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Friday, May 15, 2009

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 15, 2009

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

FAMILY HOMES ON RESERVES AND MATRIMONIAL INTERESTS OR RIGHTS ACT

The House resumed from May 14 consideration of the motion that Bill C-8, An Act respecting family homes situated on First Nation reserves and matrimonial interests or rights in or to structures and lands situated on those reserves, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: I understand the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier was just about to start the question and comment period of his speech. So if there are questions and comments that members would like to direct to the member for Ottawa—Vanier, we will take them now.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was here last night when the member addressed the House on this very important bill. It has some dimensions that deal not only with the substance of the policy matters but also the substance of how we do legislation.

One of the criticisms of this bill is that it appears that some parties in the House think we can just pass this flawed bill at second reading, send it to committee and somehow, miraculously, repair its various problems. I think the member well knows that once we pass a bill at second reading, we have a situation where we have approved the bill in principle. Substantive amendments cannot be made in committee. Therefore, it would seem that the approach to this bill would, in itself, be flawed.

I want to give the member an opportunity to refresh the House on his principle argument in his speech, which was quite focused, and maybe he could comment on a strategy to get a good bill.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I was suggesting is that instead of referring the bill to committee after second reading, where the committee is limited in the scope of what it can do, I had hoped the government would consider referring the bill to committee before second reading where we could then engage, in a constructive manner, in crafting

legislation that would reflect the will of all parliamentarians and of the interested parties, the aboriginal community of Canada.

The member for Simcoe North agreed with me when I pointed out that the committee we currently have is functioning very well. We have already dealt with two bills, Bill C-5 and C-28, expeditiously after listening to witnesses, but in both cases there was exemplary co-operation between the government side and the opposition parties. Also, in both cases, the aboriginal communities that were interested in the legislation supported the legislation.

We have a situation now with Bill C-8 where the aboriginal communities do not support the legislation and have expressed great reservations. If we approve this legislation at second reading and then send it to committee, it will tie the hands of the committee in its ability to improve the legislation. The amendments that could be introduced at that stage are rather limited and must be narrower in scope than what the legislation says.

When I hear the members of the NDP and my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois say that they want to improve the legislation by passing it at second reading and sending it to committee, I think they and the government forgot that we could have gone another route, which would have made for a situation that would have been much more constructive and more in keeping with the spirit of co-operation that is supposed to exist between the Crown and aboriginal communities ever since we had an incredible ceremony in this House, as people will remember, and ever since we had a royal commission look into the matter. We have all agreed that we need to start dealing with the aboriginal communities in a much more respectful manner and in a manner that engages them, gives them a voice and we listen to their voice. It is a matter of the honour of the Crown that we must respect that.

That is essentially what I was saying in my comments yesterday. I would hope that the members from the Bloc Québécois and the members from the NDP would support this motion, would give an occasion to the government to go back and consult properly and then bring forward a bill that we could refer to committee before second reading in order to give the committee the chance to do good work, as it has.

Government Orders

•(1005)

Mr. John Duncan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Ottawa—Vanier was not on the committee in the last Parliament, nor was I, but I do know that the legislation that came forward from the government in the last Parliament to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act so that the exclusion of status Indians from its provisions would end was virtually in the same position. It was taken to committee and, lo and behold, the committee proved successful and that act was eventually adopted.

We have a living example of the value of getting second reading and then getting things to committee. Does the member for Ottawa—Vanier not think that is an illuminating example of how this legislation might very well go?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: No, Mr. Speaker, because the Assembly of First Nations and the Native Women's Association of Canada both said, quite clearly, that they did not support the bill as it is. They actually do not think it can be repaired and that it is beyond repair.

If the member goes back to the 38th Parliament, and he was here then, when we had a Liberal minority government, we made good use of this ability to give a wider mandate to committees to work at legislation by referring over 30 some pieces of legislation to committees before second reading.

In the 39th Parliament, when the Conservatives formed a minority government, they referred three. In this Parliament, when they are still in a minority situation, they have not referred any to committee before second reading. I think that shows some misunderstanding of the ability of committees to work together, and especially this committee which has demonstrated, time and again, with a very able chair, the member for Simcoe North, and very able members from all parties, a capacity and a willingness to work constructively together.

The government missed a golden opportunity of giving a bill to the committee and giving it the latitude and the ability to really engage the aboriginal communities to understand the issues thoroughly, to respect the honour of the Crown concept that has been imposed upon us by the Supreme Court of our country, by the Constitution and to come up with a better solution than what is likely to happen now, if we are forced to deal with it at committee with it having been approved in principle at second reading.

•(1010)

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the member for Toronto Centre addressed Parliament on the bill and the thrust of his presentation was that there were no groups of the National Aboriginal Women's Council or of the AFN, which speaks for all aboriginals, that support the bill. He felt that it was inappropriate to move forward with a bill when there was zero support from the stakeholders who would be impacted by that legislation.

I wonder if the member would agree and perhaps comment on why it is important that we get this right, because the possibility of sending a bill to committee that is irreparable and fundamentally flawed may take an awful long time, which would only delay the ultimate resolution of the problems that we have identified.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Yes, Mr. Speaker, because choosing that path would leave us with three possibilities. One is that we may not

end up with a bill. We may just get hung up in committee with acrimony and so forth. Two, the bill may be passed but very flawed and, therefore, exposed to a very serious and easy challenge in court. Three, we may eventually not adopt it and kill it in committee.

As opposed to referring it to committee, we should have engaged Parliament, members of the House and the aboriginal communities into crafting legislation that would meet everyone's expectations, including the government, the aboriginal communities and the opposition parties. I honestly believe that could have happened. It could still happen if the government backs up a bit, takes the six months to go back and consult, reintroduces legislation that may be more suitable and amenable to the aboriginal communities of Canada and then send it to committee with the latitude to do its work. If we were to do that, I think we could end up with a exemplary legislation in which we could all take great pride.

On the current track on which we are being sent, the pitfalls are too numerous to end up with that kind of a result, unfortunately.

Mr. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, we need consistency here. The Assembly of First Nations and the Liberal Party opposed the Canadian Human Rights Act amendments in the last Parliament. There was considerable consultation. Our expectation was that the Liberals would join with the other opposition parties to pass the bill at second reading so we could do something useful. I am just amazed at the change—

The Deputy Speaker: I must stop the parliamentary secretary there as there are only about 15 seconds remaining for the member to respond.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: There is no amazement, Mr. Speaker. I asked the parliamentary secretary yesterday why the government chose not to refer the bill to committee before second reading but I did not get an answer. I think that is the true question. If the government had chosen that route, there would be no question about getting the bill to second reading. We would be in a situation where the committee, which has demonstrated its ability to do good work, would have the mandate and the latitude to do just that. Unfortunately, we may be set on another course now.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-8, An Act respecting family homes situated on First Nation reserves and matrimonial interests or rights in or to structures and lands situated on those reserves.

The summary of the bill reads:

This enactment provides for the adoption of First Nation laws and the establishment of provisional rules and procedures that apply during a conjugal relationship, when that relationship breaks down or on the death of a spouse or common-law partner, respecting the use, occupation and possession of family homes on First Nation reserves and the division of the value of any interests or rights held by spouses or common-law partners in or to structures and lands on those reserves.

Government Orders

Members are probably aware that I do not have any reserves in my riding so I will take a moment to explain why I am speaking to this and how I came to take an interest in the bill. It really started in the last Parliament with a former colleague, Tina Keeper, who is from the north and who had done a lot of work on this issue. There was a bill, Bill C-47, before the House that she expressed a lot of concern about. I met with her not too long ago and she was very adamant that she wanted to continue to be involved and that she would help in any way she could to ensure that any legislation that comes forward on matrimonial real property will be appropriate legislation that is fairly reflective of the aboriginal rights to self-determination and self-government.

About four weeks ago, when we had the last parliamentary break, the Ontario caucus of my party extended an invitation to groups to speak to us about the issues that were important to them. It was an outreach event. One of the groups that came before us was led by Mr. Richard C. Powless who is a consultant for first nations. Mr. Powless and his colleagues from the Six Nations came to talk about Bill C-8. After they were finished their brief presentation, there was some silence. I was not sure why because, to me, their presentation was very serious. The presentation basically said that there was no support whatsoever for this bill in the first nations across Canada but it is going forward, which is a travesty. Some of their reasons were laid out.

I decided to speak up and ask a couple of questions. The next thing I knew, Mr. Powless had agreed to send me many more details about the bill than he could possibly talk about in the brief time that he had to deal with us. He did send the material and it was terrific. It went virtually clause-by-clause down the bill and laid out some of the problems. I could, with the unanimous consent of the House, spend about two hours going through each of those but I do not think it is necessary. I will circulate it to members. It is important if they have not seen it already.

Subsequent to that, Mr. Powless, as we were corresponding, asked me whether or not he could meet with additional representatives and we did that a week or so ago. At this meeting, in addition to Mr. Powless, were: Lawané:Wan Clinton M. Cornelius, Oneida Nation of the Thames Council; Julie Phillips-Jacobs, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne; Mr. Carl Hill, Six Nations Council; and Ava Hill, Six Nations Council.

We spent some time reviewing the representations that Mr. Powless had made to our caucus and I was presented with some additional materials that laid out the concerns that they had with the bill.

● (1015)

Then we talked about strategy. It was pretty clear that Bill C-8 was identical to Bill C-47 in the last Parliament. There really has not been any evolution with regard to the policy or the proposed legislation.

Because Bill C-8 had been delayed down the order paper and did not come forward as expeditiously as it should, that was an indication the government did not really have its heart behind it, that it knew there were problems and it did not want to have to face this.

Strategically, some things could be done. The AFN and the National Women's Aboriginal Council, representing all aboriginals

across the country, could write the minister to let him know there was no support among aboriginal communities for this bill, for substantive reasons. They could ask the government to withdraw the bill and have the appropriate consultations and discussions on all the points identified as being flawed, flawed to the point that the bill could not even be repaired at committee. That was their view.

Yesterday, the member for Toronto Centre gave an eloquent speech about how important it was for legislation not fly in the face of the stakeholders affected by it. The stakeholders have to be consulted. They have to understand why it is necessary. The Government of Canada was basically imposing legislation on stakeholders, in this case the first nations of Canada, which would have an enormous impact on them and also seriously contradict a lot of the things it had earlier. There were big problems with the bill. This was two irreconcilable forces. It was not going to happen. The whole idea is we cannot force the bill through. It will not work because it is not repairable.

Some members have suggested we could send it to committee and fix it there. We have to listen to what the AFN had to say. We do not have to go to committee, have witnesses and try to identify what the problems are. It has already provided a paper, which I will give it to any member who wants it. Page by page, issue by issue, it is an extraordinary work. We cannot ignore that work. That should have been known and reviewed by the government prior to Bill C-8 being called at second reading. If the government would recognize that it is a fundamentally flawed bill and that it does not have a hope of passing, it would be in the best interests of the AFN, of Canada's aboriginal communities, to withdraw the bill, or defeat it, or hoist the bill, do anything to stop this flawed process because it will not work. That is what should happen, but it has not. The government is insistent.

Let me quote from the minister's speech from Monday. Members will recall that we had a concurrence motion after question period, which took up most of the afternoon, so we did not get around to this until about 6:15 p.m., 15 minutes before the House was to adjourn for the day. The minister got up to speak to Bill C-8. I was astounded at what he said. The minister described a process in a bill, which is not the process I know. One of his statements was:

—the bill was developed after exhaustive study, authoritative research and comprehensive consultation with first nations groups.

● (1020)

Bill C-8 was not developed after exhaustive study because it bill is the same bill that we had in the last Parliament, Bill C-47. There may have been consultations on Bill C-47, but not on this bill.

As for authoritative research, there was no additional research. There was no additional work done on this. As for comprehensive consultation, there were consultations. I know the parliamentary secretary has boasted about having hundreds of meetings. There is a difference between having consultations and listening to the consultations.

Government Orders

In fact, members will know that the government's own consultant on the bill had many recommendations and 85% of them were rejected by the government. It has to tell us something. If 85% of the recommendations of its consultant are rejected by the government, if no first nations groups in the country support the bill and if all three opposition parties are telling the government that the bill must be defeated somehow at some stage, why is the government being so closed-minded to the realities?

I want to thank Mr. Richard Powless who raised this issue with the Ontario Liberal caucus in the hopes that we would be able to do something. I am not sure if we will be able to do enough to make the right things happen. We know we need a bill, but we need the right bill that is based on proper consultations and due respect for the laws of Canada. It is very important.

I have the resolution for Bill C-47, signed by Phil Fontaine, National Chief. It is quite long. It states:

The Ministerial Representative on Matrimonial Real Property submitted a report on March 9, 2007 and included important considerations and recommendations regarding consultation and First Nation jurisdiction;

In spite of the views of First Nations and many of the recommendations of its own Ministerial Representative, the Government drafted and introduced Bill C-47 on March 4, 2008;

I referred to this in the House. The consultant of the government made recommendations and they were ignored.

It also goes on to state:

Bill C-47 contains clauses that provide the Federal Government with control over the First Nation law making process through a "verification officer" and is therefore fundamentally inconsistent with the First Nation inherent right to self government.

I cannot think of anything more fundamental in legislation.

Let me refer to a couple of the resolutions:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

Chiefs-in-Assembly reject Bill C-47 and the approach taken by the Federal government as it did not fulfill the duty of the Crown to consult and to accommodate the views and interests of First Nations.

Therefore, it also rejects Bill C-8 because it is the same bill:

It goes on to say that:

Chiefs-in-Assembly demand that the Federal Government withdraw Bill C-47 and provide First Nations with resources to properly develop and implement a meaningful process that respects First Nation jurisdiction and existing First Nation processes addressing MRP.

This resolution, passed by the AFN and signed by Chief Phil Fontaine, was dated July 17, 2008. This is not new to the government.

Notwithstanding the clear statements by the AFN and the Native Women's Council, the government ignored them. In fact, the minister himself gave a 15-minute speech. The clock ran out and the minister did not come back to the House to finish his speech or to allow members to ask questions. That is significant.

• (1025)

I want to close the last part of my speech. Yesterday, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the AFN Women's Council, and the Assembly of First Nations published a joint release dated May 14, yesterday. This is a joint communiqué, and we have to take this into account very seriously.

It reads:

Today the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the AFN Women's Council united to express their opposition to the federal Bill C-8, An Act respecting family homes situated on First Nation reserves and matrimonial interests or rights in or to structures and lands situated on those reserves.

It goes on to say:

[We] all agree that Bill C-8 will do nothing to resolve or to solve the problems associated with Matrimonial Real Property (MRP) on-reserve; that the federal government failed in its duty to consult and accommodate the views of First Nations; and, as a result, the Bill is fatally flawed and cannot be fixed. It should not proceed to committee.

This goes on substantively. I would be happy to provide this to any hon. members who would like to have it. I think it is important. It is clear, concise, and correct.

As the hon. member for Toronto Centre said yesterday, how can the federal government bring forward legislation that does not respect the views and the interests of the stakeholders that will be impacted?

We cannot have this butting of heads. It has to be a respectful process. It has to be a process that acknowledges and respects the laws of Canada as they relate to aboriginals. It has to be a process with an understanding that, yes, we need a bill and the sooner we get the bill, the better. However, it has to be a good bill. Time is being wasted.

If we send the bill to committee, all we will do is have weeks of witnesses, weeks of questions on items, when in fact the work has been done already. It shows time and time again that consultations have not taken place. Where there have been recommendations from the government's consultant, the vast majority, over 85%, of them were rejected.

It is an insult to first nations, Canadians and Parliament to suggest somehow that there has been significant consultation. First nations, and in particular the Native Women's Association of Canada, which speaks for women's groups, and the women's council, which also represents women's issues through the full council of the AFN, should be taken into account. The stakeholders, those affected by the legislation, need to believe and feel they have been consulted. They need to believe their concerns and views have been respected.

When there is a rejection of any of those suggestions, the right thing to do is explain it in true, full and plain fashion. That has not happened.

For all of those reasons, my recommendation to the House is to pass the current hoist motion before us, which suggests the bill has to stop now. We need to start the process to get the right bill so we can work here and pass legislation in the best interests of first nations in Canada.

• (1030)

Mr. John Duncan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Mississauga South has once again demonstrated that the Liberals have lost total sight of the objective of the bill.

Government Orders

We have three Conservative members on the aboriginal affairs committee who have an extensive number of reserves in their ridings. We are not naive. The member for Kenora has about 50 first nations in his riding. My riding has about 24 reserves. The member for Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River has many reserves in his riding and has done policing on reserves.

The legislation was shared in draft form, in the same way the government was complimented yesterday in terms of the Cree-Naskapi act development, which sailed through committee.

Yesterday the Liberal Party wrote in its communiqué that Bill C-8 mandated that verification officers play an active role in the development and approval of local matrimonial real property regimes and that was a complaint of the AFN. This is wrong. The verification officers are only responsible for determining whether the community approval and ratification processes are held in accordance with the proposed legislation.

Would the hon. member care to comment on these statements?

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament, I have a duty to consult as well. I did consult, and I heard what the first nations had to say. I listened. I looked at the documents, item by item, about all the ways this bill did not meet the test of good legislation.

I am not here giving my opinion. I am here, as a voice, on behalf of Mr. Powless, the first nations, and Chief Fontaine. That is their position.

The member should reconsider going after members who bring this information to the House and consider the best interests of the first nations of Canada, who are the stakeholders here.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech.

I wonder how he came to the conclusion that aboriginal women in Quebec and Canada would be satisfied to have their claims shelved. Their claims would not be acknowledged at all. If we adopt the amendment put forward by the Liberals, the committee will never examine the bill.

Aboriginal women in Quebec and Canada deserve to have their recommendations examined and acknowledged by Parliament. The only way this will happen is for the bill to be sent to committee.

I would like the member to tell me how he can think that aboriginal women in Quebec and Canada want to see their recommendations shelved.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, the member is correct. We need to get a bill to committee to hear the witnesses and work with this. However, the point is that the AFN and the Native Women's Association of Canada, in conjunction with the AFN Women's Council, have united together to say they reject this bill because it does not work.

It is not in the best interest of aboriginal women to bring forward a bill that cannot possibly pass at committee and spend all that time

debating and discussing it. The important thing is to get the bill right and get the right bill to committee so we can deliver appropriate legislation.

I understand the member's concern, but there is no way to repair this bill at committee. Once it is passed at second reading with approval in principle, substantive amendments cannot be made at committee. Therefore, this bill cannot be fixed. I understand that. The AFN understands that, and the Native Women's Association of Canada definitely understands that.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to pose a question to the member about parliamentary procedure. He is knowledgeable about how that works. When we have bills we do not agree with, we need to provide a space so people can have their voice heard. I think we might be disagreeing on how to do that.

Many have said they do not agree with this bill. Sign me up; I am part of that group. However, to say we will not have an opportunity to discuss this bill is not the right way to go. I believe that women and other aboriginal representatives are very capable of going to committee. I remember very well that when we had the changes to the voting system, the hon. member's party heard from aboriginal people on changes to the voter ID. It did not listen to them. We put forward amendments. It did not listen.

I think it is an opportunity to actually hear from the aboriginal community. If the bill is not good enough, and it is a colonial attitude, and I agree with that, then we kill the bill. However, we want to open the space to let people be heard.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, I understand what the member is saying, but he wants a bill that is going to be defeated to be the basis for discussion at committee. That makes no sense. The AFN, the Native Women's Association of Canada and the AFN Women's Council have all rejected this bill, for one reason.

• (1040)

Mr. Paul Dewar: That was under a false premise. You told them something that was not true.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, let me put it as simply as I can. The reason I recommended that the bill not pass at second reading and go to committee for discussion is that the first nations have clearly and unitedly said this bill is flawed and it must be defeated and withdrawn. I accept their assessment. I have looked at the details. I am very comfortable that they have good arguments.

They have asked for appropriate consultation before the bill is crafted, and we, as legislators, must listen. That consultation did not happen. That is unacceptable, and that is why we have to defeat the bill. Let them have the consultations and we can participate in those consultations with the AFN.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member for Mississauga South would like to comment. Not only do we have a clear and principled objection to the bill from the AFN, the Assembly of First Nations, we also have it from the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Government Orders

[Translation]

This is in response to the member for Laval, who participated in the debate. Yesterday, aboriginal chiefs in Quebec and Ontario issued a very clear statement.

[English]

We have a clear statement from the chiefs of Quebec, from the chiefs of Ontario, from the Assembly of First Nations and from the Native Women's Association, all saying that this bill should not go any further.

Would the member for Mississauga South like to comment further on those statements from the leadership of the first nations?

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. I have the releases as well.

One member said to me yesterday that the reason their party wants to get this bad bill to committee, which they said they would defeat, is because it will give them an opportunity to embarrass the government on each and every clause. In other words, it is a political stunt.

In my view, if we send this very important Bill C-8 to committee, we waste time and the bill will not be passed. We have to put the interests of aboriginal Canadians ahead of our partisan interests.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, May 25, 2009 at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

* * *

•(1045)

NUCLEAR LIABILITY AND COMPENSATION ACT

Hon. Diane Finley (for the Minister of Natural Resources) moved that Bill C-20, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back again speaking about nuclear safety.

I am pleased to speak to Bill C-20, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident. Members may be familiar with this bill. It was introduced in the last Parliament as Bill C-5. It is a bill that has had a long history of consultation. It also has a history of good support in the House.

The last time we brought the bill forward both the official opposition and the Bloc supported the bill. We were able to bring it through committee and into third reading without amendment. We look forward to working with the members on the other side of the House to get this bill through as quickly as possible.

Later, I think we will hear the member for Mississauga—Brampton South speak for the official opposition and the member for Trois-Rivières speak for the Bloc. We look forward to working with them at committee to bring this bill through to conclusion as quickly as possible.

The history of nuclear energy in Canada goes back some 75 years. For the past 30 years, it has been a part of Canada's energy mix. It has benefited this country and the citizens of this country in numerous ways.

As members know, a strong nuclear industry brings great economic and environmental benefits. However in order to encourage investments in nuclear facilities, liability rules are needed to provide legal and insurance certainty for suppliers and operators. Without the certainty of the rules concerning liability, insurers would not provide coverage to nuclear facilities, and no one would participate in nuclear development.

At the same time, it is important to ensure that Canadians have access to reasonable compensation in the unlikely event there is a nuclear incident. The health and safety of Canadians is a top priority of the Government of Canada. Canada's nuclear safety record is second to none in the world. We have a robust technology, a well-trained workforce and stringent regulatory requirements.

There are two pieces of legislation that provide a solid framework for regulating the industry. They are the Nuclear Safety and Control Act and the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act. Nevertheless, we must be prepared for the possibility of a nuclear incident, which could result in civil damages.

The responsibility for providing an insurance framework to protect Canadians and provide stability to this important industry falls under federal jurisdiction. The Government of Canada has a duty to assume its responsibilities in this area, and we are doing that.

Traditional insurance is not appropriate for dealing with this kind of liability. It is difficult to determine levels of risk. Canada, like virtually all other nuclear countries, has addressed this void with the enactment of special legislation.

In Canada we put in place the Nuclear Liability Act. This legislation established a comprehensive liability framework in case of a nuclear incident. It is the framework that is in existence today. Both this earlier legislation and Bill C-20 apply to things like nuclear power plants, nuclear research reactors, fuel fabrication facilities and facilities for managing used nuclear fuel.

Government Orders

The framework established under the initial Nuclear Liability Act is based on several principles. Those principles include the absolute and exclusive liability of the operator, mandatory insurance, and limitations in time and amount. These principles are common to nuclear legislation in most other countries, such as the United States, France and the United Kingdom. The principles that were put in place years ago are just as relevant today.

Let me quickly explain these principles. Absolute liability means the injured party does not have to prove that a nuclear reactor was at fault in an incident, only that injury or damages were caused by that incident. As well, the Nuclear Liability Act holds the operator of a nuclear facility to be exclusively liable for civil damages caused by a nuclear incident. In other words, no other business, organization, supplier or contractor can be sued for these damages. The operator is responsible.

This has two advantages. First, it makes it very easy for individuals to make a claim. They know who is liable and they do not need to prove fault or negligence. The other advantage is that exclusive liability allows the insurance industry to direct all of its insurance capacity to the operators.

The principle of mandatory insurance is straightforward. All nuclear operators must carry a prescribed amount of liability insurance in order to be licensed to operate the facility. This is a widely accepted practice in countries generating nuclear power.

• (1050)

The Canadian regime also places limitations on liability in time and amount. In terms of amount, the maximum that has been payable under the Nuclear Liability Act is currently \$75 million. As well, injury claims must be made within 10 years of the incident.

These underlying principles of Canada's existing nuclear liability framework address the needs of Canadians while permitting our country to develop nuclear capabilities.

The Nuclear Liability Act made it easier for injured parties to make claims. It guaranteed that funds would be made available to compensate individuals in the unlikely event that there is an incident.

It is a tribute to Canada's nuclear industry that there have been no claims paid out under the act. Still it has served as an important safety net for Canadians and it has provided stability and security that is needed to support the continued development of Canada's nuclear power industry.

Although the basic principles underlining Canada's nuclear liability legislation remain valid, this act is over 30 years old and it needs updating. If we consider the possibility of new investments in nuclear reactors in Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick or Ontario, we can see why this legislation must be made as robust as we can make it. We also have to keep pace with international developments in the field over the years.

As a result of this, the Government of Canada has conducted a comprehensive review of the Nuclear Liability Act and is proposing the new legislation that is before the House today. This has been done with extensive consultation across the country with the industry and with Canadians.

The bill is intended to strengthen and modernize Canada's nuclear liability regime through an all-encompassing package of amendments. Bill C-20 is a major step forward in modernizing the act. It puts Canada in line with internationally accepted compensation levels. It clarifies definitions for compensation and what is covered in the process for claiming compensation.

The bill is a culmination of many years of consultation, involving extensive discussions with major stakeholders, including nuclear utilities, the governments of nuclear power generating provinces and the Nuclear Insurance Association of Canada.

I would like to talk a little about the key changes in this legislation. The main change proposed in Bill C-20 is an increase in the amount of operator's liability from \$75 million to \$650 million. This balances the need for operators to provide compensation, without imposing high costs for unrealistic insurance amounts, amounts for events highly unlikely to occur in this country. This increase will put Canada on a par with most western nuclear countries.

It is important also that Canada's legislation is consistent with international conventions, not only on financial issues but also with regard to what constitutes a nuclear incident, what qualifies for compensation, and so on. Accordingly, the bill makes Canada's legislation more consistent with international conventions. These enhancements will establish a level playing field for Canadian nuclear companies, who will welcome the certainty of operating in a country that acknowledges these international conventions.

Both the current liability framework and Bill C-20 contain limitation periods restricting the time period for making claims. Under the current act, claims must be brought within 10 years of the incident. However, since we know today that some radiation-related injuries have long latency periods, this limitation period has been extended under Bill C-20 to 30 years for injury claims, while maintaining the 10 year limit for other claims.

Both the current legislation and Bill C-20 provide for an administrative process to replace the courts in the adjudication of claims arising from a large nuclear incident. The new legislation clarifies the arrangements for a quasi-judicial tribunal to hear claims. The new claims process will ensure that claims are handled equitably and efficiently. I think that is an important amendment that people need to pay attention to.

The challenge for the government in developing this legislation was to be fair to all stakeholders and to strike an effective balance in the public interest. I firmly believe the proposed legislation fully meets that challenge. This is supported by the initial reactions that we received with Bill C-5, as well as the reactions we have received with Bill C-20.

Statements by Members

We have consulted with nuclear operators, suppliers, insurance and provinces with nuclear installations, and they generally support the changes I have described. I know that some nuclear operators may be concerned about the cost implications of higher insurance premiums, but they also recognize that they have been sheltered from these costs for quite some time.

•(1055)

Suppliers welcome the changes, as they would provide more certainty for the industry. Nuclear insurers appreciate the clarity that would be provided in the new legislation and the resolution of some of their long-standing concerns.

Provinces with nuclear facilities have been supportive of the proposed revisions to the current legislation. Municipalities that host nuclear facilities have been advocating revisions to the Nuclear Liability Act. They are supportive of the increased levels of operator liability and the improved approaches to victims' compensation.

In short, Bill C-20 was not developed in isolation. The evolution of policy was guided by consultation with key stakeholders over several years and by the experience that has been gained in other countries.

Let me now turn to another aspect of our involvement with nuclear technology. There are three other aspects that I would like to point out quickly today.

The first is the safety record of our nuclear industry. Our CANDU reactor is arguably the safest reactor in the world and has all kinds of built-in systems to protect workers and the public.

I would also like to point out Canada's involvement in the nuclear industry and in research and development that has been exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Third, I would like to highlight the fact that Canada's nuclear industry is among the highest tech industries. It spurs innovation, which is the cornerstone of a competitive economy, generating more than \$5 billion a year in economic activity. Canada's nuclear industry employs more than 30,000 people. Many Canadians probably do not realize that. Many of those are highly skilled people in well-paying jobs.

It must be recognized that the development of Canada's nuclear industry has been made possible by the civil liability rules provided by the initial Nuclear Liability Act. The improvements by Bill C-20 are now necessary for Canada to remain a leading player in the nuclear industry.

There is an additional aspect to Canada's involvement with nuclear energy. Much of our work in the nuclear industry has been to produce electricity, electricity to provide home comforts and to drive industry and promote jobs across the country. Electricity has contributed to a healthy environment through cheap and clean energy.

In this country we have made a commitment to achieve an absolute reduction of 20% in greenhouse gas emissions from 2006 levels by 2020. We are also committed to meeting 90% of our electricity demand from low-emitting sources by that same year.

As part of reaching these targets, our government is making substantial investments in measures to increase our supply of renewable energy, including wind, solar, small hydro and tidal energy. We also see nuclear energy as part of the clean energy mix that will advance Canada as a clean energy superpower. However, in order for us to advance in clean energy production, we need the certainty provided by an appropriate and up-to-date nuclear liability framework in order to protect Canadians and provide stability to this important industry.

In conclusion, Canada's nuclear safety record is second to none in the world. The Nuclear Safety and Control Act and the Nuclear Liability Act provide a solid legislative framework for regulating the industry and have done so since Canada's industry emerged as a world player. The former seeks to prevent and minimize nuclear incidents, while the latter applies should an incident occur. However unlikely as it may be, we must be prepared for the possibility of a nuclear incident that could result in significant costs.

For these and other sound reasons, I would ask members to support this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: The member will have 10 minutes for a question and comment period after question period, but we will move on to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

TAY CANAL

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, on its 175th anniversary, the Rideau Canal system was designated as Ontario's only World Heritage site.

This year, the Tay Canal, which runs between Perth and the Rideau Lakes in eastern Ontario, is celebrating its own 175th anniversary.

The Tay Canal forms an integral part of the Rideau Canal system and is part of the World Heritage site.

Completed in 1834, the canal was funded and built by an enterprising group of local farmers and businesses seeking better access to markets for their products, in the era before the railroads.

Today the Tay Canal is a recreation paradise for boaters, canoeists, kayakers and hikers and runs through one of the best wildlife areas of the Rideau Canal corridor.

I invite all Canadians to join in the anniversary celebrations and explore this historical gem.

Statements by Members

●(1100)

CANADIAN SKILLS COMPETITION

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight the 15th annual Canadian Skills Competition that will happen in Charlottetown from May 23 to 30.

This competition for young students and apprentices will bring together approximately 500 young people from all regions of Canada to compete in over 40 areas of trade and technology.

The competition allows these students to be tested against exacting standards and their peers from across the nation for the honour of being crowned the best in their chosen discipline.

I feel it is important that we recognize and honour those in our society who have such exceptional skills in these fields. Businesses in Prince Edward Island and across Canada need more skilled tradespeople, and this event will showcase them.

I welcome all competitors, their families and friends to Charlottetown and I invite all Prince Edward Islanders to come out and observe the talented competitors in the Canadian Skills Competition next week.

* * *

[Translation]

LAURENTIAN FADOQ GAMES

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, from June 2 to 4, the City of Boisbriand will host the 12th edition of the Laurentian Quebec senior citizens' games for people over the age of 50. Participants will challenge each other to games of beanbag baseball, mini-golf and military whist, as well as to cycling, badminton and tennis competitions. Several thousand people, all of them members of one of the 40 FADOQ clubs in the region, will participate in the games.

The games will be hosted by the Boisbriand Pioneers club and its president, Michel Bossé. Many of the club members will be among the 65 volunteers working to make the event happen.

The Bloc Québécois strongly believes in the importance of sports and recreation activities adapted to those over 50, and in all social and cultural activities that get them out interacting with others and help them stay in good physical and mental shape.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Sunday, May 17 is International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. This day is a worldwide call to action to end violence and discrimination against members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited and queer communities.

In Canada, 2009 is the 40th anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality. However, around the world 86 countries still criminalize consensual gay and lesbian sex, including seven where the punishment can be death. Sadly, homophobic violence continues here in Canada as well.

Earlier this month, Gender Euphoria Day was celebrated by the trans community in Vancouver. New appreciations of gender identity and its expression can enrich our communities and us as individuals. Transphobic violence, prejudice and discrimination continue to silence our full understanding of gender identity and restrict the lives of those who come to new understandings.

We must act against homophobia and transphobia and stand in solidarity with the GLBTT community in this important struggle.

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LANGLEY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL BAND AND CHOIR

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud that the Langley Christian High School band and choir is in Ottawa today. They will be singing at the rotunda at 12 o'clock, and the band will play on the parliamentary steps at 1:30 p.m.

They are an incredible group of talented Canadians and I invite all members of the House to take some time today to enjoy their music.

Langley Christian High School has developed a Christian community of learning. They provide a challenging academic program that addresses the needs and abilities of each student and prepares them for living today and for the 21st century. They promote the spiritual and intellectual development of each student. They promote the arts so that students have the opportunity to develop their artistic side.

They have just finished competing at the MusicFest Canada competition in Markham, and they did a great job.

Congratulations to Langley Christian High School band and choir. I am proud of them.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely concerned about the Conservative government's inaction on climate change, but even worse than inaction is its campaign of obstruction.

Top scientists now accuse the Harper government of politicizing science and research funding—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member knows not to use proper names, but ridings or titles when referring to colleagues.

Statements by Members

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, excuse me. Top scientists now accuse the Conservative government of politicizing science and research funding by appointing climate change deniers to the very boards that determine research funding priorities, deniers who are on record as disagreeing with the science of climate change and with capping emissions, but the government's own appointed advisory group, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, makes it perfectly clear the Conservatives have no choice but to implement a hard cap and trade system now if they intend to meet their own emission reduction targets.

The Prime Minister is not listening. He is too busy trying to block American action. First, he lobbied Governor Schwarzenegger to gut his new low-carbon fuel regulation. Now he is fighting to weaken U.S. Congress' plans to reduce greenhouse gas—

• (1105)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for St. Catharines.

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MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Mining Week, a time to recognize the important role that mining plays in the lives of Canadians.

Our government has given the mining industry access to credit and strong supportive tax and regulatory systems. Further, we are working with industry on the new Canada Mining Innovation Council, the corporate social responsibility centre of excellence and NRCan's green mining initiative, which will all help ensure that Canada remains a global mining giant.

It is hard to imagine a life without minerals and metals; every day we use and rely on products made from them. With Canada's abundance of minerals and metals, we have much to celebrate.

With the help of our government's actions and to make sure that we are securing the environment, the Canadian mining sector will lead the way through the economic downturn and is expected to rebound to continue to be one of Canada's biggest economic engines.

Miners and their families have a government that is helping their industry and is getting the job done for them.

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[*Translation*]

375TH ANNIVERSARY OF TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in January, the festivities marking the 375th anniversary of the founding of Trois-Rivières started off with a bang. Dozens of exciting activities have been planned, and thousands of people will take part.

Le Phénix, a blockbuster extravaganza celebrating the event, was presented last weekend. Over 25,000 people attended, a testament to the magnitude of the festivities and the importance of the event to the people of Trois-Rivières.

In addition to being a source of great pride to the people of Trois-Rivières, the 375th anniversary also commemorates the history of

Quebec and North America. Not only is Trois-Rivières the second francophone city founded in America, but its Saint-Maurice forges made it North America's first industrial centre.

The enthusiasm of the people of Trois-Rivières is contagious, and I invite people from all over to participate in the festivities and be reinvigorated by our dynamic community and the excitement that has taken over our wonderful city with its rich historical and cultural roots.

* * *

[*English*]

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the House will agree that Pope John Paul II inspired us all through his selfless example. His contributions will be felt for generations.

He reached out to all faiths with humility and sincerity. In Israel he began his speech with a salutation to his “older brothers”, bridging the understanding between Catholic and older Jewish faiths. He was instrumental in defeating communism and in bringing democracy back not only to his native Poland but to an eastern Europe long held in chains.

He valued youth and created World Youth Day to bring kids of all faiths together in common understanding and common purpose. He was committed to defending the human rights of all faiths, cultures and traditions. That is why he was so admired by Canadians, because he was a champion for all.

I would like to express my full support for the current efforts in Ontario to name every April 2 Pope John Paul II Day in Canada.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize that May 17 is the International Day Against Homophobia. This day causes us to celebrate the human rights Canadians enjoy and to reflect on the tremendous challenges facing gay and lesbian people around the world.

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. In Canada, this is lived out through our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Few of the world's citizens enjoy the privileges Canadians enjoy living with: equality, dignity and the guarantee of inalienable human rights. In many countries of the world, same sex relationships are forbidden and punishable under law. In Canada, gay and lesbian people still suffer from misunderstanding and discrimination, but human rights have been won incrementally.

Statements by Members

Yesterday marked the 40th anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada, thanks to the tremendous courage, passion and strength of then prime minister Pierre Trudeau.

Let us today commit ourselves to promoting the same human rights throughout the world by continuing to lead by example.

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FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP members do not want some people to have access to guns, but the people they are trying to keep away from guns are hunters and farmers, not urban gang members. Recently, the NDP members were either missing in action when it came time to vote on the long gun registry or fell in line behind their big city leader.

In this place, the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River said, “for eight years since the turn of the century, my constituents have told me that we need to get rid of the long gun registry”. Then there is the member for Timmins—James Bay, who criticized the registry, saying, “It was never set up to deal with the realities of northern Ontario”. The member for Winnipeg Centre said, “I wouldn't want one more penny to go to that gun registry”. They voted in favour of the registry.

How can members of the NDP say they will vote against something and then sit on their hands or oppose it? How can they say they are standing up for their constituents when they seem to forget where they stand on the gun registry?

Their constituents should see how the NDP members behave when in Ottawa. They want to punish farmers and hunters, not the criminals. However, that is what one does when one is a member of the soft on crime NDP.

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● (1110)

GENERAL MOTORS

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we witnessed the closure of the GM truck plant in Oshawa. Canadians mourn the end of almost a century of truck making in the region. Our thoughts and hearts go out to the workers and their families.

The closing of the award-winning facility that produced the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra will affect thousands of workers and their families, further impacting an already devastated industry and the communities. It is a tragic irony that what was originally a Canadian company established by Sam McLaughlin would be taken over by Americans only to have those jobs and production shifted to Mexico.

My NDP colleagues and I will continue to speak up for auto workers and their families in Oshawa, in my community and throughout Canada. We will continue to press the government for immediate, meaningful and long-term action to help preserve a vital Canadian industry.

[*Translation*]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the years, if not the last few weeks, the Liberal leader has praised Liberal-style taxation. He wants to raise taxes. He wants to increase Liberal-style taxation. The Liberal leader must now answer to legitimate questions from Canadians, as well as my questions.

Which taxes does he want to raise? Does he want to raise income taxes, as well? How does he want to raise them? What portion of the population will bear the brunt of these tax increases?

The more closely we look at the Liberal platform on taxes, the more we find percentages creeping up.

Does he want to raise the GST to 6%, 7%, 8%, 9%, 10%? Are people going to see their entire salary eaten up?

He does not want to answer these questions.

We, the Conservatives, have lowered taxes for Canadians. We are proud of that, and we will never allow the Liberal leader to eliminate the progress we have made.

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YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the United Kingdom's Royal Philharmonic Society honoured young Montreal conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin with the Young Artists Award, describing him as “one of the most influential personalities in London's musical life”. This organization recognizes the most dazzling performances of classical music.

This distinction is one of many impressive accomplishments for the man who has been the musical director of the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal since 2000. He is currently the principal conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and the guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. This month he will make his debut at New York's Metropolitan Opera and Milan's La Scala.

He has quickly built a solid reputation around the world with his combination of rigour, originality and passion. He does not hesitate to work with popular artists in order to make classical music accessible to the people, as was the case at the 2007 Montreal FrancoFolies with Pierre Lapointe.

The Bloc Québécois warmly congratulates this homegrown conductor who has a truly promising future ahead of him.

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[*English*]

CANADIAN PARAPLEGIC ASSOCIATION

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how high are the buttons in the elevators on the Hill? Is it possible for one to balance a cup of coffee on one's lap while wheeling from one side of the room to another? How long does it take to get from finance committee in Centre Block to operations and estimates in West Block if one cannot take the stairs or run?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

These were the kinds of situations I had to deal with on May 7 when I joined 10 other members and senators for a national awareness day for the Canadian Paraplegic Association. I spent the whole day in a wheelchair.

[English]

It was an incredible and eye-opening experience. It was eye opening for those of us in chairs and I hope it was also eye opening for many other observers. Ultimately, we were the lucky ones, able to get back up on our feet at the end of the day.

[Translation]

I would like to express my respect and admiration for all those who cannot walk and who face these challenges every day.

[English]

I urge members of the House and Senate from all parties to take part in the day next year, as the Canadian Paraplegic Association aims to have 65 members participate to celebrate its 65th anniversary.

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• (1115)

TAXATION

Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the recession when the Conservative government is focused on an economic action plan that will create jobs, the Liberal Party is focused on increasing taxes. The Liberal leader himself said quite bluntly, "We will have to raise taxes".

The Liberal Party supports a job-killing carbon tax, and members of the Liberal Party said that they would raise the GST. In fact, the leader of the Liberal Party even refers to himself as a tax and spend Liberal.

Raising taxes is the absolute worst thing to do during a recession. The Liberals should come clean and tell Canadians what other taxes they want to increase. They should tell Canadians who is going to pay these taxes and how much they are going to have to pay.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, representatives from Quebec municipalities are currently meeting in Gatineau as part of the annual meeting of the Union des municipalités du Québec, also known as the UMQ. The president of the UMQ and mayor of Maniwaki, Robert Coulombe, was very clear when he said that he has yet to see any major projects started under the emergency infrastructure fund promised to stimulate the economy.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister had the nerve to blame the Quebec government instead of taking responsibility.

What is the government waiting for to get the money flowing and to get people working? Why is the Conservative government penalizing Quebecers?

[English]

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are working with the municipalities and the provinces right across the country, including Quebec, on this specific announcement. Some of the provinces are ahead of other provinces. For example, British Columbia has 140 projects, Nova Scotia has 26 projects and Newfoundland and Labrador has 22. They have all been green lighted, are ready to go and some are actually going. The hard hats are on and the digging has begun.

However, the House will find out exactly what is happening in our June report card. I ask my hon. colleague to just wait on that.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, are you familiar with the Pinocchio syndrome? We just witnessed it in action.

The Conservatives should have understood that stimulating the economy means investing and not causing problems. Here are the real reasons. First, the government refuses to finance the infrastructure projects that the Quebec government had already undertaken. Second, the federal government insists on analyzing projects that fall under the sole jurisdiction of the provinces, which is unnecessary. Third, Quebec will have to reimburse the money already spent if the project is not completed by March 31, 2011.

Instead of blaming others and bickering, why does the Prime Minister not order that the money be released immediately?

[English]

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we are working very closely with the provinces and municipalities right across the country. We will get the job done. My hon. colleague should just relax a little bit while we get this money out at an unprecedented rate right across this country. We need to get Canadians working and good projects actually happening so we can compete internationally and continentally when this is over.

My hon. colleague should wait for the report card in June before he criticizes this government.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he should tell that to the mayors in the gallery here today. It is unacceptable that they are being told to wait and wait.

[English]

Instead of playing the blaming game, the Prime Minister should immediately tell his officials that Quebec is ready and that they should send the money for infrastructure ASAP.

Municipalities want to be full partners and are ready now to be part of the solution against recession. Stimulus means investment, not confrontation.

Will the Prime Minister instruct his minister and his officials to deliver the money for infrastructure in Quebec now?

Oral Questions

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have doubled the gas tax. We have advanced that three months earlier. Municipalities right across the country have the ability to get their infrastructure projects working.

We are working very closely with all the provinces to get these up and going and out the door at an unprecedented rate.

It has been 45 days since the budget was passed. My hon. colleague should give us the first 100 days before he starts criticizing.

* * *

[Translation]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CAE has just announced that it is laying off 700 employees, including 600 in the Montreal area. These layoffs are in addition to the job losses at Bombardier, Pratt & Whitney and other aerospace companies. The Canadian aerospace industry is the fourth largest in the world, and half of that industry is located in Quebec. In fact, the aerospace industry is to Quebec what the auto industry is to Ontario.

What do the Conservatives intend to do for the aerospace sector?

• (1120)

[English]

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government, of course, is disappointed to hear about any Canadian who loses their job.

The effects of the global economic recession are even affecting the aerospace industry, which has typically been a very strong and well-supported industry by the government.

The hon. member talks about the job loss, and we are disappointed about those job losses, but what he does not say is that CAE has credited the Government of Canada with supporting the creation of 1,360 new Canadian jobs. He did not mention that.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping to hear about a strategy.

[Translation]

I have already asked this question twice in recent months. Let me try again a third time.

My question is very simple. It relates to a promise made by the Conservatives during the last election, namely, to provide \$200 million in new funding for the strategic aerospace and defence initiative. That program is essential to the development of new technologies.

When will the Conservatives follow through on that promise?

[English]

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about a strategy. We have the strategic aerospace defence initiative, which has been widely praised by the aerospace industry in Canada; \$900 million.

Speaking of a strategy, let me read from the recent IMF report. It states:

...Canada is better placed than many countries to weather the global financial turbulence and worldwide recession.

...the authorities responded proactively to the crisis. The IMF supports the strong fiscal package announced in January, which was large, timely, and well targeted, and it will buoy demand during the downturn.

The focus now, appropriately, is on implementing that package and we look to the Liberals for support in doing that.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we knew the Conservatives had disdain for the unemployed, but yesterday during question period, that disdain reached new heights. The Minister of National Revenue even said that improving the employment insurance system would encourage people to “work under the table”, as though the 610,000 EI claimants were potential cheaters.

Is it not proof that the government's refusal to improve employment insurance is rooted in prejudice and retrograde ideology?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have sympathy for the unemployed. That is why we have expanded the employment insurance program by adding five weeks of regular benefits. That is why we have expanded the work sharing program, which now protects the jobs of 100,000 people across the country. That is why we have also increased access to training so that unemployed workers can work more.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister says she has sympathy for the unemployed. With friends like the Conservatives, the unemployed do not need enemies.

This is the government that, in its last budget, reintroduced a measure that promotes the use of tax havens. Meanwhile, thousands of unemployed workers are being deprived of employment insurance because the Conservatives are refusing to review the eligibility threshold.

What is the government waiting for to stop promoting tax evasion and help the unemployed by changing the eligibility threshold, improving benefits and doing away with the waiting period?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we have done is help the unemployed. I just listed the measures we have introduced.

[English]

That is why 100,000 people's jobs are being protected through our work sharing program. That is why we have extended the benefits by five weeks for those who are unfortunate enough to lose their job.

When it comes to being a friend of the unemployed, the Bloc members voted against every one of those initiatives that would help those who are unfortunate enough to lose their jobs. I say shame on them.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is ridiculous to say that improving the employment insurance system would encourage people to work under the table. There is no connection between the two. This is the same prejudice that prompted the Liberals to slash EI in the mid-1990s.

Will the government stop confusing its prejudice with reality and carry out a real reform of employment insurance, based on a good faith approach, as in the case of the tax system?

• (1125)

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all know that having a job meet's people's basic needs for self-esteem and fulfilment. Everyone has the right to a satisfying professional life that allows them to live well.

That is why we have introduced our economic action plan, with real measures to help people get through the economic crisis. We have increased the number of benefit weeks by five. We have also added 14 weeks to the work sharing program, and we have frozen contribution rates.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is a lovely tape prepared by the Prime Minister's Office.

Instead of perpetuating the injustices that resulted from the Liberal government's cuts to employment insurance, the government should realize that the current system does not meet the needs of people who are losing their jobs, such as the 600 workers at CAE in Montreal.

He should play his tape to those workers. Then he will see whether they are really happy.

Will the government finally carry out a radical reform by introducing, as the Bloc Québécois has been calling on it to do for a number of years, a 360-hour eligibility threshold—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing is harder than being hopeful when you share the Bloc's ideology. Our economic action plan is paying off. The proof is that Bloc members are thinking of going back to municipal and provincial politics to help implement the concrete measures in our economic action plan.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government gave GM and union members until midnight tonight to come to an agreement. But we do not currently have any assurance that the jobs in question will remain in Canada. We cannot ask workers to make concessions but not do anything to ensure that the jobs will stay in the country.

Can the government assure us today that the jobs will remain in Canada, and tell this to GM?

[English]

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as everybody in the House knows, the minister and the Prime Minister have been engaged with our counterparts in the U.S. and our counterparts in the Government of Ontario to come up with a solution to the significant global crisis that is facing the auto sector.

As we have said right from the start, any decision that is taken will be taken in the best interests of Canadian taxpayers, with a view to the long-term viability of the industry here in Canada and, of course, the proportionality in terms of production capability here in Canada.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is very good at giving harsh ultimatums to workers but it will not do the same to GM.

Maintaining 20% of the North American market for Canada must be part of the restructuring plan. The Americans are protecting their market share. Canadian workers have made their concessions. It is time for the government to do the same. It is time for it to come to the plate.

Will the government ensure that 20% of the market and the jobs that go with it remain here in Canada?

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think I have already answered that question by saying yes, that is exactly what the due diligence we are doing is all about. A fundamental priority of our due diligence is to maintain proportionality of production share here in Canada. I guess the answer to the hon. member's question is yes.

A commentator and expert on the issue said that the ministers "have been brilliant in how they've handled this, going way back...". The commentator went on to say that they came out weeks ahead of the American government, he called the ministers brilliant and said that they deserved a lot of credit.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is great when one can quote one's self.

If the government really cared about auto jobs in this country, it would ensure that the 5,500 new vehicles that are being purchased by Canada Post would be made here in Canada. It would ensure that the minivan plant in Windsor would in fact get that contract. It cannot tell us that NAFTA is the problem because that is just not true. It has not stopped, for instance, President Obama, from fast-tracking 17,500 American made vehicles for production in the United States for its use.

Will the government ensure that Canada Post makes this one simple commitment to buy those vehicles?

• (1130)

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that Canada Post is an arm's length crown corporation owned by Canadians. It has a mandate to run as efficiently as it possibly can and we will not interfere with regard to its internal dealings.

We are ensuring that it follows its mandate, and it is doing that, and it does not compromise any international agreements.

Oral Questions

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the auto sector, a truck plant shut down yesterday in Oshawa and 2,600 more jobs are gone, and GM will obviously not keep 20% of its production in Canada.

In total, more than one-third of a million Canadians have lost their job under the Conservative government and thousands of them cannot get EI, even though they paid all their dues.

Are the Conservatives really saying to these people, "That's it, that's all. Shut up. Quit your complaining"? Is that all there is from the uncaring government?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have taken unprecedented steps to help those who are unfortunate enough to lose their jobs.

We must remember that over 80% of those who paid into EI and who do lose their jobs through no fault of their own can access EI and access to EI is more readily available in 35 of the 58 regions across the country, and the benefits are for a longer period of time.

We are also working to ensure that those who do not qualify for EI can access training so they will be prepared for the jobs of the future. What we will not do is raise taxes.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only the Conservatives talk about increasing payroll taxes; only them, no one else. Liberals cut those taxes 12 consecutive times.

Let us be clear. Improving access to employment insurance during the depths of a recession does not mean premiums go up. To assert the contrary is a malicious threat.

Why are Conservatives threatening the jobless? Why do they mock the victims of a Conservative recession, slandering them as rip-off artists who just want to bilk EI?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a global recession in case the hon. member had not noticed. Our country went into this in a better position than most. We are dealing with it better than most. We expect to come out of it stronger and sooner than most.

It is very important to understand that the EI system is supposed to be self-supporting. That means, if we are to dramatically increase benefits, then the premiums have to go up. That is a big job-killing payroll tax at a time when we are trying to create jobs. When we are trying to protect jobs, all the Liberals want to do is kill jobs by increasing the payroll taxes.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the government with respect to Omar Khadr. It now appears that President Obama is making plans with respect to the possible revival of military tribunals to deal with a number of cases.

Could the government tell us what discussions it has had with respect to Mr. Khadr and why would the government not be making representations to say that a child soldier should not be charged in the same way as others and that we have a responsibility as a country to patriate a Canadian citizen who deserves to face Canadian justice rather than a military tribunal?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member that our position has not changed. Mr. Omar Khadr faces very serious charges. He is accused of killing Sergeant Christopher Speer, an American medic in Afghanistan, in the same country where Canadian troops are fighting today.

President Obama has started a process and we are respecting his decision by allowing the process to run its course.

* * *

SRI LANKA

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it really makes a mockery of any sense of questions and answers for the member to simply give us a rote answer.

I will try again on another subject. Could the parliamentary secretary comment on the situation in Sri Lanka? The Red Cross has referred to it as a catastrophe. The United Nations has sent one of its senior officials to try to deal with the situation.

All politics aside, we face the prospect that as many as 50,000 people could be facing death as a result—

● (1135)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of State of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is quite right. This is not a matter for partisan debate.

The Government of Canada and all Canadians, and certainly my hon. colleague, are horrified at the deepening humanitarian tragedy. As my colleague knows, the United Nations Security Council has joined Canada and other democracies in calling for both parties to the conflict to immediately cease fire.

Canada continues to call on the terrorist Tamil Tigers to down arms and to release the civilians they are holding as human shields and, at the same time, for the Sri Lankan forces to cease indiscriminate artillery fire.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government of the United States is following France's lead and preparing to impose a carbon tax on polluters who refuse to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than putting its energy into convincing oil companies to reduce their emissions, the Minister of the Environment is going to Washington to ask Americans to lower their standards.

Oral Questions

Does the Minister of the Environment realize that the Conservatives' ideology threatens tax retaliation not only for polluters but also for companies that have made efforts in the past?

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member well knows that earlier this year we established the Canada-U.S. clean energy dialogue, which would lead us on the path to reduce emissions by an absolute 20% by 2020. That is the toughest target in Canadian history and one of the toughest in the world.

The big question is this. Why was the Bloc critic on the environment missing in action when we did a study this week in the oil sands? We spent three days in the Alberta oil sands and the member was not there.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week, the parliamentary secretary went to Alberta to promote the oil sands and his minister went to Washington to lower environmental standards. We stayed here to fight climate change. That is the reality.

Rather than wasting his time and money on carbon capture and storage, which will not amount to anything, why does the minister not immediately make huge investments in the development of new forms of energy such as solar and wind energy?

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to ensuring that 90% of our electricity comes from clean energy sources by 2020. That is huge.

The big question is this. Is this member afraid of the fact that we have the toughest target in Canadian history? After the 13 years, when the Liberals did absolutely nothing, we are getting it done. Why is he afraid of that?

* * *

[Translation]

CAISSE DE DÉPÔT ET PLACEMENT DU QUÉBEC

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first Quebec's Minister of Finance, then the President of the Caisse de dépôt et placement, and now the caisse's former head of risk management, Alban d'Amours, have all condemned Ottawa and the Superintendent of Financial Institutions for their failure to heed the caisse's repeated requests to call a general market disruption following the collapse of commercial paper.

Can the Minister of Finance explain why the superintendent did not take action?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Caisse de dépôt et placement doubled its holdings of tainted commercial paper a few months before the crisis. The province is responsible for regulating the caisse, not the Government of Canada or Government of Canada organizations.

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, had the superintendent declared a general market disruption, international banks would have been forced to repay the caisse for its losses.

However, because the problem seemed to be confined to Quebec, the superintendent decided to ignore it because he deemed it a local issue.

Did the superintendent fail to act because the issue only affected Quebec?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that the caisse and its investments are under the Province of Quebec's jurisdiction. In light of the crisis and some of the caisse's investments, it is clear that Canada needs a national regulation system.

* * *

● (1140)

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities admitted that the building Canada fund, announced with great fanfare three years ago, is just not working. Just 5% of the billions of dollars promised have been invested in three years.

Although it knows that this model is not working, and despite all our suggested improvements, the government is insisting on keeping the same dysfunctional model for the stimulus package. Why?

[English]

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are working with municipalities and provinces, ensuring the stimulus works even better than it would if it were just federally loaned. We are leveraging three to one on the money that will stimulate the creation of jobs and get people working and building good infrastructure into the 21st century.

That is what our goal is. We are getting the job done. We have dirt flying right across the country. I suggest the minister should stand clear of that.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would concur that the minister should stand clear of dirt flying.

I am afraid, however, that it simply is not working. We know the numbers prove that. Broken promises, announcements and, worse, re-announcements do not pay wages and they do not create jobs. Einstein had it right with the definition of insanity: "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results".

Will the minister please stop repeating his mistakes, listen to municipalities, deliver funds now, before we lose this construction season, and get people to work?

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain to the member opposite that 2,746 projects were applied for as of May 1, in her province, Ontario. These are being worked at aggressively and will be moved out at an accelerated rate.

However, I will quote this for the hon. member, “It doesn't make sense to say that we passed the budget in April and here it is the 1st of May” and “We have to deal with a little bit of time to see if the measures that we have supported in fact work”. The leader of her party said that.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night in the House the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food was asked repeatedly whether the government would provide immediate financial help for our hog producers, who are facing financial ruin, and he waffled. Yet, the minister had a request, received on May 8, from the Canadian Pork Council, in which it appealed for an immediate cash payment of \$30 per hog.

Is the minister now prepared to stand up for Canada's hog producers and demonstrate that our rural economies and our farmers are as important as other sectors?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to our hog farmers. We are taking action for our red meat producers. We are, for example, launching a WTO trade action against the COOL initiatives in the United States.

Regarding hog producers and financial incentives, we are working closely with the producers and with the provincial government to serve them best.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, farmers need cash, not excuses.

The government and, in particular, the minister just do not get it. There are 8,310 hog farms on the line. Families and rural Canadians are seeing their life's work destroyed. There are 70,000 jobs as a direct result of hog production. There are \$7.7 billion in economic activity and \$2.1 billion in wages.

Hog producers do not need more debt. They do not need diplomatic trade diatribes. Hog producers need cash and they need it now. When will the government deliver?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about cash for farmers. Our government is working hard to deliver approximately \$1 billion of government-backed credit to previously ineligible farmers. The Liberals said that they would support this vital legislation. Now they are turning their backs on Canadian producers.

Yesterday the member for Malpeque filibustered in committee and brought an end to the debate. Here is what he said about Bill C-29, which we were supposed to discuss and pass in committee. He said, “Do you want to get Bill C-29 through the House before the spring or not because it's not going to go through today”.

He should support our farmers.

* * *

● (1145)

TAXATION

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's economic action plan is taking real action to support

Oral Questions

Canada's economy. Our plan includes lower taxes, allowing Canadians to keep more of their hard-earned money in their own pockets, where it belongs.

The Liberal leader does not get it. He actually thinks Canadian taxes are too low and they should pay more. He said, “We will raise your taxes”. He would force Canadians to send more of their money to Ottawa.

Could the finance minister please inform the House how our tax-cutting measures are helping our economy?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is good news. The Liberals want to raise taxes. We are lowering taxes. Our economic action plan includes tax cuts that help boost economic activity, including the home renovation tax credit. This is a tax credit whereby Canadians can invest in their homes to create jobs in construction, retail jobs, forestry jobs. Our tax incentive is encouraging Canadians to invest in their homes. According to a new survey, nearly 70% of Canadians intend to invest in home renovations this year.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's PR tour by the Prime Minister does not change the reality that less than 5% of stimulus funds have gone out the door. The government has spent a lot of energy on glitzy announcements, but little energy on getting money to municipalities.

In Sault Ste. Marie we are still waiting for funds for the International Bridge, Algoma University and Sault College. We cannot fight the recession by only making funding announcements. How much longer must communities like mine wait before the funds begin to flow?

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, funds are flowing across this country. Projects are getting done. In fact, the Prime Minister and Premier Dalton McGuinty today announced \$950 million in costing a project for the Sheppard Avenue East LRT line in Toronto. These are the kinds of projects that will hold the country in good stead long into the future.

This job is getting done by the three different orders of government, municipal, provincial and federal.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it does not matter how we cut it, there is not enough stimulus money out the door, there are no jobs on the ground and poverty is on the rise.

Oral Questions

At poverty hearings this week in Halifax and Moncton, agencies and individuals painted a bleak, dire picture. Families are more in debt and have less savings than ever before and the safety net is not there.

When EI is not there or runs out, what is the government going to do? Where is the government's poverty plan?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have done quite a bit to help people in these challenging troubled times caused by the worldwide recession. We have increased the working income tax benefit. We have provided extra benefits through employment insurance. We have provided training also to help people get the jobs that they will need for the future. We are working on it. We have cut taxes.

I have to point out that the NDP member and his party voted against every single one of those measures.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the week progresses, the answers about Bagotville's 439 Squadron become more evasive.

In response to a question I asked yesterday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence first declared that no decision had yet been made and then, after question period, told me that they have no intention of disbanding Bagotville's 439 Squadron.

Could someone tell me outright whether or not Bagotville's 439 Squadron will be disbanded or moved, yes or no?

• (1150)

[English]

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for the question, but I really wish he would listen. This question has been answered several times.

The Minister of National Defence has been clear, as have ministers from that region. We have no intention, with respect to the 429 Squadron, of making a decision of taking the squadron away from Bagotville. Our ministers from that region are not Bloc members. When our ministers say something, they can keep their word.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, am I to understand and conclude that this statement is an official announcement and that the government promises, here in this House, today, to not touch Bagotville's 439 Squadron?

[English]

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the question, and the answer is, that is right.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the deputy minister of fisheries and oceans warned fishers not to expect an ice compensation package because "ice is not a factor".

In the meantime, this past week, several local newspapers published photographs showing tons of ice in hundreds of harbours, blocking in the vessels. People cannot fish and therefore they are unable to even feed their families.

Would the parliamentary secretary stand in this House and admit that the ice is a problem and if he says in this House that ice is not present, then who exactly is telling him that?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact the member knows full well that ice conditions are often a challenge on the east coast. However, the fact is that the majority of fleets along the east coast have begun their fishing activities and are well ahead of the 2007 season when we last saw severe ice conditions.

There are some areas in Labrador and northeast Newfoundland where there were some delays, but that is not unusual at this time of year. We are monitoring the situation daily because things do change daily. It was 21°C in Twillingate yesterday, I understand.

If the member has some additional information for us, we would be glad to receive it.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the warmer weather means that the ice loosens up more. He should read the material. That is the way it works. If he is going to talk about this and try to be a climatologist, he should do it right.

As a matter of fact, in this particular situation, I do not think the parliamentary secretary understands how it works.

Now, let us change channels for just a moment and talk about the lobster fishery. The fishers are receiving \$3 a pound and they cannot even get out into the open waters.

Will the Conservatives put just a little bit of flexibility in EI and maybe do some buyouts of licences? For the love of God, can we get a bit a compassion from the government?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, I sympathize with the member because it was his colleague, the fisheries critic from that side, who misinterpreted a comment made by our minister and announced a program when no decision had been made and no program existed. He finds himself in a difficult spot, as the member does, as well.

If the member has some additional information about ice, I can tell him that there is a meeting going on right at this moment about these issues and the difficulties the lobster industry is facing and he ought to wait for that.

*Oral Questions***HUMAN RIGHTS**

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many gay, lesbian, transgender and transsexual refugees have had to flee their home countries due to direct threats against their lives, sometimes due to political unrest and sometimes due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, in a growing number of troubling instances, the situation in the country of refuge is no better, since they face legal sanctions, violence and death.

Will the government work with international NGOs, human rights organizations and refugee agencies to urgently settle GLBTT refugees in safe countries, including Canada?

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the ministry is always focused on ensuring that we deal as quickly as possible with any refugee claim that is put in this country. The member is also aware, as the House is aware, that the minister and the ministry are currently working on trying to do exactly what the member is speaking to in terms of our refugee reforms.

I appreciate the question. In fact, we are working on it.

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, health activists from GLBTT communities note that the government has failed to deal with issues of life expectancy, suicide, smoking, alcohol and drug use, depression, access, HIV-AIDS, specific cancers, violence, bullying, blood and organ donations, and seniors' health as they affect GLBTT Canadians. Others note that medically necessary sex reassignment surgery is denied to many trans Canadians.

Will the government, working with the GLBTT community, immediately institute comprehensive and specific GLBTT health policies and programs?

• (1155)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the delivery of health services is a provincial jurisdiction. This government is very proud to be working with the provinces. We have given the provinces more money than any other government has before. We are very supportive of their decisions.

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SRI LANKA

Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are outraged by the civilian tragedy occurring in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan military claims to be in the final stages of operations against the Tamil Tigers, but over 50,000 civilians are estimated to remain in the conflict zone.

The Red Cross has stated that no emergency aid has been able to reach civilians since Saturday and calls the situation “an unimaginable humanitarian catastrophe”.

Can the parliamentary secretary tell the House what the government is doing to bring this terrible humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka to an end?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of State of Foreign Affairs for the Americas said, Canada is appalled at the loss

of civilian life in Sri Lanka. That is why our government continues to call for an immediate ceasefire, the safe and voluntary movement of civilians from the conflict zone and unhindered humanitarian access.

It is unacceptable for the Sri Lankan government to disregard the plight of civilians. Equally, it is unacceptable for the Tamil Tigers to use civilians as hostages. Our officials in Colombo, at the UN and in like-minded countries are engaged at the highest levels to coordinate international action to end this conflict.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 3,500 people in Laval lost their jobs in 2008. And job losses continue to rise.

One unemployed worker who was unable to find long-term employment was forced to accept several, very short-term contracts. Employment insurance does not take his situation into account. Like thousands of unemployed Canadians, he is waiting for the government to make employment insurance more accessible. The Prime Minister refuses to do so.

Can the minister tell this House how she intends to improve employment insurance to help Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been doing exactly that because we do want to help Canadians who have been unfortunate enough to lose their jobs in this global recession. That is why we have expanded the EI system by adding an extra five weeks of regular benefits. People can access EI easier and for a longer period of time now in most regions of the country.

We are also trying to create jobs to help these people get back to work through our infrastructure investment program. We are working with our partners in the provinces and municipalities to get shovels in the ground and get people working.

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[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago we heard the results of the work of the Canada-Quebec Forestry Task Team. The minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada just announced \$100 million over two years just for silviculture, but absolutely nothing for the forestry industry as a whole. For loan guarantees: nothing. For employment insurance: nothing. For refundable tax credits for research and development: nothing. Considering the assistance that Ontario is receiving for the auto sector, today's announcement is an insult, a real affront to Quebec.

What does the government think of that, and what is it going to do?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as promised, the Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), with the Government of Quebec, announced some concrete measures today to help communities and workers affected by the economic crisis.

This federal-provincial cooperation will help create and preserve over 8,000 jobs beginning in summer 2009 in communities affected by the crisis.

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[English]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have paid dearly for the softwood lumber sellout of the government. Thousands upon thousands of jobs have been lost. Over \$1 billion, revealed yesterday in testimony, has either been incurred or is anticipated in arbitral awards.

Now we find out that teams of lawyers are being paid by taxpayers to defend Canada under the softwood sellout. So much for an end to litigation.

My question for the government is very simple. How much money in lawyers' fees are Canadian taxpayers having to cough up for this botched deal and this bad softwood lumber sellout?

• (1200)

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's question. It is disappointing. It is false and it is deliberately misleading. He continually twists the facts.

The reality here is that he takes one little bite of testimony and he tries to make that the testimony. That is inconsistent with the truth, and it should not be allowed to be put forth as a fact because it is inconsistent.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is crucial during this global economic recession that government supports unemployed Canadians and ensures that they have the tools and skills they need to transition into a new job.

It is equally important to provide an environment where small and medium businesses can thrive and maintain jobs, as well as create new ones.

Can the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development please explain what our Conservative government is doing to support small businesses and workers during these difficult economic times?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is the best question of the day.

Our government does understand the critical role that small and medium size businesses play in keeping people employed and in

creating jobs. We are supporting the workers and small businesses by expanding the EI benefits for those who are unfortunate enough to lose their jobs, but also by protecting jobs, helping small business stay in business by expanding our work sharing program and by freezing EI premiums.

What we will not do is what the Liberals are proposing to do which would be to raise job-killing payroll taxes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to two petitions.

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CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Jay Hill (for the Minister of Justice) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act and the Identification of Criminals Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

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

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, on the Act to amend the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act.

[English]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics in relation to the main estimates, 2009-10, vote 40, under Justice.

In accordance with its order of reference, your committee has considered vote 40 under Justice in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010, and reports the same, less the amount granted in interim supply.

•(1205)

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(a)(iii) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the review of Standing Order 153 on list of reports, and Standing Order 156 on editorial corrections.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. In accordance with its order of reference on Thursday, February 26, 2009, the committee has considered vote 5 of the House of Commons, under Parliament, in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010, and reports the same.

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INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-387, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (exemption from taxation of 50% of United States social security payments to Canadian residents).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that, interestingly enough, first surfaced in this chamber from the current Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. It has been reincarnated on a number of occasions by myself and the member for Essex. It would redress a gross injustice to people who receive social security benefits while living in this country.

The former Liberal government made a major change, which I believe was a grossly improper one. This would rectify it so that the social security payments received in Canada would be treated the same as the Canada pension plan benefits that are received in the United States and taxed there by that government.

Right now, we are substantially overtaxing these benefits received by Canadians living in Canada but receiving social security benefits from the United States.

I would also thank my seconder, the member for Burnaby—Douglas.

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

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CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-388, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (judicial discretion).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill is an attempt on my part to introduce the concept of judicial discretion in exceptional circumstances. It follows a model that, from my observations and study of the British system, has worked very well there.

The legislature in the U.K. has repeatedly, as we have here, passed measures for mandatory minimums. However, the U.K. has a very special provision, and this would echo it, that allows judges in exceptional circumstances to, in effect, override the mandatory minimum.

Routine Proceedings

It reflects the reality of human life, that there are exceptional circumstances where the mandatory minimums just do not make sense, and are not fair and just. This section would allow our judiciary, which I believe to be the best in the world, to exercise that discretion in the appropriate circumstances.

Again I thank the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas for seconding the bill.

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

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CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-389, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code (gender identity and gender expression).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh for seconding the bill.

The bill will add gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act and to the Criminal Code sections regarding hate crimes and sentencing provisions, providing explicit protection for transgender and transsexual Canadians from discrimination in all areas of federal jurisdiction.

Transsexual and transgender Canadians face significant prejudice in their daily lives. Whether it is job discrimination, access to housing and public services, especially health care, problems with identity documents, difficulties with law enforcement officials, a high suicide rate, or the increased likelihood that they will be victims of violence, the situation of transsexual and transgender people demands our attention.

The bill would give transsexual and transgender Canadians direct access to the protections provided for in the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code of Canada that they so urgently need.

I look forward to seeing the bill debated this fall in the next round of private members' business. Given that transgender and transsexual folks are members of our families, our friends, our co-workers, and our neighbours, I hope this measure will find support in all corners of the House.

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

* * *

•(1210)

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION ACT

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-390, An Act respecting conscientious objection to the use of taxes for military purposes.

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, today is International Conscientious Objectors' Day. It is a very appropriate day to reintroduce a private member's bill, seconded by the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh, that would allow Canadians who object on conscientious or religious grounds to paying taxes for military purposes to divert their income tax to a special conscientious objector or peace tax account. That account could only be used for purposes other than military expenditures.

The bill would recognize the deeply held views, often related to deeply held religious convictions of some Canadians, that participating in any way in the activities of war and the accumulation of weapons sanctions and perpetuates killing and violence.

The bill would provide an important option for conscientious objection and ensure that the tax dollars of those Canadians who hold these beliefs are spent for peaceful purposes.

A particular feature of the bill is that regulations should be developed in consultation with the Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Conscience Canada, the Mennonite Central Committee Canada, and Nos impôts pour la paix.

It has been an honour to work with Conscience Canada on this project.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-391, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (repeal of long-gun registry).

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today to table my private member's bill. I would like to thank the member of Parliament for Yorkton—Melville for his seconding my bill and also for his tireless work on this issue.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that the wasteful and ineffective long-gun registry comes to an end. The registry has cost Canadians so much and has given them virtually nothing in return. Not only has the cost been in real taxpayer dollars, but the tax has also been borne by law-abiding Canadian hunters, farmers and sport shooters who have been treated like criminals under the terms of this 10 year old registry.

It is time to focus on those individuals, the real criminals, who use firearms for all the wrong reasons. I believe many of my colleagues on both sides of the House and their constituents would agree that it is time to end the long-gun registry. I want to work with my fellow MPs to see this bill passed so that we can all have the satisfaction of knowing we have worked in the best interest of those people who have elected us, and indeed, of all Canadians. I believe with this bill that outcome can be achieved.

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

PETITIONS

SRI LANKA

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in the Canadian Tamil community I have a petition to present that calls upon the Government of Canada to pressure the Government of Sri Lanka not to deny the Tamil population food, shelter, medicine and other fundamental necessities; to allow the UN and other international relief agencies access to the areas affected by the conflict; to stop the shelling and bombing of civilians, hospitals, schools, and places of worship; and to take active and concrete measures by providing leadership to convince the international community and agencies to allow international UN observer panels to monitor the human rights violations and bring the perpetrators to justice, as recommended by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Governor General.

• (1215)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today, both from members of my riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London and the surrounding area, pertaining to changes in the EI system.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present three petitions today. The first is signed by 27 of my constituents, calling on the government to make changes to employment insurance.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE MEDAL

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from 31 Canadians to introduce a new volunteer service medal to acknowledge and recognize volunteerism by Canadian troops.

Whereas during a specified period of service to their country, Canadians, from September 3, 1939, to March 1, 1947, received the Canadian volunteer service medal, and during a specified period of service to their country, Canadians, from June 27, 1950, to July 27, 1954, received the Canadian volunteer service medal for Korea, the petition calls for the issuance of the Governor General's Volunteer Service Medal for volunteer service by Canadians in the regular and reserve military forces and cadet corps support staff who were not eligible for the aforementioned medals and who have completed 365 days of interrupted honourable duty in the service of their country, Canada, since March 2, 1947.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is from 200 Canadians, to pass legislation for the protection of human life from the time of conception, fertilization until natural death.

It reads in part that whereas Canada is a country that respects human rights and includes in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that everyone has the right to life and whereas it has been 40 years since May 14, 1969, when Parliament changed the law to permit abortion and since January 28, 1988, Canada has had no law to protect the lives of unborn children, the petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation for the protection of human life from the time of conception, fertilization until natural death.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today. The first is signed by over 100 members of the Tamil community and other concerned Canadians from the Toronto and Scarborough areas of southern Ontario.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to use every diplomatic means at its disposal to seek an immediate end to the violence in Sri Lanka; to push the Sri Lankan government to respect human rights in north Sri Lanka and respect the human rights of the civilian Tamil population; and work towards a process of peace and reconciliation with all citizens of Sri Lanka.

Members of the Tamil community and other concerned Canadians are sending in hundreds and hundreds of pages of petitions about the violence in Sri Lanka. Other petitions are available at www.peterjulian.ca.

• (1220)

CANADA-COLOMBIA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there are over 200 petitioners on the Canada-Colombia trade deal. These are from across Canada, from the Lower Mainland right through to Nova Scotia, including Thunder Bay and Newfoundland.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to stop the process around the Canada-Colombia trade deal. As the House knows, tens of thousands of Canadians have written to the government to say that the Canada-Colombia trade deal should not be implemented and that a full and impartial human rights assessment should be done before there are any further negotiations with the Colombian government.

Those petitions continue to pour in. We are hoping the government will listen to Canadian citizens who write to it.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have a third petition regarding the immigration amendments that were brought forward by the Conservative government. This is from petitioners in Burnaby, New Westminster and throughout the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to abandon these changes to the immigration act that have been introduced and to increase staffing in overseas visa offices to deal with the tremendous immigration backlog in Canadian offices overseas.

Routine Proceedings

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have one petition, certified by the Clerk of Petitions, that is signed by residents of my riding of Kitchener—Waterloo and organized by a group called Project Ploughshares. This is a national organization committed to global peace and disarmament, which is based in my riding.

The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to seek a review within NATO of its nuclear weapons policies.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from over 125 residents of greater Vancouver, including many from the city of Burnaby, who are very concerned about the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka, and in particular the urgent situation of the Tamil population.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to use all possible diplomatic means at its disposal to end the violence in Sri Lanka. They also call for respect for human rights throughout Sri Lanka. They want to ensure that food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies are able to reach the combat zone, and they want Canada to work toward a lasting peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present. The first is from constituents in the Fraser Valley.

The petitioners say there is a number of severe, potentially life threatening conditions that do not qualify for disability programs because they are not necessarily permanent.

Residents find themselves losing their homes and livelihoods while trying to fight these severe medical conditions.

The petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons to enact legislation to provide additional medical EI benefits equal to maternity EI benefits.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, is from my constituents in beautiful Langley, British Columbia.

It says it has been estimated that identity theft costs Canadian consumers, banks and credit card firms, stores and other businesses more than \$2 billion annually.

The petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons to support and pass government legislation that will create three new offences directly targeting aspects of the identity theft problem, all subject to a five-year maximum sentence.

INCOME TRUSTS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, and as certified by the Clerk of Petitions, I am pleased to present yet another income trust broken promise petition on behalf of my constituent, Mr. Neville Schepmyer.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners remember the Prime Minister boasting about his apparent commitment to accountability when he said “the greatest fraud is a promise not kept”.

The petitioners want to remind the Prime Minister that he promised never to tax income trusts. He recklessly broke that promise. He imposed a 31.5% punitive tax, which permanently wiped out over \$25 billion of the hard-earned retirement savings of over 2 million Canadians, particularly seniors.

The petitioners call upon the Conservative minority government, first, to admit that the decision to tax income trust was based on flawed methodology and incorrect assumptions; secondly, to apologize to those who were unfairly harmed by this broken promise, this tax increase; and finally, to repeal the 31.5% tax on income trusts.

• (1225)

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a second petition.

I had the opportunity to address several hundred students who were here for the march for life. It is on the subject matter of legislation for the protection of human life from the time of conception until natural death.

The petitioners would like to remind us that Canada is a country that respects human rights and includes in its Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that everyone has the right to life. They also point out that it has been 40 years, since May 14, 1969, when Parliament changed the law to permit abortion, and also that since January 28, 1988, Canada has not had a law to protect the lives of the unborn child.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation for the protection of human life from the time of conception until natural death.

CANADA-COLOMBIA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my first petition has approximately 100 signatures, and it is with regard to the Canada-Colombia trade deal.

The petitioners recite a number of reasons, mostly around the lack of safe protection for labour rights in this trade deal. They call on the government to reject the trade deal until the human rights impact assessment can be done and that the trade deal be rewritten to take into account both environmental and labour standards that would be reflected in that assessment.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition, which has approximately 150 to 175 signatures, is with regard to the tragedy in Sri Lanka

I was in Sri Lanka several years ago, and I met with a number of the various political parties. The tragedy that is going on there is reflected in this petition. It is demanding that the Canadian government take a more active role at the international level to bring some sanity to that situation, both around the current bombing

by the government and the attack by the Tamil insurgency against the civilians.

The petition is drawing attention to the tragedy that is going on with regard to the civilian population to this Chamber, and it is calling on the government to take a much more aggressive role at the international level to try to bring a halt to the fighting.

CANADA-COLOMBIA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from approximately 200 people. It is a petition to stop the Canada-Colombia trade deal.

There is continuing, ongoing violence against workers by paramilitary forces in Colombia. It has been ongoing for some time. More than 2,200 trade unionists have been murdered since 1991, and there has been violence against indigenous people. There have been murders of human rights activists, which increased in 2008.

The trade deal does not provide effective protection and lacks enforcement mechanisms. All trade agreements must be built on principles of fair trade with respect to social justice, human rights, labour rights and environmental stewardship as prerequisites to trade.

The petitioners want this Parliament to reject the Canada-Colombia trade deal until an independent human rights impact assessment is carried out.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present yet another petition, from more than 100 Canadians, who are raising concerns about the same Canada-Colombia free trade deal. This is a result, in large part, of some of the efforts of the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, who some say is the hardest working MP in this place, to bring attention to this dramatically serious issue.

The petitioners are asking the government to put words into actions in this trade deal, to have an independent observation of the human rights impacts of such a deal and to understand the implications toward the environment, both of which have been ignored by the trade deal that has been presented.

There are well over 100 Canadians raising their voices in the effort to stop this failed plan and this failed trade deal.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***NUCLEAR LIABILITY AND COMPENSATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-20, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: When question period started, 10 minutes were available for questions and comments for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

I see the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is rising.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the criticisms of this bill when it was introduced in the previous Parliament is that there was no clear demonstration of the public consultation that was required in the act. The government had previously talked about speaking to communities that were affected, that were either near a nuclear facility or that had some connection to these facilities.

I can recall that in the previous Parliament we called upon the government to produce the list of consultations that had gone on, indicating the dates, the places, the names of those who had shown up and the groups that were represented. We never received that from the government.

The reason I raised this question to my colleague is that around such a critical issue as nuclear safety and nuclear liability, and I am not sure there is a more dramatic consultation required because the effects on a community or on the environment if something happened would be enormous, it is absolutely incumbent upon the government to actually speak to Canadians and to present these public forums.

That list was requested from the previous Parliament. It was never brought forward. I am requesting it again. That consultation has always been a hallmark. It has been spoken of, but often we suspect that only a few from industry are actually contacted and that the communities at large are never brought to bear on the issue and cannot bring their concerns to the government. This is absolutely critical. We are talking about the liability connected to a nuclear facility.

I wonder whether the parliamentary secretary has that list available for us today, and would he tell us the dates, the places, those contacted, and the groups and organizations that were involved? Without this list, it is very difficult for New Democrats, millions of Canadians who support us and those who are affected by this issue to feel confident in the government and feel confident that the liability scheme imagined in this bill would actually get the job done. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could produce that list for us today.

• (1230)

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member understands the process we went through. This bill is actually in its third incarnation. It came in as Bill C-63. It was Bill C-5 in the last Parliament, and now it is Bill C-20.

He was not at committee last time, but we did have extensive consultations. We had open committee meetings. We had the communities come in. We had the interested parties come to speak to us. Obviously, we have talked to the industry as well. There have been broad consultations at least twice on this bill. We bring it forward with the support of the communities, the support of the industry, and we believe with the support of Canadians as well. The NDP members were the only ones who were opposing this bill last time, and we understand they will likely do that again.

However, the reality is that this bill has been put together. It has been crafted with input from a lot of different Canadians and with the industry as well. We certainly look forward to support from the other parties in this House, because this bill is long overdue. We need to raise the liability limits. It is something that everyone acknowledges. Certainly we hope the NDP members will not stand in the way of protecting Canadians, as they did last time.

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker the parliamentary secretary talked about bringing the insurance level in line with other jurisdictions. He also talked about our CANDU reactors in Canada, the tremendous safety record they have and the tremendous redundancies they have built into their technologies to ensure we do not have an accident.

We did hear a lot of testimony in the last Parliament on this bill. People commented about the potential loss with regard to some of these accidents that could happen.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could take a bit of time to comment with respect to how raising the level from \$75 million to \$650 million compares to other jurisdictions and how the safety record of our existing facilities in this country makes the \$650 million more than adequate for what is required.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian nuclear industry has an outstanding safety record. The member for Tobique—Mactaquac has worked with me and the government side on this issue for some time now. He was on the natural resources committee last time and did an outstanding job as we tried to bring Bill C-5 through the legislative process. He is working on that same committee this time on Bill C-20. We rely on him for his memory and contributions and we appreciate them.

Our industry in Canada has been safe and has had a tremendous record in that matter. When we came to put this new legislation together, we needed to decide how high the level of insurance needed to be. There needs to be a level of insurance that is adequate in the case of an incident but it also needs to protect Canadian citizens and it cannot be so high that it is impossible for the operators to even get insurance.

The limit they came up with was \$650 million and we feel it really fits the public's need for adequate compensation in the event of any foreseeable incident at a Canadian nuclear facility. As I mentioned, we need to balance the need to ensure adequate victim compensation without burdening operators with costs that are completely unrealistic. We could have taken a number of different avenues but we made this choice for a number of reasons.

Government Orders

As I need to wrap up, maybe I can get into the reasons as to why we chose \$650 million on my next answer. Others will speak to that as well.

• (1235)

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two specific questions as a follow up to what was discussed earlier.

The parliamentary secretary talked about the liability cap of \$650 million. I just want to know specifically if that meets the demands and requests made by the various stakeholders. Is that a sufficient level? If he was about to explain how he developed that amount and how they came to that amount, that would be greatly appreciated.

Second, does the legislation allow the industry to shop for insurance outside of Canada? If the parliamentary secretary could answer those questions, it would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that there is one insurance provider within Canada that will be providing that insurance.

I just want to talk a little bit about the comparison with some of the other venues as well before I get into the details of the \$650 million. This compares favourably with what is happening in other countries that have nuclear facilities. There are a number of different ways that countries approach this but what we are doing here is in line with what most of the other countries do and it is line with the limits that other countries have on their liability requirements.

I just want to run through a couple of reasons why we have done this. The \$650 million liability limit exceeds what we believe is the public's need for adequate compensation in the event of an foreseeable incident. It balances the need for victim compensation with the requirement for the operator to provide insurance. It responds to the recommendations of the Senate committee on energy, the environment and natural resources from a number of years ago that felt that this was an adequate limit.

It reflects insurance capacity, which is also important. If insurance is required to be carried, the industry must find a capacity where the insurance industry is able to carry that. There are some other areas that are moving to limits that are a little higher and some that are at lower limits. For example, the Americans require a little bit less on each of their individual facilities. However, we believe this is appropriate here.

I think it is important that we recognize that the amounts can be raised by regulation. There will be a review regularly and if it is found not be adequate, it can be increased. That has not been done in the present legislation.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the parliamentary secretary who knows a great deal about this. I want to follow up on the question asked by my colleague from the Liberals. The liability limit in the U.S. is somewhere in the range of \$10 billion for such insurance accidents. As proposed in this bill, Canada comes in at \$650 million.

The Americans have an upper limit of liability 1500% higher than what our government is proposing. Could the member clarify why the Americans' liability on their facilities, which have the very same

scope and scale of nuclear facilities, not that much bigger and not affecting that many more people, is so much more restricted under his bill rather than matching what the Americans have done.

The fact that insurance companies will not insure these facilities is of some note. No other industry enjoys such favourable dealings with the government.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, we can already see the NDP's enthusiasm for one more government initiative.

The reality in the United States is that individual operators are required to carry \$370 million in primary insurance and another \$135 million in secondary insurance. They also pool their resources. The industry in the United States is much bigger than it is here in Canada.

In order to deal with this issue fairly, as well as with the operators, the Canadian taxpayers and the industry itself, we believe the \$650 million is more than adequate to deal with any of the incidents that we may be able to foresee.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-20, which deals with the important issue of civil liability and compensation in the event of a nuclear accident at a Canadian facility.

The Liberal Party supports this bill in principle but will use the natural resources committee to give it careful consideration in assessing whether it should be a mandate. We believe this legislation seeks to replace the outdated Nuclear Liability Act of 1976.

The bill has had a long history, the result of a decade of discussions that I am proud to say began under previous Liberal governments. These issues are complex, which is why we will be studying this bill and listening to expert testimony of individuals who understand these very complex issues. This bill deals with the fundamental aspect of Canadian nuclear safety by seeking to establish a clear regime in the event of a nuclear accident. It lays out rules for compensation and civil liability in the event of a radioactive release from a Canadian nuclear installation.

The bill retains the basic principles of the 1976 act by ensuring that nuclear operators remain absolutely and exclusively liable for damage. It requires that they carry insurance but limits the liability in time and money. The bill also ensures that suppliers and contractors are effectively indemnified.

The key aspect of this bill is that it increases the operator liability limit from \$75 million to \$650 million. That is the core issue. I would like to talk more about that and then ask some questions.

The Department of Natural Resources tells us that the increase reflects a balance of considerations. What we have heard from it so far is that it addresses foreseeable rather than catastrophic risks, that it reflects the insurance capacity that is available in the market at a reasonable cost and that it would put Canada on par with liability limits of many other countries. However, there are still some exceptions and we want to know why.

Government Orders

By putting this legislation forward, the government is responding to the explicit recommendations of the Senate committee on energy, the environment and natural resources that require this type of revision. These issues do not get a lot of media attention. They are not headlines that we see in the newspaper but they are, nevertheless, critical to the safety and security of Canadian nuclear facilities.

The need for a specific regime governing civil liability in compensation in case of a nuclear incident is based on the fact that private insurers have systematically and consistently refused to provide coverage for damage resulting from nuclear incidents. Over time, technology and innovation, coupled with a changing understanding of nuclear science, has meant that the current legislation no longer reflects the needs of Canadians. This threatens the security of the nuclear industry.

In the age of climate change, nuclear technology is critically important to our efforts to build a stable supply of clean energy. Also in a time of recession, the nuclear industry provides high-paying, high tech jobs to thousands of Canadians across the country.

The bill addresses two key aspects. First, it helps us in terms of dealing with the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and also the preservation and creation of jobs in the high tech industry.

In fact, a number of my constituents in Mississauga—Brampton South depend on this industry for their livelihoods. They work at the head offices of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, which is in the riding of my very well respected colleague from Mississauga South. That organization alone has provided jobs to thousands of Canadians and has shared its unique expertise and knowledge in 14 offices spread across seven different countries.

Intelligent Canadians going abroad, sharing our expertise and making a name for their country in the process makes us proud of what we as Canadians can achieve abroad. It is in sharp contrast, and I digress a bit, to the silly, unnecessary, unwarranted attacks by the Conservatives on the leader of the official opposition simply because he has taken Canadian experiences abroad. Many Canadians have worked abroad and have returned to Canada and it is unfortunate that those people are viewed negatively by the government.

These are the types of highly-skilled, well-paying jobs that the Conservatives are supposed to be creating for Canadians, jobs that will help us to maintain our global competitive advantage and our high standard of living.

• (1240)

Therefore, one would expect that a bill dealing with such an important issue for such an important industry would rate as a priority for a Conservative government that claims to have the best interests of Canadians at heart. I am sorry to say that the government has failed to act time and time again and, in some cases, actually worked against itself on this issue.

Various other versions of the bill have sprung up under the Conservatives but were shamefully allowed to lapse. In fact, Bill C-5, the bill's immediate predecessor, was being debated at third reading when the Prime Minister broke his own promise for fixed election dates and dissolved the House, killing the bill in the process.

This legislation has not been a priority, which speaks to the lack of trust that I and many others have regarding the Conservative record on nuclear safety.

The Canadian nuclear industry is at a critical crossroads. Its future is uncertain and yet the government continues to delay this important work. What kind of message does that send to nuclear workers and the industry? I suppose I should not be surprised. This is, after all, the government that fired Linda Keen from her position at the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, blaming the regulator when it was the minister who should have taken the responsibility.

Before this firing, the Office of the Auditor General submitted a special examination report to the AECL board of directors, pinpointing serious funding deficiencies that were holding back the necessary expansion and upgrading. It would be nice to know where the government stands on this matter but the minister and her government refuse to share their future plans for the crown corporation.

We know, through committee testimony, that the National Bank report, looking at the future of AECL, is in the hands of the minister. The problem is that the last we heard the minister has not even had an opportunity to read it. It is somehow in her department, maybe with some staff, but she does not have the time in her busy schedule to really look at this very important issue.

Again, this an important industry with thousands of Canadian jobs and yet the minister and the government refuse to show any leadership. They prefer to allow uncertainty and mystery to continue and wear the industry down through their inaction.

AECL is banking its future on a bid currently before the Ontario government to sell its next generation of Candu reactors. Candu technology is currently in use at over 40 plants around the world and the future expansion of that business depends on this.

I invite the minister to table the National Bank report today in the House and come clean on her plans for the future of AECL. Too many jobs and the industry depend on it.

Worse than endangering jobs are the lives that we put at risk because the government has not sought to find a way to a stable, long-term supply of medical isotopes, a direct result of the Conservative record on nuclear safety. This year alone there has been three radioactive leaks on the Chalk River site. How can Canadians possibly have trust in a government that refuses to take responsibility for upgrading and ensuring the security of our nuclear facilities?

We need to do what we can to ensure that we have a safe, stable and prosperous nuclear industry. In committee, we will take up that responsibility as we begin and conduct our studies.

Government Orders

A number of vital questions need to be answered before the bill is passed into law. I had the opportunity just a few moments ago to ask questions of the parliamentary secretary and I hope these questions are addressed in committee. Should this legislation allow the industry to shop for insurance outside of Canada? Will they allow for such openness and flexibility? Does the operator liability of \$650 million address the needs of all stakeholders? Is it a sufficient level and how was that amount determined? Is that amount comparable to other jurisdictions around the world? What, if any, terms exist for qualification for appointment to the nuclear claims tribunal? What is that criteria? Is that criteria sufficient? In addition, I would seek witness testimony on the definition of nuclear damage laid out in the bill, and whether it is too narrow.

Those are the kinds of questions that need to be addressed but, most important, my colleagues and I will seek to examine in committee powers given to the Minister of Natural Resources to review the liability amount. It is absolutely critical that proper checks and balances are in place.

• (1245)

I look forward to working with my colleagues in committee to tackle these very important issues.

I ask the government to change its approach to the nuclear industry. We need the minister to fight for the health, safety and economic security of all Canadians. If we continue down the same path, the future of the Canadian nuclear industry looks very dim.

• (1250)

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments, aside from some of the partisan ones that he threw in.

He was talking about Chalk River and he is well aware from the testimony that was provided in the committee that there was a situation with the reactors and he knows full well that it was contained. That is the evidence that was given. There was no health risk to the public. In any event, we will get past that and we will get on to the bill.

I appreciate in the last Parliament the tremendous support we received from the Liberals to get the bill through. I would like the member to comment on the importance of bringing the legislation up to date and in raising the amount to \$650 million. I would also like him to comment on the safety records of the nuclear facilities in Canada and how that will help us, as Canadians, to mitigate the potential insurance that needs to be carried on these units.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague specifically with respect to nuclear safety.

This is a very important issue. The legislation essentially needs an overhaul. It came into force in 1976. The provisions in the legislation were sufficient to deal with the industry at that time. However, there has been an enormous amount of advancement in technology and innovation, and concerns have been raised over nuclear safety in the past year, as I indicated in my remarks with respect to Chalk River.

It may be a separate debate and I do not want to get into the details of that debate, but in essence, I believe the bill deals with the important issue of civil liability and compensation in the event of a nuclear accident at a Canadian facility.

In my opinion we need to look at the limit. We need to have a serious discussion. Is the \$650 million limit sufficient? Does it meet the requirements of the stakeholders? Is it a sufficient amount to deal with the recommendations put forward by the natural resources committee and the Senate committee? Does it reflect the ongoing dialogue, debate and discussion in the industry?

That is one key aspect and there are many others which I believe need to be discussed in committee. That is why we are supporting sending the bill to committee. We want to make sure we are able to capture expert testimony from people who understand the issues and complexities. We want people who have the expertise to provide us with their insight and recommendations.

I hope the member opposite is open to looking at amendments, if necessary, based on the testimony that we get in committee.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately and not for the first time I am a little unclear about the Liberal position when it comes to the nuclear industry and also nuclear safety. In the last Parliament, the Liberals supported an identical bill. My colleague is now raising concerns about whether the dollar figure is high enough.

This gets to the point that there have been nuclear safety concerns in Canada with the system that we run. That is legitimate and there is a public debate about the viability of nuclear energy in terms of safety but also cost overruns. As the member is from Ontario, I suspect he is well aware that his tax burden, the money coming out of his pocket and going toward cost overruns on nuclear also has been a concern.

In terms of the amount of money, what formula would the member suggest to the government should go into a bill like this one to compensate a community for the loss of life, for the loss of the community itself, in the event of a serious nuclear accident?

That is a legitimate question, because if the formula is wrong, insurance companies are accustomed to it all the time and they try to get a formula that works to compensate people in the event of an accident. The scale and scope of nuclear accidents are potentially enormous, but also long lasting. It is not the same as a car accident that happens on the road and someone is compensated to a certain dollar figure.

What formula would the member suggest? If he is a little concerned about \$650 million being the upper limit and beyond that no one could get more compensation, what would he suggest? What is the formula? Would it be per person? Would it be by the square mile? Would it be by the size of the nuclear accident? These are important considerations which I hope the member can clarify either today or at committee.

Government Orders

Without that knowledge in Canadians' hands, the assuredness they need to have about nuclear energy will not be there. I assume that is what his position is and that is what he is hoping to achieve.

● (1255)

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, that is one of the key questions we have. As to the criteria itself, I do not know specifically what number would be deemed to be adequate. That is why we need expert testimony. That is why we in the Liberal Party support sending the bill to committee, to find out what the criteria is, how it compares with other jurisdictions, whether it is adequate and whether it meets the legitimate concerns raised in developing the bill. More important, in terms of moving the bill forward, that is why we support sending it to committee. If we oppose the bill and do not have this discussion, then we would be putting aside this very important issue that is well overdue to be examined.

My humble request to the NDP member is to support sending the bill to committee where we can ask these very legitimate questions and ask legitimate points to make sure that the experts can give us the advice that we need to be able to determine what amount is reasonable and why.

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I grew up in Port Elgin. My father worked his whole career at Bruce nuclear. I worked at Bruce nuclear for three summers as a summer student. My sister works at Bruce nuclear. My brother-in-law works at Bruce nuclear. I may be the only one in the House who has actually been inside and worked at a nuclear plant.

I appreciate that the Liberal Party is supporting sending this bill to committee for further discussion. Does the Liberal Party have a position on the safety record? I am speaking not only for Ontario, but for all of Canada on the nuclear industry overall and how it has performed over the last number of years since its inception from the first major nuclear plant, Douglas Point. I was there as a summer student when it was decommissioned. Does the Liberal Party have a position or comment on the quality of the safety in the nuclear industry in this country?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the cap of \$650 million, we want to make sure that the criteria developed for that is done in a clear and transparent way to make sure that whatever criteria used is adequate for the stakeholders.

With respect to the nuclear industry, I raised those remarks when I talked about the bill. We have legitimate concerns about the government's handling of Chalk River and about the way it fired Linda Keen. The nuclear industry's performance over the years speaks for itself. It employs many Canadians. We take pride in the Candu reactor technology. That is not the issue. The issue is how the government has dealt with the nuclear industry, how it has dealt with Linda Keen, how it has dealt with security and safety for Canadians. That is the area of concern. That is what I expressed in my remarks.

I hope the member opposite understands the concern we have expressed is reflected in the fact that we saw the government again fail to protect the supply of isotopes. It neglected to show leadership on that file. It is just another example of where the government has let down Canadians and the international community, and the many Canadians whose health and well-being depend on the stable supply of isotopes.

The question is not necessarily about what our view is of the nuclear industry. The question is about how the government has handled its leadership with respect to the nuclear industry in times of need. Unfortunately, it is sad to say, it has failed miserably.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at some point we have to ask, are we going to get involved with responsible energy policy? The bill is putting forward a minuscule amount for liability. When the American law provides \$10 billion and in Germany it is unlimited, how can we honestly stand in the House and say that the amount in the bill is anything serious in terms of dealing with liability? We know it is the bare minimum and we know it is a throw to the industry.

I would like the member to comment on what he thinks of the American legislation which allows for \$10 billion and the German legislation which allows for an unlimited amount, juxtaposed to the amount in this legislation.

● (1300)

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, I know I only have a few seconds so I will be very brief. I believe this bill is a positive step in the right direction. That is why we are supporting the bill. That is why we feel that the amount in the bill is much better than the current amount which is inadequate. We raised that concern in committee and in the Senate. That is why we are supporting sending the bill to committee so we can have that discussion. I hope the NDP will also support sending this bill to committee.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak to Bill C-20, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident.

I live near a nuclear plant, so I understand how important it is to review the existing legislation because it does not meet current international requirements respecting liability in the case of a nuclear incident. Given the Conservative government's enthusiasm for nuclear energy—which, contrary to what it believes, is not clean energy—we must update this legislation, which is over 30 years old.

Ontario and Alberta are about to embark on this dangerous adventure with federal support, so we owe it to ourselves to clarify what nuclear plant operators are liable for, define the financial terms of that liability, and create an administrative process that will ensure that citizens affected by a nuclear incident are spared delays due to a high number of financial compensation claims.

Government Orders

The primary purpose of Bill C-20 is to set up a liability regime in the event of a nuclear incident. Though the bill is far-reaching and complex, like the sector it governs, it does three things. First, it defines the liability of facility operators. Second, it defines the financial terms and limits of that liability. Third, it creates a process or administrative tribunal to hear claims in case of a major incident.

This bill is flawed, and I will explain why. Nevertheless, we must study it rationally. It does improve the existing act, and if we do nothing, the financial liability of a nuclear plant operator will not increase above the amount set 33 years ago in 1976. Bill C-20 redefines nuclear damage. The new definition is clearer and more complete, and it is more in line with the international standard.

The bill clarifies the liability of nuclear facility operators. It clearly defines what kind of damage is compensable and what kind is not. One of the most important clauses is clause 9, which provides that the operator's liability is absolute and applies automatically the moment radiation is emitted because proof of fault is not required.

Clause 9 reads as follows:

(1) The liability of an operator for damage caused by a nuclear incident is absolute.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), no proof of tort or of fault within the meaning of the Civil Code of Québec is required.

In short, this means that if there is a nuclear incident, regardless of the cause, with the exception, of course, of an act of war, civil war, insurrection and, now, terrorist activities, the operator is responsible and must compensate those affected.

Sections 13 to 30 of this bill list all of the compensable damages, such as bodily injury or damage to property; economic losses, or revenue losses; loss of use of property; and the costs associated with taking preventive measures and precautions, if the measures were ordered by an authority acting under federal or provincial legislation relating to environmental protection.

The financial limitations of this bill are very important. The government considers nuclear energy to be a clean energy. We disagree. The government would not be obligated to regulate and define the legal and financial liabilities of nuclear plant operators to such a degree if this were truly the case. We believe that nuclear energy is a dirty energy. That is why this bill provides for a liability framework in case of a nuclear incident.

That is why Bill C-20 establishes a compensation and civil liability regime to address damages resulting from radiation in the unlikely event of a radioactive release from a Canadian nuclear installation.

I used the word unlikely, but an incident is still possible, since it is covered by legislation. I am not sure that, in the case of biomass boilers, a truly clean energy, and a renewable one, I would add, we would need a bill like Bill C-20 to regulate operations.

• (1305)

To my way of thinking, this shows that nuclear energy is not clean.

There is a real and constant level of danger associated with nuclear energy. I live very close to a nuclear power plant, and I know that there are emergency measures in place for that plant. The local

people know the evacuation procedures. We have iodine capsules, which means that there is a very real danger.

Really clean energies such as wind power, geothermal energy and hydroelectricity do not threaten people's health and safety as nuclear energy does.

In our opinion, the government should focus on these emerging alternative energies instead of putting all its eggs in the nuclear basket. That is why we will support this bill, which creates a real framework for nuclear practice, provides for compensation and protects people.

As I said, the current legislation is more than 30 years old, which means that people living close and not so close to nuclear facilities are "protected" by legislation that has not been reviewed in three decades. That is incredible.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of strict control over the nuclear industry. A number of provisions of the current legislation no longer meet today's criteria. I am thinking particularly of the amounts of compensation and civil liability.

If a nuclear incident were to take place in a facility today, the limit on damages would be \$75 million.

This is ridiculously low. To date, the liability of operators of nuclear facilities has been limited to \$75 million.

With this bill, the limit on the operator's liability would increase from \$75 million to \$650 million.

The main clause in the bill is clause 21(1), which stipulates that the liability of an operator for damage resulting from a nuclear incident is \$650 million.

Yet this amount can be increased by regulation, which is an important plus. Given how much time it has taken to get back to this bill, which was introduced during previous sessions, it is important to be able to use regulations.

Members may ask, why is the limit \$650 million?

In my opinion, we have to be practical. This limit reflects a balance between risk, insurance and international rules. It was not determined randomly, and obviously we have to look at what is done around the world. There are limits to insurance and to what operators can pay, because no insurer will want to assume a risk that is higher than what we see in other countries. We therefore cannot impose unlimited financial liability, because operators may not be able to find an insurer willing to insure such a risk.

This amount therefore seems to be a compromise between the theory, whereby the financial responsibility of the nuclear power plant operator is absolute or unlimited, and practice, which prevents operators from insuring themselves for such an amount.

Bill C-20 establishes the specific liabilities of nuclear power plant operators and raises the amount of insurance those operators must have.

Government Orders

In fact, the new limit will increase operators' insurance premiums sixfold. Mandatory financial guarantees will be gradually imposed, and regulations will set out the period during which a nuclear installation can be reinsured by the government.

Thus, it provides \$400 million in reinsurance at the time of proclamation, to be gradually reduced to \$0 over the next four years. As we can see, this is to prevent too much pressure from being put on nuclear power plant operators.

Since the amount of \$650 million, which for now, is much better than the status quo at only \$75 million, is up for debate, the amount of liability held by operators will be examined by the minister at least every five years.

We say, "at least every five years", but it is important that the limit be reviewed every year to really assess the risks and make international comparisons.

• (1310)

The 1976 Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act provided for an adjustment over the years, but nothing has been done in that regard for 33 years. As we can see, it is easy to forget our responsibilities. It is up to this House to ensure that the government reviews those amounts and revises them every year.

Clearly, something needs to be done. In that regard, in his 2005 report, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development specifically addressed the issue of insurance for nuclear installation operators after two petitions were presented. One petition reads:

...the \$75 million coverage required under the NLA is woefully inadequate by international standards. Officials from Natural Resources Canada [said] that today, \$250 million would be an equivalent amount [equivalent to the amount set out in the legislation when it was passed in 1976], accounting for inflation, while the international standard is approximately \$650 million Canadian.

The statement by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development is clear. Insurance coverage for nuclear installations is not up to international standards. We must intervene. Canadian insurance requirements have not changed or been adjusted for inflation since the law came into effect almost 30 years ago. In Canada, the liability of operators of nuclear facilities is lower than that in 12 other industrialized countries with nuclear installations. These countries have in place a combination of operator insurance, a public fund and an industry reserve, which far exceeds the amount of insurance required of Canadian operators.

We support this bill because it will substantially increase the maximum financial liability to \$650 million. This is important, and so are the administrative process and the tribunal to deal with claims in the event of a major incident. The bill establishes a special tribunal to hear claims when the Governor in Council deems it is in the public interest to do so.

The law thus provides an administrative process for dealing with claims in the event of a major incident. It clarifies the role and the scope of a claims tribunal. This process would be used instead of the courts and would allow claims to be handled more efficiently and equitably. It is not difficult to imagine that the high volume of claims by victims would tie up the courts and result in delays that would be far too long for the victims. It is imperative that the victims of a

nuclear incident not be subjected to a cumbersome legal process that would quickly become bogged down by too many claims. This bill would allow victims to be dealt with more quickly and, we hope, more equitably.

In closing, Bill C-20 is necessary given that, in the next few years, the Conservative government will support an increase in nuclear power plants. We completely disagree with this government's enthusiasm for nuclear energy, which is not a clean energy, contrary to what the Human Resources minister believes.

At present, there is no satisfactory way to manage nuclear waste. Furthermore, we now have many options in terms of clean, renewable energies, such as hydroelectricity, geothermal energy, wind energy and forest biomass. But this government does not believe in these energy sources of the future, and would rather leave future generations—our children and grandchildren—with the environmental burden left by the nuclear industry.

• (1315)

Given the high level of danger of these nuclear plants, the Bloc Québécois recommends strict and efficient monitoring at all stages of the process: extraction, transportation, heat and electricity production, and so on.

That is why we are in favour of this bill, which not only updates the responsibilities of nuclear plant operators, but also significantly increases the financial limit of this responsibility from \$75 million to \$650 million, a limit that the federal government has not reviewed since 1976.

This bill will also ensure fairer and more efficient treatment for people who could be affected and who would be submitting compensation claims.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the member's colleagues from the Bloc spoke in recent days about an east-west power grid that would presumably allow power to be sold from Hydro-Québec into Ontario markets as opposed to simply running power lines from north to south. We in Manitoba have the same experience, where our power lines and power sales are all to the United States.

We have advocated for a number of years that we should build an east-west power grid. At this point, we have enough developed and undeveloped power to provide power for Ontario, so it could close down its nuclear plants. We also know that Saskatchewan is looking at nuclear plant development right now. I believe Alberta is as well. Likewise, the east-west power grid, if it were to be constructed, could solve that problem as well.

I think the member probably agrees with me. Would she comment on that idea and expand on how an east-west power grid would affect Quebec?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Government Orders

Naturally, I completely agree with him. Today we are debating a compensation process for victims of nuclear incidents. As I said several times in my speech, we believe that the government should invest not in nuclear energy, but in renewable, truly clean energy like hydroelectricity. It should also adopt a new, environmental vision and develop other potential energy sources so that instead of creating problems that our children will have to deal with, we create a series of solutions.

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech.

During the last parliamentary session, the Bloc Québécois and the Liberal Party supported this bill. I would like to thank them for their continued support during this session.

After listening to today's speech, I do not understand the Liberal Party's position.

[*English*]

Personally, I support nuclear power. However, I am pleased she made the important comment that no matter what side of the argument one is on when it comes to nuclear power, the bill is important because we have nuclear facilities out there now. We desperately need to get this covered.

It is good that she has pointed out the difference between supporting the existing facilities out there as opposed to the debate of whether we should expand nuclear power. To me, the bill is important to ensure that we cover what we have out there. It puts a platform for the future in place, but it also ensures that we adequately cover what we have today. If she would like to comment on that, I would appreciate it.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I am from Trois-Rivières, and Quebec's only nuclear plant is located just on the other side of the magnificent St. Lawrence River, in Gentilly. Quebec will certainly not be building any more of them.

Disposal of waste from the plant is a major problem that remains unsolved. Despite exorbitant costs, the problem persists. Moreover, there is the ever-present danger of a nuclear incident.

People living with plans for evacuation from their own homes and iodine capsules in case of a nuclear incident have every right to be worried. These are all very good reasons for me not to choose nuclear.

Some might say that Quebec is lucky to have hydroelectricity. That is true, but we planned our development around that energy source.

Nonetheless, because nuclear power plants have already been built, we must see to their maintenance, to the disposal of waste, and to compensation. That is why we support this bill.

It is our responsibility to take action. We cannot leave the people to their own devices in this case, and that is why we support the bill.

That being said, we would like to work together toward finding new energy solutions for the future.

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Trois-Rivières on her wonderful speech. Since she lives close to a nuclear plant, she gave a good explanation of the dangers of this type of energy. She mentioned that she was in favour of this bill since it is a huge improvement over what currently exists. However, the compensation rates set out in the bill do not correspond to international rates.

Provided that the bill is passed at this stage, does the member plan on working in committee to improve compensation and compensation criteria based on population density in the areas around nuclear plants? There can be a big difference in population density in the areas around these plants.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

In committee we can certainly look at ways to improve this bill. In fact, it is important to consider population density in the areas potentially affected by an incident. However, the \$650 million amount is based on what happens in other parts of the world and also on the ability of the nuclear plant operator to get insurance.

We could have unlimited liability, but that would be unrealistic. The damages caused by an incident can be extensive. How do we calculate the value of a human life? There is no way to determine that. It is a serious problem, but we will certainly look at it carefully in committee.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Maloway: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that it should not matter where a nuclear power plant is located. Whether it is in Canada, or the United States or Germany, they should have pretty much the same limits of liability because, at the end of the day, the damages will be roughly the same.

It is my understanding that Germany and Japan have unlimited liability. I assume that if we cannot get enough insurance on the private insurance market, then the country itself will backstop the lack of insurance.

Insurance is a very fluctuating market. In some years we can get multiple millions of coverage and then just as abruptly over a period of a few months, the markets will dry up and we will maybe get half of what we had the year before, for four or five times the price. It is a very difficult thing to try to determine what sort of private insurance will be available at any given time.

It seems to me that we should be going to the highest standards here, not to the lowest. If Japan and Germany have unlimited liability, that is exactly where we should be as well.

I also point out that in the United States it is \$10 billion, which is more than 15 times higher than what is being proposing in the bill. Clearly, something has to be done about this at the committee stage to rectify this problem.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. We will take his comments into consideration. It is important to keep in mind that if there is unlimited liability and operators are required to have insurance, we will have to make sure that the public, the government and everyone agrees to pay for nuclear plants. This is turning into a real debate in Canada. It will surely require a referendum. Quebec has some experience with this, and could perhaps lend a hand.

• (1325)

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I enter today's debate.

This issue points out some of the more fundamental questions that Canada now faces around the production of energy, energy security, climate change and others. When we talk about the nuclear industry and the government's enthusiasm and support of it to this point, it shows us a decision has been made. In fact, it shows that many decisions made.

What the New Democrats have struggled with is the government's sense of balance. If there was any sort of attention of equal amount or intensity made toward the alternatives, in terms of energy supply and demand for Canadians, in scope and scale, then we would have some enthusiasm in supporting the government.

Instead we see this imbalance, an enormous amount of money going to carbon capture and sequestration, an unproven and costly technology, huge amounts of attention going toward the nuclear industry, which raises some fundamental questions and which exist within this bill, and still a \$1.3 billion or \$1.4 billion subsidy into the tar sands every year, money they do not need nor should have from the Canadian taxpayers.

The bill talks about liability and the limits of it. The New Democrats have no challenge and no question at all in entering the debate of the need for modernization of the act. We understand the act is antiquated and old. The liability limits were set in the early 1970s. They are not sufficient and they need to be modernized.

The question is this. How do we come to a figure that meets the risks that are inherent within the nuclear industry? How do we find a formula, as my Liberal colleague mentioned earlier, or an actual sum amount to compensate a community for a nuclear accident of any scale?

As I will show in some parts of my testimony, if not today then perhaps later when we resume, when accidents happen in the nuclear industry, and they do happen, the costs can be enormous for relatively small accidents in which there was no major fallout. We are not talking simply about Chernobyls. We are talking about what are called minor nuclear accidents in the nuclear industry.

I attempted to put this question to the parliamentary secretary and to my colleagues in the Liberal Party, who have given more of a blank cheque to the government in all things: so much for probation. I cannot see any of my Conservative colleagues in the government losing much sleep during this probationary period. In giving a blank cheque around nuclear liability, the Liberals have intoned and

Private Members' Business

suggested they can take this to committee and potentially raise the limits of liability for a nuclear accident. However, that is not the case.

If the Liberals and the Bloc choose to support the government on this bill and on this figure, then \$650 million is what we are stuck with. It is critical for everybody to understand this. It cannot go up. We cannot, as my colleague from Winnipeg suggested, meet international standards.

Once the bill goes through with this limited liability, that is it. It is always curious when the government decides to place limited liability on one industry and not on any others. There is no need for the government to put a limited liability on an oil and gas producer, or a coal-fired plant or a wind generating plant or a solar industry because the accidents that happen in those areas, although they can be significant, cannot come anywhere close to the type of damage a nuclear accident can cause.

When the two other opposition parties pass this bill to go to committee, they also give their stamp of approval on the limited liability of \$650 million. Yet today they have declared that they have no clue whether that limit is sufficient, whether \$650 million is satisfactory to cover off the damages from a nuclear accident.

That somehow seems to be irresponsible. To suggest one thing to the public, that they will take a good look at this and maybe raise the limits, is irresponsible. They should know they cannot raise the limit because the royal recommendation contained within this bill suggests otherwise.

Now let us get to some of those international standards. It was mentioned earlier that in the United States it was an approximately \$10 billion pool of moneys collected together from all kinds of different—

• (1330)

The Deputy Speaker: We are about to move on to private members' business. I can assure the hon. member that he will have 15 minutes left to finish his remarks the next time the bill is before the House.

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from March 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-288, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for new graduates working in designated regions), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Private Members' Business

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to engage in debate on Bill C-288, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for new graduates working in designated regions), a proposal to grant preferential tax treatment to a chosen few graduates in designated regions who take up qualifying employment for a limited period, after graduation.

I would like to remind the House that this proposal is nearly identical to one considered in the last Parliament, known as Bill C-207, a proposal, I further note, that was soundly rejected by the majority of all party finance committee after it conducted a detailed examination only last year.

Why did the committee reject this proposal? It was more than likely due to the numerous problems associated with this legislation, problems I will briefly outline.

First, it would basically provide preferential tax treatment to recent select post-secondary graduates working in a designated region, regardless of whether there would be a surplus or a shortage workers with their particular skills.

Second, what this proposal would classify as economically depressed designated regions is informed by another piece of legislation that has not been updated in nearly three decades. This would lead to both Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which have among the lowest unemployment rates in Canada, to be comically classified as “depressed regional economies”.

Is Manitoba, with an economy that has remained so strong that it is launching television ads aimed at attracting workers from other parts of Canada, a depressed region?

Is Saskatchewan, with the lowest unemployment rate in the country and labour shortages, a depressed region?

Listen to what the Canada West Foundation had to say about Saskatchewan's economy:

Not only did Saskatchewan lead Canada in economic growth last year, it is also in solid contention for doing the same this year. In fact, many analysts expect the economy of every other province but Saskatchewan to shrink this year...In 2008, Saskatchewan created more jobs than ever in its history. Things were so hot that some industries faced labour shortages, to the point that Premier Brad Wall visited job fairs outside the province to try to attract new workers.

Is Saskatchewan a depressed region? Clearly, the answer to that question would be an emphatic “no”.

Moreover, a proposal based on the assumption that both provinces are economically depressed and in need of special assistance would not only be ineffective, it would be preposterous.

Third, there is no guarantee that new graduates attracted to a designated region would remain there once their eligibility for the credit expired.

Fourth, Bill C-288 would be tremendously expensive, representing \$600 million annually in lost tax revenue. Is \$600 million for a proposal that would likely not result in any meaningful economic activity and likely not create a single job efficient? Again, clearly, the answer is an emphatic “no”.

Fifth, this proposal would be exceedingly unfair in that it would grant preferential tax treatment to a select few and nothing for others. For example, a new graduate working in Saskatchewan, one of the outdated depressed designated regions, and earning around \$33,400 would not pay a penny of federal income tax for three years. Whereas some in Ontario, not included in the nearly three decades old list of designated regions, would pay almost \$2,700 per year in federal income tax.

Without a doubt, this proposal is fatally flawed and one that the House should reject. Not only is it costly and ineffective, it would do nothing to ensure Canada generates the highly-skilled workers we need to succeed in the global knowledge-based economy and meet the needs of employers across Canada.

A skilled, educated and adaptable workforce will greatly influence Canada's ability to compete in a global marketplace and ensure we remain a prosperous country. That is why our Conservative government has remained focused on helping provide the highest quality education and skills training.

One of our Conservative government's ongoing commitments has been to strengthen post-secondary education to enable more Canadians to pursue studies and better link the skills and expertise of students to real world needs.

● (1335)

We have not merely been talking about that. We have taken real action through significant new investments to make that happen. These include: an additional \$800 million per year to the provinces and territories through the Canada social transfer to strengthen post-secondary education; support that will reach \$430 million annually for a new consolidated Canada student grant program designed to increase post-secondary participation and, ultimately, graduation; \$205 million in new annual funding to granting councils to support research and development at Canadian universities, creating new training opportunities for graduate students; close to \$200 million per year in new tax measures to help students and families with the costs of college or university, including the textbook tax credit, a full exemption for scholarship and bursary income and making the registered education savings plan more flexible and generous; and, measures to directly support academic excellence by supporting the following: the creation of an additional 1,000 Canada graduate scholarships awards for outstanding Canadian masters and doctoral students; the establishment of 500 new prestigious scholarships to attract the top Canadian and international doctoral students to Canadian institutions; and, the creation of new practical research and development internships for graduate students at Canadian companies to provide students with hands-on experience and understanding of the research challenges of the private sector.

Our Conservative government has also taken action in support of skilled trades. These include: a new apprenticeship job creation tax credit, which provides eligible employers a tax credit equal to 10% of the wages paid to qualifying apprentices in the first two years of their contract, up to \$2,000 per apprentice per year; a new apprenticeship incentive grant that will provide \$1,000 per year to apprentices in the first two years of an apprenticeship program in one of the nationally recognized red seal trades; and, a new tools tax deduction of up to \$500 to tradespeople for the cost of tools in excess of \$1,044 that they must acquire as a condition of their employment.

Also in budget 2009, we provided even further opportunities for short and long term skills upgrading. This included a targeted program for apprentices and new summer youth employment initiatives, such as \$15 million to the YMCA and YWCA to place young people in internships in not for profit and community services organizations. As YMCA Canada noted, the latter initiative will “assist young people to gain valuable employment skills and mentor civic engagement”.

We have also recognized that a fair and competitive tax system is fundamental to ensuring ongoing economic prosperity, providing incentives for youth to obtain further skills and knowledge and fueling entrepreneurship and investment. That is why we have slashed taxes nearly \$220 billion since forming government in 2006.

Unmistakably, our Conservative government has a comprehensive and long term plan to address current economic challenges while laying the groundwork for future prosperity. We cannot be sidetracked and we cannot afford to be derailed by expensive and ineffective proposals such as Bill C-288, a proposal that would do nothing to further regionalize economic development or lead to job creation.

Bill C-288 is a poorly targeted and unfair tax measure that is constructed on an outdated piece of legislation that has not been updated or revised in nearly three decades. That would absurdly classify Saskatchewan and Manitoba as depressed economic regions despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

I am unable to support this proposal and would encourage the House to similarly reject it, as the all party finance committee did after examining it in-depth last year.

• (1340)

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the proposal before us today, which is a very good proposal. At a minimum, it gives us the opportunity to speak about some of the challenges that those of us who represent smaller areas and rural communities in Canada have and what we as a national government might do to enhance the possibility of having some of our young people return to work in the areas from which they come. We have put a lot of resources, energy and time into developing our young people and we would like them to return home and participate with the new skills, training, education and intelligence they have gathered over their years of education, if they choose, with some incentive.

This bill is timely given the recession we are in and the difficult economic challenges that are being faced all over the country in large and small areas. Attention is being paid to some of the larger centres

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with big populations. Areas like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal are being decimated by downsizing in the auto industry. There are also small, vital, viable, wonderfully exciting communities across this country that are being hit hard as well.

They should, in partnership with senior levels of government, be able to attract some of those young people who they fostered in the first place back to work with them to develop new economies and take advantage of some of the new opportunities out there that they know about. Many of the young people study these. Many of them travel. Many of them, in their university settings, rub shoulders with folks from other parts of the country and get involved, interested and terribly excited about some of the new possibilities that might be there for all kinds of communities and areas in this country.

We need them to come back home and share their knowledge with their community leadership and work with businesses, social and economic development professionals or folks who exist in those communities. They would begin to not only imagine but actually work on putting in place those new work, business and social development opportunities that will actually put those communities on a proper footing.

The member who spoke previously defended the position of the government and its lack of action where regional economic development is concerned, particularly where smaller communities are taken into consideration. If we were to listen to her, we would yet again come to the understanding that the government really does not know or have any interest in knowing what is going on in big parts of Quebec where there are many challenged regional and rural areas that need not only money and resources to come from various and sundry places but personnel. They need young people. They need that intelligence that they bring to be part of that package as well.

I know that in my own area of northern Ontario and Algoma, surrounding Sault Ste. Marie, we have all kinds of challenges where the economy is concerned. We are taking some of those really wonderful little communities with unique and interesting characteristics and turning them around in these very difficult economic times. We will take advantage of the new economy that we know will come at us if we do the right thing.

Before the fall of the financial institutions around the world, the economy did not serve smaller, rural and regional areas in the same exciting way that it did for some of the bigger centres.

We think that a shift in priority, a shift in the way that we look at economy, a move back from the focus on global and world economy and a move back from the kind of interaction and trade that we hung our economic development and trade hat on for so long would play into the opportunities and the possibilities for some of our smaller communities.

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●(1345)

We need to begin once again to focus on domestic economies and on local economies, on the ability of local producers, manufacturers and workers to share with each other, to barter with each other and to work for and with each other to create work to generate the wealth and the money that is needed to keep a local economy going and, by doing that, then to participate from a position of strength and more positively and actively into the larger economy, which is often regional, then provincial and national.

Given the serious challenges facing young people when they come out of university these days, particularly with the loans they have accrued over those years of trying to get an education, it is often not realistic for them to go back to a smaller area where there is very limited opportunity for a job that they are trained in and a job that will pay them the kind of income they need to pay down their loans in a realistic timeframe so they can get on with their lives, consider entering into a relationship and having children. They will often choose to go some place else because of financial considerations and the burden of debt on their shoulders and on their families' shoulders, frankly. Because of that, they often move on to some place else and everybody is a loser.

I think most young people would be excited to go back home and actually create for themselves a wonderful lifestyle in a place where they were known and where they could bring new energy to their community.

In a country like Canada, with such a vast area of rural and remote lands, for us to develop those smaller communities and ensure they are viable and vital helps all of us. It makes our country a better place. Given the resource base of so much of what we do, where our relationship with other countries and trading fairly with other jurisdictions is concerned, it is the way that we harvest and take advantage of those resources in a sustainable fashion, which I believe young people understand much more readily and clearly than we often do. At the moment, our only practical experience and background is in the way that we have always done it. Young people may have new ways of doing things from what they have learned in their education. They may know how we can create an economy not only for today but an economy for tomorrow for our children and our children's children. We also need to do all that we can to protect the very at risk and vulnerable environment that right now that all of us really need to be paying attention to.

The member who spoke previously said that this was a very expensive attempt to attract young people to do some local and regional economic development. I suggest that we make political choices here every day that talk about how we spend the money that we collect from taxpayers.

For example, the government has chosen over the last two and a half years to give back to big corporations, oil companies, banks and wealthy Canadians, some \$250 billion in tax relief. That is a lot of money. If we take one small percentage of that and use it in a way that helps young people to return to their communities and stimulate local economies, I think our country is better off in the long run and it is a more intelligent investment in our young people. It says to them that we appreciate and put value on who they are and the

education they have received, that we want them to come back and that we are willing to be there with them and help them financially.

●(1350)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Sault Ste. Marie for his excellent speech. I hope that the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar listened to some of what he had to say.

Unfortunately, she left before the member for Sault Ste. Marie finished speaking, but if she had listened to his whole speech, I believe she would have seriously reconsidered her own position.

I would also have liked it if the Conservative members had listened more carefully to the speech by the member for Sault Ste. Marie and had distanced themselves from their Conservative ideology. I believe that if they had been more attentive, we would have more support for this bill, at least I hope so.

I would like to thank my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle for agreeing to introduce the bill, which gives a tax credit to new graduates working in regions with demographic and economic problems.

I have to say that my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle and I have visited a number of regions of Quebec in the past two months. Everywhere we went—Chicoutimi, Forestville, Matane, Trois-Pistoles, Baie-Comeau, Rimouski, Rouyn-Noranda, Val d'Or, Mont-Laurier, Maniwaki and La Tuque—we heard the same message: this sort of measure is needed to help young people and the regions.

I will come back to the speech given by my Conservative colleague from Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar. She raised a number of points. First, I have to say that if the member had consulted her people in Saskatoon, she would have realized that the Government of Saskatchewan has just introduced an identical program to help graduates who settle in economically depressed regions with declining populations.

The member also said that the Regional Development Incentives Act needed to be updated because it was out of date. I agree that this act should be updated, but it is not the role of this bill to do that. It is up to the government.

She also said that this program would cost \$100 million a year and that it was far too expensive. Hon. members will recall Bill C-207. The Conservatives who spoke to that bill said it was far too expensive. They were talking about \$600 million at the time. I see they have finally got their estimates down to more reasonable figures.

To give my colleagues of the House some context, I will give a brief outline of the bill. The tax credit is intended for students who, in the 24 months following the successful completion of their studies, accept employment in their area of specialization in a region that is facing economic and demographic difficulties. The bill would give an income tax credit of up to \$8,000 to recent graduates for a minimum of three years.

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In the 2006 election, I promised to introduce legislation to help young people who want to settle in the regions. I am talking about Bill C-207, which I introduced in April 2006. It was supported by a majority of members of the House at all readings and even made it to the Senate. Unfortunately, when an election was called in the fall of 2008, the bill was stopped in its tracks.

• (1355)

I am therefore very pleased to see that the bill is being debated again here today in this House. I am also happy because it gives me the opportunity to clarify a few things. By voting against the former Bill C-207, the Conservatives denied young people access to a tax credit they could have used as of this year's tax return. I was especially disappointed by the Conservative members from Quebec, particularly the two ministers from my region who, incidentally, are very familiar with this measure, since the Quebec government has had a similar measure in place since 2003.

Once again, these members have proven that those who are members of governing parties in Canada tend to close their eyes and forget about standing up for the people they represent. This time, I hope that Conservative members from Quebec, especially the members for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean and Jonquière—Alma, will pass along a message within their caucus explaining the benefits of such a measure.

It is a surprise to no one in this House when I say that the regions of Quebec, as well as several regions in other Canadian provinces, are in the midst of an economic crisis that began long before the current crisis struck. I am speaking of northern Ontario and northern British Columbia and of several large regions in decline in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island. These regions have had economic woes for many years. It goes without saying that implementing a tax credit to encourage young people to live in the area, or to remain there, would be very beneficial.

Our regions are experiencing a real crisis that the Conservative government is completely ignoring. I hope that, this time, my colleagues opposite will show a little more humility as they listen to the cries for help from the regions and the young people living there.

Quebec is not the only province to adopt such a program. Following the speech by the member from Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, I stated that the provincial government of Saskatchewan instituted a similar program a few years back.

Many regions are in a period of economic distress, which of course only increases the trend of youth out-migration. Indeed, the further we go from the main centres, the more the population is declining. Quebec, like Saskatchewan, has taken measures to stem the tide. The exodus of youth and the depopulation of the regions are not new phenomena. However, for decades, they were offset by high birth rates. With the drastic decline in the birth rate, the challenge today is to keep these young people in the region and to attract others to come and settle there. Time is of the essence because the trend has continued since the 1990s and the situation is worsening in several areas.

At present, the population is declining in 6 of the 17 administrative regions in Quebec, namely Abitibi-Témiscamingue,

the Lower St. Lawrence, the North Shore, Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands and part of Mauricie and Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. In fact, in my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, young graduates about to marry or start a family leave every day. A region that loses its young people is condemned to certain death, in the medium or the long term. To make matters worse, the departure of one young person often sets off a chain reaction and many more people leave their regions.

Young people who leave their regions to go study in Quebec City or Montreal end up making connections and friends and developing a network there. As such, it is more than likely that, once they have completed their studies, they will want to settle in their new community rather than return to their home region. That is what happened in my own family. There are five children in my family. My three sisters, my brother and I have 11 children all told, all of them born in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region. Now, only three of them remain in my region, while eight have gone to live elsewhere.

• (1400)

In closing, I would like the members to bear in mind that this bill has two goals: stem the outgoing tide of young people and bring skilled workers back home. This tax credit would go a long way toward developing the regions.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my Bloc Québécois colleague's passion for his family, his region and all of Quebec is remarkable. It is wonderful.

[*English*]

With respect to Bill C-288, I was quite intrigued to hear the speech of the Conservative Party member from Saskatchewan, whose region I recently visited upon invitation. We held forums on community economic development. It was quite ironic because the member from Saskatchewan narrowly beat out a great person I know, Nettie Wiebe, who will win it next time.

Mr. Ed Fast: Wishful thinking.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I think that a couple of hundred of votes should do it.

In Saskatoon people talked about the need for this very effort, that regional economic development hinged upon their ability to retain and attract graduates and young people. Young people have been leaving. Those human resources are critical to the development of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan in general and yet their representative today was speaking against such an effort.

This also speaks to a fundamental philosophy that seems wrong with the government and needs to be altered with respect to resources in general. We are talking about natural resources as well as the human resources in our young people who go through the training programs. The bill attempts to address the disastrous loss of human capital we have seen in many parts of rural Canada.

Private Members' Business

I come from northwestern British Columbia. While we have exported minerals, forestry products and fish, we have also exported a great deal of our young talent. We on the New Democrat side support the bill. We believe this could help alleviate some of the strains within our community. This is important in a national context as well simply because failing to attract this young raw talent back to our regions, will inhibit the ability of the country to bounce back from this recession. That is getting more doubtful today as the Prime Minister puts on his rosy glasses. The IMF and the Parliamentary Budget Officer are forced to correct him time and again.

The recession seems to be deepening and the only way out is to have a national vision. The only way out is to have a strategy and a plan. We must encourage the redevelopment of our rural communities. We have been losing people and talent. It affects things in a cyclical way. The more difficult it is to attract young professionals to a community, the more difficult it is to attract anyone to that community, and the more difficult it is to have the services to give Canadians the quality of life they have come to expect.

We hope that the bill can address the professional shortages in particular. We are talking about the doctors, the nurses and engineers who can help stimulate an economy. When the tipping point has already been crossed it is very difficult to attract other nurses, doctors, engineers and architects into the community when there is a shortage. A doctor may not come if that doctor is going to be the only doctor on call. If two or three doctors are already there, it is much easier for a small town to attract another doctor or nurse. Architects, artists and all the other professionals do not come if the pool is too small. We have seen the trend over the past 20 years. Some of it is partly due to demographic trends. However, it is also because of a lack of vision on the part of the federal and provincial governments. It affects the urban and rural landscapes of this country.

Today I was pleased to welcome a group from my community of Thornhill. Members of the junior secondary band were here on a triumphant tour. The band had just won a bunch of gold medals at a national competition. These young people are in Ottawa for the first time. They are celebrating in our capital. They have such bright young faces and so much talent to exhibit over their lives. However, after they graduate from college, in the trades, or university, what will our ability be in northwestern British Columbia, or any part of rural Canada, to attract that talent back? How can we make it more welcome for them? Bill C-288 seems to help address that, to at least take some steps toward helping those who are interested in living in rural parts of Canada.

The history of this country has been driven by an idea that we would expand into some of the more remote and rural regions in order to access the incredible wealth in resources. Much of that was done in an ad hoc way, but there was always an understanding that the resources were common property, that the resources were of a collective good that Canadians were endowed with.

• (1405)

Time and time again we have seen natural resource policies from the government which shut down communities. We have certainly seen it across British Columbia in the forestry sector. It is absolutely

devastating. Fifty-four mills have closed and 28,000 people have lost their jobs in a five year period.

Then when someone brings forward a bill to counteract that and make it more attractive for graduates to get back into those communities to start up their own businesses and have a professional career, we hear Conservative members say that we do not need that either. They will strip down our basic industries, and then when we suggest ideas that could attract professionals back to those communities, the Conservatives say that they are too busy for that. They are occupying their time with free trade deals with Colombia to which they are not applying any kind of intelligence whatsoever. If there were a better form of investment than this, I would ask the government to make that claim and stand on it.

The government has claimed that attracting our young people to rural parts of the country is just too expensive to do. Yet the Conservatives can find \$1.3 billion every year to dump into the tar sands, into companies that make hundreds of millions of dollars especially in times when oil was \$140 a barrel. They did not know what to do with the money, and the problem was it was overheated and the government was absolutely complacent with the previous regime and it continued to overheat.

That was considered a good choice and is still considered a good choice by the government. We see that as fundamentally flawed. The government should use that \$1.4 billion to help graduates move into rural parts of Canada. It should stop these tax handouts to companies that do not need them, and put that money in places where it would actually make sense to help alleviate the strains that are happening within rural Canada.

The second point to this speaks to another vision that seems to be absent, which is what a restoration of the economy would look like. South of border we see quite an inspirational movement toward a green economy, toward making the recovery and the investments that are happening on behalf of the taxpayers lead to a betterment of and a creation of a sustainable economy.

The government says it is agnostic and it will just step back and let the invisible hand do its nefarious work. Yet time and again young professionals and new companies say that the investment environment here in Canada for green and new sustainable technologies pales in comparison to that in the United States, Europe and Australia.

The money will flow to the places that actually create the environment to attract the young professionals that we are talking about in this bill. The government cannot simply wash its hands of this and say that it is going to dump a bunch of money into the oil sands but do nothing on wind energy, which is running out in two months' time. Wind companies have been petitioning the government for months now, asking what it is doing to catch the shortfall.

Canadians are interested. Companies are being set up. People have made the investments. They are ready to create those jobs, and now the government is saying that the subsidy, which is one-quarter of the one in the U.S., already tipped out of scale, is just going to die out completely.

To young folks who are coming out of the colleges, universities and the trades right now, it is perplexing to encounter a government with a policy and a budget that was perfectly designed for 1950. It would have been an excellent set of numbers and initiatives from a government two generations ago, but not for a government looking to the future, to a new economy for the graduates of today.

We get these mixed signals all the time. And we wonder why young people do not get more involved, why the voting rates are so low, and why they do not stand for office as frequently as they should. I have talked to those young people. I know that even my Conservative colleagues sneak into a school from time to time, or encounter a young person, by accident, perhaps. The Conservatives need to ask the young people what they need. The things needed in rural Canada are initiatives that allow young people to feel some sense of hope of returning to their communities and reinvesting in those communities, creating the kind of economy and communities that we want to see for the future.

The Conservatives have to get out of the dark ages. Those guys have to turn around and support initiatives that are proactive and progressive. They should at long last leave the ideology behind and support the bill. Let us get on with attracting young people back to rural Canada.

• (1410)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Private Members' Business

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 27, 2009, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 2:12, the House stands adjourned until Monday, May 25, 2009 at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:11 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

Second 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
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—Limouilou	Québec	CPC
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
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
Dechert, Bob	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	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
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

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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		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, Leader of the Opposition	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 Interna- tional 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
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

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	BQ
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
Label, 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
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.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
Raïtt, 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.
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

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
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

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
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 Diversification)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Zarac, Lise	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	Lib.
VACANCY	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	
VACANCY	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Second 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 (35)		
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	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
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
VACANCY	New Westminster—Coquitlam	
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 (10)		
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
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
VACANCY	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	
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, Leader of the Opposition	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	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 May 15, 2009 — 2nd Session, 40th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

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Vice-Chairs:

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Mauril Bélanger

Rob Clarke
John Duncan

Marc Lemay
Yvon Lévesque

LaVar Payne
Greg Rickford

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

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Vice-Chairs:Russ Hiebert
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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

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Malcolm Allen	David Anderson	Carolyn Bennett	Bev Shipley	(7)

CANADIAN HERITAGE

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Rod Bruinooge
Dean Del Mastro

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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Mark Warawa

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Patrick Brown	Peter Goldring	Anita Neville	Justin Trudeau
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Siobhan Coady	Randy Kamp	Scott Reid	Rodney Weston
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Nathan Cullen	Gerard Kennedy	Lee Richardson	Stephen Woodworth
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Mr. Daniel Petit	to the Minister of Justice
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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
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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
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