses have come to their neighbourhoods. Despite shutting down 250 grow houses a year in Surrey alone, the police estimate that there are still hundreds more they have yet to get to and find. These grow houses are often booby trapped with chemical, electrical or explosive traps, or those tending the grow ops may be armed.

My question for the minister is, who is going to have to be hurt before he will start to crack down on these grow ops? Is it going to be a 10-year-old boy in Surrey? Canadians are becoming increasingly aware of how out of touch the Liberal government is. One only needs to look at this past weekend when the justice minister and his party embraced the former leader of the Marijuana Party and his agenda. Yet even some card carrying Liberals disagree with the minister's approach.

The president of the Liberal riding association from my riding agrees with me that there should be mandatory minimum sentences for convicted grow operators. On the weekend the Deputy Prime Minister finally admitted, after years of denial, that perhaps the government should consider tougher penalties.

Does the minister now agree that we need mandatory minimums for grow operations?

• (1900)

**Hon. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member's comments on Bill C-17, the cannabis reform bill and its effects, show a profound misunderstanding of the legislation.

Bill C-17 reflects a balanced approach to the laws on cannabis. The proposed legislation would allow for a ticketing regime for the possession of 15 grams of marijuana, and a ticketing option for the possession of more than 15 grams, up to 30 grams. At the same time, new offences under this proposed legislation will provide tougher

penalties for those involved in the large marijuana growing operations about which the member is concerned.

The bill proposes that the cultivation of one to three plants be punishable by a fine of \$500, or \$250 for a young person. If a person grows 4 to 25 plants, the bill proposes a maximum penalty on indictment of five years less a day and 18 months and/or up to a \$25,000 fine on summary conviction. In the case of 26 to 50 plants, the offender faces a maximum of 10 years. Where a person cultivates more than 50 plants, the maximum sentence would be 14 years, double the current maximum.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Surrey South—White Rock—Cloverdale wants this bill to include minimum sentences. This would run counter to the sentencing principles set out in sections 718 and 718.2 of the Criminal Code. More specifically, minimum sentences run counter to the principle of proportionality and restraint with respect to sentencing.

Research into the effectiveness of minimum sentences has shown that these have no dissuasive or educational effect and are no more effective than lighter sentences as far as crime prevention is concerned.

This was confirmed in 2001 by a study commissioned by Justice Canada. It concluded that there was no correlation whatsoever between the crime rate and the severity of sentences.

Moreover, the presence of minimum sentences encourages plea bargaining. For example, a study of section 85 of the Criminal Code reached the conclusion that two-thirds of charges with a minimum one-year prison sentence were withdrawn, rejected or cancelled. Not only do American statistics illustrate similar results, they also show a transfer of discretionary powers from the court room to its corridors or to prosecutor's offices.

Experience shows us that minimum sentences are treated as maximum thresholds in sentencing rather than being seen as minimal thresholds, and this type of sentence creates substantial costs for provincial and territorial correctional services and for Correctional Services Canada.

The undesired effects of using minimum sentences are felt not just in Canada. American research shows that minimum sentences do not incite the accused to plead guilty, and so increase the number, duration and accumulation of trials.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1905)

[English]

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** Madam Speaker, I find the member's comments not only surprising but extremely disappointing. He claimed that if minimum sentences were put in place they would become the new maximums. The sentences could not get any lighter. They could not get any smaller. People are getting off with nothing as it is, so how could those become the maximums? Sure minimum sentences have a consequence. Absolutely they do. They get people off the streets.

The member went on to say that they would lead to longer trials. Well, big surprise. When people are facing real sentences for crimes they have committed, of course they are going to fight a lot harder for their freedom and take more time to defend themselves. That is evidence of the justice system at work. To do anything less would be idiotic.

Why would the minister consider minimum sentences to protect kids from child pornographers as he did in response to a question on November 29, 2004 and not consider those same measures to protect the same kids from becoming drug mules for dealers?

**Hon. Paul Harold Macklin:** Madam Speaker, Canadian and American police forces work together very well. This is part of the approach that we want to continue to take with respect to enforcement.

In the message accompanying the recent drug majors report submitted to Congress, President Bush stated, "The big picture is certainly encouraging. United States and Canadian law enforcement personnel have collaborated on a number of investigations that have led to dismantling several major criminal organizations".

As for the concern in the report about the "lack of significant judicial sanctions against marijuana producers" which is what my friend is raising, Bill C-17 as was mentioned earlier, proposes doubling the maximum penalty for marijuana cultivation and requiring the judge to justify not imposing a sentence of imprisonment where more than four plants are involved and there are aggravating circumstances.

That is extraordinarily important. It changes the whole perspective of the way in which the legislation has been historically treated. We look forward to the standing committee's consideration of Bill C-17 and its recommendations for change, if it concludes that these proposals need strengthening.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a. m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:08 p.m.)

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