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(HANSARD)

Friday, November 28, 2008

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 28, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL STATEMENT

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC) moved:

That this House take note of the Economic and Fiscal Statement tabled in the House on November 27, 2008.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as many have done before me in this new Parliament, I would first of all like to welcome all members and express my gratitude to my constituents for providing me the honour to serve them for another term. We all know that this is a job that carries great responsibilities and I am very honoured to be able to stand in this House and represent the great people of the riding of Macleod.

I must once again remind all hon. members that I will argue with any member of this House that the riding of Macleod is one of the most beautiful ridings in this entire country. I am sure I have excited others to debate that, but we do have some of the most beautiful country. During the election campaign in the fall, I had the opportunity to travel around and visit most communities. We have about 25 different communities in that riding. I visited with a tremendous number of people and viewed some incredible scenery. I would invite all hon. colleagues to visit the beautiful riding of Macleod.

I could not have accomplished this task without many volunteers, those who worked tirelessly, hours and hours on the phones, driving, door knocking, answering calls, answering questions, connecting constituents with me so I could talk with them on a one to one basis. Those volunteers are what make democracy work in this country and I give a great thank you to those people.

Also I do need to acknowledge the patience and understanding of my good wife, Sandy. It is only because of her support that I can be here to serve the constituents of Macleod. I thank her for her support. I also appreciate the support of my family, which actually got larger this summer. My son got married and now we have two new

grandchildren. We now have a full family with a complement of four grandchildren, and of that we are very proud. I just wanted to share that with you, Mr. Speaker, because I know how important children are to you.

Let me continue with my speech now that we have recognized why we are here and how we all got here.

I am pleased to highlight the economic and fiscal statement that gave Canadians a clear update of the economic and fiscal situation. I might pause here for a moment to remind hon. members that this was not a budget. The budget will be coming early in 2009. The budget is where we lay out the projected incomes and projected expenditures for this government.

It seems to me that the opposition parties got their hopes high that there was going to be some spending that they could criticize, but there was not; in fact, we did not set that expectation. We said that we would bring Canadians up to date on where the economy is now, and we did that.

Here in Canada and around the world these are difficult times that require difficult choices. Our Conservative government has responded to this challenge by taking decisive action to restrain spending, to protect Canada's hard-won fiscal advantage and to reinforce the stability of our financial system.

Today I would like to briefly review some of the statement's key measures and how they will help this country weather the period of global economic uncertainty. Let me begin by looking back for a moment.

Long before many countries responded to the deepening financial crisis, Canada acted early and decisively. No one could ever have predicted the rapid decline in world markets in the last several weeks. The scale is stunning in both its depth and breadth, and nowhere is that more evident than in the carnage we see among global financial institutions.

• (1005)

The jaw-dropping list of such institutions acquired, bailed out, converted, failed or nationalized in September and October alone demonstrates that. This list includes but is not limited to Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, UBS, Lehman Brothers, the Royal Bank of Scotland, American International, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, Wachovia, Goldman Sachs, Washington Mutual, Fortis, a once very impressive list, but a troubling list now.

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Our government was well aware that difficult times may be ahead when the finance minister presented the 2007 economic statement. At that time we made choices to help put Canada in a stronger economic position, choices to lower the tax burden on Canadian families and on businesses in a significant way with pre-emptive and aggressive cuts from business, personal and consumption taxes, nearly \$60 billion worth.

BMO economist Doug Porter noted earlier this year that the 2007 economic statement was “brilliantly timed. Just as the economy was running into serious heavy weather...we had some serious fiscal stimulant”. As the University of Toronto's Institute for Policy Analysis observed, “Helping offset the weakness in Canada will be 'fortuitous' injection of stimulus from the tax cuts...announced in the” 2007 economic statement.

Clearly, we took decisive action long before other countries did. Indeed we saw the U.K. just this week take the action that we took last year, in reducing its consumption tax, the U.K. equivalent of the GST, which is the value added tax. Just this week the U.K. dropped the VAT by 1.5%. I note that the U.K. only dropped it temporarily, whereas we dropped 2% in our GST over a two year period permanently.

Why did the U.K. follow our lead? Listen to the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the U.K. just a few days ago when he announced these measures:

[W]e...need to take action to put money into the economy immediately.... [T]he best and fairest approach is a measure which will help everyone. To deliver a much-needed extra injection of spending into the economy right now. I therefore propose to cut VAT [the value added tax].... It will make goods and services cheaper and, by encouraging spending, will help stimulate growth.

For the opposition members who have opposed, mocked and derided our GST cut, I ask them to reflect on those words. However, while our pre-emptive actions gave us an early advantage, these measures did not insulate us completely from the rest of the world. Unfortunately for all of us, global conditions have continued to deteriorate.

That is why, for example, we have had to take further extraordinary steps in the financial sector to respond to a global credit crunch that originated outside our border, yet which threatened to engulf us if we failed to act. And act we did. We acted to maintain the availability of longer term credit with the purchase of mortgage pools through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This innovative measure is allowing Canadian financial institutions to continue lending to consumers, to homebuyers and businesses at an affordable cost.

We also created the Canadian Lenders Assurance Facility. This offers insurance on a temporary basis on wholesale term borrowing by Canadian financial institutions. This backstop offered on a commercial basis, at no cost to taxpayers I might add, ensures that our financial institutions are not at a competitive disadvantage internationally.

Our recent measures have received widespread praise. As the *Globe and Mail* declared:

[U]nlike most jurisdictions, Canada is ensuring liquidity in financial services without taxpayers footing the bill.... [This] helps restore trust. It also encourages competition in financial services.... [I]t keeps Canadian financial institutions

competitive with [their] global peers.... It doesn't involve billions of dollars in bailout money. It's just smart policy.

● (1010)

We have also increased the borrowing authority of Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada to provide more lending choices for Canadian businesses. We announced new rules for government guaranteed mortgages this summer to prevent a U.S.-style housing bubble. These rules are in place today.

Faced with threats outside our borders, we answered with leadership from within. The result is ours is among the best fiscal positions of the G-7 countries. This fact is underlined by an OECD report released this week which showed that while global growth will be lower in the coming year, Canada will lead the way in the recovery with the strongest growth among G-7 countries in 2010.

Unfortunately, Canada is clearly not immune to the ongoing financial crisis nor to the weakening in the economy of the United States and elsewhere. That brings me to the economic and fiscal statement. Its measures build on a strong foundation of this government's action over the last year and point the way to the additional activities we will take shortly.

Allow me to cite a few examples of its key initiatives, which focus on maintaining strong fiscal and financial management. The government is firmly committed to managing spending responsibly. For example, the economic and fiscal statement includes a commitment to eliminate the taxpayer subsidy for politicians and their parties. Political parties receive a generous amount of funding support from taxpayers, from reimbursements on election spending to tax credits to those who donate. We should not have our hands out for more, especially when times are tough.

As the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has pointed out, “We're in tough economic times, so this is exactly the place to start tightening the belt”. Indeed, if we are to ask for frugal expenditure management of public money, we must lead by example. The member for Markham—Unionville said just this week, “I do think that ordinary Canadians are having a difficult time, so I think we should set an example and tighten our belts. I personally favour that, and I suspect most of my colleagues would, too”. We thank the hon. member for Markham—Unionville for reflecting early on that this is a good move.

My hon. colleagues should put the money where their mouths are and support this measure. In absence of that, it is clear the opposition has just been sweeping empty rhetoric about, showing little understanding of the plight of Canadians.

We are also pledging to ensure sustainable federal public sector wage rates and to modernize the pay equity regime. The government is committed to ensuring effective management of taxpayers' dollars and is taking concrete action to keep spending growth on a sustainable track. As part of the new expenditure management system, the government is continuing strategic reviews of departmental spending. In the statement, we have recorded an estimated amount of savings from the round of reviews that is currently under way.

I would like now to consider some of the statement's provisions that address transfers to the provinces. The government is committed to ensuring the continued growth of federal transfers in a way that is fiscally responsible and yet sensitive to the volatile global economic environment. The equalization program will be adjusted within the principle-based structure set out in budget 2007 by putting it on a growth path that is in line with the growth of the economy. Major transfers will continue to grow. The Canada health transfer will grow at 6% a year and the Canada social transfer will grow at 3% a year.

●(1015)

Across Canada, manufacturers and their employees have faced significant challenges in recent years. These challenges have been amplified by the turbulence in the financial markets.

Make no mistake, the government will continue to implement its plan, "Advantage Canada", particularly, our commitment to building a competitive advantage for Canadian businesses, including those in the manufacturing sector, and securing the prosperity of Canadians.

To that end the government will provide a total of \$700 million in additional capital to Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada to expand their credit capacity by up to \$3 billion, and to enable the introduction of new products to better serve the needs of Canadian businesses during a period of constrained credit availability.

In addition, going forward the government will continue to look at additional fiscal stimulus measures that would contribute to a more viable and competitive manufacturing sector. Canadian manufacturers and exporters heralded these announcements as, and I quote:

—good measures...The government recognizes that liquidity is a major concern for manufacturers and exporters in every sector across Canada.

Our Conservative government is also creating a competitive tax environment through broad-based tax reductions that support job creation, support growth, and support investment in all sectors of the economy, including manufacturing and processing.

In addition, tariffs on imported machinery and equipment would be eliminated as soon as possible in order to encourage capital investment and increase efficiency in our manufacturing sector.

The government's actions in support of manufacturing will also benefit the automotive sector and in particular the automotive parts industry. For example, the government has committed to provide additional funding for the automotive innovation fund to support investments in the long-term viability of the automotive sector.

We are also open to the possibility of providing further assistance to the automotive sector. The situation is fast moving. The Minister

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of Industry is engaged in discussions with the automotive companies and is monitoring developments in the United States.

Seniors are understandably concerned about the impact of the sharp decline in markets on their retirement savings and in particular, their registered retirement income funds. We have listened and we have supported them in the past. We have supported seniors by raising the age limit for converting a registered retirement savings plan to a RRIF from the age of 69 to 71, which by the way, the House will recall from that particular vote that the Liberals and the NDP voted against that.

We are doing so again by addressing their concerns about the drop in the market value of their assets and their worries that their assets and RRIFs must be sold to meet withdrawal requirements.

In yesterday's statement, the finance minister also proposed a one time change that would allow RRIF holders to reduce their required minimum withdrawal by 25% this tax year. That would mean that individuals otherwise required to withdraw \$10,000 from their RRIF in 2008 would see that required withdrawal reduced to \$7,500.

Let me now turn to consider the statement's measures to accelerate infrastructure spending.

In budget 2007 the government announced a seven year, \$33 billion plan to boost Canada's public infrastructure. As a result, the amount of federal funding available to provinces, territories and municipalities for infrastructure projects is forecast to hit a record of \$6 billion in 2009-10, double what was spent in 2007-08.

We need to accelerate this activity. This would provide a significant stimulus to the economy and improve infrastructure that is vital to improving our long-term economic performance.

We are working with the provinces and the territories to expedite infrastructure projects, and accelerate the uptake of federal funding as well as addressing regulatory and administrative barriers that slow down project implementation.

●(1020)

While the government has already taken major actions to strengthen and preserve the competitiveness of Canada's world-leading financial sector, this statement takes further measures, measures such as supporting the financial system in extraordinary circumstances, providing solvency funding relief for federally-regulated private pension plans, and enhancing credit availability through crown agencies for Canadian businesses affected by the global credit crisis.

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In addition, the government will consult with provinces and Canadians to develop responses to short-term economic issues while continuing to implement its long-term economic plan. The immediate priorities are to accelerate infrastructure projects, improve opportunities for workers and sectors affected by current economic conditions, strengthen our world-leading financial system in line with our G-20 commitments, and improve the competitiveness of the Canadian economy.

Since the earliest days of the global liquidity crunch, the government has taken important steps to strengthen the position of Canada's financial system, which is ranked among the soundest in the world. Our Conservative government stands ready to take whatever further action is necessary to protect the stability of the Canadian financial system.

Accordingly, we are proposing that the Minister of Finance be granted additional flexibility to support financial institutions and the financial system in any extraordinary circumstances. The proposed powers will include additional options for resolving difficulties in financial institutions should they arise.

The proposed powers are a continuation of the responsible leadership that the government has exercised to ensure that Canada's strong financial system is not put at a competitive disadvantage by developments in other countries. They are precautionary and intended as standby authorities that will bring Canada's regulatory tool kit in line with international best practices.

The proposals are also in line with Canada's commitment to implement the G-7 and G-20 plans of action to stabilize financial markets and restore the flow of credit. The current global market crisis underlines the necessity of having a first rate financial sector regulatory framework, which includes a common securities regulator for Canada.

Our current system of 13 regulators is far too cumbersome and unwieldy to provide the decisive, quick response that is often necessary. Indeed, in the words of a recent *Montreal Gazette* editorial:

The recent convulsions in financial markets...signal, more than ever, that sophisticated understanding of markets and their practices...are utterly essential...At a time when the world's main governments and institutions can't keep up with global markets, it's ludicrous that Canada speaks with 13 voices.

The benefits of a common securities regulator will include greater efficiency, stronger enforcement and clearer accountability.

I see that my time is up. I had so many more positive things to say about the statement, but I appreciate that there are many other members on both sides of the House who want to stand and support this statement.

• (1025)

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I noted that my hon. colleague quoted with some enthusiasm economist Douglas Porter, who seemed to support his case many months ago. I cannot help but note that the same economist Douglas Porter was quoted in the press today. What did he say? He stated:

On balance, it's quite the opposite of supporting growth. Under the current circumstances, it's unusual, to say the least, given that almost every other major country in the world is moving to stimulate the economy.

The same Douglas Porter so approvingly quoted from months ago by the parliamentary secretary is saying today that these measures yesterday are not what we need because they do not promote growth.

When the parliamentary secretary speaks of past measures to stimulate the economy, I could say the Liberal \$100 billion tax cut of 2000 is still stimulating the economy or the measures of 2005 are stimulating the economy, but it is totally irrelevant because the issue is the economy today and the Canadian economy is in trouble today. The OECD says we will have a quarter of a million more unemployed Canadians in 2010 and yet the government did nothing, zero fiscal stimulus yesterday, and moved in the wrong direction through cuts.

Why is Canada almost unique in the world when other countries are stimulating their economies by tens or hundreds of billions of dollars? Why does the government think it is the right time at this moment of crisis to enact cuts?

Mr. Ted Menzies: Mr. Speaker, there was quite a bit in that statement, not all factual of course.

Speaking of changing one's mind, might I quote back to the hon. member for Markham—Unionville, after the Prime Minister in his year-end interviews warned Canadians that we were headed for some troubling economic times, that is leadership. We saw leadership in the fall economic update of last year with pre-emptive moves, and I will get back to that to address the hon. member's question.

However, when the Prime Minister warned Canadians with great leadership capabilities, he was not trying to frighten Canadians as the opposition members are trying to do, gleefully gloating that we are losing jobs, gleefully gloating that other economies are in trouble. We should not take pleasure in economic turmoil around the world.

This government is trying to do its best to not frighten Canadians, but when the Prime Minister publicly stated there will be some difficult economic times, let me read the quote from the hon. member for Markham—Unionville. This was somewhere around January 1. He said:

—the [Conservative] government is overstating the risks because many experts expect the Canadian economy to grow by up to 2.5 per cent this year—

It is shocking. We all change our minds, even the hon. member. When the hon. member talks about economic stimulus I cannot help but think back to last fall's economic statement, when in fact the Minister of Finance put in place measures that reduced Canadians' taxes by \$31 billion this year alone. That is an incredible amount of money.

However, let us put it in perspective. When the hon. member mentions that it is a pittance compared to other countries, the IMF is encouraging all countries to provide an economic stimulus of somewhere in the neighbourhood of 2%. If we do the simple math, the \$31 billion that we left in Canadians' pockets, that we did not take to bring to Ottawa as play money, March madness money that some of the former Liberal governments did. We left that in Canadians' pockets and let them decide what to do with it. That \$31 billion is 2% of our gross domestic product.

We did that a year ago and we would have loved to have the support of the opposition parties at that time but we also encourage them to support this. This is not a budget. The opposition should not misconstrue this to be a budget. I know it is disappointed. I know it is expecting spending that it could criticize. If we offered incentives to some industries, I am sure it would have found a way to criticize that too.

We will get to that, but as the Minister of Industry stated in the House several times this week, we will not put money into an industry until we understand that is the best use of taxpayers' dollars, that it is coordinated with whatever our largest customer, that being the United States, is going to do in that same sector, or we could lose all those taxpayers' dollars.

I know it may not be that important to that side, but it is incredibly important to us. That is why we have put in measures to show leadership from this party. We are encouraging leadership from all members of the House to cut back on our spending: our spending as members of Parliament and our spending in our own budgets. In fact, we are planning on legislating caps on wage increases to the public sector.

The President of the Treasury Board will speak to that later today in more detail. That is leadership. That is the kind of leadership that elected the Prime Minister to lead this country. We expect nothing less from the opposition than support in a difficult economic situation. Let us not play partisan politics with the future of Canadians.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his response earlier, the member opposite said that this was not a budget. But it is not an economic statement either. It is a smokescreen intended to hide this government's inaction and lack of consideration for the economic crisis we are facing.

Of course, at the beginning of the economic statement there is an overview of the situation throughout the world. However, when we dig deeper and read further into what the government is saying in the economic statement, through the Minister of Finance, there is nothing. This government said it was ready to listen to the opposition and to the Bloc's interesting proposals.

All week long, the government appeared to agree that the Bloc had a precise and costed action plan for developing wealth and vitality to support the forestry and manufacturing industries, workers, regions and families.

There is nothing of that in this economic statement. There is nothing but Conservative ideology that wants to do away with any

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kind of opposition. It is clear: the government wants to muzzle the opposition parties, women and unions. That is what we see in this economic statement.

My question for the member opposite is very simple. Can he explain why there is not a single concrete measure to support all the people who will be in need of assistance during this crisis? All the economies in the world have decided to implement a tough, clear economic plan, so that they can emerge from this economic crisis strong and thriving.

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Menzies: Mr. Speaker, I thank the members of the Bloc for some constructive suggestions. I do not think anybody promised that those would be in the economic update. I know the Bloc has not been in government. It takes a while to put these together. We certainly will take those into consideration when we develop the budget, and I again thank them for those comments.

As I have said before in the House, I encourage all opposition members to put forward constructive suggestions. Members owe it to their constituents as their representatives to not just criticize, but to provide constructive criticism. We will accept that on this side of the House. We want to do what is right for Canadians.

I sense a need to go back and repeat what I said in my first answer, and I know the hon. member for Markham—Unionville may have tuned me out as I spoke. We put a stimulus in place in the fall economic statement of 2007. The hon. member's question was about that.

That economic stimulus was equivalent to 2% of our gross domestic product, which left \$31 billion in tax cuts in the pockets of businesses and Canadians. That provided them the flexibility to buy a new home or buy a new car. A reflection of that is car sales are up in Canada this year.

Canadians can choose what to do with their money more wisely than governments can. We tend to not respect, and I have sensed this many times in the House, how hard it is for taxpayers to earn that money. When we throw around numbers like we do and say that is only \$30 million, only \$30 million is a lot of money to Canadians, especially in difficult economic times. Therefore, we provided the stimulus.

Not only that, opposition members suggest there is nothing in the statement that addresses any industry. I beg to differ. There are \$350 million to Export Development Canada, which will leverage \$4 billion to the auto industry for exporting automobiles. There are \$350 million, as well, to the Business Development Bank of Canada to leverage its lending capacity to provide credit to Canadians. It is a liquidity issue and I wish the opposition would remember that.

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•(1035)

The Speaker: The time for questions and comments has expired, but I do want to issue an apology to the hon. parliamentary secretary. I forgot that on the first and second speeches on motions there is unlimited time. I was operating on a clock and cut the member off at the end of 21 minutes. I feel very badly that I did this, but I understand he was almost finished away. I do apologize. It was an error on the part of the Chair that I should not have made. We just do not have debates on motions like this very often when I am here.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure and honour for me to stand with the unequivocal opposition of all Liberals to the fiscal update of yesterday. We speak in one voice on this issue. It is entirely inadequate to the task at hand. I would characterize the fiscal update of yesterday with two simple words: it is pathetic and it is pernicious.

To give members some sense of where I am going, it is pathetic because it offers no stimulus. Canada, virtually alone, at a time of the worst crisis since the 1930s, offers nothing to help the economy, to help jobs, to help savers, to help people retain their pensions in their retirement years. It is pathetic in terms of a failed attempt to disguise the fact that the Conservatives are actually running a deficit. It is pernicious in its attacks on labour, on women and on the vulnerable.

Let me deal with each of these three points in turn.

[*Translation*]

As I just said, I feel that this economic and fiscal update is entirely inadequate. I am very pleased and proud that all Liberals will be voting against it. The fiscal update is pathetic because it offers no stimulating action by the government to help the economy. It is also pathetic as a failed attempt to disguise the fact that the Conservatives are actually running a deficit. And it is pernicious in ways that I will explain.

•(1040)

[*English*]

The Prime Minister sometimes speaks like Roosevelt, but he acts like Calvin Coolidge or R.B. Bennett. He made some comments that we had understood the lessons of the 1930s. In Peru he said that under the extraordinary economic crisis in which we lived, we in Canada had a need for extraordinary fiscal stimulus.

He also said something with which I agree, and it is another important lesson from the 1930s, that the world must never descend into protectionism. Those are good words and I commend the Prime Minister for them. The trouble is his actions are the opposite of his words. Rather than giving us extraordinary fiscal stimulus, which when he was in Peru he said was absolutely necessary, he has given us zero fiscal stimulus. He has given us even worse. He has given us cuts that he purports to be \$6 billion next year. That is like negative fiscal stimulus.

When we look around the world, we see tens of billions of dollars of fiscal stimulus in the United Kingdom, in Japan and in the European Union. We see hundreds of billions of dollars of fiscal stimulus in the United States and in China. In Canada the Prime

Minister talks about the need for extraordinary fiscal stimulus and we see nothing at all, or worse than that we see cuts and no stimulus.

Does he not understand that the Canadian economy is on the edge of the worst crisis since the 1930s, that the OECD predicts we will have a quarter million more unemployed people between now and 2010? Does he think it is not important for the government to act to help those unemployed people, to help critical industries that are in deep trouble and require urgent attention, to help Canadian savers and pensioners who have deep concerns about the ability to live out their retirement in dignity? I could go on. There are so many things but he does nothing.

Let me deal with two of the government's excuses. He talks about past stimulus, but that is irrelevant. Other countries have given stimulus in the past. When we were the government, we gave fiscal stimulus in 2000 and 2005. The point is the world needs stimulus now. The fact that the government had some measures some years ago, obviously has not done the job or else we would not be in a so-called technical recession. We would not be heading for a quarter million more unemployed people.

Whatever the Conservative government did in the past, whatever our government did in the past in terms of tax reductions, is inadequate to the task at hand facing the economy of Canada today. That is why countries like Britain, the United States and virtually every country in the world understand that we are in this economic crisis and therefore have taken action. The Conservative government has taken zero action.

Why should we believe that the government will give us a major stimulus in February or March, or even late January? First, why did it wait? The sooner it acts, the better. President-elect Obama is not even in office yet and he has in place an economic plan. Other countries, and I have named them, China, Britain, France and Japan, have already acted. The Conservative government has been in office approximately three years, so it has had plenty of time to put forward action plans, yet it has done nothing and it tells us to wait two or three months and eventually it might get the job done.

On this question of pathetic in terms of lack of stimulus is I do not even believe, I cannot have confidence, that the government is serious when it tells Canadians it will offer fiscal stimulus early next year. It has shown by its mind-set, by its ideology this time around that it does not want to do anything. I do not believe that in its heart of hearts it wishes to stimulate the economy.

While the Conservatives talk like FDR, they act like those great depression leaders, R.B. Bennett and Calvin Coolidge.

My second point as to why this fiscal update is pathetic, is the government's pretext of balancing the books.

•(1045)

[*Translation*]

They claim that there is no deficit. However, as Jeffrey Simpson said in this morning's *Globe and Mail*, there isn't one economist in Canada who believes that there will be a surplus next year. No one can believe that.

There are at least two reasons why no one can believe it. First, their assumptions about economic growth are far too optimistic in comparison to what economists said a month or more ago. And the situation has changed for the worse since then. The government is saying that we will see modest growth next year, yet a recent OECD report said that growth will be a negative 0.5%, which makes a significant difference when it comes to a deficit. The government, as many economists have said, is being completely unrealistic and far too optimistic in its assumptions when it comes to Canada's future economic performance.

[*English*]

The second reason has to do with asset sales. This is an old Mike Harris trick. They have \$10 billion over five years in asset sales, including \$2.3 billion this year, but when we were in the lock-up yesterday and asked the finance officials for a list, they said there was no list. This is an old Mike Harris trick, and they were caught out in 2003 in Ontario when they were running on a balanced budget. They lost the election. Dalton McGuinty called in the auditor and found that in fact they were running a \$7 billion deficit. Part of the reason for that deficit was fraudulent accounting on the subject of asset sales.

The current finance minister was from that same gang. I do not believe for one minute that he has confirmed asset sales of that magnitude. I think he just put his finger in the air and chose the number that would show a balanced budget. That is his number for asset sales.

Let me make one other point on that subject. When we were in government, we did not record one penny in the budget of asset sales until we saw the money. We had to actually get the money before it was recorded in the budget as a sale. Not only has the government not received the money, it also does not even have a clue about which assets it plans to sell.

For at least these two reasons, and there are many others, the pretense that the government is going to balance its books next year is totally without foundation.

Finally, the budget is pernicious. It is enough to be pathetic—pathetic is pretty bad—but if it is pathetic and pernicious, that is even worse. It is mean-spirited. Let me give just a few examples.

The government needlessly attacked labour. Just days after public sector unions accepted a very modest wage settlement, the government felt the need to ban strikes in the public sector. Just days after the public sector union had accepted a multi-year wage settlement, why does the government have to ban strikes? One would do so only if one had a mean-spirited streak in one's thinking, which I think is characteristic of the government.

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Why does the government have to attack women and pay equity? Again this is a mean-spirited, pernicious, ideological attack on the principle of pay equity.

The government also attacks the most vulnerable in our society.

[*Translation*]

It is an attack on the most vulnerable members of our society.

[*English*]

The attack on pay equity is an example.

The government has not told us what it is going to cut. It has told us it is going to cut a lot, but it has not told us what. We have to go on the Conservatives' record, and their record in the last Parliament was to make cuts in areas where people were most vulnerable, areas such as literacy programs, women's programs, and the court challenges program.

I can assure the House that we will be looking very attentively at where these cuts will be made. We have a suspicion they will be directed once again at the most vulnerable in Canadian society. I assure the House that we will be vigilant on that topic.

Finally, we see other governments working in the spirit of solidarity with their opposition parties to tackle the world's worst economic crisis since the 1930s. Mr. McCain, who lost the election to Barack Obama, has met with Mr. Obama to ask how he can help to deal with the worst economic crisis in the United States since the 1930s.

Would we not expect our government to reach out to opposition parties in Canada's moment of economic crisis to see if we could not work together to produce a package that would help to support the Canadian economy at its moment of great difficulty?

I would have thought that would happen. It happened in the U.S., and it is happening many other countries around the world. It would be normal to expect it from a normal government in this country.

The Conservative government has taken precisely the opposite approach through its attack on democracy and its attack on all the opposition political parties, just at the moment when parties need to work together for the good of the country.

I am proud to vote against this fiscal update. We Liberals speak with one voice when we believe something is not up to the task. This fiscal update is nowhere close to being up to the task of accomplishing what Canada needs as a result of our economic situation at this moment of danger and risk and uncertainty and potential crisis in the lives of all Canadians.

The statement is pathetic because it does nothing to stimulate the economy. It crows about past actions, which are now irrelevant. Everyone around the world agrees that what is needed now is action. There is no action now. I for one find it hard to believe, given the government's ideological mindset, that it is serious in its promise to provide significant fiscal stimulus down the road.

Statements by Members

The statement is pathetic because every economist in the country knows that the Conservatives are not telling the truth when they claim a balanced budget. Even the finance minister yesterday virtually acknowledged that he was wrong.

The fiscal statement is not only pathetic; it is also pernicious in terms of its unwarranted attacks on labour, on women, and on vulnerable Canadians.

For all those reasons, the Liberal Party will speak with one voice, and proudly and definitely vote against this pathetic and pernicious fiscal update.

• (1050)

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to be able to thank the hon. member for his statement, but unfortunately I cannot bring myself to do that.

The hon. member talked ad nauseam about a crisis. Liberals like to manufacture crises and fear in the population of our country. That way they can ride in as the supposed great saviours of our nation.

We all know that Liberals are only here in the best interests of Liberals. We saw that when the Gomery inquiry enlightened us about the sponsorship scandal. Now they are running in fear from the proposal. If they cannot steal money blindly from Canadians, now they cannot even bring themselves to admit that in a time of economic instability they cannot cough up a bit of money that would otherwise be going to political parties.

The member talked about vulnerable groups. One of the most vulnerable groups in our society is Canadian seniors.

In this economic statement we have offered an opportunity for all parties in the House to stand with one voice and say that we are going to help seniors with their RRIFs so that they can keep more of their hard-earned money. That member is only too happy to stand with a united voice and slap seniors in the face when they need an opportunity to keep their hard-earned money in this global economic situation.

How can the hon. member justify that to his constituents?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I would contend that one gesture on RRIFs is like a breath mint at a garlic festival. It will help, but in view of all the other smelly stuff in that fiscal update, it hardly comes to the top of one's mind.

I do not know why it took the Conservatives forever to get to the subject of RRIFs. Our leader proposed these very measures during the French debate in the middle of the election campaign, and seniors groups such as CARP have been pushing it. Every opposition party has been pushing it, but the government stonewalled. Eventually we dragged the government to a modest measure.

Given the odiousness of the rest of the package, I suppose I have to congratulate the government on having at least one little piece of mint in a garlic festival.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nicolas Dufour (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for once, I agree with the member for Markham—Unionville. We all agree that

the Conservative government's economic statement is a direct descendant of the party's Reform roots.

It is now clear that, for two and a half years, the Conservative government has been managing the country's affairs not in the interest of Quebecers and Canadians, but in its own partisan interest.

I would like the Conservative government to explain how it can possibly believe that the opposition parties will not band together on this, and I hope that the Liberals, too, will speak out against the Conservative government's utterly abominable behaviour.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. There is an unusual spirit of cooperation among the three opposition parties these days. Such cooperation is rare, but it is inspired by the appalling statement the government presented yesterday. I have already laid out my arguments, but I would like to emphasize the lack of economic stimulus measures to address the current economic crisis in Canada. Canada is just about the only country in the western world—and that includes China and Japan in Asia—that is doing nothing to address the economic crisis.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that there is no doubt the Liberals are united on this issue. Yesterday, our leader made that very clear, as did two of the three leadership candidates. There is no doubt that the Liberals are united on this front.

[*English*]

The Speaker: About five minutes remain in the time allotted for questions and comments, but since it is almost 11 o'clock, I think I will save those five minutes for the commencement of the debate at the end of routine proceedings a little later today. Accordingly, I suggest we move on to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, December 6 marks 19 years since 14 young women were murdered at École Polytechnique in Montreal, targeted because of their gender.

In the lead-up to December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, and throughout the international 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, it is important to remember that one of the groups most vulnerable to violence is senior women. The rates of family related violence are significantly higher for senior women than for senior men and the perpetrators tend to be their adult children. Many senior women live alone, in poverty and in poor health. We must protect senior women from violence and the threat of violence.

The Government of Canada is working hard to address the problem of violence against senior women. In budget 2008 we invested \$13 million over three years in a multi-departmental initiative to help seniors and others recognize the signs and symptoms of elder abuse.

Statements by Members

Let us resolve today to work harder for social change and an end to violence in all its forms.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, senior citizens in my riding of Davenport are telling me how difficult they are finding it to survive financially. I am sure the situation is the same across Canada.

Due to these pressures, it is hard for them to remain in their homes. They are finding it difficult to pay property taxes, meet the costs of food and simply pay their bills. At a time when world oil prices are going down, seniors continue to pay inflated prices for their home heating fuel. Why is this?

When a previous Liberal government created the Canada pension plan, it was to help seniors in their retirement. It is time to increase the amount that seniors are receiving under this program. It is also time to increase the old age security supplement.

We need to help seniors meet their property tax burden by allowing them to deduct this amount on their income tax returns.

We need to do whatever it takes to make sure that their private pension plans are secure.

Senior citizens across Canada helped to build this country. As we face so much economic uncertainty, we must do everything possible to help our seniors meet these challenges.

* * *

• (1100)

[Translation]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks before Christmas, 120 workers at Bow Group in Granby will be laid off indefinitely. Some 40 workers will also be affected by the permanent shut down of Sonoco. The entire manufacturing sector in the Montérégie region, and especially its thousands of workers, is threatened by the current economic meltdown.

Rather than bringing forward a comprehensive plan to help these families and the hundreds of workers who are worried sick about losing their jobs, the Conservative government presents them with an ideological statement completely devoid of any measures to address the crisis. This government does not intend to do anything to stimulate the economy and breathe life into it.

Furthermore, even as it chooses to suffocate the economy in spite of the serious difficulties affecting industry, this government still finds ways to increase military spending.

The Bloc Québécois will speak out, loud and clear, regarding our opposition to the laissez-faire economics of this ultraconservative, backward-thinking government.

[English]

CANADA-COLOMBIA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's latest ideological push is to sign a so-called free trade agreement with Colombia; this, despite very clear directions from the Standing Committee on International Trade, despite major concerns from human rights organizations, despite a compelling case made by labour activists, peasants, farmers, indigenous peoples, churches, journalists and all those working to stop the appalling death toll in Colombia.

Over 2,000 Colombian trade unionists have been murdered over the last 17 years by the paramilitary and the military. The death rate has accelerated this year, with over 40 Colombian activists killed for the crime of trying to organize fair working conditions for their co-workers and their families.

Even though the Uribe government has a very slick public relations machine, its ties with paramilitary organizations have been extensively documented.

The NDP will stand four-square against this repudiation of Canadian values and against the Prime Minister providing a reward for the Uribe government's ongoing human rights violations.

* * *

POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Ms. Dona Cadman (Surrey North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a time when Canadian families are worried about the financial future during the current global economic crisis, our Conservative government delivered an economic update that gave Canadians an outlook on our fiscal situation, along with key measures to assist pensioners, manufacturers and many more. Instead of working co-operatively with our government, what are the opposition politicians concerned about? Protecting their entitlements.

While Canadians are tightening their belts, greedy Liberal, Bloc and NDP MPs refuse to. They are threatening to plunge Canada into another election to protect their bloated subsidies. Let us be clear. When we need co-operation most, opposition parties do not care about protecting the Canadian economy. They care about protecting their own narrow interests of their political parties.

The opposition parties should be ashamed of their greed, ashamed of their ignorance of the plight of Canadians, and ashamed of their arrogance.

* * *

NORTH BAY JACK GARLAND AIRPORT

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the North Bay Jack Garland Airport is currently one of only 15 airports in Canada which boasts a 10,000 foot runway and it is used as an official alternate landing site for instances when flights are unable to land in Toronto or Montreal.

Statements by Members

Runway 08/26 is nearing the end of its lifespan and requires resurfacing. Rather than resurfacing, Transport Canada wants to reduce the runway to 6,500 feet. It is worth noting that according to current estimates, the cost of reducing the runway length from 10,000 feet to 6,500 feet is significantly more expensive than maintaining the current length.

The importance of maintaining the runway cannot be overstated. Not only does it provide for a safe, reliable alternate landing site, but it also provides endless potential for economic growth throughout Nipissing—Timiskaming.

The new Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities must review this matter carefully and pledge his support for the resurfacing of the full 10,000 foot runway at North Bay Jack Garland Airport.

* * *

POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year our Conservative government introduced a major pre-emptive fiscal stimulus with significant tax cuts, such as lowering the GST, along with reducing personal and business taxes. These tax cuts, along with previous tax reductions we have made, mean that Canadians will pay \$31 billion less in taxes, or almost 2% of GDP.

These forward looking tax cuts are allowing Canadian families in the current period of global economic crisis to keep more of their hard-earned dollars. These are tax cuts the opposition voted against. The opposition is taking pride in showing it does not care about the needs and struggles of Canadian families and, again, it is showing that today.

While Canadians are facing difficult decisions and are being forced to tighten their belts, the opposition members care about only one thing: protecting their entitlements. Liberal, Bloc and NDP MPs are arrogantly demanding that families and seniors struggling on fixed incomes keep on bankrolling bloated perks for political parties.

It is time the opposition showed some respect for the needs of Canadian families.

* * *

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

MOURAD KHAROUNE

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec, environmental protection and economic development go hand in hand, as demonstrated by the work of talented scientists who are finding innovative ways to improve our industrial processes.

I rise here today to commend the renewable energy and climate change research team at the École de technologie supérieure, led by Mourad Kharoune. With the support of two businesses, Matériaux Excell in Contrecoeur and Multiserv in Sorel-Tracy, they have perfected a process to capture the greenhouse gases emitted in steel production.

This process, which could also be used in aluminum smelters, can neutralize 15% of greenhouse gas emissions while costing only a tenth of existing technologies. Thus, it would allow businesses to improve their environmental record. And with a little more investment, this promising process could capture up to 40% of greenhouse gases.

Bravo, Professor Kharoune. The Bloc Québécois is proud of Quebec's innovative spirit.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister delivered an economic update that underlines the fact that we have acted to aggressively bolster our economy before other countries such as the United States and the U.K. have acted.

First, we have already launched a long-term \$33 billion infrastructure plan, meaning federal funding for infrastructure in 2009-10 will be more than double that in 2006-07, stimulating economic activity and helping provinces ramp up their own spending. Second, we have already made dramatic, permanent and sustainable tax cuts, tax cuts providing \$31 billion in tax relief, roughly 2% of GDP, next year alone.

Together, those two measures alone represent a fiscal stimulus unmatched by any advanced economy internationally, a significant stimulus helping sustain the economy in a period of global economic slowdown.

Compare that to the opposition stimulus approach, which would impose a huge energy tax on all Canadian families, raise taxes on business and, stunningly, protect taxpayer funded perks for political parties. The greed, the arrogance, the ignorance of the Bloc, NDP and Liberal—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe.

* * *

ATLANTIC SALMON

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the stock of Atlantic salmon in Bay of Fundy rivers has dropped radically in the last decade. This is in spite of the fact that they were placed on the species at risk list. What is missing is a meaningful recovery plan and adequate government resources dedicated to the implementation thereof.

[*Translation*]

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has held a number of public consultations, yet it still has not come up with a plan to protect Atlantic salmon.

I hope this government will devote the same resources to protecting Atlantic salmon as to protecting Pacific salmon. One type of salmon does not deserve more protection than the other.

Statements by Members

[English]

My childhood friend, fishing buddy, hockey and football teammate, Bill Taylor, and the Atlantic Salmon Federation, which he heads, have raised awareness and money to put what should be government initiatives in place.

The government should not back out of protecting one of Canada's most precious natural resources. The government cannot back out of doing its job.

* * *

[Translation]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL STATEMENT

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance presented a prudent, reasonable, responsible economic statement. It includes measures for seniors and help for manufacturers, and it ensures sustainable growth of public sector salaries. But the opposition does not seem interested in these important measures. It is only interested in one thing: living off Canadian taxpayers.

We do not share that vision. We believe that taxpayers' money should stay in taxpayers' pockets. If the opposition does not support this government, it is for one reason only: its own self-interest.

I hope the opposition will start showing some concern for our families, our businesses and our workers and will support the important measures we are introducing. Otherwise, their decision will hurt only hard-working Canadians.

* * *

● (1110)

[English]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 500,000 women were raped during the Rwandan genocide, 64,000 in Sierra Leone, 40,000 in Bosnia, 4,500 in less than 6 months in a single province of the Congo, and hundreds a day in Darfur.

Around the world, violence against women has become a meditated act of war. The weapons used in modern warfare are no longer limited to land mines, cluster bombs or AK-47s. Rape is now a primary weapon of war. These military tactics are used to shame and demoralize women, and control populations. Major General Patrick Cammaert said, "It is now more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in modern conflict".

This must end. Canada can do something by uniting in defiance to end this crime against humanity by implementing UN resolutions 1325 and 1820. Stop rape now.

* * *

POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative government has been continually working to protect the Canadian economy from the current global economic storm, the opposition cartel of the separatist Bloc, the

socialist NDP, and the tax and spend Liberals are plotting behind closed doors to protect their political perks.

The opposition cartel is showing its true greed and ignorance to the plight of families by putting the self-interests of their political parties first, threatening another election to protect a scheme to funnel public funds to themselves.

Canadians should be, and are, outraged. This jaw-dropping display of greed when we least need it is shameful. I urge Canadians to write, call or fax all Liberal, NDP and Bloc MPs to express their outrage, today.

* * *

[Translation]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL STATEMENT

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, "the worst, most inept government in the industrialized world", "blatantly obvious partisan tactics". To put it mildly, analysts are not a loss for words this morning to express their indignation at the economic statement delivered by this government, which is blinded by its ultra-conservative ideology.

In these tough economic times, many observers agree that the worst possible thing the government could do is reduce its spending, much less take advantage of the current crisis to ram its Reform agenda down people's throats.

The government is attacking workers, attacking women, attacking companies, attacking the regions and attacking Quebec.

Even though the government said it was willing to cooperate, it still has not woken up to the fact that 78% of voters in Quebec rejected the Conservative ideology on October 14. The Bloc Québécois will take a stand against this ideological statement.

* * *

[English]

THAILAND

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday one of my constituents contacted me to express concern about a relative who was currently in Thailand and who was unable to leave the country due to the closing down of the country's international airports.

Thailand is currently experiencing unrest, and there is concern that this unrest could escalate into something more serious, particularly if the military intervenes.

At the present time foreign visitors, including Canadians, have been instructed to remain at their hotels until further notice. I know that the friends and relatives of all Canadians currently in Thailand are concerned about the fate of their loved ones.

Oral Questions

I would therefore urge the government to reassure them that their security and well-being is uppermost in its mind, and that every possible consular service available is being provided to them. I would also hope that contingency plans are being seriously considered, should it become necessary to evacuate Canadians at some point.

Finally, we need some information from the government in terms of the number of Canadians there, and reassurance that Canada will work with the global community to end—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Medicine Hat.

* * *

POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the people of the riding of Medicine Hat for electing me as their member of Parliament and giving me the honour of representing them in the House.

The opposition members should be ashamed of themselves. They have shown yet again that they are more interested in lining their own pockets than in taking real action on our economy.

Canadians elected a Conservative government to make difficult, prudent and responsible choices that are necessary to get through the global economic crisis. While Canadians are cutting out coupons and saving every penny, the opposition members are entitled to millions of taxpayers' dollars for their own partisan purposes.

This government believes in giving money back to Canadian families, workers and businesses. That is exactly what we have been doing since 2006. It is outrageous that opposition members expect Canadians to make sacrifices when they will not make any themselves.

We are leading by example and tightening our own belts. It is time opposition members do the same.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1115)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when Canadians are worried about their jobs, savings and economic security, at a time when business and consumer confidence have been shattered, at a time when every other country is generating a stimulus package to confront the global economic meltdown, at a time when the Prime Minister promised unprecedented action to protect Canadians, why did these Conservatives produce nothing but a pathetic scam to hide the fact that their ideology and their mismanagement put Canada back into deficit before any stimulus package could even be contemplated?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his kind words of support. That seems to be the kind of support we are getting in this new sense of working together.

The economic statement seems to be misconstrued by the opposition as an actual budget. We will be delivering a budget early in the new year that will talk about the plans that we are now putting in place to help industries in Canada. I might remind the hon. member that we acted over a year ago with a fiscal stimulus that is stronger than that of most countries.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for all of the parliamentary secretary's rhetoric, for all of the things about which he brags, they simply have not worked. Canada is on the cusp of a recession. The Conservatives are falling back into deficit. Canadians are facing the worst economic crisis since the 1930s and the Conservatives have no plan. There is no new stimulus and all they can say is wait, wait, wait. They have put nothing of any consequence forward for Canadians except a fire sale of assets to try to hide their deficit.

Why has the government so totally failed to be honest?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the hon. member did not listen to my first answer. I know it was at the tail end of the answer, but we did act. Mr. Speaker, you were here, and you saw that the opposition voted against a stimulus package that provided \$31 billion of stimulus to Canadians.

We stimulated that by leaving that money in the pockets of Canadians. We allowed them to make the decision about where they wanted to invest. That is the type of stimulus that other countries are now looking at with envy.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that his plan has not worked. These Conservatives are going in the wrong direction. Instead of helping Canadians through the worst economic downturn in 75 years, they are picking scapegoats and trying to create victims. They are attacking women, pay equity, public servants, collective bargaining, programs and services that help the most vulnerable Canadians. They are engaged in a fire sale of assets.

How will this vindictive, anti-stimulus attitude create or save one single Canadian job? Where is the hope—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where is the rhetoric? The Liberals had a lot of opportunity in 13 years to do that. We are leading by example. Obviously, the opposition does not seem to think that it plays a role in encouraging Canadians to be frugal. We have put in place the fiscal stimulus that this year has created a net job growth of \$200,000. The hon. member does not seem to understand that.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government blew a \$13 billion surplus and has plunged us back into a deficit. Instead of admitting this, it is trying to hide it. To hide what it has done, the government is going after the less fortunate, attacking the public service, and selling off our assets and heritage at bargain prices. Instead of investing, it is making cuts. This is the opposite of what everyone else in the world is doing.

Will the Conservatives finally acknowledge that they are going in the wrong direction, that this is a mistake and that it needs to change right now?

• (1120)

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, allow me to first of all correct a statement that I misspoke before. It was 200,000 jobs and that is a lot more than \$200,000.

What we will not do is what the Liberal government did during the 1990s. It downloaded all of those costs and cut transfer payments to the provinces. Health care is still suffering all across Canada. Social programs are still suffering. We are trying to rebuild those programs. We wish that the opposition would help us rather than hinder us.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are suffering because of that party.

[Translation]

What is in their update? Nothing for workers, nothing to stimulate the economy. Why? Because they are amateurs, because they have managed things irresponsibly. It looks as if Gilligan is at the helm of the ship. They have plunged us back into a deficit. They have eliminated our financial cushion. And now all Canadians are paying the price.

Will someone on the other side of the House wake up, someone who has the guts to say that they made a mistake, that they are sorry and that they will change course right now?

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of course, I think we are on the right course. That is evidenced by the fact that the United Kingdom earlier this week did exactly what we did in our fall economic statement of 2007, that is, reducing its value added tax. That is exactly what this finance minister did.

This Prime Minister is showing leadership. He spoke to us in year-end interviews, warning Canadians about this, and some of the hon. members did not believe him. The member for Markham—Unionville said that is ridiculous, the economy is going to grow by 2.5%. What is he saying now?

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while every other government around the world is taking action to fight the economic crisis, the Prime Minister is doing the exact opposite. Instead of presenting a plan to revitalize the economy and breathe life into it, the Prime Minister has decided to suffocate it.

The Bloc Québécois proposed constructive and realistic measures to help the economy and the public, but every last one was rejected.

Does the Prime Minister realize that by not presenting a real plan to revitalize the economy, he is basically abandoning businesses, regions and people?

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I will thank the Bloc for putting forward those suggestions, suggestions that we have not yet received from the other parties.

Having said that, those suggestions will be viewed in our planning for our budget of 2009. That is when we deal with spending. That is when we deal with incomes that come into government, but the fall economic update is simply an update for Canadians to show the state of our economy. It is nothing more than that and I would encourage the hon. members to support this, get on with governing this country and help us lead.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member could be a stand-up comic at the Just For Laughs Festival.

[Translation]

That said, in the hope of more easily imposing his ideology, the Prime Minister used his economic update to silence political parties, unions, artists, women, and every other type of opposition. The government presented an ideological update, not an economic one.

How can the Prime Minister justify this attitude?

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I might remind the hon. member that we have actually put in place the biggest infrastructure expenditure that this country has seen since the second world war. I would suggest that this will be all across this country. Quebec will play a role in that. This year alone it will double. We will be providing \$6 billion toward infrastructure that will put communities back to work.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the days before Parliament resumed, the Prime Minister made a show of wanting to cooperate with the opposition. He actually met with party leaders and finance critics. The Prime Minister, his ministers and, just now, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance even congratulated the Bloc Québécois on its recovery plan. And yet, there was nothing, absolutely nothing, in the economic statement, except an ideological hard line.

Will the Prime Minister admit that this exercise was nothing but a smokescreen, that he never intended to respond to the economic crisis and that his statement is no more than an ideological exercise?

Oral Questions

• (1125)

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many times I need to repeat this. The action has already been taken, despite the opposition members that voted against it. There are \$31 billion in tax cuts to Canadians and they chose not to support that. I would like to see what their suggestion would be if it is not leaving taxpayers' dollars in their own pockets. I am sure even some of their constituents would question the knowledge that they put into either voting or abstaining, I forget which one it was now.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, reducing the amount of taxes paid on profits only helps those who are turning a profit, such as the oil companies. That should be apparent to everyone.

The minister's financial perspective is quite at odds with forecasts by the OECD and the economists at la Financière who, with no exceptions, are all forecasting negative growth for 2009, whereas the minister and the government are the only ones to forecast economic growth for next year.

Is the minister's statement not more akin to an ideological exercise when he forecasts that there will not be a deficit although he cannot guarantee it? He states one thing and its opposite.

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we will be looking forward to the budget in early 2009, which will lay out the plans.

The industry minister has stood in the House several times this week and has talked about the consultation he is having with his counterparts in the United States and with his provincial counterparts dealing with the auto sector. He is putting together a plan.

There is no sense putting a plan together unless it is coordinated with our biggest customer, and that is the United States.

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the British Prime Minister, the French Prime Minister, the European Commission, the Chinese, the American Congress and the President-elect of the United States, Barack Obama, have all figured it out. Here in Canada, corporate leaders, the unions, Bay Street, the left, the right, the centre, have all figured it out: with 350,000 jobs lost in the forestry and manufacturing sectors, our economy needs leadership from the government.

Why is this government apparently the only one in the world to still believe that the problems facing the world economy will solve themselves? Why are they still sitting on their hands?

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only way we will resolve these problems is if all members in the House remember why they were elected, which is to make Canada a better and stronger country. Instead of the petty, partisan politics we see here today, they need to support what we have done.

The hon. member seems to be having great difficulty with math. As I have stated on many occasions, we have net new jobs in our country this year alone of 200,000. We have a new auto plant opening this year.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians, as they sat at home yesterday watching TV, were hoping to see some leadership from the government. What they got was a lump of coal just before Christmas.

The message was clear. The government prefers to play partisan politics to pander to its Reform base. It is not taking care of Canadians and their families who deserve more and need more.

When will the government wake up and take decisive action to address the real problem facing the world economy and the Canadian economy?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how many times I have to remind hon. members that we did this a year ago.

I believe we are seeing an awful lot of smoke and mirrors when we are talking about partisan politics and the funding of political parties. My sense is that is what this is all about, the underlying motive here.

They cannot believe the fact that families in our country are worried about their jobs. The opposition members appear to be worried about their entitlements

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 350,000 jobs were lost, good paying jobs with pensions, in forestry and manufacturing. Why? Across the board cuts to income tax for corporations only goes to companies that make profits and therefore pay taxes. The people in forestry or manufacturing got nothing.

That is the incredible record of the Conservative government, incompetent, and that is what will get thrown out next week.

• (1130)

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, the question is a little rich coming from a party that voted against a softwood lumber agreement that brought back some sustainability to the forestry industry.

The hon. member keeps throwing out job losses. It is very frustrating when we see such glee on his face when he talks about job losses.

I remind the hon. member that this year alone there are 200,000 net new jobs. Since the government took power, 900,000 net new jobs.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's economic update was an attack on women's equality. The groundwork for this attack was put in place earlier this month at the Conservative policy convention when members voted to kill pay equity for women.

Instead of attacking and undermining progress made on pay equity, why have the Conservatives not introduced measures to help Canadian women who will bear the brunt of the economic downturn? Why step on them?

Oral Questions

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): In fact, Mr. Speaker, the federal government is proud to be leading the way when it comes to recruitment and compensation of female employees.

We believe it is not right that women have to wait for pay equity for 10 or 15 years. We will bring in a proposal that ensures they receive pay equity on a timely basis. I ask the member to support this.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no such thing. There is no justification to remove remedies available to women to achieve equality, none whatsoever.

Women make up a huge portion of the workforce and they contribute to the economy, yet they still only earn 70¢ for every \$1 that male counterparts earn for work of equal value.

Instead of attacking women's equality, why are the Conservatives not helping women affected by the economic downturn? That is no answer whatsoever. There are no guarantees and no supports, and it breaks the existing laws.

While we are speaking on it, the minister should be answering, not her colleague. I ask her to answer me. I need an answer from her.

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, women now represent over 55% of knowledgeable workers in the Public Service and over 40% of executive ranks.

We believe the issues of pay equity need to be addressed on a timely basis.

I note the Ontario Liberal government has brought in very similar legislation to ensure that not only the employer has a responsibility for pay equity, but that the unions work together with the employers to ensure women receive the appropriate amount of pay.

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, less than two days after the Public Service Alliance of Canada came to a reasonable settlement on salaries, the Conservatives lashed out again at the public service and imposed a draconian ban on its democratic rights.

How in good conscience can Conservatives possibly justify this scurrilous attack? Have they no shame?

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the collective agreements reflect a responsible approach to public sector compensation and it is critical during a time of economic uncertainty.

This prohibition will only apply the public sector employees who seek an increase in wages beyond what the government can responsibly provide; that is the 2.3%, 1.5%, 1.5% and 1.5%. This is what the unions have indicated they are prepared to live with.

That is a reasonable amount and we are pleased to see that agreement go into place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. That was well and truly a partisan, ideological attack on the public service.

The Conservatives are hostile and vindictive. They cannot grasp the notion of cooperation and collaboration for the good of Canadians. Public servants all work very hard every day for Canadians, and they deserve respect.

Will the Conservatives put an end to these ideological attacks on the public service?

[*English*]

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the irony coming from a member of a party that in the mid-1990s was responsible for laying off public servants and down-loading costs on to the provinces, crippling health care, crippling our social programs. That is what the Liberals did to us when we were in charge of provincial governments. They had no problem doing that.

We are dealing with the public unions in a responsible manner instead of crippling social programs.

* * *

● (1135)

[*Translation*]

EQUALIZATION

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government shot wide of the mark by taking on anything and everything except the crisis. Instead of trying to put out fires, it decided to light some. First it cut funding right and left, and now it is threatening the fiscal equilibrium of Quebec and the provinces by announcing a cap on equalization payments.

Every other government on the planet is implementing measures to attenuate the effects of the crisis and stimulate the economy, so why, contrary to common sense, has this government chosen to bring in measures that are sure to intensify the negative effects of the crisis?

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I might remind the hon. member that it took a Conservative government to recognize there was a fiscal imbalance. The Liberals refused to recognize that.

We fixed that. We fixed it so well that we felt it was appreciating too quickly. In negotiations with all the provinces, we put it on a level that is sustainable, and that is the growth of the economy. The provinces will get an increase in transfer payments every year.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government is taking advantage of the crisis to interfere further in Quebec's jurisdictions. The government's desire to create a single securities commission is nothing new, but now it wants to create a single pension plan, supposedly to be able to meet future challenges.

Oral Questions

Can the government deny that the economic crisis is just a convenient excuse it plans to use to step on Quebec's jurisdictional toes?

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am assuming from the beginning of the question that the hon. member is talking about a common securities regulator. We have laid that out as something in which we would encourage all provinces to join. We are the only country in the industrialized world that does not have a common securities regulator. We are encouraging all willing partners to get together to improve the investment environment in Canada through a common securities regulator.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL STATEMENT

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, this House witnessed a most disturbing attack on democracy. Most political analysts are roundly condemning the government's frontal assault on the law governing political party financing. The Prime Minister's approach is being described as nothing less than irresponsible.

Will the Prime Minister come to his senses and do the honourable thing by withdrawing this measure, which is nothing less than a denial of democracy?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while we are taking action and showing true leadership on the economy, the opposition parties are interested only in protecting their own benefits and their own money.

There are sacrifices to be made in these tough economic times, and all the parties must do their part. Our party, the Conservative Party, is prepared to make a greater sacrifice than all the opposition parties. We are acting to protect the economy; they are acting to protect their benefits.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government's plan is clear: it is cutting funding for anyone who does not think like it does. After attacking pay equity, artists, women's groups and the court challenges program, the government listened to the most radical factions of the party, which reject the principle of pay equity, and now it has the opposition in its sights.

Instead of attacking the crisis, why has this government chosen to attack those who do not think like it does?

[*English*]

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is our priority. We are doubling infrastructure spending in the next year. We have cut the GST, lowered income taxes and business taxes and injected liquidity into our banks to ensure that small businesses, home buyers and consumers can get the loans they need to function.

What is the priority of the members on the opposition side? It is a big coalition founded on their personal, political entitlements. This is the contrast that Canadians witness, a government that is working on the economy and an opposition that is uniting around its entitlements.

• (1140)

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talks as though he understands the lessons from the 1930s.

In Peru he told world leaders that it may well be necessary to take unprecedented fiscal stimulus, but all of his actions yesterday offer zero stimulus and only cuts. The rest of the world has acted in the tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars. Britain is the latest to join in.

Why does the Prime Minister talk like Franklin Roosevelt and act like Calvin Coolidge?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always interesting to hear the analogies from the other side of the House, but the truth is we did take pre-emptive action.

The previous answer to the previous question talked about a whole litany of things that we had done. In fact, when he is referring to the United Kingdom, it followed our lead in cutting its value-added tax by 1.5%. However, I remind the hon. member that it did it on a temporary basis. We did it on a permanent basis.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is ridiculous. Last year, when the government cut the GST, the British cut income tax by \$18 billion. Unlike the Conservative government, the British do not sit around boasting about what they did last year. They had a further major tax cut this year because that is what their economy needed, like ours.

Will the parliamentary secretary admit that everything he just said is total rubbish?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, the short answer to that would be, no, absolutely not.

It is unbelievable how the hon. member can dismiss the fact that this actually created the stimulus that has put Canada in the enviable position of the strongest growth in the G7. That, I might add, was without the support of the opposition because it could not see far enough ahead to see that it was the positive, right thing to do. It voted against it.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the deficit daddy finance minister has fudged his books to bury the deficit that he fathered. Now he is trying to pass off his illegitimate surplus as the real thing.

Why will the minister not come clean to Canadians and admit what everyone knows, which is that he has engineered a surplus just to say he has one and that the Conservatives mismanaged Canada's finances during the good times and put Canada into deficit even before the global economic slowdown?

*Oral Questions***RIGHTS OF WORKERS**

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we talk about mismanagement, we are reminded of the days when the Liberals downloaded all the deficit cutting that they were trying to do onto the backs of the provinces and bragged about it, and where they knee-capped the transfer payments to health care and to social programs.

We will not do that to Canadians. We respect our provincial partners too much and we respect Canadians too much to do that.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to hide his deficit, the finance minister is now selling Canadian assets at a time when the prices are low.

Why are the Conservatives counting the money before they have even made the sales, before they even know what assets they will sell? Why are they letting the same finance minister who bungled the Highway 407 deal, losing Ontario taxpayers billions of dollars, to cut the same kinds of bad deals for Canadians just to hide his new Conservative deficit?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a little rich coming from that hon. member who, when he was not part of that Liberal side of the House, criticized the Liberals for their ridiculous spending.

We have put in place an expenditure review process that has actually set out \$15 billion of expenditures within government departments that were not necessary. To put it in plain language, these were old programs that were no longer necessary and were not a good use of taxpayer money.

We are now looking at other ways to save taxpayer dollars.

* * *

• (1145)

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the Minister of Immigration announced further details of the Conservative action plan for faster immigration, as well as immigration levels for 2009.

Under our action plan, skilled workers, such as nurses and doctors, will be able to come to Canada in six to twelve months, down from the five to six years wait under the Liberals.

Would the Minister of Immigration please tell the House about his exciting announcement today.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while other countries in the developed world are actually cutting immigration, I am pleased to announce today that Canada will maintain historically strong levels of immigration in 2009.

To help continue to fuel the economy, I have also announced ministerial instructions under our action plan for faster immigration to accelerate skilled foreign worker applications in 38 high demand occupations, like health care and skilled trades. This will allow us to more closely align our immigration with our labour market needs going forward to help reinforce the Canadian economy at this time.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's economic update failed to stimulate the economy and it did nothing to create jobs, and this at a time when countless families around the country have no access to employment insurance.

Canada Post workers are striking because the employer wants to slash short-term disability claiming workers can just use employment insurance. They cannot. And nothing in this update fixes the problem.

Why did the Conservatives use the economic update to attack the fundamental rights of workers?

Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that the Union of Postal Communications Employees is currently without a contract. There is a collective bargaining process that should be followed. We are closely monitoring the situation.

Let us be clear. For the opposition, this is about protecting their entitlements, and that is what the questions are all about.

This is a government that is protecting the Canadian economy, protecting jobs and protecting the future of all Canadians.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, instead of attacking the recession, the government is attacking workers and women.

The economic update takes away the right to strike, overrides collective agreements and removes the right for women to achieve equal pay for work of equal value.

We needed stimulus and we needed investment but instead we got a tax on the fundamental rights that have taken us decades to achieve.

How will these attacks create jobs, protect consumers and help families make ends meet? Who do these attacks really help?

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that women are entitled to fair rates of compensation, which is why there is a pay equity scheme. The problem with the pay equity scheme is that it takes so long to actually put into place.

We are putting forward a proposal that would ensure that employers, like the federal government and the unions, are responsible for negotiating pay equity so there are fair rates and that legal obligations in that respect are met in the context of the collective agreement.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his government deliberately decided to go after women by making pay equity a negotiable right. As though the principle of pay equity were negotiable. This is the government's way of announcing that it does not want to have to pay retroactive adjustments, and that the principle of pay equity will from now on be part of collective agreement negotiations.

Could the new Minister of State (Status of Women) explain how she can go along with this disastrous setback for women's rights?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pay equity is not under negotiation. It is our intent to ensure that there is a mechanism to determine pay equity on a timely basis. Why should women have to wait 10 or 15 years in order to achieve what is, frankly, theirs?

The government in Ontario and the government in Manitoba, whether socialist or liberal governments, have put in place exactly the same type of format to ensure that women get their rights recognized in a timely fashion.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the positions taken in the past by the Conservatives do not bode well for women. The Conservatives have gone after pay equity, threatened the right to abortion, cut the court challenges program, and shut down Status of Women Canada offices, stopping at nothing. And at their convention, they continued their retrograde and misogynist behaviour.

How can the Minister of State (Status of Women) explain these repeated attacks on women, except to say that it is purely for ideological reasons?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is it not interesting that when it comes to their entitlements in respect of their political parties, those members want to ensure that their money is there right away. When it comes to women and pay equity, they are content to allow women to wait 10 or 15 years before they achieve pay equity.

We are putting a mechanism in place to ensure that both the employer and the union have a responsibility to address pay equity issues in a timely fashion.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to pad their books and hide the deficit, the Conservatives are sitting on \$3 billion in the Building Canada fund.

Instead of putting shovels in the ground and creating jobs, the Conservatives have tangled infrastructure programs into a web of red tape.

In Mississauga, infrastructure projects are ready to go. When will the Conservatives cut the cheques?

Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the question from the member because it gives me an opportunity to talk about some of the things the government is doing.

In a time of global economic uncertainty, we on this side of the House understand that it is vital to invest in infrastructure that will create jobs today, tomorrow and in to the future.

The member should listen to the mayor of Toronto who said:

That money is going to ensure thousands of jobs are created and maintained.... It's exactly the right time to build infrastructure because the contracts are going to come in for less because the economy is softening.

We are getting the job done.

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Mississauga, Conservative red tape is holding back \$52 million for the bus rapid transit system; \$30 million for downtown revitalization; \$20 million for Sheridan College; \$10 million for the Burnhamthorpe Library; \$8 million for the fire halls; and \$4 million for park pathway lighting, and that is just in my riding. Thousands more are stalled across the country.

When will that money start flowing?

Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the money is already flowing, but this is not about money flowing. This government has made the largest infrastructure investment of all time. What this is about is their entitlements. They want their entitlements.

We on this side of the House are working toward a strong future for Canadians and that is why we have invested so much in infrastructure and why we are moving forward with Building Canada. No matter whether it is Liberal, NDP or Conservative, all mayors across this country recognize that we are getting the job done in infrastructure and we are making the investments necessary.

* * *

FOREST AND MINING INDUSTRIES

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, instead of attacking the recession, the government's economic statement failed B.C.'s families who work in the forestry and mining sector.

Since January 2007, 34 mills in B.C. alone have closed and 10,000 jobs have disappeared. Our forestry families needed help, they needed economic stimulus, but all they got from the economic update was blatant partisanship: no new jobs, saving no mills and no offer of hope for the future.

Why did the government put its partisan interests ahead of B.C.'s working families?

*Oral Questions***Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP were ever to make any suggestions, it might suggest that we stabilize the softwood lumber communities. We did that with the softwood lumber agreement. It might suggest that we put money into lumber communities. We did that with a \$1 billion community trust. It might suggest that we focus on innovation for the future. We have already done that. It might suggest that we focus on market research and market development. We are already doing that.

We are protecting the economy. We are talking about that today. Members on the other side are only concerned with protecting their own entitlements. We will get the job done for Canadians.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister should visit the communities of Terrace, Burns Lake and Hazelton that have lost mills under his watch. The government has failed B.C.'s forestry communities. It forgets somehow that 62% of Canadians rejected their efforts on the economy, 62% of Canadians rejected the Conservatives' so-called vision for the future of this country.

Conservatives continue to pit the environment versus the natural resources sector. It is time for them to wake up, smell the coffee and get with the program. When will they invest in a green economy for green collar jobs?

• (1155)

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 80% rejected them. We do not need to get any lectures from them about support by Canadians for this government.

Our government has acted to help workers. We are acting to help their families who are facing uncertainty. We have supported the Canadian forest industry by getting that softwood lumber deal done. We have supported the community development trust, which is putting money back into those communities.

Again, this government is working to protect Canadians and working to protect this economy. All we hear from opposition members today is that they are working to protect their entitlements. They should be ashamed of themselves. We will get the job done for Canadians.

* * *

TERRORISM

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week Canadians have watched with horror the terrible events unfolding in Mumbai, India. These appalling terrorist attacks have killed well over 100 people, with hundreds more injured.

[Translation]

We stand behind the people and the government of India against those who have decided to terrorize the people and violate fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

[English]

Many Canadians are deeply worried about family and friends in India. Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs update us on the situation in Mumbai and what the government is doing to assist during this extremely difficult period?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure Canadians and families affected that the Government of Canada continues to deploy every effort to assist Canadians in Mumbai, including assistance in travel documents, replacing documents that might have been taken away, facilitating the departure of those wishing to leave through commercial means and, of course, providing financial assistance to those in need.

We must remain vigilant and that is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in yesterday's economic update, the Conservative response to the economic crisis was pitiful. One in seven women lives below the poverty line, but instead of helping Canadians, the Conservatives launched an ideological attack. Workers are worried about their jobs, yet there was no mention at all of employment insurance.

Why are the Conservatives launching partisan attacks instead of bringing in measures to help the most vulnerable members of our society?

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have committed \$387 million to the homelessness partnership strategy and the assisted housing initiative, which over five years is \$1.9 billion. That is more than any other government in history has committed. We also have, in addition to that, programs through targeted initiatives for those who are unemployed, those who want to get re-educated and get skills. We are investing at a time when investment is needed in these areas.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his government decided to attack public servants by taking away their right to strike. Instead of reaching out to workers, they decided to go after their rights. In the hope of imposing their right-wing ideology more easily, they are shamefully going after what thousands of workers have fought hard for decades to achieve: the right to negotiate a collective agreement and the right to strike.

Why does the government want to silence workers, when a settlement was reached with many unionized public service employees, if not to—

The Speaker: The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, I was very pleased with the responsible attitude that the union took in terms of coming to a collective agreement with the employer.

I would point out, for the member's information, that in all cases unionized federal public sector employees will have collective agreements at set rates for the annual increases. With the collective agreements in place, there is no requirement for a dispute resolution mechanism such as strike or arbitration.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this update does not meet the needs of the people of northern Ontario. With high unemployment rates, workers and their families are paying the price because this government refuses to act. The people of northern Ontario need new infrastructures and jobs, and older people need to know that their pensions are protected.

Why must families in northern Ontario pay for the government's inaction?

• (1200)

[English]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that traditional industries such as mining and forestry have sustained the economic well-being of many regions and communities. That is why our government is continuing to come through for the workers and their families dependent upon this industry.

I just spoke a few moments ago about the community development trust and the pride that we have in putting that \$1 billion toward communities that are hard hit by the economic situation. We are cutting red tape and we are protecting the environment. We are continuing to work and create new opportunities for Canadians.

Again, I want to point out today that this government is focused on protecting the economy. The opposition today seems to be focused on protecting their entitlements.

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SENIORS

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, seniors are understandably worried about their nest eggs. They want to ensure that they will be able to retire in comfort. They want to know that their government is listening to their concerns and taking action.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance please inform this House what this government is doing to help senior retirement savings during this time of global economic uncertainty?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for that question and welcome our new Conservative member for Kenora to this House. I congratulate him on his election.

To answer that, it is nice to have a positive question that actually reflects on what we will be voting on here soon. I might remind hon. members that this is a suggestion in the economic statement, and that is to reduce the required minimum withdrawal amounts from RRIFs by 25%, but I answer this with great concern because I understand the opposition may be voting against this. That is what seniors asked us to do. I would encourage all hon. members to respect that request.

* * *

*[Translation]***PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY**

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in our gallery of His Excellency Mohammed Ameer, Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister of Morocco in charge of the Moroccan community abroad.

[English]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Keith Peterson, Minister of Health for Nunavut.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS
*[Translation]***ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PRIVACY**

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the annual reports on the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for the year 2007-08.

[English]

This document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

I have the honour to lay upon the table the annual reports on the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act of the office of the Chief Electoral Officer for the year 2007-08.

[Translation]

This document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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IMMIGRATION

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 94(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, I am pleased to present, in both official languages, the annual report on immigration for the year 2008.

Government Orders

[English]

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1) I wish to table a notice of a ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 26, 2008, to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal statement tabled in Parliament on November 27, 2008, and to implement other fiscal and economic measures.

[Translation]

I ask that you designate an order of the day for the consideration of the said motion.

* * *

• (1205)

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the address be engrossed and presented to Her Excellency the Governor General by the Speaker.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

INTERPROVINCIAL BRIDGE

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the seventh consecutive day, I would like to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Ottawa—Vanier as well as citizens from the entire national capital region. This petition is asking the government to intervene in the bridge issue. There is currently a proposal under consideration to build one or two new bridges that would eventually link to a ring road around the national capital region and that would remove heavy truck traffic from the core. Every self-respecting city, particularly Canada's capital, should have a ring road for heavy truck traffic.

The petitioners are asking the government to direct the National Capital Commission to carry out a detailed assessment of another option: an interprovincial bridge linking the Canotek industrial park to the Gatineau airport, which is option seven of the first phase of the environmental assessment of potential bridges in the national capital region.

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL STATEMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry.

As this is my first speech in the House, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the voters in the riding of Alfred-Pellan, who renewed their confidence in me during the most recent election. I would also like to thank those who have given their time and energy to the Bloc Québécois team to raise awareness of our ideas and our priorities. I would have been so proud to have seen their efforts result in a plan to bring some much-needed stimulus to the economy.

I believed that the Conservative government, with the support of the opposition parties, would have offered Quebecers and Canadians solutions to help people and businesses deal with this global crisis that, some say, will be worse than anything we have seen since the Great Depression.

Every other government on the planet is taking steps to deal with the crisis by stimulating the economy, but this government has given us a partisan, ideological statement that has a lot in common with the Reform Party's far-right agenda, a right-wing ideology that has blinded the government to the importance of acting now.

Instead of breathing life into the economy, which desperately needs help, the Conservative government has chosen to stifle it. It has left businesses, regions, and by extension, the entire population, high and dry. We cannot accept that. My party and I condemn the fact that, instead of tackling the economic crisis, the Conservative government has chosen to create a crisis of democracy for strictly partisan reasons by eliminating funding for political parties.

In the current economic situation, the Prime Minister should have given workers a helping hand, but instead he decided to attack their interests by suspending their right to strike. He also continued his campaign to erode the status of women by making pay equity a right henceforth to be negotiated in the collective bargaining process but without compensating for the fact that the fundamental right to strike is being eliminated. In the hope of more readily imposing his ideology, the Prime Minister wishes to muzzle the political parties, the unions and women. In short, he wants to muzzle all opposition.

Government Orders

Although they said they were prepared to work with the opposition parties, the Conservatives rejected the proposals in the economic recovery plan presented this week by the Bloc Québécois. These were realistic proposals that met the needs created by the current economic crisis. The federal government has the responsibility to take action at the juncture of this economic crisis. Furthermore, Ottawa has the means to do so without increasing debt servicing or creating recurring deficits.

The Bloc Québécois put forward a recovery plan to help businesses and the general population, a three-part plan that could have made a significant contribution by injecting some \$23 billion into the economy. The plan we presented this week was realistic and it could have been implemented to help Quebecers and Canadians protect what they have and to stimulate their industries and the economy.

This plan included immediate measures that cost nothing. Some of the measures not retained were: adopting legislation on the government's preferential procurement practices; regulations requiring federal organizations to use forestry products in federal construction projects; abolishing the two-week waiting period for employment insurance benefits; reinstating funding for economic development organizations; reinstating cultural programs; the implementation of the Kyoto protocol and credits for non-polluting industries, particularly in Quebec; raising to 73 the age for converting an RRSP to a RRIF.

• (1210)

Our plan also includes measures for businesses. For example: a \$4 billion modernization fund to stimulate investment in manufacturing companies and increase productivity; a comprehensive plan to support the manufacturing and forestry sectors; a \$2 billion development fund for affordable housing using CMHC assets; and a \$2 billion fund for home energy efficiency renovations, also using CHMC funds.

We have also proposed measures to help people directly, such as full compliance with the equalization formula; an additional \$1.3 billion transfer for post-secondary education; an incremental increase in the guaranteed income supplement; graduated retroactivity for those eligible for the guaranteed income supplement who were swindled by the government; improved access to the employment insurance fund; an income support program for older workers; and a \$4,000 rebate program for the purchase of electric, hybrid or fuel-efficient vehicles.

As I said earlier, the government has sufficient means to fund this kind of economic stimulus package. Funding can come from a strategy to reduce the use of tax havens for tax evasion. We also recommend that tax breaks for oil companies be cancelled. Ottawa's financial assets, which total \$176 billion, will also be called upon.

Instead of showing Quebec and Canada its true Reform Party colours with its right-wing economic statement, the federal government could have put forward measures, some of which would not cost a penny, to help the economy.

That is what the Bloc Québécois proposed to the Minister of Finance just days ago. Our economic stimulus plan is realistic and strong, and it shows that we can act to stimulate the economy and

give businesses and individuals the tools they need to deal with the crisis.

The Bloc Québécois will vote against the Harper government's ideological economic statement because it attacks democracy, workers and women, while doing nothing to stimulate the economy. The Conservatives have chosen provocation over cooperation, but the people do not want an election.

In closing, I would like to quote *La Presse's* André Pratte, a strong federalist. This morning, in an editorial entitled "Irresponsible, Mr. Harper!", he said—

• (1215)

The Speaker: Order, please. I believe that the hon. member is referring to the Prime Minister, and he must use his title, not his name.

Mr. Robert Carrier: Mr. Speaker, you were right to call me to order.

I was quoting an article written in French by André Pratte which said: "Mr. Harper is attempting another one of his dirty tricks... The opposition parties will have no choice, they will have to vote against the bill. It is a question of survival."

Because I believe in democracy, in workers' rights and—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member knows that even when he is reading an article, he cannot do indirectly what he cannot do directly. He ought to refrain from using the names of members of Parliament and refer to them by their title, even if he has to insert that into an article.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry.

I will end by saying that I believe in democracy, in workers' and women's rights, and I will stand with the Bloc Québécois to oppose this economic update.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Questions and comments. The hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as an aside, Marc-Aurèle Fortin was a great painter.

I would like to ask my colleague a question following his wonderful speech. Would any of the measures proposed by the Bloc Québécois create numerous jobs and, in addition, fulfill one of the duties of a civilized society, which is to provide decent, affordable housing to everyone? Where would this money come from so that the budget's fiscal balance would not be affected?

Mr. Robert Carrier: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. That is one of the elements of our plan that I mentioned briefly. Obviously, one way to make a quick contribution to this country's economic development would be to use the surplus accumulated by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, which amounts to about \$8 billion.

The government should quickly implement a plan for affordable housing, which is desperately needed across the country. I have had feedback in my riding, where people have to go on a waiting list before they can get affordable housing. Since the government coffers already have a surplus, this would have no effect on the budget. This immediate action would be appropriate to respond to the economic crisis.

[*English*]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt we have committed funding over five years of \$387 million, or \$1.9 billion, which is a significant amount.

The member wishes to use the funds in CMHC. CMHC has insured mortgages. It is there, although a huge amount, to protect against any defaults.

Particularly given the uncertain times in the economy, would the member not agree with me that it is wise to ensure there is a sufficient amount kept in surplus or in assets so the liquidity is there in the event it is necessary? Would the member not agree that it is only prudent to do this and that it would not be wise to take funds out of this account?

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier: Mr. Speaker, the wording of the Conservative member's question is a very good reflection of his party's philosophy: always be cautious, maintain a balanced budget, but all the while ignore the crisis we are currently experiencing.

But a government needs to be close to its people to realize that they are experiencing difficulties. Many of them are losing their jobs. Seniors' incomes are decreasing, because their assets, their pension plans, are consistently decreasing. They do not know how they will survive.

The government's job now is to invest in the economy, and later, when the economy has improved, the government can focus on a balanced budget.

As for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, it has an existing surplus that is not being used. We are not talking about the government creating an additional expense in the current budget. We are talking about the government using the surplus instead of letting it sit there as their ideological safety net, saying that there is a huge \$8 billion surplus, and it will stay there as protection, but all the while, people need housing. Building more affordable housing would stimulate the economy.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as I rise today to speak to the economic statement, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Beauharnois—Salaberry for putting their trust in me for the second time in the recent election. The people of Beauharnois—Salaberry voted 50.1% for me, which is a powerful motivator. I am happy about that, and I would like to thank them and tell them that I intend to continue the work I have been doing in my riding and in the House of Commons since 2006 with the same passion, the same thoroughness and the same determination.

Government Orders

In the same vein, I would be remiss if I did not also thank all the people who worked on my campaign. I want to tell them that I owe this victory essentially to them, because of all the time and energy they put into the campaign. I extend my thanks to them.

I would like to speak to the economic statement delivered in this House yesterday by the Minister of Finance. Many things have already been said about this statement. I listened carefully to the speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. Now, I would like to add my voice to those of my colleagues and share my reactions.

On listening to the speech by the Minister of Finance, the first thing I sensed was a great deal of provocation, pure and simple. There was the Conservatives' usual arrogance, along with the confrontational attitude we have seen before. The Conservatives had promised to be more conciliatory and to work with the opposition. Yet at the first opportunity, what they gave us was pure provocation.

We can see that this government has no concept of the political reality in which it has found itself since 2006. I believe the Conservatives do not understand how they fared in the election in Quebec and that they are turning a deaf ear to the message from the voters. The people have just barely given the government a second minority. Obviously, they do not want an election.

Since this is a time for compromise, openness and action, I cannot understand the attitude of the government, which has presented us with an economic statement that is very surprising, but unacceptable. The Conservative government, which had again said that it was prepared to work with the opposition parties, has—I would say deliberately—provoked all the opposition parties in this House since this session began.

Rather than tackling the economic crisis, the Conservative government decided to invent a democratic crisis—for reasons that are purely and strictly partisan, truth be told—by eliminating funding for political parties, knowing full well that this measure hurts third political parties in particular.

The government is claiming that it wants to save \$27 million. And yet it did not hesitate to call an election that cost \$300 million when voters did not want an election. Furthermore, this government broke its own law by calling an election for reasons that, I believe, were purely partisan. It just does not make sense. The Prime Minister said he wanted to call an election to be in a better position to manage the crisis. After calling an election and returning to power, the first thing he does is to again throw this House into a democratic crisis. He is not really doing anything to deal with the economic crisis and has not put forward a concrete plan.

Government Orders

The Prime Minister should have given workers a hand, but he decided instead to attack their rights by suspending the right to strike. As a woman, I am particularly affected by the attack against women in making pay equity subject to negotiation. I was very surprised, in today's question period, to note the silence of the Minister of State (Status of Women) who did not raise an eyebrow or express her disapproval, as a woman, of her government's position on pay equity.

• (1225)

This comes in addition to other actions by a government trying to obtain absolute power by attacking all opposing points of view, anything that does not suit its ideology, anything that does not match its world view and anyone who opposes it. It wants to silence them. Consider the media. It is no secret to anyone, and the government was highly criticized for it. We also know that it tried to block the work of parliamentary committees. It even attacked the credibility of the Chief Electoral Officer in the in and out scandal.

It also attacked the Auditor General by asking her to submit her press releases to the Prime Minister's Office for approval. It also attacked civil society groups that dared to take legal action against the government for some of its actions such as eliminating the court challenges program.

I would also remind the House that during the election campaign, the government announced unfathomable and unacceptable cuts to artists, and despite unanimous consensus in Quebec, it has maintained those cuts. The Minister of Canadian Heritage at the time promised during the election campaign that the programs would be replaced, but we know very well that this is false, since the new Minister of Canadian Heritage reiterated in this House that there was no way he would reverse his decision regarding programs to promote Canadian artists on the world stage to expand Quebec culture.

Clearly, this is a question of ideology. This economic update contains no economic or administrative decisions, only ideological decisions. The Conservative government is using this twisted method to impose its ideology more easily. It is using the economic update to silence political parties, unions and women, in short, to silence any form of opposition.

When I was debating with the Conservative candidate in my riding during the election campaign, I was able to see how much contempt the Conservatives have for workers and unions. I was debating with him about having empathy for people who lose their jobs, and about the fact that we must offer them what they need to get through this crisis. I felt the same way during my debate with the Conservative candidate as I did when I heard the Minister of Finance scoff at workers' rights.

We can see the logical progression, and that these decisions are purely ideological. Instead of presenting a plan to stimulate the economy and give it a boost, the Prime Minister went for measures that will stifle the economy. While all the governments in the world—this came up a lot today—are taking action to counter the crisis, the Conservative government is doing the exact opposite. The federal government did not get the job done. It did not do what it could have done when it comes to measures to help people and businesses through the financial crisis.

The only measure put in place to help individuals is a temporary reduction in RRIF minimum withdrawals. That is a step forward, but is it not nearly enough compared to what the Bloc Québécois has proposed.

We have been saying this for a week already. The Bloc Québécois proposed a series of measures to help individuals through the crisis. We would like the government to listen to us and implement the measures we proposed, not in a few months or a few weeks, but to implement these measures now to counter the economic crisis and help individuals and businesses through this difficult crisis.

• (1230)

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her presentation. I would like her to elaborate a little on the issue of political party financing, as proposed in the government's economic update.

As we know, the federal government has had a law governing the funding of political parties since January 1, 2004. This was a first, since, prior to that, money just fell from the sky and landed in secret slush funds. This was a big step for Canadian democracy. That law was inspired by similar legislation adopted in Quebec in 1977, under the René Lévesque government. The new legislation ensured equilibrium among the parties, so that there would be some degree of uniformity or equality in terms of political party representation.

The current proposal upsets this equilibrium in which the limitation on political party fundraising was balanced by appropriate and uniform funding provided by the government to all political parties. This would reverse existing legislation. We see this as an attack on democracy.

I would like the hon. member to add some of her personal thoughts about that very worrisome part of the government's economic update.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Political analysts clearly expressed themselves in the newspapers this morning and said that cutting the subsidy to political parties was a purely partisan move. It seems as though the Conservative government thinks that people are completely lacking in intelligence. But their intention is clear: they want to put an end to a democratic practice that protected us from wrongdoing or fraud in political party funding, as has happened in the past. It is a purely partisan move. And the Bloc member is not the only one saying it. This opinion is shared by Quebec, by the opposition parties and was expressed in national newspapers today.

I would like to add that when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance gave his speech, he said that the opposition "got their hopes high" in terms of seeing concrete measures in the economic update and that they have no reason to be disappointed. We have more than hopes, we have expectations. We formulated very concrete proposals and we want the government to take them into consideration.

Government Orders

[English]

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's comments with interest.

We are in tough economic times. The finance minister and this government took pre-emptive strikes over a year ago to stimulate the economy, and the rest of the world is trying to catch up.

With regard to political subsidies, I wonder if the member is aware that just yesterday the NDP premier of Manitoba was planning to bring in a share per voter of \$1.25, similar to what exists federally, but upon reflection decided not to do so because he realized that it would not be a good use of taxpayers' money in these tough economic times. In fact, in Manitoba union and corporate donations are not allowed either.

If Manitoba has gone without taxpayer-subsidized votes for about 10 years now, why can we not do that on the federal scene as well?

• (1235)

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, first of all, Manitoba can make its own decisions, and I respect that. In Quebec, we have also chosen to contribute financially to parties. That law, introduced by René Lévesque, cleaned up political financing in Quebec. Maintaining financing is a way to avoid slush funds. I want to reiterate that the purpose of this move is not to better manage taxpayers' dollars, but is more to kick the Liberals when they are down, financially speaking.

[English]

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time this afternoon with the member for Vancouver East.

When I stated in the House a couple of days ago that I could not support the Speech from the Throne, I did so because the throne speech laid out an agenda for this Parliament that completely ignored the concerns of hard-working Canadians in this time of unprecedented economic uncertainty. It did not address their fears about lost jobs, lost pension benefits, lost EI benefits and lost savings. As an agenda for economic recovery, the throne speech was a lost cause.

The right-wing hecklers on the government side tried to shout us down. They said that a detailed economic plan would be inappropriate in a throne speech. They said that we should wait until Thursday, when the economic update would be tabled. That would be the time for action on the economy, they said. That would be the time for bold strategic measures that would offer hope to Canadians. That would be the time, they led us to believe, that the Minister of Finance would morph into a northern Obama, vigorously attacking the economic crisis and protecting Canadian families from its ravages.

Yesterday the finance minister attacked all right, but instead of attacking the recession, he attacked democracy, he attacked workers, he attacked women and he attacked seniors. Of all of those attacks, his attack on democracy, I suspect, is perhaps the least sexy for those watching this debate on television this afternoon. After all, party financing is insider baseball and hardly tops most Canadians' list of concerns, so let me dispose of that one quickly.

Jean Chrétien knew the Liberal Party was hugely dependent on donations from large corporations to finance that party's election campaigns. In fact, 80% of the party's financial support came from Canadian companies, not individual supporters. To kneecap his successor, Paul Martin, he made corporate donations illegal. All parties would now have to raise money without the support of corporate and union donations, and individual donations were capped.

As partial compensation, he implemented instead a system whereby each party would get \$1.75 annually per vote garnered in the most recent election. This is the subsidy that the economic update suggests will be cut as of April 1, 2009.

I can see eyes glaze over all over the country as I discuss this item, so let me just say this: as a proposed measure of fiscal responsibility, it amounts to one-twentieth of 1% of just the increase in the government's overall spending since it took office in 2006. It has nothing to do with attacking the economic crisis. It has everything to do with implementing the strategy of Conservative adviser Tom Flanagan, who said in his book, "The path to Conservative political dominance is to financially bankrupt your opponents". It was an out-and-out partisan attack.

The same is true of the government's attack on workers. At a time when Canadians are deeply worried about the future of their jobs, the government's sole response was to propose a ban on the right to strike for public sector workers. That measure is completely unconstitutional and therefore serves no purpose other than signalling the government's intent to attack workers instead of helping them through this difficult economic time.

Leaders in countries around the world are taking bold steps to invest in the economy and to protect and create jobs. They are offering a 21st century version of the New Deal.

Here in Canada, we got no deal at all. There was no new infrastructure spending that could have helped workers, suppliers and communities. There was no mention of a stimulus package for transforming the auto sector. There was no investment in the new energy economy. There was no mention of innovation or of research and development. There was not a word about addressing the need for more workers in health care, aged care or child care.

The job creation package Canadians so desperately need is nowhere to be found in this update. To add insult to injury, there is not even an investment in restoring the social safety net, and this precisely at the time when Canadians most need it.

In the manufacturing sector alone, we have lost over 350,000 jobs since the government came to power. As I said during question period the other day, EI claims in Ontario are up 14%. Claims are up 30% in Windsor and a staggering 96.4% in the finance minister's own backyard of Oshawa.

Government Orders

Ontarians are urgently looking for reform of the EI system. On average, they get \$4,600 less a year than workers get in other parts of the country, yet the economic update does nothing to make EI more equitable or more accessible for workers who have lost their jobs.

EI is an essential part of poverty prevention. The government's silence on this cornerstone of our social safety net is a direct attack on the very people who have paid into this system all their working lives.

Some of those people, of course, are now pensioners, and they are profoundly worried about their retirement savings.

● (1240)

The economic update announced a 25% reduction in the amount of mandated minimum registered retirement income fund withdrawals, and, to be fair, that is at least a step in the right direction. However, for seniors who have watched their retirement savings disappear before their eyes, a moratorium on mandatory withdrawals would have gone much further in dealing with the anxiety that they are feeling.

Other pension measures are even more disturbing. The government announced that it is planning to allow pension plans under federal jurisdiction to double the length of time required for solvency payments from 5 to 10 years. The conditions are that companies must have the agreement of pension plan members and retirees by the end of the year 2009 or they must secure a letter of credit to cover the five-year difference to protect pensioners. That is certainly good news for companies but is it really good for members of the pension plan?

I will cast it in this light. The way the system works now, if an employer under funds the pension plan and uses that money for other corporate expenditures, retirees and other beneficiaries of that plan, in essence, become financiers of the company. They lend companies money for their business. However, unlike other financiers of the company who lend money, they did not get to make a decision about whether they wanted to take on that risk and, in these uncertain economic times, I very much doubt that it is a risk that most beneficiaries would be willing to assume.

If the government were serious about wanting to support workers instead of attacking them, it would have replaced its vague language on proposed "consultations on issues facing defined benefit and defined contribution pension plans" with strong language on the need to work with labour, business and other levels of government to discuss mechanisms, like a pension insurance fund. Or, it could have adopted provisions of the very first bill that I introduced in the House after being elected in 2006, the workers first bill, which would have given workers' pensions super priority in cases of commercial bankruptcy.

The primary focus of pension reform must be to protect the pensions of workers but that, of course, is not what we find in this economic update. What we do find, however, is yet another attack on women. It eliminates the ability to make pay equity claims retroactive.

In the most inflammatory language, the government suggests that pay equity is a problem because it is inherently litigious and adversarial. It goes on to say:

This costly and litigious regime of double pay equity has been in place for too long. We are introducing legislation to make pay equity an integral part of collective bargaining.

This is yet another direct attack on the hard-fought gains by Canadian women and it is an attack that is driven purely by the right-wing ideology of the Conservative government.

The stage for this was set in the last Parliament. The Conservatives then cut funding to Status of Women. They cut funding for the court challenges program. They cut funding for the arts. They even cut funding for children's literacy. This had nothing to do with fiscal responsibility. It was an ideologically-driven attack on programs that supported the most disadvantaged in our society.

Canadians deserve more from their government and Canadians need more from their government. They need to know that the government shares their worry about their jobs, their pensions, their savings and their homes.

Political leaders around the world and every senior economist in Canada agree. Hard-working families need action now. They need a bold plan, strategic investments in our ailing economy and economic stimulus now but, inexplicably, the economic update does not deliver.

The vote that I am casting on that update next week is not a vote that I am casting for myself. I will be casting it for the seniors and hard-working families in my riding who sent me to Ottawa to fight for them. They are under attack and I will not take it sitting down. I have stood up for them in my community and I have stood up for them in the House.

When I rise to cast my vote in opposition to this update, I will again be standing up for those Hamilton Mountain residents who entrusted me with the responsibility to make this Parliament work for them.

● (1245)

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my hon. colleague's remarks from across the way, especially the concern she expressed for the seniors in our country, but I want to correct a couple of things to which she made reference.

She indicated that when she votes next week, as she put it, against the economic and fiscal update, she will be voting on behalf of seniors. She should be aware, and I hope she is, that when we vote Monday on the ways and means motion to implement certain provisions from budget 2008, which I think was passed last February or March, which was a long time ago, by a previous Parliament, and certain provisions from the economic and fiscal update, those provisions will have to do with taxation measures.

Many of those taxation measures deal directly with seniors, the very people she says that she wants to help, measures like RRIFs and the reduction in the amount they must pull out of their RRIFs. That measure will help them considerably. She should be aware that and that is what is contained in the ways and means motion that we will be voting on.

Government Orders

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member was not here when I delivered my speech because I did say that the 25% reduction in the mandated RRIF withdrawals was a step in the right direction. However, it does not go nearly far enough.

Seniors have been devastated in terms of what is happening to their portfolios as a result of the economic downturn. The member will know that organizations like CARP and others are saying that what we needed was a two year moratorium. That would have really helped seniors.

More important, there is nothing in the economic update for those seniors who do not have investment portfolios. Where is the help for those seniors? The economic update is absolutely silent on helping the most vulnerable in our community. I will make absolutely no apologies for standing up for seniors in the House.

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Hamilton Mountain on a very wide-ranging commentary on the budget update.

My question is predicated on a call that I had from a small parts jobber who has been implicated and impacted by the recent Magna announcement that it will be laying off over 800 workers.

In meetings that we have had with the big three, they have indicated that after capital expansion and change in the assembly line, there are five new products that have been invested in and are ready to go. However, they are in danger because the government is focused on what the United States will do.

Perhaps the member would like to answer the question that I am trying to answer myself. Why would we wait to see what the United States will do on something that is so self-evident? The capitalization, the investment and the transformation have already taken place, the products are ready to go, and yet the government is not prepared. It still looks at it as a bailout as opposed to a stimulus that would actually bring those products on line, create the jobs and the investment that it carries with it and would answer my friend's issue in York South—Weston that he and his employees would still have jobs.

• (1250)

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree, not only with the member for York South—Weston, but perhaps, more important, with his constituents. Like him, I have had numerous emails, one just this morning from someone who works at a dealership selling cars in my riding of Hamilton Mountain. Everyone is concerned about the profoundly negative impact that this economy has had on the automotive sector.

The member will know that we are not just talking about auto jobs because for every auto job seven additional jobs are created in our communities as a result of the auto sector.

We have a government that is saying that it will wait to see what happens south of the border. Frankly, that is not good enough. I bet that part of that south of the border package will be an investment in the industry but only if we actually protect jobs in our country. In the process, the Americans may actually siphon jobs out of our country and have them move south of the border.

What we need is to invest in the auto sector here, transform the industry, create jobs, protect jobs and help families in our communities.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in the House today in response to the economic and fiscal update that we heard yesterday. I am very proud to be here as a re-elected member for the constituents of Vancouver East. My community is largely a low-income community and I know people were listening to the economic and fiscal update yesterday. They were very eager to hear whether the government was getting it, whether it had heard the message from ordinary people across the country about how they were hurting, the jobs being lost and how families were struggling week by week and month by month.

Sitting in the House yesterday and listening to the Minister of Finance, I must say that I had a sense of anger. The emails and calls I have received from my community tell me that people were not only disappointed but angry that the Conservative government failed to respond in a moment of urgent need to the needs of average people.

What we saw yesterday instead was an attack on the rights of working people and on our political democracy. When we go through the statement and look at it line by line, we see immediately that what is glaringly absent is a program for the strong economic stimulus that is required in this country. One only has to look at the global situation and what has happened in the last few months to feel the anxiety that people have about what is unfolding.

This is a time when people expect their government to show leadership. When we look at the international community and see what other countries are doing, it is very evident that they are understanding that a serious and substantive investment as an economic stimulus is the centrepiece of any economic program that needs to be put forward. However, here in the House yesterday we saw none of that. What we saw instead was an attack on people's rights and an undermining of the programs we have had in this country.

I particularly wanted to hear any message or indication that the housing crisis in Vancouver would be addressed. In the city of Vancouver, there is, in effect, a zero vacancy rate. People are paying 60%, 70% and even 80% of their income for housing, if they can find it. We have seen housing that is being demolished or converted. We have seen thousands of low-income units lost in the Downtown eastside. We have seen renters in the west end, on the eastside, all over the city who are scrambling to survive, to find their most basic need, which is the right to shelter, security and housing. What better example could there be for an economic stimulus and investment in our economy and yet the government was silent on this matter.

I want to remind the government that back in 2007, the inner-city inclusivity table for VANOC, the Olympics, came up with a report that was a collaboration between businesses, the city, the province, the local community and civil society. They determined that the city of Vancouver needed 3,200 units by 2010 to deal with the crisis that was already there in 2007. Not one step has been taken to deal with that urgent recommendation made in 2007.

Government Orders

We know from the most recent homelessness count done in metro Vancouver that homelessness has increased by 22%. We know that the aboriginal population is most at risk for homelessness. In fact, aboriginal homelessness has increased by 30% over 2005. Although aboriginals only comprise 2% of the population, they comprise 32% of the region's homeless population. These are staggering statistics. They speak to a society that has become deeply divided due to public policy and policies of the Conservatives and prior governments that have eroded basic programs, affecting the ability to get EI, the opportunity to have safe and secure housing and to have a decent job.

• (1255)

Those factors were already place. It is now being accelerated and deepened and turned into an even greater crisis because of what has happened with the world-wide financial credit crisis.

What we heard yesterday was a slap in the face to Canadians. It was an insult to see the minister come forward with a program to eliminate strikes in the public sector and the roll-back of collective agreements. This is just sheer folly. Ideology is leading the government rather than programs, supports and measures to help workers and average families wherever they might be.

Surely the government must be aware that in 2007 the Supreme Court of Canada struck down British Columbia's Bill 29, which Gordon Campbell tried to do exactly the same thing. He rolled back collective agreements and wages in the health care sector. Those collective agreements were torn up. Thankfully those unions brought forward a challenge to the courts and it went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. The ruling from the Supreme Court said in essence that workers had the right to bargain collectively as part of their freedom to associate and that the right to free collective bargaining was protected by freedom of association in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This is clearly being said by PSAC, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, as it now lives in fear of losing its very environment and rights, which have been established over many decades.

As my colleague for Hamilton Mountain said earlier, not only is there an attack on the rights of workers by undermining the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike, but there is a double jeopardy, and that is an attack on women's equality.

What right does the government have to abandon all the work that has been done on pay equity? Every union member has the right to file a grievance. The union has a right to file a complaint about pay equity issues and it has the right to deal with it through the collective bargaining process. For the government to take that on and to use this economic crisis as an opportunity to attack those worker rights as though somehow we would not notice or somehow it would slip it through, is incredibly appalling. It is unconscionable and it is a real revelation and indication of the government's agenda.

Yesterday, we had an economic and fiscal update that did not give any concrete significant economic stimulus to help those families in need.

Another thing we listened for was whether there would be any reform for the EI system. What kind of insurance scheme do we have when workers and employers have paid into it, but two-thirds of

people do not even qualify any more? What happens to those workers when they are thrown out of their jobs or they are laid off because of the worsening economic situation? One would think they would be able to rely, at least as a basic source of security and income, on an employment insurance system that should be there when they need it. Even that system has been gutted over the years. We have said loud and clear in the House that the EI system must be reformed. There must be money put into that system.

We know \$50 billion-plus have been created as surpluses in that system, but they have not been ploughed back in to help workers with retraining, with assistance when they have been laid off, or whatever their circumstances have been. This is a travesty.

I am very proud to say that the members of the NDP are standing up as a united caucus. We will be voting against the economic and fiscal update and the ways and means motion on Monday. We understand the devastation it will bring. We understand it completely missed the mark in helping the people who need it. It is an ideological attack put forward by the government on democracy, on workers and on women. It has failed the people who are in need and therefore we will not support it.

• (1300)

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, could the member opposite comment on a remark made by one of her colleagues, the member for Winnipeg Centre? When this individual was informed about the government's intent to end welfare for politicians, he responded by saying that this meant war. In a week when we see what has happened in India, when our men and women are in Afghanistan and so much horribleness exists in the world, to use that phrase to end political welfare seems very inappropriate. Moreover, the Manitoba NDP government, which had a plan to introduce a similar contribution per vote, has decided to move away from that.

Does the member agree with the Manitoba NDP government and does she think maybe her colleague went over the top?

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I do know all of us in the NDP, including the member for Winnipeg Centre, have expressed our outrage about all aspects of the economic and fiscal update.

I also know the Government of Manitoba is reviewing and considering bringing in controls around political contributions and financing.

I understand the member is now, out of desperation, trying to spin this. He is using the term "political welfare". However, the Conservatives have opened the door again to take us backwards, in terms of allowing big money to dictate how elections are run in our country.

We happen to believe in a level playing field. We believe in a democratic system. What we have has been a fair system. The Conservatives have decided they want to attack that.

However, I want to be very clear on this. Our opposition to the economic and fiscal update is primarily because there is no economic stimulus and no help for the workers and the families needing it. That was meant to be the primary reason for the economic update and the Conservatives failed to deliver on that score.

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Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my friend from the NDP a few questions about the asset management aspects of the economic update.

First, in short form, it seems to me, to use the words of the hon. member for Markham—Unionville, that this is a fire sale of public assets. Would the member comment on the rationale contained at page 52 of the document presented by the Minister of Finance, where it states “an asset purchased in the 1950s may no longer be relevant to the core responsibilities of the Government more than 50 years later?”

Second, the government says that it would employ a considered approach, taking into account the condition of the markets to make sure a fair value could be achieved for these assets.

In a down in the economy, in a buyer's market, does the member think that any of these assets will be sold and if so, does she think there will be any fair market value? Does she think there will be any value to the government in disposing of such assets?

• (1305)

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising this point because it is hard to cover everything in 10 minutes. This was one issue I did want to get to. Again, what we have seen with the economic update is the government trying to manoeuvre and manipulate and slip in some programs that it has always wanted, like selling off public buildings, which are owned by the people of Canada. It is using the rationale of the economic recession before us to get that through and hope that nobody notices.

I agree with the member. The idea that the government will get fair market value for these valuable properties, which have an immense public value, in today's market is ludicrous. Any real estate agent or any expert on real estate will tell us that this is the worst time to do that. Why would we sell off these valuable assets when they should be kept for the benefit of the people of Canada?

Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in debate today on the fall economic fiscal update. My comments will be fairly narrowly focused. I think some of my other colleagues have addressed and will address the broader issue of the economic stimulus that our government has taken in the past year and also address red herrings that members of the opposition have raised in respect to the sale of assets.

The finance minister has been very clear that there will not be any fire sale of the assets belonging to the Canadian public. However, as we know, the opposition today is more concerned about protecting their own privileges in respect of their financing of political parties rather than engaging in any meaningful debate, so they are bringing up these various red herrings.

Millions of Canadians are aware that we are entering difficult times. There is a deep sense of concern across the country about the economy and as a result, Canadians are making hard decisions to ensure they are ready for the future.

Yesterday we heard the Minister of Finance tell Canadians that we would take concrete action to ensure responsible fiscal management and effective government. As part of our commitment to employees and to taxpayers, I look forward to legislation that will ensure equitable compensation in the public service. This will bring long

overdue reform to our complaint-based pay equity regime, which has proven to be a lengthy, costly and adversarial process, a process that does not serve employees or the employer well.

We are fortunate in our country. We have one of the most dedicated and professional public services in the world. The federal public service is one of the best places to work for men and for women, with competitive salaries and a full range of family-friendly benefits. It is worth noting that in 1983 fewer than 5% of women were in senior management positions. Today women make up 41% of the senior and executive ranks of the federal public service.

Our government is proud to be leading the way when it comes to recruitment and compensation of employees. The time is right to put in place a more modern approach to ensuring fair wages for all employees.

We need to take action to put an end to the long and drawn out court cases of the past. Many Canadians would be surprised to know that the last court ruling on pay equity was in 1999, at a cost of \$3.2 billion to taxpayers, a settlement that took a gruelling 15 years to achieve.

Before I continue any further, Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague.

Public service employees deserve better. Taxpayers deserve better. Next week our government will put a better, more modern system into place to ensure equitable compensation.

First, our approach will be proactive. Employers will be required to proactively ensure wages are fair and equitable.

Second, it will be timely. Issues will be resolved as they arise within the collective bargaining process instead of through lengthy legal proceedings. I should point out that this is a natural extension of the employer's duty to bargain in good faith and the union's duty of fair representation to all of its members. It will be fair. All employees will have full recourse to address any complaints.

Last, it will be collaborative. Employers and bargaining agents will be jointly accountable for ensuring equitable compensation. This will now become an integral part of collective bargaining.

The Supreme Court of Canada recognized recently collective bargaining as a fundamental human right. The government remains committed to that right. Given this decision, the collective bargaining process is the right mechanism to protect another fundamental right, the right of equal pay for work of equal value.

Pay equity legislation has been continually evolving since the first proactive legislation was introduced by my home province of Manitoba. It was followed by Ontario and Quebec. For interest sake, I note that the Ontario legislation was introduced by a Liberal government.

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●(1310)

Our new federal model would improve upon these existing models while incorporating provisions that have worked well in those statutes.

This legislation is important and I encourage every member of the House to support it.

As I said a few moments ago, we need to replace the existing complaint-based regime with a process that responds to the needs of both employees and employers and which takes into account the realities of the Canadian labour market.

In fact, in 2004 a Liberal appointed task force concluded that proactive legislation, such as we are bringing in, as opposed to the complaints-driven legislation is more effective than the current complaint-based model. The task force recommended that Parliament enact new stand-alone, proactive pay equity legislation. Let me quote from the report of the task force:

Proactive, comprehensive pay equity legislation will create a level playing field. The current legislation has resulted in protracted and costly litigation for employers who are subject to a complaint.

We should all be encouraged by developments in the past two weeks. The Public Service Alliance of Canada, the country's biggest federal public sector union, has resolved two pay equity complaints through a negotiated settlement with our government. This was an outstanding complaint that arose over the last number of years before our government came into office.

The fact that we were able to come up with a negotiated settlement is another strong sign that it makes real sense to move forward with a more modern approach to equitable compensation.

Moving to an approach that is based on collaboration with bargaining agents rather than the current adversarial process would ensure pay equity issues are addressed as they arise and that problems are resolved quickly. Pay equity concerns would no longer be placed on the back burner.

Through the collective bargaining process, employers and unions would both be responsible for ensuring that wages are fair and pay equity compliant.

The legislation this government will table would give us a more modern and collaborative approach. It would replace the current system which is archaic, onerous and unfair to employees with a system that is modern, fair and responsive.

An hon. member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Justice for his support for this, knowing him as I do to be a fair and equitable man.

Supporting this legislation is the right thing to do. It is what Canadians expect. More important, it would continue to protect the legal principle of equal pay for work of equal value. It would ensure that women and men continue to benefit from quality working conditions in Canada's public service. Not only would it preserve the pay equity principle, but it would also create a more streamlined process so that women who were entitled to pay equity through the legislation would realize those gains in a timely fashion.

●(1315)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Treasury Board president closed down negotiations with the public service unions and took the wage discussions off the table and then proceeded to conclude contracts with the majority of those unions.

Given that there are long-term contracts in place now, I wonder if the President of the Treasury Board could explain so that my grandmother would understand why it would be necessary to suspend the right to strike which is part of the collective bargaining process which this place respects.

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question.

As the member knows, when a collective agreement is achieved, as we have achieved with PSAC in this case for the four year period, that eliminates the right to strike and the right to arbitration. It is no longer necessary. That is a voluntarily achieved collective bargaining situation.

When a collective agreement is imposed, however, for those unions that decide that the 2.3%, 1.5%, 1.5%, and 1.5% is not reasonable, that settlement would be imposed. When it is imposed, at the same time it also has to have the corresponding action taken that no one can strike. It is that kind of circumstance that we need to specifically spell out for legislative purposes.

Obviously, this does not affect the PSAC agreement where PSAC has already voluntarily agreed to a collective agreement and the issue of strike or arbitration is no longer relevant.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the President of the Treasury Board explain the government's rationale for bringing in this draconian measure.

I listened carefully to the President of the Treasury Board. He used language such as "public servants deserve better", "proactive", "good faith" and "fairness". What Canadians were looking for yesterday was the bringing together of people to deal with the economic crisis.

A perfect example of what we got instead is the elimination of the right to strike until 2011. It is incredible and incredulous that the government would bring this in at the same time as saying that it wanted to be fair.

I want to ask the President of the Treasury Board, if he is so concerned about fairness and equity, why bring in these draconian measures on the one hand while saying the government is trying to work together with public servants on the other? Does he not get that that is contradictory, that it is divide and rule?

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, what I find incredulous is that the member would look at a one day snapshot rather than look at a year of actions this government has taken in terms of stimulating this economy. We have brought in tax incentives that in fact increase our GDP by an effective 2%.

Now I notice that other socialist countries, for example Great Britain, are bringing in similar measures. They recognize that what the Canadian government did to stimulate the economy is working and they are now following suit.

In respect of the wage restraint that our government has been asking the unions to comply with and which we think members of Parliament should also comply with, we think that 2.3% is a reasonable wage settlement. At a time when there is so much economic uncertainty, where other workers are losing their jobs, I think that offer is fair. When public sector workers look at that offer, they will see that we have been reasonable. I believe the unions have recognized that as well.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is aware that the throne speech passed Parliament last night, and today there was a unanimous motion for that result to be returned to the Governor General expressing confidence in the House.

Is the member aware that the House did in fact express confidence after the economic and fiscal update was presented by the government yesterday?

• (1320)

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Speaker, yes, I am aware of that. I want to thank all members of the House, including the opposition, for expressing confidence in this government. It is very important as we go forward that we continue to work together with members of the opposition.

I note that there may be some technical concerns about the legislation that I am bringing forward. That is something we can discuss on a co-operative ongoing basis.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place today to debate the economic and fiscal update.

Canadians understand that there are certain sectors of the Canadian economy that have been more severely impacted than others by the global credit crisis, including the manufacturing sector in this country that has deep roots in the U.S. economic system.

The manufacturing sector is of great importance to our Canadian economy. Faced with global economic uncertainties, many industries are undergoing considerable transition as they respond to global pressures. The tightening of international credit, a slowing U.S. economy, volatility of energy prices, and the dollar: these are serious challenges with which industry is faced in this current economic climate.

Unlike the opposition which ignored the problem for the last three years, our government acted quickly to provide effective assistance to this sector. From the moment Canadians voted for change, we stepped up to the plate and demonstrated leadership to ensure that this country has the right business climate so that our industries can be more productive, more innovative and secure jobs for Canadians.

Everyone agrees the manufacturing sector has to become more modern, more efficient and more productive. Some of these adjustments will be difficult, but they are necessary for the long-term competitiveness of this sector and of Canada's economy.

The success of manufacturing in Canada will increasingly be determined by the ability of our industries to make adjustments in their production capabilities, to respond to and capitalize on new global realities, including the need to innovate, be more competitive

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and participate in global value chains. Today this message becomes ever more important.

This government has taken action to help. We are working to ensure that Canadian businesses affected by current circumstances have access to capital to help support their success.

We developed a plan to purchase \$75 billion in insured mortgage pools by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, therefore freeing up much needed credit to help these manufacturers have access to finance.

Furthermore, we have increased the borrowing authority limit for the Business Development Bank of Canada from \$9.7 billion to \$11.5 billion, ensuring that the BDC has the necessary flexibility to assist small and medium size business in Canada.

By approving a \$2 billion increase in Export Development Canada's borrowing authority, our government is ensuring that companies have access to the financing they need to continue to grow, innovate and take advantage of business opportunities in Canada and abroad.

I am very proud that the Minister of Finance announced yesterday in the economic and fiscal update that our government is providing EDC with an additional \$350 million in capital to support up to about \$1.5 billion in increased credit capacity for those most affected by the current financial crisis. EDC will now be able to add nearly \$80 billion in exports and investments it helps to make possible for Canadian enterprises, including \$4 billion for the auto sector alone.

We are also providing BDC with an additional \$350 million in capital so that it can increase its credit capacity by about \$1.5 billion for term lending activities, and a new time limited facility providing guarantees to financial institutions for their lines of credit for viable small and medium size businesses.

These are concrete and effective measures that will make a real impact on the manufacturing sector. They were applauded yesterday by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters which stated that the economic update "gave Canada's manufacturing and exporting sectors much needed oxygen and short-term breathing room".

I am very disappointed that the opposition wants to vote against these important measures supported by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. It is typical of the opposition to put its own self-interests ahead of the interests of Canadian families, workers and business, but I cannot understand how it is that the opposition can disapprove of these measures which are so vital to our manufacturing sector.

It is important to note that these actions are part of a much larger series of measures that this government has taken since 2006, important measures that the opposition has consistently voted against. We acted much earlier, and for those industries and workers affected by the changing economic circumstances, we introduced the \$1 billion community development trust to support our communities affected by economic difficulties.

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We are assisting older workers in vulnerable communities through the targeted initiative for older workers, TIOW. For the TIOW, we have extended funding to a total of \$160 million over five years.

We are working to provide over \$9 billion in tax relief for manufacturers and processors. I repeat, that is \$9 billion in tax relief for manufacturers and processors. I did not say banks and energy; I said \$9 billion in tax relief for manufacturers and processors.

● (1325)

This includes broad-based tax reductions and increasing for three additional years the temporary accelerated capital cost allowance on the investments in machinery and equipment. We have improved the scientific research and experimental development tax credit program.

Let me put this in context and emphasize the impact these measures are having on stimulating the Canadian economy. Actions taken by this government mean that in 2009 Canadians and Canadian businesses will pay \$31 billion less in taxes as a result of the tax cuts we have introduced since 2006. That is just in 2009. Canadians will pay \$31 billion less in taxes. That is equivalent to about 2% of Canada's GDP and it is permanent structural relief. It is not some flash in the pan, throw some money at it, see if it sticks, we do not know if it will work. That is what the opposition proposes. We propose permanent structural stimulus for the Canadian economy.

We have shown that working on sound economic management, tax relief and strategic investments will help the Canadian industry weather current economic uncertainties and remain competitive.

What the government will never do is write a blank cheque, as the opposition advocates. Canadians have grown tired of short-term and ineffective policies of the Liberals and others. Our government is working with the manufacturing sector to ensure the plan is in place that will ensure the innovation and long-term sustainability of the sector and at the same time provide value for money for hard earned taxpayers' dollars.

Our government continues to take action to create the conditions necessary for business success. Through the measures introduced in recent budgets, combined with the government's long-term economic plan, "Advantage Canada", the government will deliver on its commitment to help companies in the communities in which they reside to both innovate and succeed.

Our actions will help all sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, the automotive and the forestry sectors. We will indeed take specific steps to respond to specific challenges in specific industries. By providing this long-term foundation, we will provide a stronger economy for all Canadians.

We must keep our eye on the future. Canada will weather this economic storm and we will come out stronger, more innovative, more competitive, and sooner than any other G-7 nation.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must say that despite all the bravado that was quite an entertaining piece of fiction nonetheless.

I want to say to the hon. member for Peterborough that I do not know how he can imagine to be strolling down the middle of Peterborough and talk to the people at the cafés, and try to justify

what has been said about his particular speech. As far as I am concerned, the economy will recover but it will despite the Conservatives as opposed to with them.

I have a question for the member and it is very specific. I want him to answer specifically because we have yet to hear it. It is about the community trust fund which in my opinion does absolutely nothing for the workers of Grand Falls-Windsor whose mill is about to shut.

I do not expect him to answer that, but what I do expect him to answer is this. How is this fund going to help someone who has been laid off in the forestry? Do not stand in the House and start talking about something about the program itself and the older workers. Once again, specifically, if I am working in the forestry and I am laid off, how is this going to help me? As a matter of fact, with a mill that is about to close, how is it going to help the forestry industry because it does not? Can the member—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: I accept the challenge, Mr. Speaker. I would love to answer that question.

As a matter of fact, the community development trust fund, of course, as the member knows established agreements signed with all the provinces including Premier Danny Williams in Newfoundland. I hope that he looks at the community of Grand Falls-Windsor and determines that it deserves some portion of that community development trust fund which is very important money.

When it comes to forestry, our government stood four square behind forestry. We signed a new deal with the Americans and returned \$5 billion to the forestry sector here in Canada.

I will tell the House what else we have done. We have brought in accelerated capital cost allowances to allow the forestry sector to innovate, so that they can get its technology up to speed so that it can compete. These were specific recommendations brought forward by the forestry sector. I note they were part of a unanimous recommendation by the industry committee chaired by the member for Edmonton—Leduc. We were proud to bring it in. Big measures for forestry. We did it.

● (1330)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nicolas Dufour (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I find that extremely funny, because for once, opinion about the Conservative government is unanimous, but not in a good way. Even the *National Post*, a conservative newspaper, says that the statement is completely absurd and that cutting political party funding is ridiculous. That is the *National Post* talking.

Ideology is one thing; idiocy is quite another. What is funny is that the government is accusing the opposition of partisanship, while it is being meanspirited. Cutting \$27 million from the political parties is clearly an idea taken from the Reform Party. The problem is that the opposition and the people are unanimous: they are against the government. Everyone sees through the Conservative Party's tactic. I am even surprised the government actually believed everyone would buy this. How can a minority government think it can muzzle the opposition just like that?

Eliminating the \$1.95 subsidy would take us back to the days of brown envelopes. Quebec understood this and acted accordingly. The proof is that the Prime Minister was guided by Quebec's Act to govern the financing of political parties, which he—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage has one minute to respond.

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Mr. Speaker, I am pretty excited to get this question. I note that this is the only thing the opposition parties can possibly unite on, which is their entitlement to Canadian taxpayers' dollars for their own political gain. There are—

Hon. Maria Minna: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I heard the hon. member call time just a moment ago. With all due respect, I did not realize we had another Speaker in the House of Commons. Members of Parliament are now calling time on debate instead of the Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I appreciate the assistance from many members of the House. The questioner's time had expired and it was time to go to a response. I made that decision myself.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: I am not as senior as you, Mr. Speaker, in the House, but I would suggest that might have been debate.

Nonetheless, the only thing on which these parties can unite on is their entitlement to taxpayers' dollars. I ask them to look into their hearts. Barack Obama specifically refused public dollars to his campaign. I ask all of them to look into their hearts and say whether they deserve that money or whether seniors, children, people on reduced income and people looking for affordable housing deserve it.

Who deserves the money? The opposition parties because they are entitled to their entitlement? They are entitled to that money? I do not think so. We do not give charities as much money as we give to political parties in this country. There are great incentives for people to donate to political parties. Go out and ask people for help. They will.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Beaches—East York.

As this is the first time I am giving a speech in this 40th Parliament, I want to thank all of the constituents of Mississauga South for electing me. This is the eighth general election that I have participated in. I have almost got it down. Elections are not my favourite. Campaigning is not my favourite. Serving the people is what most interests me. I think that there is a difference between

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being a politician and an elected representative, and I certainly prefer the latter.

I also would be remiss if I did not specifically thank my dear wife, Linda, and my family members who have over the past 15 years given me an extraordinary opportunity to pursue a career which I love very dearly.

It is a great honour to be a member of Parliament. I have a great deal of respect for this place and I have a great deal of respect for all the members here who were successful, and those who also ran but were not sufficiently appreciated. Our democracy is worth protecting. This is our system. This is the way it should work.

In the election, I made the promise to my constituents, and I want to share it with the House, to continue to work hard and to use my best judgment in a professional and responsible manner. That is the only promise that I made to my constituents, because if we conducted ourselves in this place in a professional and responsible manner, the public perception of our profession would increase enormously. We would be held in higher esteem. We need to work harder on this. I know it seems to have been lost, this idea of bringing more order and decorum, more professionalism, more responsibility, more maturity to this place, but we do have to work harder, even in the light of severe challenges that are facing our country.

Earlier this day, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance confirmed that the Prime Minister, during his year-end address last year, cautioned Canadians about the impending financial crisis. It has been known for a long time. Most of us would have received newsletters from investment houses reminding us about what happens when there are corrections in the market.

I thought it was interesting that the Prime Minister, despite the clear evidence, continued to say during the election that our banks are strong, that everything is going to be fine. Well, I understand politics and I understand that is what one says. But that same denial continues even today.

In the economic statement yesterday, there were budget forecasts which were looking at .3% growth in GDP in 2009-10, when virtually every private sector economic forecaster, the OECD, all had more pessimistic projections for that period. Why? Because it would allow them, by having more generous projections for the GDP growth rates, to show a minuscule surplus in the fiscal year in which we are currently in that ends next March, and a small deficit in the following year.

It is deceiving Canadians and I know it is because in the last Parliament we set up, under the accountability act, the Parliamentary Budget Officer. That Parliamentary Budget Officer is independent. That Parliamentary Budget Officer has access to all of the information from the finance department, everything that the finance minister has.

So, when I looked at the releases, et cetera, it was clear. The Parliamentary Budget Officer came out and said, sorry, but all of the fiscal problems that Canada is experiencing right now have nothing to do with the global economic crisis; they have to do with, and are solely as a consequence of, the actions of the Conservative government.

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•(1335)

The erosion of the tax base, irresponsible spending and the raising of some \$50 billion more in spending makes it the biggest spending government in the history of Canada.

That is how it has squandered a \$12 billion surplus. It is also reflective of the fact that the Liberal government had a contingency reserve. It basically meant that once we got down to a \$3 billion surplus, there was no more money to spend and it needed to be saved in the event that serious unanticipated issues beyond our control came up, such as SARS or BSE. That is why it was there. Otherwise it was going to pay down debt. If we do not pay down debt in the good times, we are not going to pay down debt when we are in an economic crisis.

It was clear. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said, “My goodness, I do not know what the Prime Minister is talking about. We have the same numbers but I know that the economic projections are not as rosy as presented to the Canadian people” and indeed in the economic statement.

I have a copy of the ways and means motion to implement the provisions of the economic and fiscal statement tabled in Parliament. What is not in the motion? There is nothing on the provisions about dealing with the funding of political parties. They have taken it out.

An hon. member: It was never in there.

•(1340)

Mr. Paul Szabo: Well, Mr. Speaker, it was never in this printed copy which is the first copy. The member says it was never in there. The fact is, it was in the speech yesterday. It is in the book. It was written about by all of the editorialists.

It is fascinating that the Conservatives put it in and now it has been taken out. Why has it been taken out? Because it has nothing to do with addressing the economic challenges that our country is facing. It was a political stunt.

We did not even talk about that yesterday. When we were in this place, when we asked questions and gave speeches, we were talking about the principal issue and that is that the economic statement and the commitments of the government basically said, “Do not even consider it. We are not having any economic stimulus until, at the earliest, the budget next year”. Why? Because the government wants to wait and see if people really need help.

Do we wait until people lose their jobs before providing an economic stimulus to save them? Is that the way it works? I am sorry. Every major industrialized country in the world facing the same challenges has brought forward immediately a significant economic stimulus package to protect jobs, to protect pensions, to protect the savings of its citizens and to give them hope. The government gave Canadians no hope yesterday. The government gave them no prospects of any relief whatsoever. They were told to fend for themselves, keep what they have and not to depend on the government, that the government has no role to play in the lives of people.

We know what is going to happen. We have been through economic downturns before. We know what happens when people lose their jobs and when interest rates skyrocket. We know what

happens when inflation gets out of control. People lose jobs. There is a ripple effect on businesses, individuals, families, crime rates, health care costs and social program costs. Pick the subject matter. It is impacted by an economic downturn, by a crisis.

We have a crisis. The government is in denial. The government is delaying. It is deceiving Canadians. It is time to stand up and call it what it is. It is misleading, it is misinforming and it is doing a disservice to Canadians and to the country. Regardless of whether the Conservatives have wording on political funding in the economic statement, that was never the issue. We need to put the interests of the people ahead of political interests.

Mr. Speaker, we will oppose this economic statement.

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to address one of the main themes that the Liberal Party keeps saying and that is that we have squandered the surplus that was there when we took office. I want the member of the Liberal Party to stand up and challenge any of the spending initiatives or any of the tax cuts that we have actually made, specifically the spending on infrastructure, the spending on research and development, the spending on post-secondary education in the last budget, the increased transfers to the provinces for health care and education, the taxes for small businesses, for all businesses, the child care plan. With respect to any spending initiatives that we put in place or any tax cuts we made for businesses, families or individuals across the country, what have we done that the Liberals would have opposed or would have reversed if they were on the government side of the House?

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, over the last 15 years I have seen the cycles come and go. I also was part of a government that was called upon to provide peace, order, and good government. We were also called upon to provide responsible government, which meant that when we could afford to give tax cuts, we would give them, but not before.

There are a number of examples. The member asked for examples. Let me give him one, because I have time to give only one.

One was called pension income splitting for seniors. This was going to be a wonderful benefit for seniors. I understand that income splitting is important, but when we have limited dollars, they should be targeted to those most in need. However, if we take out all the seniors who do not have a partner and all the senior couples who are in the same tax bracket anyway, only 12% to 14% of seniors will benefit, and they will be those earning the highest incomes as seniors in Canada. They are not the ones who are most in need.

•(1345)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nicolas Dufour (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will ask my question quickly, in case the Conservative Party decides to close the House as well.

Today, the Conservatives are sacrificing democracy on the altar of partisanship. This is unacceptable. I would like the members opposite to explain why they thought they could trick everyone about the \$1.95.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, that matter is off the table, so with all respect to the member, let me spend the time on the need for an economic stimulus. The need for an economic stimulus is the problem. We cannot wait.

I implore the government members to consider carefully whether we can afford to wait until next spring before we start talking about a ways and means measure or about changes that are going to provide stimulus, whether that stimulus is to the auto sector, to the forestry sector, to the shipping sector or to small businesses.

We have a very serious challenge before us. We cannot wait. Economic lags take time. The members will know that a stimulus might not have impact for at least a year. We have to act now to save jobs, to protect pensions and to protect the savings of all Canadians.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member just admitted that he and his party would take away income splitting for seniors, thus creating a massive tax increase for all seniors.

He also ignores the actions our government has taken to bolster our economy. In the next year we will double infrastructure spending. We have cut the GST to keep prices down for consumers. We have lowered income taxes for working families. We have bolstered our financial institutions by injecting liquidity that they can now loan to small businesses and home buyers.

They on that side are looking to protect their narrow entitlements instead of the best interests of our economy. Why will he not put aside his narrow entitlements and focus on the broader interests of Canadians?

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, I gave an example of how money spent was not targeted. I never said I would reverse it. The member is notorious for putting words into people's mouths.

The reason we have to give the stimulus is clear, but where it goes is not clear. It should go into areas where jobs will be stimulated immediately, where people will be able to hit the ground now. It should go into infrastructure, into the auto sector. Those sectors are going to lose jobs.

Let us save what we can. Opportunities are there, and we have to take them now. The longer we wait—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claimed that he wanted a new mandate because he needed to deal with the economy. That is what he told Canadians when he decided to call an election. By the way, it was an illegal election since he broke his own law and then usurped the powers of Parliament. In a parliamentary structure a minority government usually falls because of a vote of non-confidence in it and then there is an election. Parliament was not even sitting at the time he called the election, so a vote of non-confidence could not have happened. The Prime Minister usurped the powers of Parliament and broke his own law. From the start we see the kind of respect he has for Parliament.

After the election the Prime Minister said that we would have a different House of Commons. He said that he would be more collaborative with the opposition. He said there would be a different tone.

We saw that tone last night, a tone which is the same as before. Basically it has come back with a vengeance. It is a bullying tone, one of “my way or the highway”. There is no collaboration. The Prime Minister is totally ignoring the fact that this is a minority Parliament.

One minister said this morning that he never heard Canadians say that they actually wanted a minority government. Therefore, he does not acknowledge there is one because he does not acknowledge what Canadians are saying or how they vote. The Conservatives discount the democratic process in this country altogether.

In yesterday's statement women in this country were again being attacked. Is it not bad enough that the government and the Prime Minister did this in the very first budget they brought into the House? I will get to that in a moment. Let us look at some of the facts.

Women earn on average only \$37,000 compared to men who earn on average \$70,000. Women earn only 70¢ for every dollar that men earn. Women provide 80% of the caregiving for children and family members. Therefore, they are in and out of the labour force which costs them a great deal in terms of promotions, income and pension buildup over a lifetime. They are therefore poorer when they become seniors and usually are more vulnerable to economic downturns. They are more vulnerable as a whole. Because of this a large number of women need affordable housing, but they are not getting it.

Child care is gone. Most women cannot go to work without a proper quality child care program. One of the first things the Conservatives did was cancel the program.

There is no minister for women in this country. I was at a press conference recently where a member said that she was the first minister responsible for the status of women. She claimed she had no other portfolio, which was not true, but nonetheless she said that. The House leader said in the House that the size of cabinet has not been increased because some individuals are just secretaries of state. I thought they sat around the cabinet table. They go to cabinet meetings and they have an increased salary and extra staff. This was reiterated by another Conservative member in answer to a question. We do not have a minister. Today in the House she was not allowed to answer any questions on the issue. We do not have a minister responsible for the status of women in this country. Maybe the minister, if she is a minister, should resign and give her salary back to Canadians.

Government Orders

The Prime Minister might want to consider that women would like to have a minister to look after their issues.

The Prime Minister has an agenda. He knows exactly what he has wanted to do from the start. His first objective when he came to power was to strip the cupboard bare and spend all the money. That is what Harris did in Ontario. When there is no money left in the cupboard, the Prime Minister will say that there is no money so services have to be cut. Who pays the price when services are cut? The people who need the services the most: women and seniors. Housing and infrastructure programs suffer as well.

This has been a specific determined approach by the Conservative government from day one. Right off the bat, as soon as they got here, the Conservatives started to cut programs for the most vulnerable. They cut the literacy programs. How many wealthy people need literacy programs?

• (1350)

The Conservatives took the word “equality” out of women's equality, which is counter to the Constitution of Canada and the Charter of Rights, which says that women are equal. However, that is not happening so we need a program.

The government says that child care is not needed and that women do not need it to go to work. During the election I met a woman in my riding who broke down and cried in front of me because she could not afford child care. This was a woman from a middle-income family, with a home, a mortgage and a couple of children and she was spending about \$1,300 per child on child care. She could not afford that amount but could not find a space elsewhere. No spaces were available. She broke down because her choice was to leave her job, which she did not want to do because she needed the income.

I know of another woman who had to leave her job and her partnership position, which meant she was lowering her income, to stay at home with her ailing mother. She had to somehow become self-employed. This goes back to women providing care and losing economic power. These women have no housing and no child care.

When we talk about infrastructure for the cities, the government has been talking about \$33 billion for a long time but I have not seen a cheque go to the cities. The \$33 billion, by the way, is not even real because, if we break it down, only about \$1.5 billion are actually from the government. The rest of the money was there from the previous Liberal government. The Conservatives just keep recycling it and re-announcing it all over the place.

Where are women in this country? Nowhere. They do not exist, not as far as the government is concerned. In fact, it is doing everything possible to bury them further and hurt them as much as it can. I do not understand what the problem is.

We know that emptying the cupboard and cutting services was the government's objective from the start. It was not a secret. It happens constantly with all the budgets that have come through here.

However, the Conservatives did not get the majority they wanted in the last election. I truly believe the Prime Minister wants another election because he thinks that if he goes to the people and tells them how bad everybody else is and how badly he needs it now in order to put the economy back on track that he could get his majority, which

would then give him the power to do as he likes with the country, with women and with social programs where he can tear down, take apart, leave the cupboards bare and make the cuts that he so badly wants to make. He has even started to politicize the judiciary. He has voted non-confidence in Elections Canada in the House. He has started breaking down our systems, our democratic structures, but he cannot finish the job and do it well because he does not have the majority that he wants. He has people like us objecting and getting in the way all the time. He needs an election so we are not in the way anymore and he can do what he really wants to do to the country.

He called an election because he wanted the majority so badly. He had no platform. He never said what he would do. He only introduced his platform in the very last couple of days, after the debate, because people were asking where it was. However, it said none of the things that he is doing now.

As I said earlier, he broke the law and usurped the powers of Parliament all because he wanted this fabulous majority to do as he wanted. Now he is trying to force another election because he does not want to invest in Canadians. He could do it. Nothing prevents the government from coming forward with an economic plan that would address our economic downturn and deal with the crises that this country is facing and will face.

I have seen other prime ministers in the past do it. Lester Pearson, one of our most famous prime ministers, brought major reforms to this country in two minority governments, major social reforms that we still enjoy today.

However, the present government does not want to do that because it is not interested in co-operating nor in building. The Prime Minister wants his majority so he can actually tear down. Right now nothing prevents the Prime Minister from coming into the House with a proper economic plan and proper programs to help Canadians who are losing their jobs or are about to lose their jobs, to help women and to invest in research, health, technology, green jobs, into anything. Anything would be helpful and anything would be better than nothing.

There is no way I can support this kind of behaviour in the House and no way that I can support the government's intentions.

• (1355)

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech from the hon. member, and following that, her comments about squandering a surplus. Only a Liberal would think that paying down \$37 billion in debt is squandering the surplus.

There was talk for many days in the House about a contingency fund. The Liberals continue to harp on the fact that there was a contingency fund set up. However, there never was a contingency fund legislated in the House. Admittedly, it was in a budget bill.

I would like to ask the hon. member if she will be confident enough to defeat this government that has brought tax savings to Canadians, go back to her constituents, and tell them she is back knocking on their door because someone wanted to take her entitlements away?

Government Orders

•(1400)

Hon. Maria Minna: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I was talking about earlier, that kind of attitude. It is contempt for people in the House. The member would not raise that if he were being honest with himself.

The fact of the matter is that the sanctimonious approach does not work. The reality is that the Conservatives' tax cuts and their programs have helped those who already have lots of money in this country.

Let us talk about the \$5,000 savings. How many Canadians at this time will have \$5,000 at the end of the year, especially middle income Canadians who are suffering already? How many will have \$5,000 to put aside per member of the family, so it could become \$20,000, \$25,000 per family? The women I spoke to earlier will not have that kind of money.

The Conservatives should have been investing in people. They only looked after the people they thought might vote for them. This was part of their agenda to try to get their fabulous majority, which they missed last time and they are hoping to get it next time. Their attitude about entitlements and all that is quite disgusting. Those hon. members should take a look at themselves in the mirror when they wake up in the morning and see what good they have done for Canadians today.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member. She mentioned how this statement is failing women. One of the things we were looking for, and I have the document in my hand, is to actually reform EI. As we know, women are not able to access the EI fund at the rate as others.

This morning it was actually a former Conservative candidate who said that the best way to stimulate the economy directly right now is by providing more EI assistance for workers, and particularly women.

I would like to know what the hon. member thinks of that because the infrastructure is set up. All the government has to do is help people access the fund, and get the money to them so they can spend it in their communities. We did not see it from the government and we do not think we will see it from the government. I want to know what she thinks about that.

Hon. Maria Minna: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. There are many things that we need to do for women, certainly maintain the pay equity but also with respect to EI. EI has been reviewed a number of times. In fact, when it was set up, it was to be reviewed every five years to see what unintended consequences it might have with respect to some of the different recipients across the country.

Women are most disadvantaged with respect to EI at the moment. Therefore, it does need to be reformed. It does need to be expanded to include and assist women who are losing jobs and will be hit hardest by the economic downturn. Self-employed people, for instance, are not part of EI at the moment, and they should be. Many of them are women. EI needs to be reviewed and needs to be changed. The hon. member knows that is something for which I have advocated and would support.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, I wonder if the member would agree with me that we should send a telegram to the President of the Treasury Board, who this morning bragged about 41% of the public service being female. Fifty per cent or more of the population is female. We should send him a telegram if she agrees.

Second, the minister responsible for the Treasury Board said that the cost to the litigious process of getting pay equity rights effected was \$4 billion. He may have misled the House, because their own document said—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Beaches—East York, a very quick answer, please.

Hon. Maria Minna: Mr. Speaker, that is typical of what goes on all the time. Now we have the correct information about the settlement, and it indicates the full extent to which women are losing out. Pay equity was intended to help them catch up, to be able to have a normal life, to raise their families, and to be recognized for their work. They are part of our economy.

However, that is not happening. The government is doing the exact opposite. Pay equity is being eliminated in this country, and women's rights are going out the window.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans.

It is a pleasure to rise today in the debate on our government's economic fiscal update. The world is experiencing an unforeseen and unprecedented global economic slowdown. As a result, Canadians are making hard decisions to ensure that they are ready for the future. They are making hard decisions to ensure that they will have the money to pay for their children's education and for their own retirement.

This government is also making some hard decisions to keep its house in order so that these tough economic times shall pass.

On Thursday, we heard the Minister of Finance tell Canadians that we are taking concrete action to ensure responsible fiscal management and effective government. This action includes measures to keep spending under control and focused, as well as measures to modernize our institutions and the way they do business. Canadians expect no less from their government.

As part of this commitment, the Minister of Finance announced that our government will be introducing legislation to ensure predictability in federal public sector compensation.

In this country we are fortunate in having one of the best public services in the world. Public servants work in more than 200 federal organizations. They work in dozens of different occupations, from border guards to food inspectors and from public health specialists to diplomats.

Government Orders

It is important to remember that public servants are paid by the Canadian taxpayer. It is important that the government lead by example and tighten its own belt before it expects Canadians to do the same. That is why our government will introduce legislation to ensure that public sector compensation remains reasonable and affordable. This legislation would put in place annual public service wage increases of 2.3% for 2007-08 and 1.5% for the following three years. Our government is ensuring that pay for the public sector grows in line with what taxpayers can afford.

This restraint will apply to all public sector employees, including members of Parliament, senators, cabinet ministers and senior public servants. Our government is also ensuring equitable compensation in the public service. This will bring much-needed reform to our complaint-based pay equity regime, which has proved to be a lengthy, costly and adversarial process that serves neither employees nor employers well.

We should be especially proud of the progress toward greater gender balance in the public service, particularly within senior ranks. It is worth noting that back in 1983, fewer than 5% of women were in senior management positions. Today women make up 41% of senior and executive ranks of the federal public service. Women are taking their rightful place in the federal public service.

They are not only taking on top jobs, but their representation in many groups has also increased dramatically over the years. For example, women now represent nearly 60% of knowledge workers. They also represent about 50% of the economist group and 40% of the commerce officers group.

It is safe to say that over the past two years, there has been a significant change in Canada's public service, and women have played a big role in that change. Today, the public service provides women and men with equal access to all positions and with identical wages within the same groups and levels.

I am proud of the example we are setting for both private and public sector organizations around the world. I am aware that the situation is not perfect, but remarkable progress has been made in addressing the wage gap between men and women in the federal public service. Since 1999, the difference between total wages for men and total wages for women has been decreasing steadily.

Given this situation, and given the need to ensure that the strides women have made in the federal public sector continue to be maintained, the time is right to put in place a more modern approach to pay equity.

● (1405)

We need to take action to put an end to the long and drawn out court cases of the past. It is worth recalling that the last court ruling on pay equity was in 1999 and at a cost of about \$3.2 billion, a settlement that took a gruelling 15 years to achieve. We cannot afford any more repeat performances like that. Public service employees deserve better. Taxpayers deserve better.

Next week the government will table legislation that will ensure such court cases will become a thing of the past. The legislation is important and I encourage every member of the House to support it. We need to move on. We need to replace the existing complaints-based pay equity regime that has left us with a lengthy, costly,

adversarial process, a process that does not take into account the realities of the new Canadian labour market.

I note with encouragement the developments over the past two weeks, which has seen the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the country's biggest federal public sector union, withdraw two pay equity complaints through a negotiated settlement with the government. The fact that we are able to come to a negotiated settlement on two important pay equity complaints is another strong sign that the time is right to move forward with a more modern approach to equitable compensation.

Moving to an approach that is based on collaboration with bargaining agents rather than the current adversarial process will ensure pay equity issues are addressed as they arise and that problems are resolved expeditiously.

The legislation the government will introduce will give us a more modern and collaborative approach. It will help us rid the current system, which is archaic, onerous and just plain unfair to employees. However, all these important measures are already being threatened by an opposition that is more interested in lining its own pockets than by leading by example. Just as Canadian families and businesses are doing, the government should show prudence and restraint.

In this global economic instability, supporting the legislation is the right thing to do. It is what Canadians expect. Most important, it will ensure prudent and responsible use of tax dollars and it will protect the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. It will ensure that women and men continue to benefit from quality working conditions in Canada's public service.

● (1410)

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions on pay equity and I suppose it is fair to say that if the response is to wait for the legislation, then that is the response. However, there were too many forceful statements made in the House, particularly by the President of the Treasury Board, which leads me to believe the legislation has been reviewed. The hon. member who spoke on the topic must have some knowledge that there will be a change.

The language in the document talks about getting rid of litigious, adversarial and complaints-based approaches to ensure that gender is not a discriminatory factor with respect to paying people what they are worth.

The minister responsible said that the cost of litigation was \$4 billion. The document itself said that the equity settlements were \$4 billion.

Would the hon. member agree with me, as his own documents imply, that the \$4 billion went to make more equal pay to women who do equal work to men in the workplace and not to the costs of litigation and the adversarial process? If his answer is he does not know, I will accept that with respect.

Government Orders

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for listening and for reading the government's submissions because that is very important.

I was not intimately involved in the process, but what I read and what is in the government's documentation is partly what he said, that the almost \$4 billion was the settlement, but what he left out was the fact that it took 15 years.

I understand the hon. member is a lawyer. Having some knowledge of some of the costs of litigation, lawyers tend to work, at least in the smaller communities I live in, for about \$100 to \$150 an hour. I suspect when we get to the levels in the litigation process we are talking about, we are talking about hundreds of dollars an hour. Over 15 years, my guess is this cost a heck of a lot of dollars.

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Conservative member's speech and I see that he has done his homework. And yet I have a great deal of difficulty understanding something. In his statement, he said that an agreement was just negotiated with public service representatives. There were even complaints or grievances with respect to pay equity that were negotiated and two were resolved.

Now he is supporting one of his government's measures, which eliminates employees' right to strike and will impose a new way of resolving pay equity disputes.

I have a great deal of difficulty understanding that a politician would say one thing and its opposite in the same speech. How does he explain that?

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing duplicitous about that. It is not contradictory in nature. I said in my speech that a perfect example of how we could get away from the litigious way we had dealt with pay equity would be by negotiation. I used the example of two recent negotiated settlements instead of going to the usual complaints process. Therefore, we are experiencing an example of how well that works. That is what I was talking about.

In my previous occupation I had occasion to work with many women who received equal compensation for equal work. That was right and that was fair. In fact, in my speech I referred to some of the top positions in the federal civil service. I believe over 40% are now occupied by women. Yes, we should be aiming for 50% to 51%. It should be equal, and we are moving to that.

Also, the Ontario provincial police had its first female commissioner. Therefore, I think society is moving along at an accelerated pace and the government intends to see that continue.

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first allow me to congratulate you on your election as a chair occupant in this 40th Parliament. I know the experience will be rewarding and you will find table officers to be of great help, especially those two, and the people of Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock are proud of you.

I also wish to thank the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West for sharing his time with me. I am proud to have this

opportunity to speak on behalf of the people of Ottawa—Orléans, whose servant I am, in support of the government's economic fiscal update.

This government believes in Canadians and their ability to succeed. We believe in removing barriers to prosperity and success by making government more efficient and more effective. We believe in providing taxpayers with programs and services that give them value for money.

[*Translation*]

In the throne speech, which the House passed yesterday evening, we sketched a broad outline of our strategy to protect the financial security of Canadian families and businesses during this period of global economic instability. Our program is very objective. Fiscal restraint and good government are just two ways we can support our economy during these uncertain times. We have committed to ensuring responsible spending during this fiscal year and those to come.

[*English*]

We promise to continue to keep spending in check, to practise restraint and to look at every dollar we spend with a critical eye.

As the finance minister told us, we will not spend now to tax our children and grandchildren later.

The current economic situation has also heightened Canadians' appreciation for what is required. They see that we need a fiscally responsible government and a competitive economy to protect our families and our communities. They expect us to be prudent in spending their tax dollars and they are looking for us to deliver.

Canadians understand the need for belt-tightening in tough economic times. They see that taking a responsible approach to public sector compensation is even more critical during a time of economic uncertainty and tight fiscal circumstances. They understand that this economic crisis, which has come to us from beyond our shores, will require sacrifices close to home.

As part of our government's plan to stabilize the economy, we have said that grants, contributions, capital, wages and other operating expenses all will be placed under the microscope of responsible spending. Indeed, we have delivered.

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

Last week, in response to a question I asked, the President of the Treasury Board announced that we had reached an agreement in principle on compensation with the Public Service Alliance of Canada, which represents over 100,000 federal public service employees.

Shortly after that, we reached two compensation agreements with the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, one for the translation group and the other for the economics group.

All of these agreements include pay increases of 6.8% over four years, which is reasonable during these difficult times. These agreements are in line with our financial framework and our policies.

Government Orders

[English]

The public sector unions have recognized that we are in difficult economic times. I am confident that we soon will be able to put the negotiations behind us and face our economic challenges united.

However, given the urgent need to ensure predictability in public sector compensation overall, it is reasonable and responsible for the government to consider all options in order to achieve this. We need as much predictability in our compensation structure as possible during the current uncertainty. That is why we will be tabling legislation to set future increases in rates of pay in the public sector. By this, I mean the entire federal public sector, senior public servants and parliamentarians included. This means us.

[Translation]

This legislation will control increases in rates of pay across the federal public service and limit the growth of the public sector payroll.

We are demonstrating clarity and foresight by adopting this approach to government payroll management. Taken together, these agreements in principle and our legislation are examples of responsible outcomes in public sector compensation. They are fair to employees and affordable for Canadian taxpayers. They will serve Canada well as we face uncertain economic times.

[English]

This approach is about sharing the load. It is about balancing recognition for our highly respected public sector employees and the valuable jobs they do to serve Canadians from coast to coast. The government understands the significant contribution that these employees make every day to the high quality of life in our families, in our communities, and so do I.

Our approach to controlling the growth of public sector compensation is about making the government more effective by spending responsibly on the right priorities. It is about practising restraint, just like any household would do in tough economic times, and reaping the rewards later. It is about compensation that is fair to employees and fair to taxpayers. That is good for the government, good for taxpayers and good for Canada.

[Translation]

All government members understand that Canadians are going through tough economic times.

Parliamentarians, public servants and public service unions all have a role to play in ensuring fiscal restraint during these difficult economic circumstances.

• (1425)

[English]

Our disciplined approach recognizes the urgent need for predictability in terms of compensation costs across the federal public sector. During this time of global economic uncertainty, it is important that all governments start at home and tighten their own belts. Our government is leading by example, something that the opposition clearly does not understand.

I hope the opposition will stop with its heightened rhetoric and partisan games. Canadians expect us to work together to get them through this storm.

These measures are responsible and prudent. They are what Canadians expect from their government. They are what Canadians expect from us. It is my hope that the opposition will come to its senses and support these important actions.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, reference has been made to looking out for the benefit of Canadians. Much discussion has taken place on the issue of gender and how women suffer a great deal as a result of the government's agenda.

Not only are we seeing the systematic roll-back of the battle related to pay equity, but we are also seeing threats to the more general area of the rights of workers, in which women are affected as well.

However, I also note the fact that as a result of the lack of a stimulus package in the government's agenda to deal with this economic recession, once again women will suffer a great deal. Where is the investment for affordable housing? Where is the investment for child care? Where is the investment for education? All these factors affect the well-being of women and all Canadians, and we see nothing from the government.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the hon. member for Churchill to this House. I appreciate her passion for these issues. As she gets to know me, she will understand that so do I.

This government is doing things for women and we are doing things at a rapid pace instead of getting them entangled in years and decades of litigation.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for a most eloquent speech. We have always known that he is very eloquent but that was well worded and well delivered and I congratulate him on that. I would like to second his suggestion that he is very passionate about women's issues, about his constituents' issues, which leads into my question.

I know the hon. member represents a part of the greater Ottawa region and would in fact then represent a number of public service employees of this government.

Mr. Marcel Proulx: They will remember.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Mr. Speaker, if I could actually hear over the heckling on the other side of the House, I want to ask the hon. member if he has not heard positive comments from the fact that there is actually some stability, and in fact these public servants are willing to shoulder some of the positive moves that we want to put forward.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Mr. Speaker, I must say that I have heard from the public servants of Ottawa—Orléans and from the greater national capital region, and they are willing to do their share, but not if we do not. They expect us to do our share first, and if we do, they will pull along.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member for Ottawa—Orléans has a great deal of experience in the National Capital Region. I have a real problem with his speech. He politely and candidly states that the government just negotiated an agreement with the Public Service Alliance. I am wondering about the following. How can he support a change by his government that eliminates the right to strike for major unions when they are open to negotiating, as he himself said? How can he support that? I will repeat that I have a great deal of difficulty with a politician who would say one thing and its opposite in the same speech.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Mr. Speaker, fair-minded people understand that the agreement we are proposing will only limit salary increases. In any event, the unions have already agreed to these salary increases.

● (1430)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It being 2:30 p.m., this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

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

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MS. DENISE SAVOIE

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

HON. MAURIL BÉLANGER

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. JACQUES GOURDE

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

HON. GORDON O'CONNOR

MR. JOE PRESTON

MR. MARCEL PROULX

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Fortieth Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health	Nunavut	Nunavut	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	Ontario	NDP
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	CPC
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Labour	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	Québec	BQ
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Arthur, André	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Québec	Ind.
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Fredericton	New Brunswick	CPC
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	Québec	BQ
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	NDP
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	Québec	BQ
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon	Yukon	Lib.
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Beaudin, Josée	Saint-Lambert	Québec	BQ
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Ontario	Lib.
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Québec	BQ
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	CPC
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	BQ
Blaney, Steven	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	BQ
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	BQ
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Lois	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	Québec	BQ
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Cadman, Dona	Surrey North	British Columbia	CPC
Calandra, Paul	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Pontiac	Québec	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Québec	BQ
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	BQ
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	Ind.
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi— Churchill River	Saskatchewan	CPC
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Industry	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Coady, Siobhan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	Ontario	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet— Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	BQ
Crombie, Bonnie	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Dechert, Bob	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Demers, Nicole	Laval	Québec	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	BQ
Desnoyers, Luc	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Québec	BQ
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	Lib.
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dorion, Jean	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	BQ
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	British Columbia	Lib.
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	BQ
Dufour, Nicolas	Repentigny	Québec	BQ
Duncan, John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	NDP
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	Québec	BQ
Fast, Ed	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	Lib.
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	BQ
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Québec	BQ
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	Québec	BQ
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology)	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	Ontario	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	Lib.
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	BQ
Guergis, Hon. Helena, Minister of State (Status of Women)	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Guimond, Claude	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	BQ
Hall Findlay, Martha	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Hoepfner, Candice	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	Ontario	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	Ontario	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	NDP
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Québec	Lib.
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Kania, Andrew	Brampton West	Ontario	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kennedy, Gerard	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	Lib.
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)	Thornhill	Ontario	CPC
Kerr, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	West Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lake, Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry ...	Edmonton—Mill Woods— Beaumont.....	Alberta	CPC
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île.....	Québec	BQ
Lauzon, Guy.....	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert.....	Québec	BQ
Layton, Hon. Jack.....	Toronto—Danforth.....	Ontario	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec).....	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean.....	Québec	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour.....	New Brunswick.....	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River ...	Ontario	Lib.
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	BQ
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture.....	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell .	Ontario	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	Nova Scotia.....	NDP
Lessard, Yves.....	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik —Eeyou	Québec	BQ
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce.....	Ontario	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre.....	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Sport)	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CPC
Lunney, James.....	Nanaimo—Alberni.....	British Columbia	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island....	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway.....	Central Nova	Nova Scotia.....	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton.....	Ontario	Lib.
Malo, Luc.....	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	BQ
Maloway, Jim.....	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Mark, Inky.....	Dauphin—Swan River— Marquette.....	Manitoba	CPC
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek .	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Hon. Keith.....	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	Lib.
Martin, Pat.....	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Tony.....	Sault Ste. Marie.....	Ontario	NDP
Masse, Brian.....	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe.....	Ontario	NDP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville.....	Ontario	Lib.
McColeman, Phil.....	Brant	Ontario	CPC
McGuinty, David.....	Ottawa South.....	Ontario	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood.....	Ontario	Lib.
McLeod, Cathy.....	Kamloops—Thompson— Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East ..	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	Québec	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	BQ
Mendes, Alexandra.....	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	Lib.
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance..	Macleod	Alberta	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Merrifield, Hon. Rob, Minister of State (Transport)	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker of the House of Commons	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick	CPC
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	Québec	NDP
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	Québec	BQ
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
O'Neill-Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	New Brunswick	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Oliphant, Robert	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Québec	Lib.
Paillé, Pascal-Pierre	Louis-Hébert	Québec	BQ
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	Québec	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Mégantic—L'Érable	Québec	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	Lib.
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Petit, Daniel, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	CPC
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Pomerleau, Roger	Drummond	Québec	BQ
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	CPC
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	Lib.
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Natural Resources	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Ontario	Lib.
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	Alberta	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Rickford, Greg	Kenora	Ontario	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	Lib.
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis— Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Savoie, Denise, The Acting Speaker	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CPC
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Andrew, The Deputy Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	CPC
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Simson, Michelle	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	BQ
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	BQ
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	Ontario	NDP
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Québec	Lib.
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Uppal, Tim	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Valeriote, Francis	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Minister of Public Safety	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister for La Francophonie	Louis-Saint-Laurent	Québec	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	Québec	BQ
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	NDP
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Ontario	Lib.
Wong, Alice, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	CPC
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversi- fication)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Zarac, Lise	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	Lib.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Fortieth Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Labour	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	CPC
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob, Minister of State (Transport)	Yellowhead	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Tim	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Cadman, Dona	Surrey North	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	Lib.
Duncan, John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Ed.	Abbotsford	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ.	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Sport)	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	Lib.
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
McLeod, Cathy	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Savoie, Denise, The Acting Speaker	Victoria	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	North Vancouver	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	CPC
Wong, Alice, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Richmond	CPC
MANITOBA (14)		
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	Saint Boniface	CPC
Hoepfner, Candice	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Maloway, Jim	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	NDP
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Fredericton	CPC
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Fundy Royal	CPC
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
O'Neill-Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	CPC
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	CPC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Coady, Siobhan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Lib.
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	NDP
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	Ind.
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
Kerr, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	West Nova	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Central Nova	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
NUNAVUT (1)		
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health	Nunavut	CPC
ONTARIO (106)		
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	NDP
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Calandra, Paul	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	CPC
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Industry	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Crombie, Bonnie	Mississauga—Streetsville	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Dechert, Bob	Mississauga—Erindale	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Lib.
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Lib.
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology)	Cambridge	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	NDP
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Lib.
Guergis, Hon. Helena, Minister of State (Status of Women)	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Hall Findlay, Martha	Willowdale	Lib.
Holder, Ed	London West	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	NDP
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Kania, Andrew	Brampton West	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Kennedy, Gerard	Parkdale—High Park	Lib.
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)	Thornhill	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathyssen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Lib.
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker of the House of Commons	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	CPC
Oliphant, Robert	Don Valley West	Lib.
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	Lib.
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Natural Resources	Halton	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Greg	Kenora	CPC
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Lib.
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Lib.
Simson, Michelle	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	CPC
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Valeriotte, Francis	Guelph	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Minister of Public Safety	York—Simcoe	CPC
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Lib.
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.
Young, Terence	Oakville	CPC
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Egmont	CPC
QUÉBEC (75)		
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	BQ
Arthur, André	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	BQ
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	BQ
Beaudin, Josée	Saint-Lambert	BQ
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Bernier, Hon. Maxime	Beauce	CPC
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	BQ
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Jonquière—Alma	CPC
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	BQ
Blaney, Steven	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	BQ
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	Beauport—Limoilou	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	BQ
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	BQ
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Pontiac	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	BQ
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska— Rivière-du-Loup	BQ
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	BQ
Demers, Nicole	Laval	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	BQ
Desnoyers, Luc	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Dorion, Jean	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	BQ
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	BQ
Dufour, Nicolas	Repentigny	BQ
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	BQ
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	BQ
Guimond, Claude	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	BQ
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	BQ
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	BQ
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	BQ
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	BQ
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	BQ
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	BQ
Mendes, Alexandra	Brossard—La Prairie	Lib.
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	NDP
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	BQ
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paillé, Pascal-Pierre	Louis-Hébert	BQ
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Petit, Daniel, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	CPC
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Pomerleau, Roger	Drummond	BQ
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	BQ
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Lib.
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister for La Francophonie	Louis-Saint-Laurent	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	BQ
Zarac, Lise	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.

SASKATCHEWAN (14)

Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana.....	Wascana	Lib.
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre.....	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.....	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew, The Deputy Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.....	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon.....	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of November 28, 2008 — 1st Session, 40th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FINANCE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

HEALTH

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

**HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

LIAISON

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

NATURAL RESOURCES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chair:

Joe Preston

Vice-Chairs:

Michel Guimond
Marcel Proulx

Harold Albrecht
Kelly Block
Rodger Cuzner

Claude DeBellefeuille
Yvon Godin

Marlene Jennings
Guy Lauzon

Tom Lukiwski
Scott Reid

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Chair:

Harold Albrecht

Vice-Chair:

Claude DeBellefeuille

Yvon Godin

Marcel Proulx

Scott Reid

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

STATUS OF WOMEN

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

STANDING JOINT COMMITTEES

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Joint Chair:

Joint Vice-Chair:

Representing the Senate:
The Honourable Senators

Representing the House of Commons:

Panel of Chairs of Legislative Committees

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MS. DENISE SAVOIE

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

THE MINISTRY

According to precedence

Right Hon. Stephen Harper	Prime Minister
Hon. Rob Nicholson	Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn	Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture)
Hon. Greg Thompson	Minister of Veterans Affairs
Hon. Marjory LeBreton	Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister of State (Seniors)
Hon. Chuck Strahl	Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Hon. Peter MacKay	Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway
Hon. Stockwell Day	Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway
Hon. Vic Toews	President of the Treasury Board
Hon. Rona Ambrose	Minister of Labour
Hon. Diane Finley	Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
Hon. Bev Oda	Minister of International Cooperation
Hon. Jim Prentice	Minister of the Environment
Hon. John Baird	Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Hon. Lawrence Cannon	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Tony Clement	Minister of Industry
Hon. Jim Flaherty	Minister of Finance
Hon. Josée Verner	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister for La Francophonie
Hon. Jay Hill	Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
Hon. Peter Van Loan	Minister of Public Safety
Hon. Gerry Ritz	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Hon. Jason Kenney	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism
Hon. Christian Paradis	Minister of Public Works and Government Services
Hon. James Moore	Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages
Hon. Leona Aglukkaq	Minister of Health
Hon. Lisa Raitt	Minister of Natural Resources
Hon. Gail Shea	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Hon. Gary Lunn	Minister of State (Sport)
Hon. Gordon O'Connor	Minister of State and Chief Government Whip
Hon. Helena Guergis	Minister of State (Status of Women)
Hon. Diane Ablonczy	Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)
Hon. Rob Merrifield	Minister of State (Transport)
Hon. Lynne Yelich	Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)
Hon. Steven Fletcher	Minister of State (Democratic Reform)
Hon. Gary Goodyear	Minister of State (Science and Technology)
Hon. Denis Lebel	Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)
Hon. Keith Ashfield	Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)
Hon. Peter Kent	Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mr. Pierre Poilievre	to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Mr. Rob Moore	to the Minister of Justice
Mr. Daniel Petit	to the Minister of Justice
Mr. Jacques Gourde	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue
Mr. Greg Kerr	to the Minister of Veterans Affairs
Mr. John Duncan	to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Mr. Laurie Hawn	to the Minister of National Defence
Mr. Gerald Keddy	to the Minister of International Trade
Mr. Andrew Saxton	to the President of the Treasury Board
Mr. Ed Komarnicki	to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour
Hon. Jim Abbott	to the Minister of International Cooperation
Mr. Mark Warawa	to the Minister of the Environment
Mr. Brian Jean	to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Mr. Deepak Obhrai	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Mike Lake	to the Minister of Industry
Mr. Ted Menzies	to the Minister of Finance
Mr. Tom Lukiwski	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
Mr. Dave MacKenzie	to the Minister of Public Safety
Mr. Pierre Lemieux	to the Minister of Agriculture
Mr. David Anderson	to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board
Mr. Rick Dykstra	to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Mrs. Alice Wong	for Multiculturalism
Mr. Dean Del Mastro	to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Mrs. Sylvie Boucher	for Status of Women
Mrs. Shelly Glover	for Official Languages
Mr. Colin Carrie	to the Minister of Health
Mr. Randy Kamp	to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

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