



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, February 2, 2011**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 2, 2011

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like most members, I feel a heightened sense of patriotic pride when attending citizenship ceremonies. This certainly was the case recently when I had the privilege of attending the ceremony of Jens Hansen of Beamsville, Ontario.

Since moving from his native Netherlands, a complicated history of bureaucratic red tape has meant that for the past 21 years Jens has officially been stateless. He met and married his Canadian wife, Carolyn, when the two worked in Bermuda and they chose to move to Canada to raise their two fine sons, Kristiaan and Liam.

The family is very active in the community and Jens assists at Community Care and local schools, as well as participating in the Rotary theatre.

In short, he exudes the fine qualities that have made our country of immigrants so great. I was pleased that my office was able to help Jens through the citizenship process.

I would like to congratulate Jens and to thank him for his continuing contributions to our local community and to Canada, the country he can now proudly call his own.

I welcome Jens home.

### JORDAN RIVER ANDERSON

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is the sixth anniversary of the passing of the late Jordan River Anderson, a young boy from the Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba in whose memory is named “Jordan's Principle”.

Jordan was born with a rare neuromuscular disorder and was ready to go home from the hospital when he was two years old. However, he spent over two more years in the hospital due to a jurisdictional dispute over who should pay for his home care. Tragically, Jordan passed away at five years of age without ever leaving the hospital.

Jordan's Principle honours his memory by affirming that the needs of the child must always supersede jurisdictional disputes.

In December 2007, the House passed a motion unanimously calling on the government to immediately adopt a child-first principle based on Jordan's Principle.

I ask my colleagues in all parties to join me in honouring the memory of Jordan Anderson and call on the government to respect the will of Parliament and fully implement Jordan's Principle without delay.

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[Translation]

### L'ÉCHO DU NORD'S 2010 PEOPLE OF THE YEAR

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce you to the 2010 people of the year, as chosen by the newspaper *L'Écho du Nord*: Joanna Comtois, the woman of the year, and Danny Berger, the man of the year.

Joanna, who is 14 years old, found out when she was 8 that she had Ewing's sarcoma. She now knows that she will never recover. Nevertheless, she established Fondation Espoir or the foundation of hope, which supports pediatric cancer research that, it is hoped, will help other children. This endearing girl has captured everyone's heart through her courage and determination.

Danny Berger, the man of the year, is the co-owner of Vieux Shack, a well-known and popular bar and restaurant in Saint-Jérôme. He is also a popular radio host and DJ. Using his extraordinary communication skills, he led the Leucan Shaved Head Challenge in the Laurentian region. Danny says that talking to people brings him joy, and we can attest that sharing this joy is what guides him and what led him to receive this honour.

Congratulations Joanna and Danny.

*Statements by Members*

•(1410)  
[English]

**TYESHIA JONES**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it saddens me to rise today to remember Tyeshia Jones, a young Cowichan woman brutally murdered in my hometown of Duncan. She was doing what many young people do. She was walking home late at night after a party but she never made it. Instead, our community spent days searching for her and was devastated when her body was found.

Sometimes the sad facts about violence against aboriginal women can overwhelm us. A young woman like Tyeshia should have the same expectations of a violence-free life as any other young woman in Canada but aboriginal women are three times more likely to experience violence and are seven times more likely to be murdered.

In Cowichan, we value the lives of our young women and we will walk together to show whoever took her life that we honour Tyeshia and her family. The community will gather for “Take Back the Night - A Walk for Tyeshia Jones” in downtown Duncan on February 18. All are welcome.

We thank the many volunteers who searched for Tyeshia and the many RCMP officers who are investigating her murder.

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**THE PRINCE ARTHUR HERALD**

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the students at McGill University for founding *The Prince Arthur Herald*. This newspaper was founded last month and promises to be a beacon of freedom.

All Canadians, including myself, can be proud of the principles this paper seeks to promote. These include: a dedication to the free market system that has provided Canadian society with wealth, prosperity and opportunity for all; the belief in the limitation of state regulation to only the most fundamentally necessary aspects of Canadian life; the freedom of speech and expression, particularly in Canadian political life; along with a belief in a strong and viable national defence to secure the safety of Canadians.

Once again, I would like to congratulate *The Prince Arthur Herald* and I look forward to the wealth that this nation shall derive from its moral sentiments.

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**JOSE KUSUGAK**

**Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on January 19, Inuit leader, Jose Kusugak, went on his final journey in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, surrounded by family and friends.

A linguist and broadcaster with CBC North and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, Jose helped bring new vitality to the Inuktitut language. A political leader, Jose served as president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Kivalliq Inuit Association.

As a founder of Nunavut, Jose was a father of Confederation. He famously said that Inuit are first Canadians and Canadians first. A

storyteller, a hockey fan and a negotiator who possessed great wit, intelligence and a big heart, Jose was, above all, a father, a husband and a grandfather.

We take comfort in knowing that Jose left this life where he wanted to be: at home and in his homeland with Nellie and surrounded by the people he loved and who loved him. We thank Jose for all that he has accomplished for Inuit and for Canada.

*Nakurmiik. Matna.*

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**VOLUNTEERISM**

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over the recess period, a number of regions in New Brunswick were hit hard by storms and high winds. In my riding of Tobique—Mactaquac, private and public property damage was significant, including along the Saint John River and Keswick River valleys.

During the process, I had an opportunity to spend time on a cleanup crew removing damaged walls and insulation.

[Translation]

It is a terrible sight to see people go through something like that, and even worse when it happens over the holidays.

[English]

In spite of the challenges, people are working hard to restore their homes and their lives. I want to express my appreciation and thanks to the many volunteers who have stepped up to assist those folks in need, the local service organizations, community members and businesses who have donated time, money and supplies to the restoration cause and to our valued volunteer firefighters who have played a key role in ensuring community safety.

We hope and pray for continued success in the coming weeks and months as those impacted work to restore their lives. I know the continued dedication of family, friends and community will play a big part in that continued progress.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SECURITIES**

**Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on January 12, the member for Beauce published a letter opposing the Conservative plan to create a national securities commission based in Toronto. He also said that this plan does not respect the Constitution because it intrudes intrusion into provincial jurisdictions. Let us not forget that he has openly defended his position in the past, calling the plan “misguided and unrealistic.” This is yet another voice within the Conservative caucus itself that is speaking out against this plan to centralize.

*Statements by Members*

Now that we all know where the member for Beauce stands, I hope that he will put his money where his mouth is when we reintroduce a motion condemning the Conservative plan and that he will support that motion. Otherwise, it can be assumed that he wrote this letter only out of political opportunism and personal interest.

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•(1415)

*[English]***BRUCE HALLIDAY**

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to and honour the life and memory of Dr. Bruce Halliday, member of Parliament for Oxford from 1974 through 1993.

Dr. Halliday continually strove to serve his community and improve the well-being of his family, friends, patients and constituents. The front page headline in the *Tavistock Gazette* after Bruce's passing read, "Dr. Halliday was an inspiration to all".

Bruce served as chairman of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities and held many memberships on various committees and parliamentary organizations.

In 2004, he was presented with the Distinguished Service Award by the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians. As well, he received an award from the Speaker of the House of Commons in recognition of parliamentary leadership on disability issues.

Dr. Bruce was the kind of man we all aspire to be. He was a loving, caring husband, father, grandfather and an inspiration to his whole family. Bruce was an extremely committed citizen to his community and his community activities. I and many others have lost a true and loyal friend. In addition, I have truly lost a mentor.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Elizabeth and her family.

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*[Translation]***FRANÇOIS LANGLOIS**

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to mark a remarkable achievement by a citizen of LaSalle, the third Quebecker to reach the seven summits and one of the 170 climbers who have scaled the highest peaks on the seven continents. François Langlois accomplished this feat in December when he reached the summit of the Vinson Massif in Antarctica.

In 10 years of adventures, this philanthropist and explorer has collected more than \$4 million for sick children. Born prematurely with respiratory difficulties, he spent a month in an incubator fighting for his life. When starting out on his expedition to the top of Mount Everest, he promised to give back to children.

Mission accomplished for François Langlois who, during his expeditions, has always remembered the seriously ill children he has met on his hospital visits.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House, I wish to congratulate him for his grit and determination and thank him for his great generosity.

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*[English]***IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my constituents were outraged by media reports that a Canadian immigration official wanted to let an illegal immigrant count his illegal work experience on his immigration application. Not surprisingly, some of those who profit off the immigration industry like the new interpretation of the rules. Immigration lawyer, Joel Sandaluk stated, "Immigration Canada should reward hard work".

That is not the point. In Canada we welcome a quarter of a million legal immigrants every year. Canadians expect immigrants to come here the legal way, not pay immigration lawyers to help break our laws and then profit off of it.

That is why I was happy to see a few days later that our government's immigration minister had overruled this official and made clear that illegal immigrants are, ipso facto, criminally inadmissible to Canada.

My constituents support a welcoming policy toward legal immigration, just as they support the Government of Canada enforcing its laws and deporting those who work here illegally. The law is the law.

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**CANADIAN FORCES**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are well-known for using military personnel in their photo ops.

We found out over the Christmas holidays that the Supreme Court of Canada has now authorized the class action law suit of SISIP to proceed. Instead of having 6,500 disabled soldiers go to the courts to seek retribution for their benefits, why does the government not now sit down with the class action law suit and settle this once and for all?

We also found out that now the Conservatives, through the Treasury Board, want to charge military and CF personnel for parking on military bases. Imagine having to pay to go to work and park your car.

We also found out today that those next of kin who travelled to Afghanistan to the site of where their fallen soldiers may have come from may no longer benefit from military expenditures to cover the cost of their travel.

When will the government stop using the military for photo ops and really do something for the men and women of our military once and for all?

*Oral Questions*

● (1420)

*[Translation]***THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the economy is our government's top priority. Our economic action plan has produced concrete results, but we must now stay the course. We have listened to Canadian families, small business owners, workers and business people.

The Prime Minister and the Conservative members of Parliament have held over 150 economic consultations with Canadians. We continue to hear that Canadian families and businesses want our government to stay the course. They want us to create jobs, balance the budget and cut taxes.

Our government's tax reduction plan will protect and create jobs and will stabilize our economy. We will continue to oppose the opposition's plan to increase taxes, since this would stall the economic recovery, cause the loss of jobs and hurt families.

The opportunism exhibited by the coalition will cost us jobs and will jeopardize Canada's fragile economic recovery.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Collective of Solidarity with the Tunisian Struggle for Social Justice is holding a rally on Parliament Hill today to show its support for the people of Tunisia.

Tunisians are experiencing a surge of hope, having freed themselves from the heavy yoke that was weighing them down. The beginnings of real democracy are taking shape. The democratic world should pay close attention to the Tunisian experience, because its success could fuel the aspirations of other countries in the region.

The federal government's message must be clear: Canada will not harbour former dictators or their families. It must reach an extradition arrangement with Tunisia concerning Mr. Trabelsi, the brother-in-law of former president Ben Ali. Canada must also immediately freeze all of his assets and those of his family so they cannot be liquidated or transferred to tax havens. If any of those assets come from dirty money, they must be seized and returned to their rightful owners: the people of Tunisia.

Long live a democratic Tunisia!

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*[English]***TAXATION**

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, average Canadians cannot believe the Conservative government is handing out billions in tax breaks for wealthy corporations when we have a \$56 billion deficit and have added over \$100 billion to the country's debt.

These massive corporate tax cuts will not help the two million small business owners who have had their payroll taxes increased. Huge handouts to big corporations will not help average families to pay their mortgages or gas up their cars.

Canadians know big oil and big banks do not need billions in tax breaks. Too bad the Conservatives have not got the message.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Ajax—Pickering's recent tour of a correctional facility left him "unimpressed". He said that he was unimpressed that the failed prison farm program, which lost millions of taxpayer dollars a year and had less than a 1% success rate, was replaced with more relevant and effective inmate programs. He was unimpressed that prisoners were not happy while serving their sentences and paying their debt to society. If anyone should be unimpressed, it is the Canadian taxpayers who work hard and play by the rules.

The Liberal public safety critic can continue to champion the rights of prisoners and high morale for inmates. On this side, our Conservative government will continue to work hard to get results for law-abiding Canadians and victims, like Bill C-23B that would prevent those who commit sexual crimes against children from ever receiving a pardon.

This is our pledge, even if being tough on crime does not impress the member for Ajax—Pickering.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***PENSIONS**

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for five years the government has done nothing about pensions and then it comes up with a private option that will weaken the Canada pension plan and simply boost profits for banks and insurance companies on top of the \$6 billion tax break they have already been given.

When will the Prime Minister stop lining up behind banks and insurance companies and start lining up behind middle-class Canadian families who need security in retirement?

● (1425)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I note that the idea for a new registered pool pension plan was very well received by all of the provinces and would be a useful addition to Canada's retirement income system.

This is the government that has brought in income splitting for our pensioners, the tax free savings account, increases to the pension deduction to the age limit. In every case the Liberal Party voted against those things. When will it get on the side of Canadian pensioners?

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 75% of private sector employees do not have a pension plan. However, instead of strengthening the public pension plan, the Prime Minister is enriching banks and insurance companies with his private plan, in addition to the \$6 billion in tax breaks he has given those very companies.

Why does this government line up behind banks and insurance companies and never behind ordinary middle class Canadian families?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, this government has done more than any other government ever has for pensioners in this country. We brought in income splitting for our pensioners, the tax free savings account, increases to pension benefits and tax credits for seniors. In every case the Liberal Party voted against those benefits for our pensioners. It is time for the Liberal Party to support our seniors.

[English]

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, talk to the income trust retirees about what the government did to them.

The issue here is the government should be strengthening the public provision, the Canada pension plan, instead of enriching banks and insurance companies.

The Prime Minister himself has a public pension. It is a good fat public pension. He stood up for that pension. When will he stand up for improved public pensions for average Canadians?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is precisely what this government has done, which is a very different record than on the other side, when the previous government put Canada into so much difficulty. What was it doing with services for ordinary people with health care, education, pensions? As the Liberal government was raising taxes on people, it was also scrapping those services. That is why we have to keep taxes low, keep core services funded in the country and ensure we keep this economy and job creation going.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS**

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while American Senator Joe Lieberman is dragging our national reputation through the mud and slugging our border, the Prime Minister is negotiating a secret perimeter security deal with the United States. If the Prime Minister is negotiating this deal in secret, it is because he intends to sacrifice large portions of our sovereignty.

Why is the Prime Minister discussing perimeter security with the Americans and not with Canadians?

[English]

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government always puts the interests of Canada first and foremost. The hon. member knows that more than \$1.6 billion in trade crosses

the border between our country and our nearest neighbour every day, creating job and economic opportunities.

We have been focused on means of keeping our shared border open to trade and investment and closed to security and terrorist threats.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is using security as a foil to disguise his failures on trade with the United States.

Yes, the border has thickened, but do not for a minute think that it has to do with security. Labelling rules have nothing to do with security. Buy American legislation has nothing to do with security. Higher fees at the border have nothing to do with security. Recent U.S. softwood lumber claims have nothing to do with security. It is our Canadian sovereignty.

Why is the Prime Minister having these discussions with the Americans but not having these discussions with Canadians?

• (1430)

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, only a Liberal would be concerned that we are talking to a trading partner with whom we do 75% of our trade. Of course we want to keep those lines of trade and security open. We will continue to do that. We are committed to that. I hope that the Liberal Party will support this because it is right for Canada. It is in the best interests of our country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HARMONIZATION OF SALES TAXES**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to tax specialist Luc Godbout, Quebec's and Ottawa's sales taxes are essentially harmonized, which means that both taxes are applied to the same goods, with a few exception, such as books, diapers and nursing products. These goods are not taxed by the Government of Quebec.

My question for the Prime Minister is this: is the problem with the negotiations between the two parties a result of the fact that Ottawa is determined to impose a tax on certain goods, such as books and diapers, which calls into question Quebec's policy on culture and families?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc said that there were differences between the federal sales tax and Quebec's sales tax, and the reason is that the taxes are not harmonized. That is what we are in the process of negotiating with the Government of Quebec and these negotiations will be held in good faith.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there can be some differences, as there are in the agreements with Ontario, and the Prime Minister knows that as well as I do. What is causing problems right now is the stubbornness of the Minister of Finance—from Ontario—who gave \$4.3 billion to Ontario but who refuses to do so for Quebec, even though Quebec did this back in 1992.

*Oral Questions*

I am urging the Prime Minister, as is Mr. Bachand, Quebec's finance minister, to intervene in this issue, to take it over and to resolve it once and for all.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we favour sales tax harmonization, but that decision is up to the provinces. Quebec has the option to sign an agreement like the ones signed by Ontario, British Columbia and the Maritimes. Until now, Quebec has not decided to do so, but we will continue negotiating in good faith to harmonize sales taxes, while respecting our agreements with the other provinces.

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**TAX EVASION**

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the government lacks political will when it comes to both harmonization and tax havens.

In parliamentary committee, Brigitte Alepin, a specialist in the field, admonished the government for making it easier for the wealthy to evade taxes. She reminded us that the last budget contained new provisions that encourage tax evasion through the use of tax havens.

Why does this government encourage the use of tax havens?

[English]

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of National Revenue, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government is working to address the issue of tax havens.

The following is an interesting quote from Jeffrey Owens of the OECD recently at the finance committee:

I talk to a lot of business people, financial advisers, investment banks. And the one thing that clearly has changed here is that if they get a Canadian client who comes to them and says, "Look, I want to evade taxes; perhaps I could use Barbados or somewhere else", they'll say "Forget it. Those days are gone." So there's been a change in attitude on the part of the business community, and that should not be underestimated.

This is thanks to the work of our government.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that same individual chided Canada for having agreements with Panama, which is a tax haven.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Canadian banks have raked in an after-tax net profit of \$46 billion, \$6 billion of that because of their presence in tax havens. That seems to me to be quite a bit.

By putting an end to tax evasion, the government could rebalance its finances and would have the leeway to help the economic sectors that need it.

Why is the Minister of Finance helping his banking friends and saving them billions of dollars through their use of tax havens?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Once again this year, Mr. Speaker, the World Economic Forum has rated our financial system the best in the world. This has happened for several years now.

We have been through a very difficult time, a very difficult recession, but we are one of those countries, and there are only a few in the developed world, that did not have to take taxpayers' money and put it into our banks.

Our banks were able to continue. Our credit system was able to continue. That is one of the reasons jobs have been recovered, and we have about 400,000 net new jobs in Canada now than we lost during the course of the recession.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

[Translation]

**PENSIONS**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister must remain open-minded. Public pension plans carry low risk. They are indexed to account for inflation and they do not cost much to manage. No other retirement savings method offers the same advantages at such a low cost.

Why protect the interests of big businesses that do not need help or protection? Why will the Prime Minister not instead help families and workers by improving public pension plans?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and his colleagues, his provincial counterparts, are discussing ways to improve the Canada pension plan. However, we must reach an agreement with the provinces and at this time, Canadians do not want us to increase premiums and taxes to improve pensions. We are currently examining this option for improving our pension system, as we have already done through many other measures.

[English]

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, governing is about making choices.

The Prime Minister could choose to work with us on the New Democrat plan that would make life more affordable for our seniors or he could choose Bay Street and more corporate giveaways. Clearly, that will be the Conservatives' choice, judging by the reaction in their backbenches at the moment.

The New Democrats' CPP plan is doable. It is modest in cost and it is realistic, and it has been endorsed by the former chief actuary of the CPP.

Will the Prime Minister agree to our practical pension plan and include it in the budget?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated earlier, the government has adopted several measures to improve the pension system in this country.

The Minister of Finance and his provincial counterparts recently announced the development of the registered pooled pension plan in terms of improvements to the CPP.



That is an ongoing subject of discussion with the provinces. The provinces do have to approve. Many do not approve and at this time, at least in our view and certainly in the view of most, this is not the time for increases in CPP premiums.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it seems the Conservatives have made their choice. Their preferred option for fixing the pensions is to take the big banks' approach. It reminds me of that ad we see on TV. The Bay Street model does not work. The managers take up to 40% in fees. We call them egg management fees.

According to the polls, Canadians prefer building their retirement based on the improved Canada public pension plan. That is very clear. Why is that? It is because it is a plan that is owned by Canadians, guaranteed efficient and inflation-proof.

Will the Conservatives include improvements to the CPP in the budget?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, changes to the CPP require the consent of the provinces. It cannot be done by the federal government unilaterally.

While the Canada pension plan is an important part of our retirement income system, so are a range of private and individual savings options. There are many financial planners in many financial firms in this country who do an excellent job of providing services for their clients in planning for their retirement.

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#### ATOMIC ENERGY OF CANADA LIMITED

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has been a leader in nuclear energy for 60 years. The Conservative policies are threatening that reputation as well as tens of thousands of jobs.

When the Conservatives announced their intention to sell AECL, they put a halt to all contracts. Meanwhile, Ontario is looking to expand its nuclear generation, and AECL would be the natural choice.

Why is the government starving AECL, reducing its value and grinding Ontario's energy plan to a halt?

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are doing nothing of the sort. Our government is continuing the transaction process in order to establish a more competitive CANDU, Inc. under private ownership and to protect the interests of Canadian taxpayers. We hope to conclude this process as quickly as possible in order to provide certainty to AECL employees, to clients and to the industry.

• (1440)

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, policies are reducing the value of AECL and it is also all about jobs. There are tens of thousands of jobs in the GTA alone. Ontario was hit hard by the recession and many of those jobs have not returned. There is a real opportunity to create and maintain jobs, as well as ensure that Canada remains a world leader in nuclear energy.

#### Oral Questions

Why do the Conservatives insist on killing jobs and selling out Canada's nuclear industry? Have they never heard of the Avro Arrow?

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy is staggering. For 13 long years, the Liberals starved that organization of funding and support. Our government is continuing this transaction process. We are going to get it done as quickly as possible and it is going to be done for the benefit of the industry, for the clients and for the employees.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that the government is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to ram the F-35 aircraft down Canadians' throats.

Ministers' tours, generals' tours—we have never seen anything like it. Even worse, they are making the same announcements more than once and claiming that some contracts are in jeopardy. But when we check, we find the contracts have already been completed. It is an outright sham.

Are they worried about Canadians learning the truth: that they are incompetent and are wasting taxpayers' money?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think the person who is worried is the member opposite because the more he talks against the F-35 the more he shows his true colours. He is against the aerospace industry in his own region. He is working against those men and women he used to serve with.

In this government we are going to invest in the important equipment that the men and women in uniform need. We are an important country. In the future there may be threats against this country. We are going to give our men and women in uniform the equipment they need to do the important job that we ask of them. I am very proud of this investment. We are going ahead.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians will be glad to know that I am defending taxpayers' money. The Minister of National Defence says the F-35 can be modified to be compatible with Canada's refuelling tankers within the, and I quote, "current budget allotted for the F-35".

Could the minister please inform Canadian taxpayers how much this additional modification will cost? While we are at it, Canadians would also like to know what is the current budget allotted for the F-35. The minister acts as though he knows. Let us find out.

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the member were paying attention he would know: it is \$9 billion. The refuelling capability is within that budget.

*Oral Questions*

I had hoped, given his background, that he would boldly go where no Liberal has gone before and would support the men and women in uniform. Alas, he has fallen back on that old Liberal position of playing politics on the backs of the men and women in uniform.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that he would judge the Egyptian government by its ability to maintain stability.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us whether the stability he is looking for will be achieved by keeping President Mubarak in power?

[English]

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, we have all been watching events in Egypt very closely as they unfold. We will always be strong supporters of freedom, democracy, justice and human rights. We have repeatedly urged the Egyptian people to move in that direction as they seek reforms that benefit their future.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the reply is confusing. It is like the minister's position on the assets of the Ben Ali family. Even though the European Union and Switzerland are taking action to freeze the assets the Ben Ali family accumulated by pillaging the Tunisian people, the Conservative government is refusing to clearly state whether it intends to freeze these assets before they are transferred to tax havens.

Can the minister clearly tell us whether he intends to quickly freeze the assets of the Ben Ali family?

•(1445)

[English]

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we made it very clear that members of the Ben Ali family who have profited unfairly at the expense of the Tunisian people are not welcome in our country.

I can advise the member that we are working closely with our international partners to use every legal means in Canada to address this issue and we will continue to work very hard on it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Canadian Heritage is once again being taken to task by the Commissioner of Official Languages for the length of time it takes to provide funding to organizations in francophone communities. The processing of funding applications is so chaotic that some organizations have had to use their credit cards to pay their employees. The commissioner says that these chronic delays have

resulted in Canadian Heritage failing to fulfill its obligations to these communities.

What does the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages intend to do to correct this situation?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, and I have already spent time pointing out to my colleague that our government has already taken action. We have already initiated the necessary reforms to reassure all francophone and anglophone communities in Canada that receive funding from our government that the process has been fixed. We have already implemented the necessary measures.

In Mr. Fraser's report—the report mentioned by my colleague here in the House—the commissioner stated that he was satisfied with the steps taken by the government to improve the situation. This has been resolved.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, whether we are talking about the bilingualism of judges, the use of French as a language of work in federal institutions, or the use of French at the Vancouver Olympic Games, the bottom line is that, for this government, French is a second-class language.

What is the minister waiting for to rein in the Department of Canadian Heritage and remind it of its obligations to francophone communities?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, quite simply, that is utterly false. Our government takes its responsibilities in the area of official languages seriously. That is why we put in place our Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, a real action plan, and increased by 20% funding for grassroots organizations that help new Canadians, whether they speak French or English, who are in a minority situation.

The 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games were the most bilingual games in the history of the Olympics. They were a great success for all of Canada. We are very proud of our commitments, investments and policies that protect Canada's two official languages.

\* \* \*

[English]

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us set the record straight. The Conservatives' short-sighted, ill-advised and reckless CRTC policy direction of 2006 by the former minister, and their conservative colleague from Beauce, created today's usage billing fiasco.

Here is some free advice for that minister. For the sake of consumers, competition, business and innovation, use section 12 of the Telecommunications Act and issue an order in council to rescind the CRTC decision on usage based billing.

Will that minister act?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. Of course, the opposition party is new to this file. It just encountered this in the last 48 hours and started to try to raise money to fill its coffers for an election that nobody wants.

However, we are concentrating on jobs and opportunities for Canadians. We are concentrating on the economy. We want to make sure that the Internet is available for consumers, small businesses, innovators and creators. That is what we are all about. That is why we are reviewing this decision through that prism to make sure that Canada's best interests are maintained.

**Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, you have created that mess. Now fix it.

[*Translation*]

Yesterday the Minister of Industry was asked whether he would overturn the CRTC's decision that will allow Internet service providers to charge Canadians more, while also limiting competition. He replied that he would review the decision, not overturn it. Let me be crystal clear.

Will the minister invoke section 12 of the Telecommunications Act in order to ensure healthy competition for Canadian Internet users? Will he repair the damage he has caused since 2006?

• (1450)

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his point of view, but at the same time, of course we need to take action. We must protect consumers, innovators, and small and medium-sized businesses. That is what this government has always done.

[*English*]

That is what we have done. That is what we will do. We will always stand on the side of Canadians and consumers.

\* \* \*

**HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is giving our largest corporations billions of dollars in tax breaks while shutting the doors of Service Canada community offices throughout rural Canada. These centres are open every day and are a lifeline for those who need to access government information on a daily basis.

In Newfoundland, people are being told to go online or wait until a Service Canada employee visits the community, which may be two days a month.

I ask the minister, how can the government save money on the backs of rural Canadians and give billions in tax breaks to our largest corporations?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to providing Canadians with access to information and to the benefits and services to which they have a right. That is why we are actually improving the service to be delivered to her constituents.

Right now, the people who are there do not work for the government. They cannot offer very much in the way of information

or service. So what we are doing is that we are putting in government employees there who will actually be able to provide services to these citizens, in terms of helping them get their old age security, or their CPP, or a social insurance number. We are going to make sure they get the service.

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, sending people to the Internet when many rural Canadians do not have access to high-speed Internet is an insult. Expecting people to organize their lives to coincide with the schedule of a Service Canada employee who may get to the community, depending on the weather and, in my riding, on a ferry schedule, is completely unreasonable and inconsiderate. Hundreds of jobs will be lost throughout the country.

Why is it that the Prime Minister can find all the staff he needs to put up 10,000 signs worth \$40 million but will not find the dollars to keep the people who provide these essential services?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do wish the hon. member would stop fear-mongering and let her constituents know the real facts.

With this new outreach situation, what we are going to be doing is providing service that was not available in these communities before. We are going to have qualified government employees who will actually be able to accept and process the applications for old age security, for the guaranteed income supplement, for the Canada pension plan, for a social insurance number.

We want her constituents to have these services to be able to do it at home. Why does she not help us with that?

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we know, the economy is our government's top priority. Canada's continued economic growth demonstrates that we are in fact on the right track. Investing in job creation and keeping taxes low for families and job creators are some of the priorities we are focusing on.

Conservative ministers and members of parliament have been very actively consulting with Canadians right across this country.

Would the President of the Treasury Board please tell us what the results of these consultations are to date.

**Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first, just for the record, if I may, and to put you at ease relative to a comment that just came from the other side of the House, we do not think, on this side of the House, that you were responsible for any messes. We just wanted to clarify that.

### Oral Questions

I can tell members that before the economic action plan was launched, we listened carefully to Canadians. We may not have done everything perfectly. We think we got it about right. We are the strongest economy in the G7. Over 400,000 jobs have been created. The average Canadian family pays \$3,000 less in tax than before the plan was put in place.

We are continuing to listen. The Prime Minister has led, and so have MPs and ministers, on round tables. Over 150 them have taken place. We are listening to Canadians.

\* \* \*

### CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when the Americans started threatening that Canadians would require passports at the U.S. border, the previous Liberal government did nothing.

Now this administration is no better. Every time the Americans have pushed, the Conservatives have capitulated and rolled over. Meanwhile, the border keeps getting thicker and more expensive for travel and trade; Canadian jobs are being lost; and border communities are suffering.

Why is the Prime Minister keeping the latest border deal with the U.S. secret? Our sovereignty, security, personal privacy, and governance are at stake. Canadians deserve answers and accountability. Why won't they get it?

● (1455)

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government must be doing something right because the Liberals do not like our talking to the Americans, and the NDP said we should talk faster.

We share the member's concern. We want to make sure that the border between our shared countries is accessible and that any road blocks are removed. We will continue to work very hard on that.

\* \* \*

### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the sovereignty of our country is at stake.

The U.S. government's authorization of unrestricted use of Monsanto's genetically engineered alfalfa has put Canadian farmers at financial risk. They have already been shut out of key markets over GE flax and have had to pay the price.

Now our farmers, both conventional and organic, are threatened by the inevitable contamination of U.S. GE alfalfa.

Will the Prime Minister express these concerns to the U.S. president on Friday, or are the Conservatives too wrapped up in meeting with Monsanto's lobbyists to listen to the concerns of Canadian farmers?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course we have a separate rigorous situation that we put anything like this through here in Canada. We are sovereign in that respect.

We work with the Americans on a number of fronts, but we do make decisions differently when it comes to the applications of genetically modified situations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to assure the member opposite that we had a tremendous response in the European Union, talking about low level presence.

I know his bill is coming up for debate again next week. I certainly look forward to putting to rest a lot of the full moon logic that he bases his situations on.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### COPYRIGHT

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, following the example of the Quebec National Assembly, the Union des consommateurs, the Barreau du Québec and various groups of artists and artisans, including ADISQ and UDA, now the City of Montreal has also said that Bill C-32 should apply the principle of private copying and thereby guarantee that Quebec creators receive compensation in accordance with the value of their intellectual property. Contrary to the minister's scornful remark, it is not just a handful of musicians who oppose his bill.

When will the minister decide to make significant changes to his bill and give creators fair compensation?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, each of the groups that the hon. member has just mentioned wants a bill that will make piracy illegal here in Canada. That is what they want.

Consultations were held with ADISQ, the Government of Quebec, the City of Quebec and Quebec artists. Everyone wants a bill and everyone has been hoping that Canada will apply the WIPO Internet treaties and make piracy illegal here in Canada. That is what we have done. No, we do not agree with the Bloc Québécois and its proposal to implement a new tax on iPods; however, we do want to protect our artists and creators by making piracy illegal in Canada.

Why is the Bloc Québécois against Quebec creators?

\* \* \*

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the CRTC's recent decision to implement usage-based billing will have a devastating effect on Internet services for people and small businesses. The end of unlimited Internet packages will have a significant impact on access to new technology and on the competitiveness of businesses, especially those outside large centres.

Will the Minister of Industry demand that the CRTC reverse this decision and take consumers and the regions into account?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, it is important to support consumers, innovators, and small and medium-sized businesses. Our policy encourages competitiveness and competition. This decision needs to be reconsidered. We announced this policy yesterday, and we will announce our decision at the end of the day, the week or the month.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' failure in foreign policy and trade is having real consequences for Canadians.

Either inexperience or negligence has led to a complete breakdown in our relationship with the UAE, causing damage to real Canadian small businesses.

What data is the government collecting regarding the impact of visa costs, the new time limits on visits by Canadians trying to do business there, and the general damage to the Canadian brand in the Arab world?

•(1500)

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the House, and we know this, that the Government of Canada works very hard on arrangements that are in the best interests of Canada and that are of the best value to Canadians. That is the principle we operate on.

In some cases we have had proposals that were not in the best interests of our country. We have had to say no. We will continue to make sure that we protect Canadian interests to the best of our ability.

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me help the minister. I have a constituent who sells medical uniforms in the UAE who has been deeply affected by this government's bungling. He now has to pay \$1,000 for a visa, an agent's fee of \$350 and can only spend up to 14 days doing business there. Worse, he wrote, "I am removing the Canadian name from my product because it's now a detriment".

This is a real business, with real workers, with real families. What is the minister doing to fix this problem?

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member should know that the UAE's move to require Canadians to have a visa prior to entry into that country is based on the decision in 2009 to negotiate reciprocal visa arrangements with foreign countries. This is a policy of the UAE. It is going to be applied to all countries. That is its right and privilege.

We hope that in time both countries will see that it is better to loosen those kinds of restrictions. We will be continuing to work with the UAE as it indicates a willingness to do so.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are fed up with the Internet usage caps and the ripoff that they have been receiving. The government can blame the CRTC, but the real blame goes back to the Conservative government's 2006 directive that ordered the CRTC not to protect the public but to protect the interests of the media oligarchies. The result of this deregulation has been jacked up prices and lousy service.

Will the minister insist that all the usage caps come off individual home Internet accounts? Will the government rescind its directive to the CRTC so the commission will once again stand up for the public and protect the consumer?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member fails to disclose is that part of our directives to the CRTC is to improve competition, improve choice for the consumer and make sure the consumer has those choices. That was a directive we put before the CRTC as well. We will review the decision in that context.

The hon. member is part of a party that had a leader who mentioned the egg management fee in this chamber earlier. All I can say is that when the NDP is in charge of the eggs, it nationalizes the eggs, throttles the chickens and at the end of the day we are all clucked.

\* \* \*

**BROADCASTING INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what a turkey.

The CRTC is considering gutting journalistic standards so the media giants are going to be allowed to say anything they want as long as nobody gets killed.

Now, I have never met a journalist in this country who thought that misinformation, lying or negligence has any place in any Canadian newsroom. So, who would this benefit? Well, Conservative attack ads certainly and Fox news media definitely because, thanks to the Conservative marching orders, the CRTC has been reduced to acting like a short-order cook for the media barons.

Will the minister tell the CRTC to stand up for the public interest, or does the government support the deliberate poisoning of Canada's media landscape?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would say very simply that if my hon. colleague has a problem with the CRTC, he should address it to the CRTC. If the journalists in question have a question for the CRTC, they should address it to the CRTC. This is a question for the CRTC. The member ought to know that the CRTC does operate independently of the government and there is a process for people to make any grievances to the CRTC known. This is for the CRTC to decide and not the government.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is focusing on the top priority for Quebecers, the economy, and is continuing to help our people, our workers, our seniors and our families. In the meantime, the Bloc MPs are getting all worked up again, wanting to print shiny new “Bloc dollars” and trying to trigger an expensive and unnecessary election before they even read the budget.

Can the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State for Agriculture tell the House what our Conservative government has done recently for the economy in the regions of Quebec and for our farmers?

● (1505)

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are working on stimulating Canada's economy. Obviously the agriculture sector is part of that. We have just launched an initiative that we are calling “Canada Brand International”, for products from Canada. We ran a pilot project at a grocery store and the results were surprising.

If we put a maple leaf logo on a product from Canada, sales go up 70%. If we say on the product that it is made from Canadian potatoes, strawberries or tomatoes, sales go up 100%. It is very interesting.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADA POST**

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last spring the government was caught advertising on an erotic website. It said it would put an end to it. Today we learn that there is erotic advertising on a government website. Canada Post has an online store that features Canadian and American retailers selling racy lingerie, erotic products and even a link to The Adult Boutique.

Does the minister realize that children have access to this site? Does he really think it is appropriate for Canada Post to be selling sex toys, racy accessories and other erotica?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this has recently come to my attention and we will be doing a full investigation of this. If it is actually true, it would be inappropriate for a crown corporation and corrective measures will be taken.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT**

**Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, some 80,000 Quebec seniors are living below the poverty line, and the Conservative government is not only refusing to pay the guaranteed income supplement benefits it owes to thousands of seniors who were cheated out of them, but it is also refusing to improve the program.

When will this government, which does not care at all about our seniors, finally hear their demands and those of the Bloc Québécois, which since 2001 has been calling for a monthly increase of \$110 in the GIS and full retroactivity for those who have been cheated?

[English]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, seniors have contributed so much to building our country. That is why we have done more for seniors than any previous government.

We have appointed a minister of state dedicated to seniors. We have cut taxes for seniors and introduced pension income splitting. We have raised the GIS earnings exemptions to put more money back in the pockets of seniors. We have taken action to protect vulnerable seniors and combat elder abuse. We will continue to work hard for Canada's seniors.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, six years ago Jordan River Anderson passed away in hospital while governments fought over who would pay for his care at home. His story convinced the House to vote unanimously for Jordan's principle and ensure that no other child would have to wait for care while governments argued over who paid the bills.

Four years later, the government still has not implemented Jordan's principle. Disputes with the provinces still happen and children still wait for medical treatment.

Why will the government not honour its word? Why the delay in implementing Jordan's principle?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the circumstances which led to the death of Jordan were clearly tragic. It is why this government is working with the provinces to implement Jordan's principle. We believe the health and safety of all children must triumph over jurisdiction issues.

We have reached agreement in Saskatchewan to implement Jordan's principle. We have also reached agreement with the Government of Manitoba and work is under way in B.C., Alberta and New Brunswick.

We continue to work with Health Canada and all provinces and territories to see that tragedies like this never happen again.

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**SEALING INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the uneven support of a coalition, our government has been resolute in its support for Canadian sealers.

Can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans inform the House on the latest steps taken to protect the livelihoods of our Canadian sealers?

• (1510)

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to confirm for the House that our government has reached an agreement with the Government of China for the export of seal meats and seal oil. Canada is now the only country that may export seal meat to China. This represents a great opportunity for our sealing families.

Whether it is standing up for traditional markets or opening new ones, our sealers know that they can depend on our Conservative government.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts:

[Translation]

The 24th report on Chapter 4 entitled “Sustaining Development in the Northwest Territories” of the spring 2010 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

[English]

The 25th report on Chapter 1, Aging Information Technology Systems, of the spring 2010 Report of the Auditor General of Canada.

[Translation]

The 26th report on Chapter 2 entitled “Modernizing Human Resource Management” of the spring 2010 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests the government table a comprehensive response to each of these three reports.

#### HEALTH

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th, 13th and 14th reports of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to motions adopted by the committee on Tuesday, December 14, 2010.

#### INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

In accordance with its order of reference of Monday, June 14, 2010, your committee has considered Bill C-452, An Act to amend

### Routine Proceedings

the Competition Act (inquiry into industry sector) and agreed on Tuesday, December 14, 2010 to report it without amendment.

#### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women in relation to the condemnation of the stoning of young men and women in Afghanistan.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Tuesday, February 1, 2011, your committee recommends:

[Translation]

That the Committee condemn the stoning of young women and men in Afghanistan and call on the government to take the necessary action to put an end to these stonings as soon as possible.

• (1515)

[English]

A copy of the relevant minutes of proceedings is tabled.

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### NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY FOR THE ELECTRIFICATION OF COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEMS ACT

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-614, An Act respecting a national transportation strategy for the electrification of commuter rail systems.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this particular issue with respect to a transportation strategy has evolved as a result of huge concerns in York South—Weston and throughout the Georgetown corridor with the Weston subdivision. They have found that the development is so close to those railway lines that the issues of safety, noise, environmental pollution and the quality of health have stood in the way of moving ahead in a progressive way with respect to using rail corridors to relieve the congestion that exists in urban areas. This is not just in southern Ontario. This is a situation that exists right across the country.

This initiative calls upon the Minister of Transport to meet with his provincial counterparts and look at the potential that exists for the electrification of urban commuter rail operations. This would add value in terms of the technology that exists that is Canadian built, would help to create jobs and would build on the legacy of our original national dream, which is to have a transcontinental railway that would aid with the building of our Canadian culture.

The new reality is to look at urban areas and look at our national dream and give it an up-to-date and future reference, which is to electrify commuter rail and to add value and instill public confidence in the fact that we can use our rail corridors to add value to our quality of life and move on with meeting the issues related to climate change and the degradation of health in our urban areas.

I hope this will find the support of the House.

*Routine Proceedings*

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

\* \* \*

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S BUSINESS**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP)** moved:

That Bill C-393, An Act to amend the Patent Act (drugs for international humanitarian purposes) and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, standing in the Order of Precedence on the Order Paper in the name of Ms. Wasylycia-Leis (former Member for Winnipeg North), be allowed to stand in the name of Mr. Dewar (Ottawa Centre); and that the order for second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Finance of Bill C-572, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Budget Officer), standing in the Order of Precedence on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Dewar (Ottawa Centre), be discharged and the Bill be withdrawn.

**Hon. John Baird:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This should not be seen as a precedent but should be seen among all of us in this parliament as trying to work together to make this Parliament work.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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**PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT**

(Bill C-572. On the Order: Private Members' Bills:)

Second reading of Bill C-572, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Budget Officer)—Mr. Paul Dewar.

(Order discharged and bill withdrawn)

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was heartened by the House leader's words.

I rise today to seek unanimous consent for the following motion. I move that it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology that it have the power, during its consideration of C-501, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and other Acts (pension protection), to amend section 136 of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. I ask for that because Canadians want us to work for them not against them.

If you seek it, Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that you will find unanimous consent.

• (1520)

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

**PETITIONS**

## AFGHANISTAN

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first one is a petition of over 100 names, thanks to the folks at Sunshine Coast Peace Group on Vancouver Island who request that the House inform the Canadian public of the number of civilian casualties inflicted by Canadian troops in Afghanistan; that the House report the number of military casualties, including serious injuries, to the Canadian public; and that the House keep the Canadian public informed of the cost of the war to Canadian taxpayers; and the House act to bring our troops home forthwith.

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by well over 200 people. There are thousands of names in support of my Bill C-544.

The petition states that horses are ordinarily kept and treated as sport and companion animals; that they are not raised primarily as food-processing animals; that they are commonly administered drugs that are strictly prohibited from being used at any time in all other food-producing animals destined for the human food supply; and that Canadian horse meat products that are currently being sold for human consumption in domestic and international markets are likely to contain these prohibited substances.

Therefore, they call upon the House to bring forward and adopt into legislation Bill C-544, An Act to amend the Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act (slaughter of horses for human consumption), thus prohibiting the importation or exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption, as well as horse meat products for human consumption.

## MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present another petition regarding chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency or CCSVI multiple sclerosis. I have presented the latest statistics: 12,500 liberation procedures worldwide in 50 countries; 80% to 97% of MS patients showing one or more venous abnormalities; one-third of MS patients showing significant short-term improvement; and one-third showing some improvement with liberation.

We absolutely need evidence-based medicine here in Canada, which means we must collect the evidence through clinical trials and/or a registry. The petitioners are, therefore, requesting clinical trials here in Canada with diagnosis treatment, and follow-up.

## STATUS OF WOMEN

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have had many petitions come to my office in the recent weeks. The first group, which is over 2,000 petitions, is calling on the government to not accept the decriminalization of the sex trade. They are saying that decriminalizing the sex trade will entrench the exploitation of women in Canada. They went on to say that it is important that legitimizing prostitution in Canada will further the exploitation of all women in our society.



I am very glad that they sent me those petitions because I totally believe this is true.

● (1525)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on my second petition I have over 1,000 signatures of people requesting that the government develop and implement a comprehensive national action plan to combat human trafficking.

CRIMINAL CODE

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition contains over 2,000 signatures of people who are calling on Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to decriminalize the selling of sexual services and criminalize the purchasing of sexual services and provide support to those who desire to leave prostitution.

I think this is an extremely important petition that has been brought forth by the Canadian public.

In my last petition, people are petitioning the government to not only decriminalize the selling of sexual services and criminalize the purchasing of sexual services but also to ensure there are additional supports for those who desire to leave prostitution.

ANIMAL WELFARE

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, similar to my colleague, the MP for British Columbia Southern Interior, I also wish to table a petition from Alberta residents from Balzac, Beiseker, Carstairs, Airdrie, Crossfield, Linden, Priddis and Calgary all calling for the expedited bringing-forward support of Bill C-544 to prohibit the import and export of horses for slaughter for human consumption.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my second petition is from Calgarians requesting urgent hearings on the proposed purchase of 65 F-35 joint strike fighters. They call for a thorough, informal and frank national debate on the potential security threats; the costs, benefits and consequences of buying new fighter jets and a competitive process; and that the unknown costs be prioritized along with the needs for Arctic icebreakers; equipment and manpower for border protection; a needed boost for the diplomatic corps; and foreign assistance in environment, health and education needs.

ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, from that beautiful province of British Columbia, where I used to live for many years, from points north, south, east and west in that province, many of those fine people have written in to the House of Commons to support the bill of our colleague from British Columbia, Bill C-544, and to expedite that bill through the House of Commons.

Given the fact that horses are ordinarily kept and treated as sports and companion animals; that horses are not raised primarily as food producing animals; that horses are commonly administered drugs that are certainly prohibited from being used at any time in all other food processing animals destined for human food supplies; and that

*Routine Proceedings*

Canadian horse meat or products that are currently being sold for human consumption in domestic and international markets are likely to contain these prohibited substance, the petitioners are petitioning this great House of Commons and all members of Parliament to expedite Bill C-544.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition from residents of Liberty Village, Parkdale, Roncesvalles, the Junction and Weston, all in the city of Toronto who are calling on the Government of Canada to use electric but not diesel trains in the rail expansion in the Georgetown south rail corridor.

This petition was spearheaded by Peggy Nash and the petitioners note that Metrolinx is planning an eight-fold expansion in diesel rail traffic from 50 trains per day to over 400 trains per day, cutting through the west end neighbourhoods. The expansion will make this the busiest diesel rail corridor on the planet

The petitioners note that exhaust from diesel locomotives is a known danger to public health, linked to respiratory diseases, cancers and premature death. They also note that diesel exhaust poses an especially potent danger to children and the elderly, that it is harmful to the environment and that it contributes to climate change. They are also loud, heavy and disruptive to neighbourhoods and the local quality of life.

Whereas 250,000 people live within one kilometre of this line and 30,000 children attend one of more than 200 schools within a kilometre of the tracks, y the petitioners are asking Parliament to act to ensure the rail expansion of the Georgetown south rail corridor be electrified from the outset and that there be no further expenditure on diesel technology.

ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, have a petition with dozens of names of Canadians right across the country calling upon the House of Commons and Parliament assembled to bring forward and adopt into legislation Bill C-544, An Act to amend the Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act (slaughter of horses for human consumption), thus prohibiting the importation or exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption.

AFGHANISTAN

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by dozens of Canadians to end Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan.

In May 2008, Parliament passed a resolution to withdraw Canadian Forces by July 2011. The Prime Minister, with agreement from the Liberal Party, broke his oft repeated promises under the parliamentary motion and, furthermore, refuses to put it to a parliamentary vote in the House.

*Government Orders*

Committing 1,000 soldiers to a training mission still presents a danger to our troops and an unnecessary expense when our country is faced with a \$56 billion deficit. The military mission has cost Canadians more than \$18 billion so far, money that could have been used to improve health care and seniors' pensions right here in Canada.

Polls show that a clear majority of Canadians do not want Canada's military presence to continue after the scheduled removal date of July 2011.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Prime Minister to honour the will of Parliament to bring the troops home now.

• (1530)

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition on behalf of constituents, not of mine necessarily, but from the Guelph area in central Ontario who are calling upon this Parliament to bring forward Bill C-544, which was introduced by my colleague, the member for British Columbia Southern Interior. It talks about horses as companion animals, not as animals for consumption. Many of us who may live rural or may not live rural have had opportunities to be around horses and know they truly are companion animals and not a resource for consumption.

The petitioners call upon the House to bring forward that bill expeditiously and stop the importation and exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to support Bill C-544. This deals with horse meat products that are currently being sold for human consumption in domestic and international markets and are likely to contain prohibited substances. The petitioners, who are from the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, are supportive of the bill from the member for British Columbia Southern Interior, Bill C-544.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to adopt into legislation an act that would amend the Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act, thus prohibiting the importation and exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption as well as horse meat products for human consumption.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

## SITUATION IN EGYPT

**The Speaker:** The Chair has received an application for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Toronto Centre. I would be pleased to hear the hon. member's submissions on that point now.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wrote to you yesterday, asking that the House have an opportunity to debate, on an urgent basis, the situation currently under way in Egypt for two reasons.

It is important for the House to have a chance to discuss what the consular reaction and other reaction has been to events affecting Canadians. Equally important, the House needs to have an opportunity to discuss the unfolding situation which, day by day, indeed, hour by hour, becomes more difficult and more serious.

I would hope very much that you would recognize this, Mr. Speaker, as an urgent situation, one where the House would benefit from having a discussion this evening.

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for the submissions on this point. I am aware of the apparent urgency of the situation. Accordingly I am inclined to permit the debate to proceed in accordance with the hon. member's request.

The House will sit later this evening for the purpose of dealing with the matter.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## STRENGTHENING AVIATION SECURITY ACT

The House resumed from February 1 consideration of Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say it gives me pleasure to speak to this bill, but that would not be accurate. There are few bills that have come before the House in the time I have been here that are more misguided, represent a more serious threat to the fundamental interests of Canadians and are so unworthy of any member's support in the House of Commons. This is Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act.

*Government Orders*

The bill would amend the Aeronautics Act to require Canadian airlines to send personal information of passengers to foreign security services. What information would be forwarded is determined by requirements laid out, and it is fair to say, in hitherto secret agreements with other countries. Details of those agreements have not been released. However, it is known that Canada has signed or is negotiating agreements with the European Union, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Panama, the Dominican Republic and the United States.

Details of the agreement between the European Union and the United States for the same information transfer are troubling. That agreement, which we have seen, allows the following.

It requires airlines to provide information forwarded in what's known as the passenger name record, which is the file that is created either by a travel agent or airline when a person books a vacation. The passenger name record can include the following information: a person's credit card information; who the person is travelling with; the hotel; other booking information such as tours or rental cars; any serious medical conditions of the passenger; any dietary preferences; an email address; employer information; telephone information; baggage information; and any medical conditions that may be noted on the file.

The information collected can be retained by the United States for up to 40 years. The information may be forwarded to the security service of a third nation without the consent or even notification of the other signatory. No person may know what information is being held about him or her by the United States and may not correct that information if there are errors. The United States may unilaterally amend the agreement as long as it advises the EU of the change. There has already been one amendment whereby all documents held by the EU concerning the agreement shall not be publicly released for 10 years. Therefore, we would be left in the dark as to what documents those may be.

These are the kinds of concerns that are raised by the present bill. In essence, the bill is to allow data mining of Canadians' personal information by foreign security services. There is a danger that unless this bill is agreed to, the United States could close its airspace to Canadian aircraft. While this threat may result in pressure to pass the bill, it is unlikely the United States would actually carry through with this threat.

We have a number of concerns about the bill and I believe it is supposed to apply to any Canadian airline that would fly over America airspace.

We know that when Canadians choose to enter the United States, they will voluntarily relinquish a certain amount of their privacy rights. This is because they make a deliberate decision that when they enter into the sovereign area of another country, they can fully expect to comply with that country's laws. The bill would force Canadian airlines to deliver that information to U.S. homeland security when a Canadian aircraft would not even be going to the United States but may simply touch U.S. airspace.

Given Canada's geography, this means that, in real practice, every flight from Canada to Central America, South America, Cuba, Mexico would affect the privacy rights of Canadians. Every time a

Canadian wants to fly to one of those places, his or her personal information is sent to the United States homeland security, even though that Canadian has made the deliberate choice not to fly to the U.S., but simply over American airspace.

I have heard the Conservatives stand in the House and say they cannot do anything about that, because it is American airspace and there has been an act in place for decades saying that every country can control its airspace. Let us seriously look at the validity of that argument.

The Canadian government sought and obtained an exemption from the act for domestic Canadian flights that would pass over U.S. airspace. A flight that originates in Vancouver and may go to Toronto and which may fly over the northern states of Minnesota, the Dakotas, et cetera, are excluded from the bill.

• (1535)

If one is flying from Vancouver to Mexico and it is needed for safety and security, then why is it not an equal concern when one is flying from Vancouver to Toronto, because in both cases the planes are flying over U.S. airspace? The fact that the U.S. government is willing to give an exemption to Canadian flights that fly over U.S. airspace, in some cases, proves there is no serious, legitimate argument to be made that there is any security threat by those aircraft.

Second, what has happened for decades? The act the Conservatives quote, which allows the U.S. to control its airspace, has been in force for many decades. Have we had any problems? We have had none.

The government, which threw over the long form census because the Canadian government had no business asking a Canadian citizen how many bedrooms they have in their home, will sign into law a bill that forces the private information of Canadians to be sent to a foreign government security service. I am talking about things like their medical condition, email addresses, credit card information. The government, which made such a big deal in the summer of sticking up for the privacy rights of Canadians, is selling their privacy rights down the river in the bill.

What mechanism would Canadians have to correct any errors? U.S. homeland security, by the mechanism contemplated in the bill, would send a message back to the Canadian airline, indicating whether the Canadian person named should be issued a boarding pass or not. The bill would allow U.S. homeland security the authority to determine whether a Canadian airline would issue a boarding pass to a Canadian citizen getting on a Canadian airline to fly to another country, yet that plane would not even land in the United States.

Talk about a fundamental violation of the mobility rights of Canadians. Talk about a fundamental violation of the privacy rights of Canadians. This is absolutely a shocking abdication of the Canadian government's responsibility to protect the privacy and sovereign and mobility rights of its Canadian citizens.

*Government Orders*

What about our sovereignty? It has been suggested that the bill may work in such a way that diplomats from a country like Cuba who are coming to Canada at the invitation of the Canadian government may not be allowed to fly over U.S. airspace.

Canada has charted an independent policy when it comes to Cuba. It is different than the United States, which does not even allow its businesses to trade with Cuba. Whereas Canada has enjoyed a long and mutually beneficial trading and cultural relationship with that country. Are we going to turn over to the United States the decision whether the Canadian government, elected by the Canadian people, can even meet with representatives of a government that we may choose? This violates the principles of democracy.

The principles of democracy are no taxation without representation and no valid law-making without representation. By turning over to a foreign government like the United States the authority to determine whether a Canadian can choose to take his or her family to Mexico without any democratic redress of that Canadian citizen is a violation of democratic rights. To whom can that Canadian complain? That Canadian cannot complain to any democratic representative of the United States. U.S. homeland security has no administrative or democratic obligation or responsibility to a Canadian citizen. That is a fundamental violation of the democratic rights of Canadians.

I want to talk for a moment about a disturbing trend that has happened with the government as it completely sells out Canada's sovereignty to the United States.

This week the Prime Minister will go to Washington and he will start discussing what I call SPP 2, which we all thought was dead, an idea so flawed that Canadians rejoiced when they thought the this mechanism was over.

The SPP 2 would not only further the obligation of Canada to send private information on Canadian citizens to the United States, but also would call on Canada to harmonize its regulations with the United States on everything from cereal to fighter jets. We may face the prospect where a decision over whether a drug or a prescription medicine is allowed in Canada is determined by whether it meets the conditions of the food and drug administration in the United States.

The Liberals are trying to fool Canadians that they oppose this deal when it was the Liberal government of Paul Martin that started negotiations into the security and prosperity partnership.

• (1540)

I see an interesting trend in that the Liberals are taking all of the good of ideas that the New Democrats have championed over the last five years: opposing corporate tax cuts; opposing the SPP; proposing a cap and trade system. These are all ideas proposed by the New Democrats that the Liberals and the Liberal leader have opposed. Of course hypocrisy and sensitivity to contradictions are not exactly points for which the Liberal Party is known.

• (1545)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in terms of the key principles that should be involved in one of these deals, members of the European Commission talked about the purpose limitation principle.

At transport committee the Minister of Public Safety strongly indicated this information would be used only for security purposes.

However, in a subsequent document from the U.S. ambassador, it became clear that this information could be used for whatever purpose the U.S. government chooses. The information about the passengers on the aircraft could be used for criminal purposes, for security purposes, for any purpose that the U.S. government deemed important.

How could the government go ahead without putting some safeguards against the cross-purpose use of this information?

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Western Arctic on his fine and tireless work. He has brought an intelligent and reasoned approach to all issues concerning transportation policy and has often been a lone voice at committee to stand up for the privacy rights of Canadians. The member has raised a very astute observation along that very avenue.

The Canadian government should be ensuring, first, that no private information of Canadians is sent to any foreign government. We should remain in control of that information. We are a mature democracy. We can retain control of the information and take care of security threats. We have just as much ability as any foreign country does, instead of ceding our sovereignty and turning over, like some colony, the obligation to control the security of our citizens.

To turn over that information at all is bad, but to turn it over and then not stay in control of what that information will be used for is a double insult.

A feature of the previous Liberal government and a continuing feature of the current Conservative government is to negotiate these very important and profound changes to Canadians' privacy rights in secret. If the Conservatives believe that these laws and these agreements are proper, they should show parliamentarians what the details of those are so that Canadians can see what is being negotiated. We will let the Canadian people pass judgment on who really protects privacy in this country. It is New Democrats time and time again.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government has a pretty bad group of negotiators because under this agreement the Americans could potentially hold information for up to 40 years. Under the European agreement the information is only to be kept for a matter of days. I believe the member for Western Arctic could verify that for me. There is a limitation as to the amount of time that the information can be kept. In addition, some of the information is blotted out so it cannot be tied to individual people. Authorities could work on an aggregate basis with the information but it would not violate privacy issues.

Would the member agree that the government has a very poor record of negotiating on this point and basically sold us down the drain? It could have negotiated reciprocity with the United States and made the United States give information on 2,000 flights a day as opposed to the hundred and —

*Government Orders*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, this points out the poor negotiating skills of the Conservatives. We did not obtain reciprocity in this deal. We did not require the American authorities to require American airlines to send passenger names and record information to Canada when American aircraft fly over Canadian airspace. Why not?

I am also told that the European Union has rejected these kinds of demands by the Americans. Why Canada cannot stand up like the EU does is beyond me.

In conclusion, information that is sent and kept for a matter of days is a violation of Canadians' privacy. In the digital world when information is sent, we have no control over where that information goes. We cannot even have guarantees that it is destroyed.

• (1550)

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-42. I have some concerns regarding issues of privacy as well as the fact that the government introduced this bill on the last day of sitting, June 17.

We are all concerned about security issues and balancing that with privacy issues. On the issue of providing information to a foreign government, it would be done when a plane lands in foreign territory. If a Canadian were to fly from Toronto to New York, information would be provided.

However, what is being proposed is that if, for example, a flight from Toronto to Vancouver went over American territory, personal information, the name and details of the passengers, would be given to American authorities. This is not only outrageous, but a violation of Canadian sovereignty and the rights of Canadians.

The question raised in the House on a number of occasions regarding Bill C-42 is as to why we negotiated such a bad arrangement. The Americans would basically have a free hand to know who is going to be travelling over American territory without the flight even landing there. In fact, the Americans can keep this information for up to 99 years, depending on the situation. This is an obvious concern.

To divulge this information is unprecedented and would certainly weaken Canadian sovereignty. It would mean that the information of people on flights anywhere in this country that go over American territory would be disclosed to American authorities.

At the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities in May, the Assistant Privacy Commissioner noted her concern that the information could be kept from 7 days to 99 years. This seems highly excessive. The information may not be used just for the issue of security, but could be used for other purposes. That is the big question: What other purposes would it be used for? For example, it could be used for law enforcement or immigration issues and not necessarily for the purpose for which it is intended. That is where many Canadians have concerns.

In the Aeronautics Act we also have the legislative authority to create a no-fly list. I have never understood this. We are saying people cannot fly, but they can board a passenger ship, train, or use an automobile. Apparently they are only a threat in the air and not a

threat on a ship or train. If a person is not allowed to fly, why would he or she be able to take other modes of transportation? The government must think that only people who fly are potential terrorists.

Canadian airlines disclose information when going to another country, but the fly-over issue is the crux of the matter.

Canadians value their privacy. We tend to be asked for a lot of private information. When people go to a store they might be asked for their social insurance number. The social insurance number is only given for government programs and not because someone wants to buy a piece of furniture, yet my constituents have been asked for their social insurance number. People are asked for information that is not germane to the issue at hand. With regard to the fly-over situation, a number of my constituents have voiced concern.

At committee the Liberal Party made three amendments.

First, the House of Commons should be required to conduct a review of these measures two years after the date of coming into force and then every five years. That oversight provision is important. It has been done in other legislation and is something that should be included.

• (1555)

Second, this data transfer would be limited to the U.S. in legislation. The original version said it could be forwarded to any government. It is going to be only to the United States.

Third, the airlines and travel agents would be required by Canadian law to inform passengers of this impending data transfer before a ticket was purchased. That is important. Canadians need to know that if they board an airplane which will be flying over a particular territory in the United States that their information is going to be given away. The Privacy Commissioner has pointed out concerns with regard to this.

This bill amends the Aeronautics Act to allow an operator of an aircraft that is going over, in this case, the United States to provide information. The amount of information to be given to the United States is clearly of concern.

I would hope when the Prime Minister is in Washington at the end of the week that this issue will be raised with the President of the United States. Unfortunately, the Americans have the impression that terrorism has somehow emanated from this country.

*Government Orders*

We all remember then-senator Hillary Clinton's comments about 9/11, the porous border and the terrorists who had crossed the border from Canada, which of course was not true. We have to be concerned about the comments yesterday by Senator Lieberman of Connecticut that the northern border of the United States is more porous than the southern border. This impression continues. We seem to be playing into this by suggesting that we have to provide information to the Americans.

When we deal with aviation regulations, we usually are talking about domestic regulations. In this case it is actually a security program dealing with another country. The collection of information is paramount. Again, this is unusual because it is not for domestic purposes. It is dealing with a foreign country.

Sovereignty is important. In international law, sovereignty of a country extends into airspace. We are abrogating that by allowing information to be given. There may be a change in weather and the route would have to change. The passenger would not know that in advance, obviously. Privacy and citizen rights, et cetera, are at stake.

There is the whole issue of balance between security and privacy. It would appear the government has simply caved in when it comes to this. Had it not been for my Liberal colleagues on the transport committee, we would have had a pretty wide open situation for turning over information to the United States. That is a concern.

There are issues about security at airports. I do not know if people feel any safer because they go through scanners at the airports. In Narita International Airport in Japan, the security initially is done before people get to the airport. Passports are checked outside the airport and metal detectors are used on vehicles. All that is done in advance. In Canada we wait until people are in the airport. Then we shake down some elderly individual or some 15-year-old kid, instead of dealing with the practical needs for security.

This legislation is flawed. Although the amendments enhance the legislation, I still have concerns with regard to the issue of turning over any personal information to a foreign government, and in this case when people are simply flying over a country. We all understand if the flight is landing in the country but when it is just flying over it, it seems to be questionable at best, particularly if the information is not being used strictly for that purpose. It could be used for other purposes, and Canadians would not necessarily know what it is being used for. That raises concerns. Why would the information be kept for up to 99 years? That is a concern.

The legislation has received some improvements because of these amendments, but again there is still the issue of whether we should be caving in to the United States and giving out personal information which is not done elsewhere.

• (1600)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague in the Liberal Party is a man who has grave concerns about privacy issues. I want to thank him for speaking to this bill. Although he is not on the transport committee, in his role he would understand some of the issues surrounding this bill very well.

In June 2007, the European Union data protection supervisor wrote a letter giving four concerns about the developments of these data transfers. One of them was the use of the letter by the U.S. to

avoid binding treaties. Canada's overflight exemption is based on a diplomatic letter of understanding.

My colleague has had a fair amount of experience in foreign affairs. Does he think we should be turning over Canadians' private information on the basis of a diplomatic letter of understanding? Is this not a situation that is fraught with hazard for Canadians?

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure to work with my colleague for many years not only in the House but also in municipal government in the past. He raises a very important point with regard to the European Union.

There is no question that basing it on a diplomatic note not knowing the purpose other than information is given but that it could be used for law enforcement or immigration purposes is far too broad. As my hon. colleague well knows, a diplomatic note alone is not sufficient in terms of the security we need as Canadians and in balancing this privacy issue. That is something that would have been helpful had we been able to get that into the bill.

I know legislation is never perfect, but it is better to have a bill which addresses these concerns. This bill was introduced on the last sitting day in June and here we are at the beginning of February rushing it through. I wonder whose agenda this is. Is this the government's agenda or someone else's in this case?

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it appears as though the Conservatives gave away the store when negotiating with the United States on this agreement.

In the committee hearings, when Mark Salter, a professor at the University of Ottawa, made a presentation, he complimented Canada for having set a high global standard for the use of the PNR in particular with the Canada-EU agreement in relation to PNR matters. He said, "This agreement is praised by both Canadian and European data protection authorities because it has specific time periods for the disposal of data", not the 40 years that this other agreement with the Americans has. He went on to say:

[I]t limits the data's use, and it limits in particular the individualization of that data. The information is rendered anonymous, which allows the security services to build up the profile without attaching it to any one individual. This has become one of the global standards for international treaties on PNR agreements, and we are moving away from that high standard with the passage of this legislation.

I would ask the member whether he agrees with Professor Mark Salter of the University of Ottawa who presented to the committee and gave a very good argument as to why Canadians should be looking at what they signed with the Europeans as opposed to what they are now proposing with the Americans, where they just rolled over?

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to review some of the testimony and Professor Salter's comments and they certainly jibe very much with the Privacy Commissioner's concerns. It is even worse than the member said because in fact the information would be held from seven days to 99 years. What the member pointed out and what the professor indicated very strongly is that is more of what we should be looking at rather than giving the store away.

*Government Orders*

I say again, when the Prime Minister is in Washington on Friday, this should be one of the priorities because we keep giving away information for purposes other than what it should be used for.

I agree with the hon. member that had that testimony been implemented as one of the amendments to the legislation, it would have been most helpful in providing the kind of security and privacy that Canadians would expect from their government.

• (1605)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak to Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act. I have heard concerns raised daily by members in this House that make one wonder how on earth we can even move forward to vote on this bill. We are hearing about countless concerns that were raised in committee and countless additional concerns raised by other nations about such proposals where there were better negotiations.

What would Bill C-42 provide? Even if we choose a flight that does not land in the United States as we prefer to fly direct to another nation, if we are flying over the United States of America, the airline still has to provide private information about us to the United States of America.

We have heard in the House today that not only is this information being freely given with no strings attached, but the United States of America will hold the information for 40 years, despite the fact that we may be on a flight travelling to another country for a couple of days or even a couple of months. It is absolutely reprehensible.

It is very important, as some of my colleagues have pointed out, to consider Bill C-42 in the overall context of the additional U.S.-Canada border security initiatives under discussion, for example, a proposed common perimeter, with implications for greater sovereignty intrusions. Perhaps that is the reason the United States is not demanding the same information if we are flying from Edmonton to Ottawa over U.S. airspace. It is only if we choose to take a holiday in Cuba and fly over the United States that it wants the information.

We must keep in perspective who would be doing the border checks and interrogations. It would be U.S. officials, not Canadians.

Today it has been revealed that in discussions between our Prime Minister and the President of the United States, one of the matters being raised by the U.S. is the potential demand for visas for Canadians who visit the United States of America.

It is very important to hold back on voting on the bill and to have the overall review that is being proposed by some members without delay. Why wait several years? It sounds as though we are getting a raw deal compared with the negotiations reached by other nations.

The very intent of Bill C-42 to provide the free and ready uncontrolled access and use by the United States government to private information about Canadians, as has been argued by a number of expert witnesses before committee, violates our constitutional rights set forth in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We must also keep front of mind that the information provided is intended to allow the U.S. to add Canadian names to the

controversial no-fly list. We have heard case after case of Canadians being added to the list and all their rights removed, including even the ability to earn an income or people to assist them.

Witnesses who testified at committee advised that in considering such intrusive measures, it is absolutely incumbent on the government to seek limits, so far as possible, on the erosion of charter rights. At a minimum it should call for safeguards on the use and sharing of the information.

What does the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provide? First and foremost, the charter specifies that Canada is founded on the principles that recognize the rule of law.

What does the rule of law mean? That is the difference between a dictatorship and a democracy. Under the rule of law, we are governed by Canadian laws, not foreign laws. Under the rule of law, the rules that govern our nation are made by duly elected officials, the majority of whom choose those rules, and decisions are based on those rules.

The charter provides the right to security of the person, including the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

The charter provides the right to notification that a person's rights are to be interfered with.

The charter provides the right to be heard.

The charter provides to Canadians the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.

The charter provides the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned.

All of these rights are being impinged on in a major way by this fly-over rule and list.

The charter provides the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned, and if detained, the right to be promptly informed without unreasonable delay of the reason.

• (1610)

The charter provides the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Clearly, this is being violated by the fact we are all deemed guilty and the U.S. needs the information about every traveller, whether an 82 year old or a 15 year old.

The right to mobility is something that we forget, which is very important to a fair and effective economy in Canada. The rights to mobility include the right to enter, remain and leave Canada.

The provisions of Bill C-42 would allow information about Canadians to be shared with U.S. officials without notice and without consent, including the U.S. right to pass on that information to other nations. There would be no right of appeal, no right to access one's file held by the airline or by the U.S. government in order to verify and ensure the correctness of that information. Clearly, the information may be false or based on hearsay, and we have already seen examples of Canadians being added to the no-fly list where, clearly, the information was garnered under torture, with no right to access privacy rights accorded to citizens of the United States under U.S. law.

*Government Orders*

This bill, as mentioned, would expand the duties of operators to provide additional information in their control for a flyover of a foreign country en route to another. Regardless of Canadians' efforts to avoid the imposition of U.S. security measures or delays on their holidays to Mexico or Cuba, or a business trip to another nation, this new law would require airlines to provide personal information and any other information they may hold. Absolutely no provision is made requiring the airline to make that information available to travellers, nor does it provide any procedures to access that information. These and other issues were raised by witnesses appearing at committee and, clearly, ignored.

As was pointed out in testimony before the committee reviewing Bill C-42, the constitutionality of the no-fly list is currently being challenged in U.S. courts and it may be wise to await the outcome of these proceedings. As other members of the House have pointed out, the bill has been delayed already, so what is the rush? Should we not stand back and consider the ramifications for Canadians' personal security?

In my previous positions working with border security and enforcement personnel in discussions on shared intelligence as being a useful opportunity to detect violators where we have trans-boundary illegal activity, those measures to share intelligence were pursued in the context of clear constraints on sharing access and storage of the information, even among duly appointed enforcement officials. Given the consequence of the no-fly list, similar conditions seem all the more critical to ensure the protection of Canadians from unnecessary intrusion in their constitutional rights.

So many yet unresolved concerns with this bill have been raised in committee and in the House over the last few days, one wonders how it could proceed through Parliament without the basic safeguards that have been granted to other nations.

In the very least, given these issues and concerns, I call upon the members of the House to support the amendment providing for a timely review, particularly in the context of the ongoing discussions on security measures.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague for her excellent presentation on some of the legal issues surrounding this.

Just recently I had to deal with a case where a resident of the Northwest Territories was denied admission to the United States with his family because of a minor drug offence that occurred when he was quite young. He could not go with his family on a holiday to the United States when he tried to cross the Alberta-Montana border.

Testimony in committee indicated that the information the U.S. would be getting from us could be applied for any purpose that it may choose or deem. Within the United States there is zero tolerance for drug offences, which weighs heavily on many Canadians.

How does this sit with Canadian law when we have a Canadian person on a Canadian plane, under the rule of law of Canada, being taken off that plane, perhaps for laws that are in force in the United States and have nothing to do with Canadian justice?

•(1615)

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, as one of my colleagues expressed, the member for Western Arctic has been an incredible

proponent for the rights of Canadians and improved and safe transportation. I appreciate his efforts and he is a great neighbour to the north.

It is an important question. As I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, we are proud that we are democratic country and operate by the rule of law. What that means is that Canadians are governed by the rules enacted by the House, and not by any other nation. It becomes particularly critical when we choose to travel to another nation. For example, a lot of Canadians choose to travel to Cuba, a nation to which the United States restricts the travel of its own citizens.

I know a lot of people who have been looking into contracts to assist Cuba develop its economy. Could reprimands be issued or problems arise for those citizens in their dealings with U.S. contractors because of the information passed on?

Clearly, this could result in significant violations of the basic rights afforded to Canadians, and we really should be looking to the types of conditions that were imposed by the European Commission.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly what the Americans are up to is data mining. In fact, that is probably what is going on too with the Canada-U.S. agreement, but there is a big difference between what Canada negotiated with the European Union and what we are dealing with in the United States.

To the United States, they are giving over all of the PNR information, and it is attached to names. Moreover, the Americans can keep the data for up to 40 years. Yet with the European Union, the agreement has time periods for the disposal of data, not 40 years but a matter of days. It also limits the data's use and it limits, in particular, the individualization of the data. The information to the Europeans is rendered anonymous, allowing the security services to build up a profile without attaching it to any one individual. Therefore, they are maintaining the individual's privacy in the European agreement. That is—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will have to stop the hon. member there to make sure the member for Edmonton—Strathcona has a chance to reply.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very important issue. Even more important than the time limitation on the information is the very demand for the information with no limitations.

What I am finding profoundly hypocritical is that in one breath the government is saying it needs to open up the borders for trade and to moving goods across it more quickly and, at the same time, it is trying to restrict the movement of ordinary Canadians across those borders.



*Government Orders*

When I was the head of law and enforcement for the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, I had the privilege to work with officers who were trying to share intelligence and better track the illegal movement of hazardous goods across our borders and the trade in endangered species. I am sad to say that important intelligence work is being made a sidebar by this threat of terrorists. We seem to be overly preoccupied with it and are now imposing unreasonable rules on ordinary citizens.

We need to take a breath and stand back and take a closer look at the direction we are going in.

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as tourism critic for the New Democratic Party and, even more importantly, as a Canadian citizen concerned about Canadian privacy rights and Canadian sovereignty, I feel it is my duty today to speak about the serious implications that Bill C-42 would have for Canadian travellers taking international flights. It is disturbing but not surprising, unfortunately, that the Conservative government would even think about introducing such a bill.

It might be reasonable to assume that foreign governments would want carriers to provide the names and personal details of airline passengers arriving on their soil. That information is already given by airlines, including for stopovers and passengers in transit.

However, Bill C-42 would go much further. Bill C-42 would have airlines give over the personal information of all passengers to a foreign country, the U.S.A., in which they are not even landing. Just flying over the U.S.A. would be enough.

Let us explore some of the implications of the bill.

Apparently, passengers leaving Canada on a vacation to Cuba, for example, could have their name, birthdate and over 30 other pieces of personal information subject to screening by Homeland Security in the U.S., which would involve running that information through various U.S.A. government databases, including the infamous and notorious U.S. no-fly list. If one's name is not on one of these American lists, U.S. Homeland Security will tell the Canadian airline that one may be issued a boarding pass.

However, we have all heard the horror stories of people with a similar name to someone on that million-name list, or who have been put there by mistake, never to be taken off, especially if they have the same birthday as someone with the same name on that list.

If one is caught up in this mess, one might be questioned, delayed or barred from the flight or, effectively, banned from all flights leaving Canada, if they go over U.S. territory, from then on.

There are already examples of significant misuse.

The standing committee heard the story of Hernando Ospina, a journalist with *Le Monde Diplomatique*, whose Air France flight from Paris to Mexico was diverted to Martinique just because he wrote an article critical of U.S. foreign policy. And there is the story of Paul-Émile Dupret, a Belgian researcher with the European Parliament whose flight from Europe to the World Social Forum in Brazil was diverted, not because he was a security threat but because he campaigned against the transfer of European travellers' information to U.S. authorities.

Will I be on the no-fly list after this speech?

How can the government assure Canadians that this type of political misuse will not happen if Bill C-42 is passed?

Apparently, the U.S. told the government it needs everyone's personal information so it can check it with the various lists of people it does not want flying, so there will be fewer false matches and problems.

Apparently the U.S. told our government, "Let us clear your passengers for you", which is what the U.S. seems to be saying, and our government is going along with it.

Is it laziness? Just let someone else take control of our security and give over control in the process. In losing control of our own air security, we would have no idea why particular passengers were barred from going on vacation to Cancun. We would simply have to accept that they would not get to fly internationally any more, because we have given a foreign government a veto over Canadians travelling abroad.

I know members of the government have been arguing that we have to give up some of our sovereignty if we want to have security, that the cost of our safety, just this time, is the freedom of movement of our citizens.

It reminds me of Benjamin Franklin's famous saying:

Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.

• (1620)

That is ironic, because this bill will not improve the security of Canadians an ounce. It does not have our security interests in mind at all. If it did, there might be some clause for sharing of information instead of it all being one way. U.S. carriers could be giving us their passenger lists, too, so we could make decisions about our security. However, reciprocity is nowhere to be found in this piece of bad Canadian negotiation.

This is ridiculously one-sided. Only Canadian passenger information is being sent to the U.S.A. All it does is send our personal passenger information abroad for governments to do with as they may. They could keep that information forever or pass it along to other groups or governments or use it to prosecute Canadians for their own purposes.

*Government Orders*

We will not have any control over it. It is yet another significant erosion of Canadian autonomy by the Conservative government.

Why should members in the House, representing Canadians, support the legislation if it will not even improve the security of Canadians? We are not elected to represent the interests of foreign governments, at least not the members in my party and not this member from Thunder Bay—Superior North.

Cutting the privacy rights of Canadians for no improvement in our safety is a foolish bargain. It is no wonder the Canadian Civil Liberties Association called the bill:

—a complete abdication to a 'foreign government' of Canada's duty to protect the privacy of Canadians, and a cessation of existing Canadian legal safeguards. This abdication and cessation of privacy protection is unacceptable and dangerous.

This was what it said at the transport committee in November 2010.

The legislation rolls back, and it rolls over, Canada's privacy laws in order to get airlines to pass along the names and personal information of air travellers to a foreign government. It gives a foreign government the ability to tell our air carriers who can and cannot fly on flights that do not land in its country.

We in my party are very supportive of thoughtful efforts that genuinely increase safety and security for Canadians, but the bill does neither. Bill C-42 is an egregious invasion of the personal privacy of Canadian air passengers and an abdication of Canadian sovereignty by the government.

Our very own chief justice said, in 2009, that,

One of the most destructive effects of terrorism is its ability to provoke responses that undermine the fundamental democratic values upon which democratic nations are built.

This faulty legislation undermines both the sovereignty of Canada and the privacy rights of Canadians. There is no evidence that it will even increase security. I invite all members of the House to keep the interests of our constituents and all Canadians in mind and vote against Bill C-42.

\* \* \*

● (1625)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I think you would find agreement for the following. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, during the debate tonight pursuant to Standing Order 52, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. chief government whip have the unanimous consent of the House for this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.  
(Motion agreed to)

**STRENGTHENING AVIATION SECURITY ACT**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is not simply Canadian citizens who will be impacted by this, but it could also be Canadian foreign policy and it could be those people who seek refuge in Canada.

Mr. Edward Hasbrouck of the Liberty Coalition, a U.S.-based civil liberties group, who gave testimony in our committee, said:

You should be very clear that the enactment of Bill C-42 would grant to the U.S. government de facto veto power over the ability of virtually anyone to obtain sanctuary in Canada, since in most cases it's impossible to get to Canada to make a claim for political asylum or refugee status without overflying the U.S., and that power of the U.S. would be exercised at the worst possible point: while a refugee is still on the soil of and subject to the persecution of the regime they are trying to flee.

If we have a situation where, such as in many of the countries in South America or Central America, people head to the airport to escape a tyrannical regime or unfair treatment in that country, they could be turned down by the U.S. government regardless of what the Canadian government wanted in this instance.

Once again, not only is this an abrogation of the personal rights Canadians, but is it not quite clearly an abrogation of our right as an independent country to set our own foreign policy?

● (1630)

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly have to agree with the hon. member for Western Arctic. He has done a lot of work on this file. He knows it well and I trust his judgment and opinion.

However, adding my own subjective observation of our Prime Minister's behaviour over the last five years, whether it is protecting Canadian rights in any area, it is clear that his loyalties lie more with the wishes of our neighbour to the south than they do with Canadian autonomy, Canadian privacy and even the right to our own natural resources.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have looked at what the bill entails and I have looked at what is happening with other bills, namely the potential agreement of border security. This is just another nail in the coffin of Canadian sovereignty and Canadian independence.

In my long lifetime, we have seen an erosion of what I call our independence and our ability to act and think for ourselves as a nation. There used to be a time when the leaders of all parties stood up for the rights of Canadians. We can think back to John Diefenbaker, Lester Pearson, Pierre Trudeau, Tommy Douglas. Those people understood the concept that we were a sovereign nation.

*Government Orders*

During those times, our farmers were protected. The lumber industry was thriving. We had well-paying jobs in manufacturing, protected by various agreements with other countries.

Then we saw progressively, in the 1980s under the Mulroney regime, a deterioration of this. We saw the tremendous pressure that the corporate elite had been exercising finally bear fruition when we saw the free trade agreement which resulted in NAFTA.

We see absurd situations today in which, for example, we have fruit growers in my area who have a hard time making a living because of all the produce being dumped from the United States. We see absurd situations in which Canadian governments have been sued by foreign corporations because they have decided to be a little stringent on environmental laws.

Then we have seen the buy American policy over the last couple of years, with the Americans tightening up trying to protect their municipal governments and their industry. Our reaction is to allow them more access to our contracts. For the first time in history, we have seen what we call the subnational governments subjected to trade agreements. We are seeing this with the proposed Canada-European trade agreement, the fact that municipalities will be in danger. In other words, municipal contracts will have to come under the scrutiny of big multinational corporations from Europe and we will lose our autonomy.

Many of us spent time speaking out against the Security and Prosperity Partnership, the SPP, and we thought it was put to an end. Now we are seeing a border agreement. The Prime Minister will be going to talk to the President of the United States on Friday to fine tune it.

Our Canada is not what it used to be and this bill, as I said earlier in my speech, is just another nail in the coffin of our sovereignty.

It used to be when we would talk about borders, especially with the Americans, that we would go across in a friendly manner. There were friendly border guards. We would go back and forth. Sometimes we would have to provide ID and sometimes we would not. It worked and our countries were relatively safe.

Now we see a tightening up. I am hearing cases in my riding of people subjected to unnecessary abuse by American border guards. Whereas before they used to go across for business or pleasure, now there is racial stereotyping, verbal abuse and interrogation. At the same time, the Americans want us to co-operate and have a free border.

Many companies cannot ship in a timely manner to the United States. Supposedly, an agreement would stop this. However, at the same time, the Americans do not seem to have a will to work with us.

I would like to submit that this whole fiasco of the F-35 purchase, this tremendous pressure on us, is almost like blackmail, that if we buy these airplanes, they will give us freer access to their borders. That is how it is appearing. We are being told we have to buy into this airplane that is not suited for our Arctic patrol, has one engine, cannot land on short runways, and is not even proven.

Let us move on now to this bill.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

As we know, our Aeronautics Act currently exempts the operators of aircraft from restrictions on disclosing personal information without consent when the laws of a foreign state require disclosure of information about anyone on board a flight that is landing in that state.

Accordingly, passenger information for any Canadian flight that will land in a foreign state can be disclosed to a foreign government without restriction by the air carrier. The important part of that is “that will land in a foreign state”.

Bill C-42 amends this section to expand its application. As we are currently discussing, it would now apply not only with respect to foreign states in which the flight is landing, but also to any foreign states that the flight would travel over. I find that ridiculous. For example, if I, or someone here in the House, went to Mexico, Latin America or Cuba, our names would be subject to American security measures. That makes no sense. How is that logical if the flight will not be landing in the United States? Why should we have to give Canadians' personal and secret information to the Americans?

As we have already learned during this debate tonight, this does not apply to flights arriving in Canada that fly over the United States. There is something wrong there. If a flight from Vancouver to Toronto flies over the United States, that is okay, there is no problem. We do not have to provide the United States with the information.

However, according to this bill, if the flight goes to Cuba, that will be the rule. I find it shocking, and wrong, to force us to provide personal information on Canadians to a foreign government.

[*English*]

None of this really seems to make any sense.

Some people have been quoting witnesses who appeared at committee. I would like to thank my colleague from Western Arctic, who is responsible for transport, for providing information. Although I was not at committee, the national coordinator, International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, who said:

After running a risk assessment for each passenger using data mining technology, Homeland Security in turn issues a boarding pass result back to the airline. The result instructs the airline to issue a boarding pass, deny permission to travel, or issue an enhanced screening requirement. These regulations give the U.S. access to a whole subset of information on air passengers who are not entering the U.S. but merely overflying its airspace. Furthermore, this information can be shared among at least 16 U.S. agencies and with foreign governments. The program gives the government of a foreign country a de facto right to decide who gets to travel to and from Canada, since the vast majority of Canadian flights to and from Europe, the Caribbean, and South America overfly American airspace.

*Government Orders*

My colleague from Thunder Bay said something in a humorous manner, but we have to understand that there are implications here. What if someone from homeland security does not like what we are saying here today? What homeland security does not like what my colleague said, or it does not like the fact that I am criticizing the U.S. government? What is to stop it from putting my name or anybody's name on that list? How can we get off that list? The next time I board an airplane for Mexico will I be banned from going?

The bill does not make any sense. There is no reciprocity. We should all give our heads a shake before we support a measure like this.

●(1640)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise as transport critic for the Bloc Québécois to speak about Bill C-42. To begin with, I would like to mention that, in order to facilitate the passage of this bill, the Bloc Québécois will support the subamendment introduced by the Liberals even though our party had already proposed an amendment in committee.

As the hon. member just said, I too found that it was difficult to examine this bill in the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities because there are two opposing philosophies or approaches. We heard from human rights and freedoms advocacy groups and from the Privacy Commissioner, Ms. Stoddart. Ms. Stoddart had serious reservations about this bill with regard to respect for civil liberties and privacy.

Previously, a similar provision referred to any aircraft making a stop at the end of a flight or making a stopover en route to another country. Now, Bill C-42 stipulates that certain personal information must be provided about the passengers on board any aircraft passing through U.S. air space. We do not see this as being a problem, if the Americans can guarantee that the information will be destroyed after a certain number of days and that it will be not be shared with other organizations that are indirectly involved.

But civil rights groups told us that up to 16 organizations could receive the information transferred to the Americans. That is why the Bloc Québécois called for reciprocity. If that is what the Americans want, then any American flight that is flying over Canadian territory should also provide a list of its passengers. Unfortunately, that suggestion was rejected by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. As democrats, the members of the Bloc Québécois accept that decision. But it would have made sense. It could apply to a number of American flights originating in Europe, headed for New York, Washington or Dallas, that fly over the Queen Charlotte Islands, Greenland or Iceland. We had concerns; we heard them. That was our first concern.

The second had to do with the Americans' exclusive right to impose this measure. The typical American approach is based on a fear that the events of September 11, 2001, would happen again. That is an editorial comment. I am not sure that terrorists would follow the same pattern. The planes that hit the towers were American. The terrorist pilots who committed this terrible act were trained at flight schools in Miami, in the United States. Thousands of people died.

●(1645)

The administrative assistant working for Xerox Corporation on the 48th floor of Tower 1 of the World Trade Center, who was busy typing up a report, did not deserve to get hit by a plane. What happened was unspeakable, indescribable.

In other words, the Americans seem to think that if terrorists want to strike, they will use exactly the same pattern.

What is more, Americans are driven by fear. Nevertheless, a sovereign nation can impose any rules it wants to on its land. That is why we in the Bloc Québécois are sovereignists and we want a sovereign Quebec.

That was our second concern. We met with people from Air Transat, the largest charter airline in Canada and the pride of Quebec. Air Transat received help from the QFL Solidarity Fund to start up. I am not sure, but I think that is the case. Air Transat has its head office in Quebec. It provides thousands of jobs in Quebec. It is currently ranked first in the charter travel industry. We should talk about holiday travel, as opposed to business travel. Its current charters go south, but it also has flights to Europe, mostly during summer and fall. Air Transat is number one, and the people at Air Transat told us in committee that if we did not agree to comply with this American requirement to provide lists, Air Transat would be doomed to bankruptcy.

Allow me to explain. I want to address the members from central Canada. Air Transat would no longer be able to offer direct flights from Edmonton to Cancun or from Calgary to Mexico, to the islands, to Jamaica. These provinces are in central Canada. If we refuse to provide the list, we cannot use American airspace. A plane leaving Edmonton would have to go to Vancouver, a lateral flight, in order to take the Pacific route to then go south. This would run up incredible costs and increase the duration of the flight. I imagine that it currently takes three and a half or four hours to get from Calgary to Cancun. The other route would take eight hours. Air Transat could no longer continue to operate.

*Government Orders*

Air Transat flights that leave from Montreal, Toronto, Halifax and Vancouver can use the air corridors. However, there is another problem that was explained to me and that made sense. Air Transat has some large carriers like Airbus A330s, Airbus A310s and Airbus A320s. These planes land in Montreal. I see my colleague, the hon. member for Jeanne-Le Ber, who must hear planes landing at Dorval in his riding. Some of his constituents are even bothered by the noise at times. That is another issue being examined by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. I do not know whether you are aware, Mr. Speaker, but an Airbus A330 needs more than 50 metres to land. It cannot stay in Canadian territory. If you have ever flown in that aircraft, you know that when it arrives from Europe or the south, it must fly over the American border in order to land, depending on the wind and whether it is on the north-south runway. The border is just a few kilometres from Montreal—50, 60 or 70 kilometres, I do not remember exactly. So, in order to turn to land, it must cross over into American airspace.

• (1650)

This also applies to Air Transat flights in the eastern market. In Vancouver, they have precisely the same problem because they have large carriers, which need a little more room to land and take off than a Cessna, for example. Can we all agree on that, Mr. Speaker? I know you are listening, for you keep nodding your head, which shows that you are paying attention.

In closing, the Bloc Québécois approved this bill in committee and will vote in favour of the amendment to the amendment proposed by the Liberal member.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with my colleague from the Bloc on the transport committee.

I understand the ramifications to the airline industry and how that plays out and I also appreciate that negotiations have taken place. According to evidence given at committee, within the homeland security policy there is room for a full exemption for all of these flights if the Canadian government matches up to the security requirements for the passengers at the same level as they are provided in the United States. Government members said it would cost billions of dollars to raise our security level such that we could achieve the full exemption.

Does my hon. colleague think that our security clearances on passengers flying out of Canada on international flights are lax or not of a certain standard? If they are not, does he buy the Conservatives' argument that this would cost an extraordinary amount of money in order to make it happen in a good fashion?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the NDP member for his question.

In any case, this is not the first time that the Conservatives have talked through their hats in committee or in the House.

They are talking about billions of dollars without any costing. That is what was said. I do not want to attack the credibility of the member who said it. Perhaps, deep down, he believes it, but he did not provide us with any proof. It is easy to say that something will

cost billions of dollars. Fortunately, he did not say that it would cost hundreds of billions of dollars.

We should look up the word “exaggerate” in the dictionary. It is tempting to believe a little white lie. We can be inclined to believe that it is true. But billions of dollars?

I agree with the hon. member. The Conservatives were talking through their hats. That being said, we have a decision to make and we cannot simply ignore the economic impact of that decision. I would not want to be responsible for the closure of Air Transat. On the contrary, I am in favour of Air Transat and I am in favour of further developing Air Transat and creating more jobs in Quebec.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, this week the Prime Minister is travelling to the United States to make an agreement on security arrangements between the two countries. This is a serious matter. At committee we were given the understanding that these regulations had to be put in place and finalized by December 31 to the satisfaction of the United States. Those were the conditions laid down by the government.

The lack of information about what the Prime Minister is proposing with regard to security information in the United States vis-à-vis the perimeter deal—

• (1655)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will have to stop the hon. member there.

[*Translation*]

There are only 30 seconds remaining for the hon. member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Speaker, I am missing part of the story. Also, I did not think that you recognized the hon. member twice. I suppose the Standing Orders allow it if no one else rises. I thought he was beginning his speech.

If I have understood correctly, at the end of his question, he spoke about the security perimeter negotiations with the Americans. As I understand it, the Prime Minister will be in Washington on Friday. It seems that one of these items is on the agenda. Unfortunately, I did not understand the question.

[*English*]

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure people are well aware that I am rising to speak to Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act. We are dealing with the amendment. I want to commend the member for Western Arctic for so ably outlining all of the reasons that New Democrats are opposed to the bill.

I want to read a bit of the legislative summary because it is important that people understand why we are so opposed to the bill.

### Government Orders

The bill would amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. It would amend the section that allows the government to expand the application so it would apply not only with respect to foreign states in which the flight is landing, but also to any foreign state that the flight would travel over. The air carrier would be able to provide disclosure without consent. Those are the two key points about which we have been speaking. One is it is not just that flights are going to the U.S., but even flying over it would require that this information be released. The second is that it is without consent.

I want to touch on the legislative summary that outlines the problems with the no fly list. These are problems people are concerned about in the current context.

With regard to the no fly list, the summary states:

The program was the focus of some controversy in its early days, since Transport Canada, assisted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), adds names to the list without the knowledge or consent of the potential passengers. There has been considerable concern that names will end up on the list mistakenly, resulting in an innocent passenger being banned from air travel. For example, there were media reports that two young boys, a 15-year old junior champion athlete and a 10-year old both named Alastair Butt, were initially stopped from taking domestic Air Canada flights in 2007 because this name appeared on the list.

Essentially, a couple of children were not able to fly.

Many organizations have spoken in opposition to the bill. I want to read something from the press release of the Council of Canadians dated December 3, 2010. It states:

Secure Flight has been roundly criticized by international civil society groups because it requires that a large amount of your personal information be transmitted to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security even if your flight only passes through U.S. airspace. It's not just name, gender, age and destination as government sources claim. Any and all information contained in your travel records will be transmitted to the U.S. security officials, who may use it for whatever purposes they see fit.

We give over a whole lot of information when we are flying, particularly if we are going to a hotel. We have given credit card numbers and we may have given medical conditions. We have given all kinds of information that the Department of Homeland Security will now have access to and can do whatever it pleases with it.

The Council of Canadians goes on to state:

For the vast majority of flights to and from Europe, the Caribbean and South America, Canadians will be asking permission from the U.S. government to travel. If your name is on the expensive and flawed U.S. no-fly list, you could be denied a boarding pass.

Canada has made many steps to harmonize airline security with U.S. programs but none has been good enough to prevent ever more draconian demands. Our severely flawed made in Canada "no fly" list was supposed to prevent the imposition of the U.S. list on Canada. But that benchmark has moved again to the point the U.S. must issue travel permissions to Canadians.

Canada can still say no to Secure Flight. In fact, we would be doing the world a favour by voting no to C-42 because of the enormous global concern about the program from other states, as well as various international bodies, including the United Nations. Because of our geographic location, Canadians have the most to lose from the imposition of Secure Flight rules on Canadian travel. It's only right that Canada takes a stand now, before it's too late.

I could not agree more with that statement by the Council of Canadians.

Other groups that are opposed as well. I will not go through them all, but the Council on American-Islamic Relations has said that the

bill could potentially have huge impacts on Canada's sovereignty and our privacy and Charter of Rights.

It is the sovereignty issue I want to turn to now. We are seeing a continuing harmonization in Canada with U.S. rules and regulations. For those of us who have been in the House long enough, we can remember back a few years ago some of the talk that was going on about smart regulations.

• (1700)

Anybody thinking about smart regulations would say, "What is the matter with regulations that are smart?" Smart regulations were an effort to harmonize our regulations in Canada with many of the regulations in the United States. These could affect our health care, our pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and it goes on. These could remove from Canada the right to say no to certain products. Smart regulations kind of went underground because there was a large hue and cry in 2005, particularly in the agricultural sector, about the move to do these smart regulations. Then we had SPP, the Security and Prosperity Partnership agreement. Again, Canadians en masse said, "absolutely not".

About six or eight months ago some us on Parliament Hill who were opposed to the SPP, the Security and Prosperity Partnership agreement, had a bit of a celebration because we thought it was dead.

I have an article from the *Globe and Mail* of February 2, which says that the Prime Minister and the President are eyeing sweeping changes in border security. This is an article by John Ibbitson and Steven Chase. The subtitle is, "Plans to implement greater intelligence sharing sure to raise sovereignty, privacy concerns". I have a few quotes from this because it is relevant to what we are talking about here. It states:

[The Prime Minister] and [President] will meet on Friday to set in motion the most sweeping changes to the Canada-U.S. border since the 1988 free-trade agreement.

According to information obtained by The *Globe and Mail*, the Prime Minister and the U.S. President will order a working group of senior bureaucrats to finalize within a few months agreements that would transform the 49th parallel through co-operative arrangements on trade, security and management of the boundary line.

It would mean sharing intelligence, harmonizing regulations for everything from cereal to fighter jets, and creating a bilateral agency to oversee the building and upgrading of bridges, roads and other border infrastructure.

The important part of that last sentence is the harmonizing regulations for everything from cereal to fighter jets.

Many of us in the House, certainly in the NDP, have been fighting smart regulations and the SPP. Now the government looks like it is bringing it back under another guise. This time it is border security.

The *Globe and Mail* article goes on to say:

Some of the agreements could be implemented through changes to regulations, but others could require legislation that would have to be approved by Parliament and Congress.

The new co-operation plan is a follow-up to a failed attempt in the past decade, the Security and Prosperity Partnership, to harmonize the regulatory regimes of Canada, the United States and Mexico....

*Government Orders*

The most controversial aspect of the talks will be an attempt to more deeply integrate the sharing of intelligence on people and products to ensure that anything or anyone entering either country would be properly inspected and the information shared.

There is a couple of other problems with what is being outlined. One is when things are done by regulation, it effectively removes parliamentary oversight. Most regulations, unless it has been designated in the legislation, do not come to Parliament. What we could essentially have is by the back door, by stealth, imposition of regulations in Canada that Canadians simply do not want. They have signalled that under smart regulations and under the SPP.

First, it is critical that we oppose vigorously Bill C-42, and I hope Canadians are listening to this. I hope they write their members of Parliament to tell them they do not want this violation of our privacy information, that they do not want the United States to say who can fly in Canada. If somebody who wants to go south somewhere and has to fly over the United States, the United States could say, absolutely not, that a boarding pass cannot be issued to that person.

Not only do we not want Bill C-42, we do not want smart regulations. We do not want the SPP. We do not want this new border security agreement that will erode our sovereignty even further.

I am ever hopeful that Canadians are paying attention to this very important issue, the very important erosion of our sovereignty.

There is a number of other ways that the legislation could be amended.

As my time is almost up, I urge people to look at the 1998 European commission's key principles, which would certainly help the legislation be more effective, and also the comments of our Privacy Commissioner who appeared before the committee and outlined a number of issues that she felt were important and that should be included in any legislation where the privacy of Canadians could be infringed upon.

● (1705)

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member's comments bring back some memories of being at meetings with the Privacy Commissioner and looking at some of the implications. It turns out that the issue of Canadians' privacy continues to grow. Information on many of the things we do is out there.

I also understand that the requirement to report the flights will no longer apply to domestic flights such as those from Toronto to Vancouver that happen to cross U.S. soil. It will only be required when a flight goes from Canada to a third country and passes over the U.S. It is my understanding that arrangement is about to be put in place.

Does the member believe that we still accommodate the U.S. far too much in its over-reaction to 9/11?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Madam Speaker, the member is correct. Domestic flights will be exempt. Those of us who fly from here to Vancouver Island welcome that piece of news because the flights often fly over the northern states on the way home.

I agree with the member that there is far too much intrusion into Canadian sovereignty with what is happening.

It is just wrong when we have to ask for the blessing and permission of the United States to allow Canadian citizens to fly to Cancun, or Cuba, or some other point when the flight goes over the United States. Canadians should be able to determine whether they are safe on a plane. Canadians should be able to determine who should be on a no-fly list, if they agree with such a thing, not the Americans.

I urge all members to oppose this bill and to say no to what the United States is trying to impose on us.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Madam Speaker, most of us here believe in our country. We have a certain respect for our sovereignty. We believe in our institutions. Yet we see a progressive movement away from our ability to control what we have in Canada as a nation. Bill C-42 is just one step in that direction.

I wonder if my colleague has any ideas as to why the government would be willing to do this. Why is it that the government cannot stand up for what we in Canada really believe in? Why can the government not stand up for our rights instead of progressively selling out step by step our ability to do business we are used to doing here in Canada?

● (1710)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Madam Speaker, my colleague asked an excellent question.

Thank heaven there have been New Democrats in the House. We have seen the government cave under tremendous pressure on things like the MacDonald, Dettwiler takeover and the potash situation in Saskatchewan. Without our voices in the House talking about the importance of Canada maintaining its own identity, about Canada maintaining control over its own resources, about Canada maintaining its own sovereignty, we would have seen more Canadian resources sold down the river.

All of these foreign takeovers that supposedly have government oversight are rubber-stamped by what we call the ministry of rubber-stamping. Virtually none, except for the two that I have mentioned, have been turned down by the government and, it is sad to say, by previous Liberal governments.

We really need a government that stands up for Canadians, that stands up for the protection of our resources, for the protection of our sovereignty, for the protection of our privacy. Pieces of legislation like Bill C-42 do not give comfort to Canadians that the Conservative government is acting on their behalf.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I think the question regarding Bill C-42 at this point is what would happen if we did not pass this bill. The government told us that if it was not in force by December 31, the Americans would deny overflights of United States territory, but here we are on February 2 and Air Transat is operating fine.

*Government Orders*

I understand the Bloc's concern that it has to do what Air Transat tells it to do. In the area of the air passenger bill of rights, the Bloc members were onside with the NDP in the beginning. Then Air Transat got to the Bloc members and they flipped to the other side and did what Air Transat told them to do. Now Air Transat is telling the Bloc members that they have to pass this bill because it is going to cost too much to fly around the edges of the United States. I guess those are valid concerns, but there are broader concerns to be dealt with on this issue.

At the end of the day, I feel, and I think this caucus feels, that if we had negotiated with the Americans in a tougher manner, they would have backed down. If we had said to the Americans that they would have sovereignty over their airspace and we would provide the information for those passengers for those 100 flights a day flying over their territory, but they would have to reciprocate and provide information on those passengers on the 2,000 planes that fly over Canadian airspace each day, I think we would have seen the Americans back off a bit.

They would have had to come to grips with what their constituents would have to say about this, what their airline industry and airlines would say to their government, and what all those thousands of passengers would have to say. There would be an uprising in the United States against their congressmen and senators. They would be telling the U.S. government at this point to hold back and be a little more understanding of the situation.

Let us look at what we would be providing under this agreement versus what we are providing under the agreement with the European Union.

Under this agreement, I do not think we negotiated anything with the Americans. I think we simply kept their demands and said, "Yes sir, whatever you want you are going to get". The reality is that we would provide all the PNR information to the United States, which the U.S. could keep for up to 40 years and perhaps share with other foreign governments. We are not really sure about that. The information on the PNR is tied to an individual's name, so privacy is a huge issue.

Let us look at the agreement Canada has with the European Union regarding the same information in the PNR. As a matter of fact, the Canada–E.U. agreement has been praised by Canadian and European data protection authorities because it has specific time periods for the disposal of data. In other words, they cannot keep it for 40 years as the Americans can under Bill C-42. They have to dispose of it after, I believe, a week. I am not sure of the days, but it is not a very long period before they have to dispose of the data. It limits the data's use, unlike what we are giving to the Americans. It limits, in particular, the individualization of the data. This is a really important point.

The information under the Canada–E.U. agreement is rendered anonymous. This allows the security services to build up the profile without attaching it to any one individual. Therefore, security is maintained.

If the member for Winnipeg North wants to get on a plane under this agreement that he is likely to vote for with his caucus colleagues, the Bloc and the government in the next number of days, the information he would have to provide would be in the Americans'

computer system and it would be tied to him. They would do data mining and build a bank of information and a profile on him over time.

Under the Canada–E.U. agreement, the PNR information is separated from the person's name. Therefore, a person's privacy is maintained. They still accomplish the same goal that they are trying to get. They can build up profiles but they are not violating privacy. This has become one of the global standards for international treaties on PNR agreements. By getting involved with the Americans in Bill C-42, we are moving away from that high standard with the passage of this legislation.

I wish the Liberals and the Bloc would pause for a second and take another look at this.

• (1715)

As I said, we were supposed to pass this bill by the end of the year or the flights would stop. Well, the flights are continuing, and if we do not pass this legislation now, the flights are going to continue into the future. The Prime Minister will be in Washington on Friday no doubt to provide some answers and excuses as to why his government has been unable to get this legislation through the House. It is his problem to explain it, because he waited until the last possible minute to bring the legislation before the House in the first place.

There are other broader issues we should be looking at here. We should get the initial infrastructure that we have had in place since 9/11 working properly first. I will give a few examples of things that are not working right and some broad areas that we should be looking at.

One example is the trusted shippers program. We have a huge exposure in Canada and the United States with I believe it is 1,000 trusted shippers under the trusted shippers program who are not following up on packages and baggage. People are sitting on airplanes after having gone through all the security procedures, and packages and parcels that have not been checked are on the planes right underneath them. Does that make any sense at all?

We should be concentrating on where the exposures are. Right now the biggest exposure according to the American Air Line Pilots Association is the trusted shippers program, all the mail and packages that are being put on planes without being checked. Why are we not looking at that area? In the whole area of the no-fly list, we do not even have the bugs worked out on that yet.

A couple of years ago, we were stopping Senator Ted Kennedy and refusing to let him on a plane. The member for Winnipeg Centre was denied boarding several times because another person with the same name was on the no-fly list. Six-year-old Alyssa Thomas was denied boarding because her name is on the no-fly list. They would not let her on the plane.

And we trust these people with all these data? Good luck, if the Bloc and the Liberals, and the government for that matter, think that giving all this information to the Americans is somehow going to provide security.



*Government Orders*

All we are going to get at the end of the day is perhaps a delayed flight if we have to go around American airspace. I am not suggesting that is ever going to happen. I would suggest that we should call their bluff and not pass the legislation.

What are other countries doing? What is Mexico doing? The member for Western Arctic said the Mexicans are not participating in this program. Why do we not check these things out? Clearly, the government has no desire to give us information as to what is going on.

When I talk about a reciprocal agreement, what kind of negotiating is going on in the government when it simply holus-bolus accepts what the Americans want it to do? The Conservative government does not say that if we are going to give them information, we want theirs. Did it occur to anybody over there in the government, the government negotiators, at least to suggest that to the Americans? Perhaps that would have slowed down the process a bit. But no, we are simply rolling over.

The government told me that it does not want to ask them for the information because we do not have a computer system that could handle all the information. The Americans are going to take our information on 100 flights and they are going to spend, and I forget the figure I was told, but a huge amount of money anyway to deal with this data and we would have to do the same thing if we got information from them.

I would suggest that the government start looking at its negotiating team and maybe get it to do a little more work.

• (1720)

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is nice to come back to the same old, same old. The member is always enthusiastic about these things. The reality is that there are other considerations. We do not deal with matters with the Americans on an item-by-item basis. It is all in the same pot.

When I was on the transport committee, after 9/11 we went to visit with the officials at homeland security in the United States. The gentlemen broke down and cried at the thought of 9/11. They trained all of their flight attendants in karate so that they would be able to take on hijackers. They did absolutely everything and found that nothing worked. They wanted to salvage Thanksgiving week, their biggest flight volume week, but it was a disaster. Confidence has been lost. They are doing bizarre things.

I hope the member agrees that we should be more concerned about the overall privacy issues that we in fact contribute to ourselves. There are a lot of things that we need to do and learn to protect our privacy. This is only one small issue.

**Mr. Jim Maloway:** Madam Speaker, as I have indicated, there are other extremely important areas that we should be looking at, including the trusted shippers program and all of the exposure to the packages, letters and bags going onto our planes unchecked. I would like to know what the government is doing about that, as opposed to simply rolling over on an American demand that we provide this information with no guarantee as to how it will be dealt with.

All I am saying is that it would be a big improvement if they would simply adopt the provisions of the Canada-EU agreement. Why would the government not have insisted that there be specific

time periods for disposal of data, that the data use is limited and that the data individualization is changed so that the information is rendered anonymous, as per the EU.

Those are all things that would help and the Americans could still build up their profile without attaching the information to the individuals. Hence, the privacy situation would be somewhat mitigated.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Madam Speaker, one of the more absurd parts of this whole negotiation that took place was the exemption that the U.S. gave to domestic flights.

Quite clearly, the history of terrorist action in aircraft in the United States was domestic to domestic. We saw that in the terrible events of 9/11. Quite clearly, in Canada, when we are travelling domestic to domestic, what we have to produce is a simple piece of photo ID, quite easily duplicated and forged. The level of security on these flights is extremely low. As well, domestic to domestic flights in Canada fly over some of the more populated areas in the United States and yet the U.S. government is quite willing to give this exemption for those flights. Why is that?

Does this relate to what the Prime Minister will be doing in the United States with information about all Canadians in this deal that he is signing or working out with President Obama on Friday?

• (1725)

**Mr. Jim Maloway:** Madam Speaker, no doubt there is an overall objective and an overall plan that the security people in the United States have in mind here.

The member is right. The airplanes that were used in 9/11 were domestic airlines. They were not international flights. They were domestic flights that were commandeered in the United States.

Here we have many domestic flights that are taking off from Toronto going to Vancouver and crossing over American air space. He certainly exposes some truth there. Certainly the Prime Minister is under a lot of pressure from the Americans but all we say is that he have some backbone here. The flights were not shut down during the first time they said they would be and they will not be shut down in the future.

We can certainly vote against this bill—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Vancouver East. I should let her know ahead of time that I will have to interrupt her at 5:30. She has a few minutes to begin her comments.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, although I only have a few minutes this afternoon, I am sure this debate will continue tomorrow because it is a very important bill that we are debating. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-42, the Aeronautics Act.

I first want to thank my colleague from Western Arctic who is the NDP transport critic. I know the member from Western Arctic and his team, the folks in his office, his researchers, have put together just a wealth of information that when one reads through it leaves one with a very troubling sense as to what the bill is all about.

*Routine Proceedings*

The bill was before the House before the holiday break. There was a sense of urgency, a deadline and it had to be rushed through. This is such a familiar story in this place that it almost makes the notion of Parliament and the work of parliamentarians seem redundant. Everything has an urgency and must be rushed through.

We are here to dig into legislation, to find out what it is about, to look at its merits, to give it a sober first thought and second thought, to have it go through committee and then through all the other processes. That is very important, especially in this day and age when everything is so focused on security, technology and the movement of information from government to government. There are huge issues involved here in terms of people's privacy.

While we have the opportunity and the right to see this legislation, we just think of what it means to the people out there who have not the vaguest notion of how these massive changes are taking place in our society. These days, travelling by air is something that millions of people do. It is part of daily living, part of business and part of one's family life.

Something I find deeply troubling is that most people have absolutely no awareness or knowledge of the rules that are being imposed, the secret agreements that are being laid out, which affect how their personal information is being used. When we relate that to a bigger picture about what is taking place with the deep integration with United States' policies, whether it is trade, security issues or border issues, this is something that I know many Canadians are more and more concerned about.

• (1730)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The hon. member will have seven minutes left for her comments when this debate resumes.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The House resumed from Wednesday, December 15, 2010, consideration of the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** It being 5:30 p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, December 15, 2010, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the first report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Call in the members.

• (1810)

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

(*Division No. 153*)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Allen (Welland)  
Andrews  
Ashton

André  
Angus  
Asselin

Atamanenko	Bagnell
Bains	Beaudin
Bellavance	Bennett
Bevington	Bigras
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brison	Brunelle
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Crombie	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Donnelly	Dorion
Dosanjh	Dryden
Duceppe	Dufour
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter	Eyking
Faillie	Folco
Foote	Freeman
Fry	Gagnon
Gameau	Gaudet
Goodale	Gravelle
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	Holland
Hughes	Hyer
Ignatieff	Kania
Kennedy	Laforest
Laframboise	Lamoureux
Lavallée	Layton
Lee	Lemay
Leslie	Lessard
Lévesque	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
Mathysen	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard
Mendes	Minna
Mourani	Mulcair
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nadeau
Neville	Oliphant
Pacetti	Paillé (Hochelaga)
Paquette	Patry
Pearson	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proulx
Rae	Rafferty
Ratansi	Regan
Rodriguez	Rota
Russell	Savage
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simson
St-Cyr	Stoffer
Szabo	Thi Lac
Tonks	Trudeau
Valeriote	Vincent
Volpe	Wilfert
Wrzesnewskyj	Zarac— 140

## NAYS

### Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Arthur	Ashfield
Baird	Benoit
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)

*Government Orders*

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*Translation*]

**SERIOUS TIME FOR THE MOST SERIOUS CRIME ACT**

The House resumed from February 1 consideration of the motion that Bill S-6, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and another Act, be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the third reading stage of Bill S-6.

● (1820)

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

*(Division No. 154)*

**YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Alblonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Arthur
Ashfield	Bagnell
Bains	Baird
Bennett	Benoit
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Cadman	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannon (Pontiac)	Carrie
Casson	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Coady	Coderre
Crombie	Cummins
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davidson	Day
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dhaliwal
Dhalla	Dosanjh
Dreeshen	Dryden
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Fantino
Fast	Finley
Flaherty	Fletcher
Folco	Foote
Fry	Galipeau
Gameau	Généreux
Glover	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Guergis
Hall Findlay	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hiebert
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Holland
Ignatieff	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Kania
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lauzon
Lebel	Lee
Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Malhi

Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Day
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Généreux	Glover
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hiebert
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Petit	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson
Tilson	Toews
Trost	Tweed
Uppal	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young — 136

**PAIRED**

Members

Bachand	Boughen
Carrie	Gallant
Lalonde	Oda
Ouellet	Paillé (Louis-Hébert) — 8

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

*Routine Proceedings*

Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McGuinity	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLeod	McTeague
Mendes	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Neville	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oliphant	Pacetti
Patry	Pearson
Petit	Poilievre
Preston	Proulx
Rae	Raït
Rajotte	Ratansi
Rathgeber	Regan
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Rodriguez
Rota	Russell
Savage	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Sgro	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Silva	Simson
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Szabo
Thompson	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Trudeau
Tweed	Uppal
Valerjote	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Volpe
Wallace	Warawa
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	Wilfert
Weston (Saint John)	Woodworth
Wong	Yelich
Wrzesnewskyj	Zarac — 202
Young	

## NAYS

## Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Angus	Ashton
Asselin	Atamanenko
Beaudin	Bellavance
Bevington	Bigras
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brunelle	Cardin
Carrier	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Donnelly	Dorion
Duceppe	Dufour
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Faille
Freeman	Gagnon
Gaudet	Gravelle
Guay	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hughes	
Hyer	Laforest
Laframboise	Lavallée
Layton	Lemay
Leslie	Lessard
Lévesque	Malo
Maloway	Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
Mathysen	Ménard
Mourani	Mulcair

Nadeau	Paillé (Hochelaga)
Paquette	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Rafferty
Savoie	Siksay
St-Cyr	Stoffer
Thi Lac	Vincent — 74

## PAIRED

## Members

Bachand	Boughen
Carrie	Gallant
Lalonde	Oda
Ouellet	Paillé (Louis-Hébert) — 8

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

(Bill read the third time and passed)

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed from December 16, 2010 consideration of the motion

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development concerning the extension of time to consider Bill C-469, An Act to establish a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights.

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If you seek it, I believe you will find agreement to apply the vote from the previous motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting yes.

**The Speaker:** Is there agreement to proceed in this way?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party will vote in favour of this bill.

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois will vote yes.

[English]

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, NDP members will vote yes.

**Hon. Helena Guergis:** Mr. Speaker, I vote yes.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Arthur:** Mr. Speaker, I vote in favour of the bill.

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

(Division No. 155)

## YEAS

## Members

Abbott	Alblonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Welland)	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson

*Routine Proceedings*

André	Andrews	McColeman	McGuinity
Angus	Armstrong	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Arthur	Ashfield	McTeague	Ménard
Ashton	Asselin	Mendes	Menzies
Atamanenko	Bagnell	Merrifield	Miller
Bains	Baird	Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Beaudin	Bellavance	Moore (Fundy Royal)	Mourani
Bennett	Benoit	Mulcair	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Bevington	Bezan	Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Bigras	Blackburn	Nadeau	Neville
Blais	Blaney	Nicholson	Norlock
Block	Bonsant	O'Connor	O'Neill-Gordon
Bouchard	Boucher	Obhrai	Oliphant
Bourgeois	Braid	Pacetti	Paillé (Hochelaga)
Breitkreuz	Brison	Paquette	Patry
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Pearson	Petit
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge	Plamondon	Poilievre
Brunelle	Cadman	Pomerleau	Preston
Calandra	Calkins	Proulx	Rae
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)	Rafferty	Raitt
Cardin	Carrie	Rajotte	Ratansi
Carrier	Casson	Rathgeber	Regan
Charlton	Chong	Reid	Richards
Chow	Christopherson	Richardson	Rickford
Clarke	Clement	Ritz	Rodriguez
Coady	Coderre	Rota	Russell
Comartin	Crombie	Savage	Savoie
Crowder	Cullen	Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Cummins	Cuzner	Schellenberger	Sgro
D'Amours	Davidson	Shea	Shipley
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)	Shory	Siksay
Day	DeBellefeuille	Silva	Simson
Dechert	Del Mastro	Smith	Sopuck
Demers	Deschamps	Sorenson	St-Cyr
Desnoyers	Devolin	Stanton	Stoffer
Dewar	Dhaliwal	Storseth	Strahl
Dhalla	Donnelly	Sweet	Szabo
Dorion	Dosanjh	Thi Lac	Thompson
Dreeshen	Dryden	Tilson	Toews
Duceppe	Dufour	Tonks	Trost
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Trudeau	Tweed
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dykstra	Uppal	Valeriote
Easter	Eyking	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Faille	Fantino	Vellacott	Verner
Fast	Finley	Vincent	Volpe
Flaherty	Fletcher	Wallace	Warawa
Folco	Footé	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Freeman	Fry	Weston (Saint John)	Wilfert
Gagnon	Galipeau	Wong	Woodworth
Garneau	Gaudet	Wrzesnewskyj	Yelich
Généreux	Glover	Young	Zarac — 276
Goldring	Goodale		
Goodyear	Gourde		
Gravelle	Grewal		
Guamieri	Guay		
Guergis	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)		
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)			
Hall Findlay			
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)		
Hiebert	Hoback		
Hoepfner	Holder		
Holland	Hughes		
Hyer	Ignatieff		
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)		
Kania	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)		
Kennedy	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)		
Kent	Kerr		
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)		
Laforest	Laframboise		
Lake	Lamoureux		
Lauzon	Lavallée		
Layton	Lebel		
Lee	Lemay		
Lemieux	Leslie		
Lessard	Lévesque		
Lobb	Lukiwski		
Lunn	Lunney		
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie		
Malhi	Malo		
Maloway	Marston		
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)		
Masse	Mathysen		
Mayes	McCallum		

NAYS

PAIRED

Members

Boughen

Gallant

Oda

Paillé (Louis-Hébert) — 8

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.*[English]*

It being 6:22 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF CANADA FOR THE REGION OF NORTHERN ONTARIO ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-309, An Act establishing the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Northern Ontario, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

**Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-309, An Act establishing the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Northern Ontario be concurred in.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** A recorded division on the motion stands deferred until February 9, at the conclusion of government orders.

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## EMERGENCY DEBATE

[English]

### SITUATION IN EGYPT

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the situation in Egypt.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.)** moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this debate. It is unquestionable that we face an urgent situation in Egypt at the present time. Any Canadian watching the news tonight will be aware of the level and degree of violence in the streets, as it appears that there is active fighting between the forces that are closely tied to President Mubarak and those who are demonstrating for significant change in Egypt.

I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Don Valley East, but there are some events taking place even now.

• (1825)

[Translation]

We have just learned that CBC employees were attacked in the streets and, without the intervention of the Egyptian army, they could have been seriously injured by the physical attacks.

My comments will primarily focus on two issues: the protection of the Canadian government's consular operations—the government's policy in response to the problem and the situation—and the crisis, which is not limited to just Cairo or Egypt and remains a major challenge for the entire region.

[English]

I want to say a couple of things in the debate and there will be a chance for questions. There will also be a chance for questions to the government with respect to the activities of Canadian officials and what has happened.

I want to make it very clear that our side recognizes the great hard work of people who work on behalf of the citizens of Canada and the very difficult circumstances in which our embassy officials in Cairo have found themselves over the last several days.

The underlying challenge, and we saw it emerging from the Lebanon crisis, is that Canada consistently finds itself under-resourced, without enough people on the ground and without a sufficiently determined response time from the government in Ottawa. We were behind in our response with respect to the Lebanon situation.

A valuable report coming from the other place refers to some of the difficulties and challenges that we see in this particular instance. Many Canadians had a great deal of difficulty finding out about the circumstances affecting their loved ones, their children, their cousins and those who are part of their families. We also saw those people themselves facing a challenge as they tried to find out information about how they could possibly get out of the country.

The minister took great offence yesterday when I asked a simple question based on facts. The fact of the matter is that Canada faces a problem. Far too many of our personnel are here in Ottawa and not enough of our personnel are working on behalf of Canada overseas. That is a problem and a challenge which must be faced. We are also not always using the most up-to-date technology to get in touch with Canadians or to make sure they are available.

The one thing we know for certain is that this is not an issue about looking back and saying who did wrong and who goofed up. One thing we know for certain is that we will face in the future more of these situations. This is the world we are living in. We are living in a world in which there are either man-made difficulties, political difficulties and challenges, or difficulties involving natural disasters. We simply have to improve our capacity as a government to respond to the critical situation. That is the first point I want to make.

The second point I want to make is that none of us could have anticipated the extent and the pace of change which has taken place in the Middle East. Countries which seemed from the outside to be extremely stable are now profoundly unstable. Deeply repressed, yes. Oppressive, yes. Hierarchical, yes. Virtual dictatorships, yes. They are profoundly unstable because their people are expressing a very simple reality; they have had enough.

More than half the population of Egypt is under the age of 30. It is a young country. It is a country with a 5,000 year old civilization, but it is a young country. It is a young country in which people are becoming better educated, in which people are increasingly learning of all of the challenges of globalization. It is a young country where all of the opportunities are in place. Its people see an economic and social system of which they are taking advantage. The revolution and technology of Twitter and Facebook, and the social media which has taken over the younger generation which allows them to communicate one with the other, allowing people in Tunis to communicate with people in Cairo, allowing people on the street in Cairo to tell others to come out for a demonstration and tens of thousands of people come out.

It is not possible to ascribe what has taken place and what continues to take place to political radicalism or to a particular ideology that is in place, although that obviously has a role and we must recognize that presents us with a challenge. We have to understand that this is a part of the world in which all of the theories about social change and political change are actually being put to work on the street.

Our party, the government and others have made the same point, that it is not for us as Canadians to determine what the outcome in Egypt is going to be.

● (1830)

However, it is important for us to state today that it is very clear that the steps that have been announced by President Mubarak with respect to his own plans and with respect to the plans that he is supposedly putting forward for political reform are simply not sufficient to deal with the extent of the concern and with the extent of popular reaction to the regime.

This is not any form of outside interference. This is a simple statement of the facts. This is a simple statement that what has been done so far is clearly not having the effect that we all want to see.

There is a legitimate concern in stability as much as there is a legitimate concern in democracy because we all know from our own lives that without a degree of stability and without personal security it is not possible for us to see working democracies really advance. However, we do not want to see a time when governments use the security and the stability arguments as an excuse for further repression.

We want to state categorically on behalf of this Parliament that we affirm the dignity of every person around the world. We affirm their dignity, we affirm their human rights, their right to the rule of law, their right to democratic assembly, their right to peaceful assembly, their right to freedom of religion and their right to freedom of expression. We do not see these as being confined to any one country. We see these as values that are indeed universal and they are

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contained in the documents that are expressed by the United Nations itself in terms of the rights of every person in the world.

There is a profound movement for democracy that is under way in the Middle East. It is an extremely encouraging and profound movement. It is important for this Parliament to state very clearly to the Egyptian people that we are with them in their struggle, we are with them in their quest for democracy, we are with them in their quest for stability. We say to all the people of the Middle East, and I would say most emphatically including the people of Israel, that we value the peace and stability which has been achieved at such great costs. Canada will stay involved and stay engaged in the peace process to ensure that the democratic change, indeed the democratic revolution that is now under way in Egypt and Tunisia and many other parts of the Middle East, does not take away for one second the need for peaceful co-existence between Israel and all its neighbours in the Middle East.

I appreciate the chance to speak on this debate. I appreciate the opportunity to share some thoughts with the members opposite. I do not see this debate as an opportunity to take partisan shots one way or the other. It is a chance for us as members of Parliament to have a thoughtful exchange on what we think is taking place, on what we think Canada can usefully and productively do to be a constructive partner for peace as well as a constructive partner for justice and democracy.

That is the kind of foreign policy we want to see, a Canada that is deeply engaged in the world because, as I often say, the world is in us and we are profoundly in the world.

● (1835)

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for raising this issue in the House. He has rightly pointed out that this is indeed quite a monumental and historical time in the Middle East with the changes taking place and he has outlined the reasons why these changes are taking place.

Canadians have noticed that this government's strong policy has been to promote democratic rights, human rights, around the world, including in Egypt. For that reason I can assure the member that this government looks at Egypt and because it sees all of these things happening it is calling for a human rights transition to a new government, for a transition in the Middle East that will ensure that the rights of its people are upheld as per Canadian values, such as human rights and the like.

I want to tell the hon. member that this government will also stand for human rights around the world.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Madam Speaker, let it be noted that is the nicest thing the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs has ever had to say about me and I deeply appreciate it.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to join with others in this place to reflect on what is happening in Egypt.

I want to ask the member a question very directly.

Frankly, many of us have seen how the west has gone from supporting Mubarak to understanding that this is no longer tenable.

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This is a very direct question and we hope that the government would join us on this as well. Would he agree with the NDP that it is time to say to Mr. Mubarak that his time is up, that it is time to leave, not in one month, two months or three months, that it is time to leave now?

It is important for all of us to be clear on that issue. Otherwise, we are simply talking about concepts without detail, without conviction.

I would like to know what the member thinks of that.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Madam Speaker, the member for Ottawa Centre should know that the phrase “your time is up” has been used before and it is not one that I will use on this occasion.

The key point we need to realize about the situation in which President Mubarak finds himself and the situation in which the Government of Egypt finds itself is simply this: the measures that he has announced so far have clearly not had the effect of creating stability and creating a sense of transition to democracy.

When President Obama, for example, last night said very clearly that we expect a transition to democracy to start now, I think that is something we all share. It is very clear to us on this side that, looking at it as we do from the distance where we are, more steps need to be taken and more simply needs to be done.

However, I continue to believe very profoundly that it is up to the political process in Egypt itself to determine what exactly will happen and how it will take place. It is up for us to say that what has been done so far is not having the effect that we would like it to have. I think that is the critical message that has to be received.

It is not up to President Mubarak alone to determine what will be the outcome of his regime. It is increasingly, and rightly so, up to the people of Egypt to make that determination.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am blessed to have one of the largest Egyptian communities residing in my riding, primarily Coptic Christians who are the largest religious minority in Egypt. I have had the pleasure of attending their mass and been blessed by Pope Shenouda himself.

Many in the Coptic Christian community have expressed frustration and anger over the ongoing religious persecution that has targeted many Coptic Christians and has been escalating over the years, as we saw in Nag Hammadi last year and in Alexandria where 21 were killed and 79 injured. With this growing religious intolerance and sectarian violence against Coptic Christians in recent years and the failure of the Egyptian government to effectively investigate and properly prosecute those responsible, what consideration can—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Order, please. The hon. member for Toronto Centre.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Madam Speaker, I had an opportunity three weeks ago to visit the church that was bombed. One thing that many members may not know is that right across the very narrow street from the church is a mosque. The mosque could just as easily have been bombed as the bomb went off in the middle of the street.

The member raises a very critical point. When we look at what a democracy is, a democracy is not just about elections. A democracy is not just about demonstrations in the street. A democracy is about

the institutional protection we provide for minorities. It is about the rule of law. It is about the protection of human rights. It is about the recognition of due process and the recognition of ending corruption and dealing with citizens fairly.

Therefore, it is especially important that the needs of the 10 million people in Egypt who are Coptic Christians be taken fully into account in the kind of government and the kind of process that will emerge in that great country.

• (1840)

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the important debate tonight on the current events that are taking place in Egypt. The Liberal critic for foreign affairs is a difficult act to follow.

I would like to talk about Egypt from a personal perspective. I have been historically involved in Egypt through ancestors, et cetera, and I find the current situation brings me a lot of trepidation.

Egypt has been the cradle of civilization and the cradle of three of the great monotheistic Abrahamic religions. What is unfolding in Egypt is not a new trend because throughout civilization Egypt has gone through good times and bad times. However, what is happening today is a reaction by people who have been subjugated for 30 years and not being allowed the freedom that they want.

Popular uprisings and revolutions are fluid by nature and unpredictable as they are more concerned with getting rid of the old than defining the new regime. We have seen many examples. What comes to mind is what happened in Iran in 1979 and what transitioned then. Uprisings promise change but make no guarantees that such change is non-violent in the short term or will lead to pluralistic democratic society in the long term.

A peaceful transition in Egypt will depend mostly on the existing power brokers, especially the military and its political partners in Cairo. It is important that Canada play a leadership role now so that when we help the politicians make decisions we will be clear on what we stand for. We stand for pluralism and democracy. We are not imposing any of our values on anyone. However, we are leading them to where they should be going for free democratic elections.

As has been mentioned, the Egyptian people are fed up. The speed with which the grassroots movement, the civil society, has organized itself has been amazing. For six days there had been no violence. Violence has now started because the people can see no changes taking place.

For politicians to participate and for politicians to ensure that there is a negotiated and a peaceful transition, it is important that the people are consulted and that the opposition participates in the consultations. Having elections where the rule of the majority is guaranteed is important. It is important that democracy takes precedence. It is important that President Mubarak understands that the people will no longer put up with the amount of pressure they had been under.



It is interesting to note that the military has the respect of the Egyptian people and has done nothing at the moment to the people. Hopefully that will not change. What we need to understand is that there are too many factors are at play. The Egyptian police are not liked by the people but the military, which is under the command of the president, is liked by the people. Those are some of the issues that people need to think through before giving advice.

Egypt is at a turning point. If it turns toward a continuation of military dominated leadership supported by the business elite, we will not have seen the end of the turmoil. Popular forces and the opposition cannot continue to be excluded from meaningful participation. One must hope that the transitional government will do the right thing and open up the political arena for full participation and an early and free election.

Yemen, Jordan and Tunisia have recently seen wide-scale protests and we hope that this regional disruption will not lead to greater tension in the Middle East.

• (1845)

President Mubarak said that he would not seek re-election but rejected demands to step down. That is a factor we must consider as we are giving guidance to the country. The 82-year-old Mubarak is a former air force commander and he wants to finish his presidential term which ends in September.

One of the factors that we need to consider as we are talking to them is: what are the permutations and combinations that the Egyptian people will settle for? More than 400 people have been wounded and one person has died in clashes with pro and anti-government demonstrations, which we saw in the streets of Cairo. The Coptic Christian community thinks that President Mubarak may not be the worst but that he is the best at the moment. It is very important that those factors be taken into consideration.

President Obama said that he spoke to President Mubarak who recognized that the status quo was not sustainable and that a change must take place. President Obama has also said that an orderly transition must be meaningful, peaceful and must begin now.

The leader of the Liberal Party has pointed out that Canadians are looking at these events. Egyptians are expressing a desire for democracy and openness, and have grievances and concerns that need to be addressed.

We hope President Mubarak will respond to these legitimate issues in a constructive spirit. No one wants the violence to escalate and we hope the Egyptian government, police and army, and those who are demonstrating will show an equal desire for peace and mutual respect.

Security and stability are legitimate human aspirations as well. We have heard from our foreign affairs critic. I hope that from this emergency debate the government will see an opportunity to take a balanced and intelligent approach to helping the Egyptian people realize their dreams.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as I watch the news coverage unfold and listen to the debate and discussion from world leaders and from

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commentaries across the globe, the subject within this debate, which I believe has been most neglected, is the consequences of this crisis on religious minorities. I speak particularly of the Coptic Christian minority which has been under consistent assault and attack in Egypt for many years. These Christians are being persecuted all over the region. It is the responsibility of human rights supporting people everywhere in the world, regardless of their faith, to speak out against that persecution.

I wonder if the member has comments on how this Parliament and the government can shine light on that subject so that it is not forgotten as we watch the unfolding crisis play out in Egypt.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Madam Speaker, in my deliberations I did mention that there were many permutations and combinations that needed to be regarded.

“I quote the Rev. Paul Girguis, who said:

The current situation for the Copts stinks, but [longtime Egyptian President Hosni] Mubarak is the best of the worst for us.

I think what Canada can do is show Egypt, which has been a cradle of civilization and understands pluralism, that polarization is not the way to go and that when a crisis occurs a minority group should not be picked on.

I can say from experience that I was a visible minority in Africa and we were picked on because people did not understand pluralism. I think it is important for Canada, when we are using diplomacy, to use the diplomacy of pluralism.

• (1850)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, is the member concerned, as many are, that this is being seen by many as an either or situation? What we are hearing from people who actually started the democratic uprising in Egypt is that this is not about one choice or another. They are saying that this is about the people actually being heard for the first time in 30 years.

Would the member care to comment on the concern she might share with myself and others that this is being seen as either being with the tired corrupt regime or having something else, when in fact there is another way?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Madam Speaker, I think the elephant in the room is the Muslim brotherhood. People are saying to vote one way or the other. It is a choice between this and that.

It is up to the Egyptian people to look at history, to look and at what happened in Iran and decide for themselves which way they want to go. These decisions should be made by the Egyptian people without interference from external forces.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I, too, want to thank the member for Toronto Centre for asking for this emergency debate. I associate myself with his comments, particularly those about how we, as a country, must stand for dignity in the world and for human rights and freedom.

It was inspiring to watch peaceful demonstrations, but it has been very disturbing to see violence lately. I was at a protest Sunday in Halifax, where Muslims and Christians stood side by side saying that they needed to have peace, change, human rights and democracy.

What advice does my hon. friend have for them?

*S.O. 52*

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Madam Speaker, I would refer back to the historical experience with living in pluralism. Egypt has been the cradle of three monotheistic faiths and those faiths have always lived in harmony. It takes external forces to create disharmony.

The example the member has given is the will of the Egyptian people to ensure a peaceful solution and to ensure that this does not get into a religious polarization of people.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Madam Speaker, over the past few days, the eyes of the world have focused on Liberation Square in the capital of Egypt. Events unfolding in Cairo could have a profound effect on the Middle East and the entire world.

Our government's priority is, of course, the safety of Canadians who are in Egypt. That is why we took swift action to organize an air evacuation of those who wanted to leave the region. These measures will be deployed as long as they are required. My colleague will describe in more detail the measures we have made available to Canadians.

This evening we are particularly disappointed and concerned that the protests that began with hope, order and enthusiasm are now fraught with violence, havoc and fear.

[*English*]

A few hours ago, live ammunition was used against Egyptian citizens. At least one person has been killed and many hundreds more have been wounded, some seriously.

Egypt, a nation of 80 million people with an ancient civilization, has long been a moderate leader of the Arab, African and Muslim worlds, and an important partner in the Middle East peace process, based on its long-standing peace treaty and co-operation on security matters with Israel. It is also home to the Suez Canal, a vital shipping route. What happens in Egypt therefore has major implications for other countries of the region, most especially Israel, for the world economy and for international security including the security of Canadians.

This morning I spoke to my Egyptian counterpart, foreign minister Aboul Gheit. Our deep and strong relationship with Egypt allows us to be frank with each other as friends should be. In our conversation this morning, I expressed Canada's concern about the situation in Egypt and our desire to see a peaceful and meaningful transition to democracy. I also reiterated the importance that Canada and the world place on the stability of Egypt and its region.

In discussions with my colleague, now and in the past, I have not hesitated to raise Canada's ongoing concerns with the situation of human rights in Egypt. We have urged Egypt to improve respect for human rights, in particular freedom of expression and freedom of association. We have raised concerns about the continuing application of Egypt's state of emergency, which is still in force after 30 years, and the use of torture and arbitrary detention by Egyptian security forces. We have also encouraged political reforms in order to promote democratic development and respect for the rule of law in Egypt, including the holding of free and fair parliamentary elections with international observers.

After the political opening of 2005, which saw the introduction of multi-candidate presidential and parliamentary elections in Egypt, the following years saw a marked setback on human rights and democratic development. Canada has expressed concern on several occasions in that regard. In particular, we conveyed our disappointment at the parliamentary elections in November and December 2010 that saw the ruling national democratic party win over 80% of the available seats and a loss of most of the opposition seats amidst allegations of massive vote fraud and low voter turnout. A lack of international observers surely contributed to the lack of credibility of the outcome.

These elections represented a setback for democratic reform and modernization in Egypt and a failure by its government to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the Egyptian people for a greater voice in the running of their government. There is no doubt that these decisions by the Egyptian government fed the frustration of the Egyptian people.

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

The results of the latest parliamentary elections, the absence of political reform and the slow pace of economic progress, the increase in the price of food, and the bleak future for youth led to the protests that began on January 25. There is no doubt that the example of Tunisia, where the people are experiencing the same frustrations, also inspired the Egyptian protests. However, the priority must now be to put an end to the violence, and I urge the Egyptian authorities to respond with restraint during these tense times.

[*English*]

We urge Egypt to respect freedom of association and freedom of movement for all political actors. There, however, have been disturbing reports of looting, as well as prison breakouts and we urge the Egyptian authorities to respond to these incidents and to safeguard the security and the property of all of the people in Egypt.

The large-scale protests in many parts of Egypt have demonstrated the desire of the Egyptian people for greater political freedom and economic reform. The people of Egypt are claiming what people all around the world want and what we as Canadians take for granted: freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law and the chance at a better life.

The demonstrators have also shown their commitment to bringing about political and economic reform through peaceful protest, not by taking up arms or by terrorism. They should be commended for peacefully expressing their views and their voices heard.

Other darker forces, however, are at work on Liberation Square and that is why calm and order must be restored as quickly as possible. We all know that the new social networking media, at the heart of popular movements around the world, is transforming the way societies everywhere communicate and share information.

It is increasingly important for people everywhere to be connected to the Internet, for the governments to permit access. We are, therefore, disturbed by interruptions to Internet services in Egypt and the blocking of social networking websites. This not only restricts access to information and communication by the people of Egypt, but it hampers emergency efforts to provide consular services to foreign nationals in Egypt.

• (1900)

[Translation]

We are also troubled by the forced closing of some news media. We call on the Egyptian government to ensure freedom of expression by unblocking websites and not interfering in the free dissemination of information.

We have noted President Mubarak's promise to leave office next September and the appointment of a vice-president, a new prime minister and a new council of ministers, who have been asked to undertake economic reforms. This new political team will be judged on its response to the legitimate demands of the Egyptian people.

[English]

However, more clearly needs to be done in order to address the long outstanding need of Egypt for real and meaningful political and economic reform. Putting on a coat of paint to cover the cracks in the wall will not satisfy the Egyptian people's demand for change.

The Government of Canada has long engaged Egypt and other governments in the region on the need to bring about reform. Democratic development is a priority of Canada's foreign policy. Democratic development advances Canada's interest because it offers the best chance for long-term stability, prosperity and the protection of human rights.

[Translation]

Canada is committed to strengthening civil society and democratic institutions and processes, including political parties and independent media, throughout the world so that people can have control over the decisions that affect their daily lives. With this same determination and hope, today, we are asking President Mubarak and the new Egyptian government to strengthen the foundations of democracy, dialogue and co-operation.

It is not up to Canada to decide who should govern tomorrow's Egypt. Today, the people of Egypt are telling us, in the most active and courageous way possible, that they finally want to choose leaders who will bring them prosperity, justice and safety. We do not hesitate to raise our voices, loudly and clearly, in this chamber to say that we hope that Egypt's future leaders will actively devote themselves to implementing reforms that will meet the needs and aspirations of the Egyptian people.

[English]

Canada wants to see a transition towards greater democracy and freedom in Egypt, with respect for human rights and the rule of law. There needs to be a clear timetable for a new parliamentary election with international observers.

The 2010 parliamentary election lacked credibility and deprived the people of Egypt of an elected and democratic opposition as a

means of peaceful political expression and participation in the governing of their country. The current situation is, at least in part, a direct result of this failure to respect the democratic process.

A true democratic transition in Egypt will require institutional reforms. For example, it will require the establishment of a credible and non-partisan elections commission to run the elections, as we have here in Canada. Such an elections commission would oversee the preparations for an election, which should reflect international standards for transparency and integrity.

The international community will no doubt be willing to assist by providing election observers and technical assistance.

Egypt also needs to make constitutional reforms. These could include stronger guarantees for human rights, in particular, freedom of expression and freedom of association, coupled with the strengthening of the independence of the judiciary.

[Translation]

The state of emergency that Egypt has been living in for 30 years now, which has resulted in much injustice and inequality, must soon be lifted. As I was assured by the Egyptian minister of foreign affairs this morning, the rules governing the registration of presidential candidates are to be revised so that as many people as possible can run in the September election.

It would also be beneficial to set fixed terms for the president and vice-president.

However, an election must not be confused with democracy. Although a fair and equitable election process is certainly essential to building a democracy, only a stable and honest government can ensure the sustainability of democratic principles.

In order for us, here in Canada, to recognize and support the future Egyptian government, it must meet four basic conditions: first, it must respect freedom, democracy and human rights, particularly the rights of women; second, it must recognize the State of Israel; third, it must adhere to existing peace treaties; and fourth, it must respect international law.

• (1905)

[English]

Canada urges Egypt's government to heed the courageous voice of the Egyptian people, seize the moment and turn it into an opportunity for long overdue democratic and economic reform that will allow Egypt to maintain its place as a leader among Arab, African and Muslim states.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's intervention tonight. I know it was not the first choice of the government to have the debate tonight, but I appreciate his being here and I appreciate the level of detail he provided us with.

S.O. 52

Again, in the spirit of the evening, I know there is a reluctance on the part of the government in its repeated statements to respond to the question as to whether or not Mr. Mubarak should go, but I wonder if he would not agree with me that what we do know now as a result of what happened today is that the statement President Mubarak made last night does not appear to be sufficient to bring peace and stability and the transition all of us have been looking for.

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon:** Mr. Speaker, the present situation in Egypt is extremely troublesome. The objectives that have been fixed, or at least have been placed there, do not seem at this moment to be going in that direction. Obviously, I repeat what I mentioned before that we do believe that a new government must espouse the fundamental principles of democracy, freedom of rights and freedom of expression, and the promotion of human rights. Undeniably, and I say this to my colleague from the Liberal Party, it is extremely important that the Egyptians themselves determine how that new government is going to be formed and what institutions need to be built so that democracy will indeed prevail there.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is a definite problem with how the west is dealing with this in some manner because of the past record. We all know that for 30 years Canada and the United States were supportive of the regime, including the army. Canada has sold arms to Egypt. We know that.

However, I think that what people are waiting for the government to say very clearly and unequivocally, as was said by President Obama, is that the transfer of power should happen now. What is absolutely clear from that statement is the signal for Mr. Mubarak to resign and leave now.

I am wondering if the minister could please clarify that. If he cannot clarify that, could he tell us why he cannot clarify it and join other nations and world leaders who have done so, frankly?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon:** Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate what I said at the outset. It is incumbent upon the Egyptians themselves to choose the next government and to do that in a peaceful manner and to transition into democracy and build democratic institutions.

I was informed that a couple of political parties in Egypt have now acknowledged and responded favourably to the announcements made yesterday by President Mubarak. There remain some political parties that are outside the process for the time being, but again, it is not Canada's role to tell the Egyptians what to do, particularly in terms of how they should go about choosing a new leader.

Suffice it to say, we think it is extremely important for Egypt to have a new government and that it be done in a peaceful and durable fashion as much as possible.

•(1910)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my view that whatever the outcome of this process set in motion, we must consistently call upon the Egyptian government to continue to recognize the state of Israel, to honour past peace agreements, and to respect religious minorities, including Coptic Christians who have been mercilessly persecuted by extremists in that country.

I wonder if the minister would join with me in affirming that Canada would call upon Egypt to continue to recognize Israel regardless of the outcome of the political changes under way right now, and to honour previously signed agreements for peace and to protect the rights and safety of religious minorities, including Coptic Christians.

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. We are very supportive. My colleague, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, as a matter of fact, was very supportive of the Coptic Christian community when that terrible explosion took place a couple of weeks ago.

In terms of stability in the region, it is incumbent and extremely important, and that is why in the few moments I had to speak in the House I insisted, first, that there be respect for liberty, democracy and human rights, but at the same time that the new government must recognize the state of Israel. The peace agreements already in existence must also be recognized by a new government. Indeed, that government needs to respect the international community's will.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has been encouraging to see the military not intervene in the last few days. Today it was a bit worrisome in that there was violence and no one intervened to stop it. It is not clear to me exactly to what degree the military is an independent force in the government right now in Egypt, but I am wondering what our government is saying to the Egyptian government about the role the military should play. I say this because it seems to me it is very important that the military plays a role that is peaceful and that it encourages and allows peaceful demonstration, which it seemed to be doing for a while. However, I was concerned to read that the leader of the military suggested that it was time for these protests to end soon, or something to that effect, which I just read a few minutes ago. If that report is correct, I am worried about where this is going.

Therefore, I am asking what our government's message would be to the Egyptian government, and to the military itself in Egypt, on what the military should do.

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon:** Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure my colleague that when I spoke with my counterpart this morning, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the minister of foreign affairs, I did indicate to him what Canada's position was, including, obviously, the call for calm and non-violent protests and demonstrations. The minister was very concerned, as a matter of fact, as we spoke that clashes and demonstrations were taking place. He too wished that his countrymen would heed the advice for, and move to bring forward, the reforms we are all speaking about.

No one I have spoken to on this file is supportive of any kind of clash. They think these demonstrations are legitimate, and they are calling for a new beginning in Egypt. I think all those moderate and likeminded people I know in Egypt are calling for exactly the same thing.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the last time we had an evacuation from the Middle East, I believe it was from Lebanon, where we evacuated Canadians. Now we are evacuating Canadians from Egypt but are charging them a fee for their evacuation.

*S.O. 52*

Would the hon. minister be willing to tell this House tonight that the government is going to cancel this policy of charging Egyptian Canadians for their evacuation and assure us that every Canadian will be evacuated from Egypt regardless of the thickness of his or her wallet.

• (1915)

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon:** Mr. Speaker, I will reassure my colleague that we will not change our policy. We have put in place a policy that is similar, indeed, to the policies of the United States and other countries. It is a policy that provides for cost recovery. We have estimated that the cost of these flights from Cairo, or even the flight that left today from Alexandria, to destinations in Europe is about \$400 per person. This is what we have asked for in terms of cost recovery. We have not had any objections to this policy from the close to the 400 Canadians who have been evacuated on a voluntary basis.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my thoughts turn first to our constituents of Egyptian origin and to the immigrants, naturalized citizens and people of Egyptian descent who live in Quebec and Canada. Their days are filled with anxiety because violence has marked the events in Egypt since they began. And today it worsened as supporters of the Hosni Mubarak regime began to systematically attack protestors.

We cannot forget that the misfortunes of the Egyptian people, which are spurring the uprising we have been witnessing for over a week, go back much further than these last few weeks. For a number of decades, the Egyptian people have been living under regimes that are dedicated to making a small number of people rich and that are known for their authoritarianism and widespread violation of basic human rights. This is especially true of the current regime of President Hosni Mubarak.

The power of Mubarak's regime is usurped power. Everyone knows that Egypt's elections are rigged, to the point where during the latest election, the majority of the credible opponents decided not to run, in some instances in the first round and in many other cases in the second round, because they saw that the election had been completely rigged.

The Mubarak regime is also known for its ongoing violations of basic human rights: arbitrary detention, torture and censorship. Clearly, that could not last forever. After the Tunisian uprising that led to the fall of President Ben Ali, Egypt exploded. The protestors oppose the regime of Mubarak, a dictator who has ruled since 1981 and is now aging and ill. Hosni Mubarak had to go overseas for several weeks in 2010 for an operation, and with the approach of the 2011 presidential election, the question of his successor was on everyone's minds. Of course, those in power could not accept the possibility of losing that power and considered offering President Mubarak's son to the Egyptian people—imposing him, in fact. But now the anger in Egypt is no longer directed solely at the standard of living. It is also directed at those in power because the people recognize that abuse of power is largely to blame for the country's problems, be they economic or otherwise.

In recent months, tensions had risen in this country of 83 million people, triggered specifically by price increases and restrictions on

basic commodities. Some 40% of the Egyptian people live on less than \$2 a day. The unemployment rate among young people is especially high, as in Tunisia. Egypt's relative underdevelopment can be explained, at least in part, by a remarkably inadequate education system. According to the World Bank, in 2003, only 32% of young Egyptians had earned a bachelor's degree.

• (1920)

Egypt's national statistics office has calculated that 73,000 new university places will have to be created each year for the next 15 years just to maintain the graduation rates.

Half of the Egyptian population is under the age of 24, and this explosive demographic situation is having a serious impact on the country's economy. Furthermore, with 94.5% of the country covered by desert, understandably, population density in Egypt's populated areas is just about the highest in the world.

This is not the time or place to give a full chronology of all of the events in recent days, but I would like to go back to February 1, 2011, when, after a series of non-stop demonstrations, the army announced through a spokesperson that it agreed that the Egyptian people's demands were legitimate and said it would not use any force against the demonstrators. That was definitely a turning point. According to the media, at least 250,000 Egyptians marched on Liberation Square in Cairo, in the largest demonstration since the beginning of the revolt against President Mubarak's regime.

Yesterday Mubarak announced that he would not run again, but that he would remain in power until the presidential election in September 2011. However, a spokesperson for the Egyptian army asked Egyptians, particularly young people, to stop demonstrating. The spokesperson said that they had gotten their message across and that their demands had been heard.

But over the course of the day, we saw that they would not allow themselves to be discouraged by that kind of admonition. Unfortunately, Mubarak's supporters reacted violently today. Anti-Mubarak protestors committed very violent acts, and there are concerns that this new situation could radicalize the positions, although the army has called for an end to the protests. Reporters and cameramen—even some members of the Quebec media are there—who were covering the violence in the heart of the capital have been threatened themselves and have, of course, described a very tense climate. Agence France-Presse spoke of over 500 injured today in the protests, and there is some fear that that number will be even higher this evening.

S.O. 52

The Bloc Québécois's position on the current situation in Egypt can be summed up as follows. First, the people of Egypt have spoken out against President Hosni Mubarak. Egyptians are calling for their president to step down. The trust is no longer there—if it ever was—between the people of Egypt and their government. President Mubarak is no longer the right person for the job. In light of all of this, we cannot simply say, like the Minister of Foreign Affairs said earlier, is that it is not our role to decide who should run Egypt. We cannot simply say that what is going on in Egypt is not our business. That kind of reasoning no longer works these days.

In recent decades, the Canadian government has broken that taboo several times. Members will recall the very positive role played by the Mulroney government in the fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa, for example. We cannot simply say that this has nothing to do with us and that it is up to them to decide.

The people in the streets of Egypt have spoken: they do not want the status quo. They want freedom.

•(1925)

We have seen thousands of Egyptians challenge the authoritarianism of their regime in recent weeks in order to claim their due rights and freedoms.

The Bloc Québécois will always stand behind those fighting for freedom. Freedom is a universal and inalienable right. Democracy and the rule of law are the natural expression of a free society.

We strongly condemn repression of peaceful demonstrations. We condemn the Internet censorship imposed by the government on the Egyptian people. The free circulation of information is a fundamental condition of democracy and liberty in a country. The Egyptian government must lift the censorship on the Internet sites it recently banned. Freedom of information is not negotiable.

Finally, we feel that a swift and peaceful transition to a democratic and free regime must be initiated quickly and peacefully.

For that reason, we believe Hosni Mubarak has to leave and, to get him to leave, democratic countries must join forces to put pressure on the Egyptian government. Since it was supported for so many decades, we think that an interim government and president should be appointed with the consent of the key parties. Then, free, multi-party, fair and transparent elections have to be held as soon as possible.

The Bloc Québécois defends the idea of freedom for all peoples, but it also defends the responsibilities that come with that freedom. The outcome of the political battle must not be a victory for extremists, who would, in turn, deny the Egyptian people the freedom and democracy to which they are entitled. We want to see an Egyptian government that restores the people's trust in their government and responds to the aspirations of the Egyptians.

In other words, any new government will have to ensure Egyptians' freedoms, religious freedom in particular since Christians in Egypt have suffered many humiliations and injustices these past decades.

That government will also have to ensure stability in the region by maintaining diplomatic relations with its neighbours and will have to

recognize the State of Israel's right to exist. None of that can be achieved as long as the Egyptian people rightly feel that all their freedoms have been taken away.

In closing, Hosni Mubarak has to leave. We very easily stand behind the message the U.S. government sent him today, that the transition must begin immediately.

•(1930)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and the Bloc.

[*English*]

The member has been clear on the need for Mr. Mubarak to leave. We have been hearing this in the streets since January 25. Leaders of countries in Europe and elsewhere have said unequivocally that there needs to be a transition into a new government. In order to do that, the present regime needs to exit.

One of the problems Canadians have, and I share in their frustration, is that the Canadian government has not been clear and declarative. Tonight we heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs say what we have said from the beginning, that the election should not be seen as legitimate and re-run. We welcome that. In the end, the Canadian government needs to be declarative. It needs to say that it is time for Mr. Mubarak to go, simply because we have supported that regime for 30 years. We need to be clear that if we want long-term stability, then the person who has caused the uprising needs to leave.

Perhaps the member could comment on why he thinks the government has not been declarative. Why does he think it is important for the government to be declarative as to what should happen with President Mubarak?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Dorion:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. It is somewhat surprising to see that the Canadian government is dragging its feet in saying what other western governments have said so decisively, which is that the transition must happen immediately.

President Obama made a statement in which he called for the transition to be organized immediately. He called for an open, transparent, fair and multi-party election. We have learned from WikiLeaks that over the past two years the American government has exerted some clear pressure, behind closed doors, on the Mubarak government to put an end to abusive practices, particularly in terms of human rights and elections.

France's President Sarkozy has also made demands similar to those of President Obama. It is very surprising that Canada is not following suit. At the same time, it should be said that Canada's right-wing government has relatively authoritarian tendencies, which could easily lead to a certain complacency towards a regime like that of Hosni Mubarak.

S.O. 52

[English]

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate the situation in Egypt. As we know, on January 25 things changed in Egypt, and we are still trying to understand the effects of that change. Clearly, things are changing by the minute.

On January 24, President Mubarak was in charge of Egypt. On January 25, the people of Egypt were in charge of Egypt. That continues today to be the dynamic. It is the people of Egypt who are charting the course for the future of that country.

It is up to us, as those who support democratic aspirations, to be declarative that we support the people who have the courage and decided to overthrow a regime in a peaceful manner, a president who has been a tyrant for over 30 years. However, it is of concern that it is done in a way that represents the best interests of the people of Egypt, which is being seen today, and whether the rest of the world will support the intentions of the people who have decided they want to change the power structure within the country.

It is important that we be declarative, that we take a position. Our party at the outset was very clear. We said a number of things, which I will enumerate. We said that the election in November 2010 should clearly be re-run. We said that the emergency laws should be lifted. We said that it was important that all legitimate political parties be recognized and candidates for the presidential election in September be recognized as well. We also said that it was important that Canada take a position.

Sadly, at the time, we initially heard the government say that it wanted everyone to remain calm on both sides. Clearly, it was not in tune with what was going on because at that moment only one party was engaged in violence, which consisted of the security forces of Egypt that were using water cannons and tear gas against the population. Frankly, we all were concerned that might escalate.

It was a little tone deaf, frankly, when the government said that it wanted both sides to remain calm when only one side was using violent means. Thankfully, things did calm down. We saw the people amass in what is known now by everyone as Liberation Square. There was an acquiescence by security forces and the military did not intervene or instigate any form of intimidation against the people, notwithstanding that the regime was establishing curfew laws and edicts.

It is with hope and some concern that we watch what is happening. Developments in Egypt today have deepened our concern and the concerns for the safety of the protestors. Let us be clear. President Mubarak's insistence to delay his departure from power, as we heard last night, has contributed to further violence and destabilization, as we saw today. It is clear that for the sake of his country and regional stability, he must bow to the demands of the Egyptian people and immediately relinquish the position of president.

That is why we, unequivocally, condemn the use of violence against the peaceful and democratic demands of the Egyptian people. The alleged involvement of the regime in organizing the crackdown is completely unacceptable.

● (1935)

What do Egyptian protestors want? What do the people want? The clear consensus among all protestors is they want an end to Hosni Mubarak's regime. We have heard the calls for an end to corruption, an end to the emergency laws that have ruled Egypt for the past three decades. We have heard calls for economic fairness, representative and transparent governance and the protection of rights and freedoms. It is time for political reforms in Egypt and, as Egyptians have made clear, further delay is not acceptable.

It is with great pride that I note that not only were protests being organized in Cairo, but also right in Canada. I want to single out a couple of young Canadians who, like young Egyptians, organized demonstrations in the nation's capital last Friday and just yesterday in front of the Egyptian embassy. There were a number of them, but three people in particular were responsible in Ottawa. They are Iman Ibrahim, Mahmoud Al-Riffai and Yasmine Faoud. These three young people were like the young people in Egypt who decided they would put aside their affairs and would take the challenge to organize people to call for reforms for democracy in Egypt. We should applaud that.

It needs to be understood. This is not just about young people getting involved in politics. This is about young people leading a movement. If we did not have young people deciding that they have had enough, that they want to see real change, we would not see the changes we have seen.

Yes, technologies helped with this and it was important that there were tools like Facebook and Twitter. However, that is not the story. The story is that young people decided they would take on the powers that be and would decide the future of their country. They should be applauded, they should be lauded and they should not be treated in a paternalistic way. They should be respected for what they have done. They are a model of leadership, not just for Egyptians but for Canadians and others around the world.

That is important to understand because there has been a lot of talk about who is behind the protests.

However, I have had daily reports on the ground from Egypt and by all accounts the protestors are representative of every part of Egyptian society. They are truly Egyptian. There has been a breathtaking explosion of political and social creativity, organizational experiments and debates among ordinary people on how to organize their lives.

Some have worried that democracy in Egypt might embolden extremists. They point to the existence of the Muslim brotherhood as the strongest opposition in Egypt. This is false. The Muslim Brotherhood is not leading these protests and is hardly represented in them. In a population of 83 million, it hardly commands more than a few hundred thousand members. In fact, some have argued that fear of an extremist backlash, promoted by the current regime, was the rationale for their existence, and that was to distract others away from what the government was doing.

S.O. 52

However, Egypt is an important player in the region and in the world. There is no question that we want stability in the region. However, the present situation under the current regime is neither stable nor sustainable. To fear these peaceful protests is an offence to the people who have put their lives on the line for their rights and freedoms. It is not representative and open governments that lead to extremism; it is the exact opposite.

● (1940)

Who are the political players? Who composes the Egyptian opposition? How are they preparing for the transition of power?

Despite the 30 years of crackdown, Egypt has a diverse political opposition composed of traditional parties and newer ones. While it is unclear exactly what will happen next, the information I have received from people on the ground is that opposition parties are talking. They are working together to find a consensus.

At one point they even put together what was called the people's parliament that formed a committee to negotiate certain terms. These parties have been united in the demand for Mr. Mubarak to depart.

However, these parties are not representative of everyone. One of the things that is being debated right now is the notion of who should be the interim. Many have pointed to those political players who do not have a vested political interest in the future presidency. I hope that is where things go but, of course, it will be up to the Egyptian people to decide that.

It is important to look at our role as an international community. We must not forget that we have played a role in Egypt in the last 30 years. This regime did not sustain itself on its own. It was supported by countries throughout the west. For decades we have stood by Egyptians and many of us have stood by those who have been denied rights, the basic legitimate rights of freedom of expression and of political participation.

In fact, it was the west that played a significant role in propping up this regime. It is really important that we understand that, not to shame anyone but to be held accountable. For instance, in 2008, the last time the government reported on Canada's weapon exports, Egypt was our 23rd largest client at \$1.8 million. Some of the exports in arms to Egypt at that time included smoothbore weapons with calibres of 20 millimetres, automatic weapons with a calibre of 12.7 millimetres, unmanned airborne vehicles, aero engines and aircraft equipment.

We are part of this but compared to the U.S., we are minor players. However, it is important to note that we were responsible and we were implicated in supporting the regime.

What should Canada do now? What I have heard from many people on the ground, in general, and particularly from Egyptian Canadians, was that our government's response needed to be clearer, stronger and less tepid.

I recall a proud moment just a couple of years ago when the green movement of Iran rose up against the dictator in that country. I remember well that all parties in the House debated and passed a motion to support the green movement. We were pretty declarative in the House that we wanted to see its rights and voice recognized and to see the regime that was in place replaced.

I think we need to put that into context when we seem to be rather careful about what should happen with Mr. Mubarak. I think we should be clearer about what should happen with him, in that he should be asked to move on.

We should be demanding that our government intervene in a positive way, that we add our voice to others to condemn the use of violence against protestors and that we use all of our diplomatic influence on the Egyptian authorities to start moving forward to seek out an interim situation in terms of leadership that will then lead to elections and to the rebuilding of democratic institutions in Egypt.

It goes without saying that what we do and how we do it matters. What we have heard from young people in Canada and in Cairo, from people who have had their rights denied for over 30 years, is that they do not need one strong man to come in to lead them. They do not need the rest of the world to dictate terms to them.

● (1945)

What they need is to understand that the old way is the wrong way. The old way of deciding to support a strong man and ensuring that those people within our interest are supported is something we reject. The decision to do things differently means supporting a pluralistic approach to our foreign policy by supporting a pluralistic framework within other countries because this is happening elsewhere in the region. That would mean that our government would not need to hide from statements on where we stand.

In the next days and weeks that follow, we are not sure what will happen. Canadians want to know what the government's intentions are in terms of support for the future of Egypt. We not only hope that we will support Egyptians in deciding their own fate and future but also that we will stand with them, not only now, but after they have decided who should lead them. We hope not to turn our back on them. We hope that in the future we will reject the notion of supporting the strong man and support the pluralistic composition that is Egypt; that we are seeing in the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and throughout Egypt today.

Finally, I hope that our Parliament, our government, will be stronger in how it decides to declare its support and that we should not hide from our pride in supporting the people of Egypt.

● (1950)

**Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was interested in what my friend said about whether Mubarak should step aside, if this is what we truly want. I realize that there is a lot of faith out there in the democratic movement that is going on within Egypt, but at the same time much of it has happened independently. Various groups have worked on it independently and not so much together. I would like to ask my friend if he could elaborate on that a bit more.

If Hosni Mubarak was persuaded to step aside, what would be the responsible way in which these groups should come together? Do they actually have the ability to be able to do so or would some other transitional methods need to be put in place? Also, is there any role for the Government of Canada in that as we try to help Egypt get through this transitional process?



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**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, what exists now is a vacuum, which concerns many of us. I will qualify that because there are people who are looking for methods to help Egypt come out of its 30 years of repression and seek a new day.

There are people who have been seen as perhaps interim leaders. I think this approach makes sense but it is up to Egyptians to decide. One person who has been put up as a possibility is Ahmed Zewail, a Nobel Prize winner in chemistry. He is respected by many of the Egyptian people and has offered. There is also the approach of having different leaders come together as an interim group to oversee affairs until there are fair elections and a new president elected.

However, it is important for the Government of Canada to be plugged in and know what is happening on the ground. The Minister of Foreign Affairs suggested that Egypt's opposition parties today had accepted Mr. Mubarak's offer to allow for a period of time until reforms are made. As soon as that was articulated, many people in Cairo rejected it immediately. What I hear now is that they have decided not to accept Mubarak's offer.

Clearly we need to be plugged in and we need to know what is happening on the ground. We should be careful not to interfere but careful to support when we see there is a consensus in Egypt. I think that is the best that Canada can do.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, as the member has indicated, the government has an important role to play in this situation, including that of Tunisia recently. After all, the government has embassy staff on the ground there who are in a better position to know what is going on. There is obviously some reluctance on their part to move forward.

Does the member have any thoughts or speculation as to why the government seems reluctant to be more definitive in its approach?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know. There are days when I think it is just a matter of not caring and other days it is a matter of just not knowing. What has happened since January 25 is that events have forced the government to take a position, albeit one that is reluctant.

One concern many of us have is that, notwithstanding the reluctance of the government to have a position, it is something that it is forced to be held accountable on, not just by us in Parliament but the by world community. If Canada does not have a position in line with the democracy movement that is spreading throughout the region, it essentially says that Canada does not care.

However, we know that is not true. We know that the protests in front of the Egyptian embassy here and right across Canada by young Egyptians and Canadians who work with them and support them want Canada to have more of a presence, to be more declarative and to say that when it comes to democracy being a concept, it needs to be more than just a convenient talking point. It needs to mean something in our foreign policy, which is why it is important that the government be declarative.

We have heard it from other countries and especially in President Obama's comments last night. Other countries have said that there needs to be not only a transition to stability but a resignation of the regime now so the people can realize what has been denied them, and that is basic freedoms and participation in their political culture.

● (1955)

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I just got off the phone in the last few minutes with members of the Coptic Christian community in Windsor. There is a church in a reasonably sizeable community. I had been picking this up earlier, but its greatest concern is for the safety of families and friends still in Egypt.

We all know that Coptic Christians have been a target of discrimination for a long time, either directly by the current administration or in situations where the administration seemed to step aside and let fanatics attack them. I am wondering if my colleague could give any indication of what Canada might be able to do to ensure that particular community is protected during this period of time of uncertainty.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent point. Canada prides itself, as we should, on our recognition and protection of minority rights. There are vulnerable populations and communities obviously throughout the world and the Coptic community in Egypt is certainly one of them. When I have talked to people from the community here in Canada, they share the same concerns as those mentioned by my colleague.

What Canada needs to do when it is engaged in diplomacy is to be unequivocal about the need for respect of minority rights. That means that we name them, that we do not just say that we hope we respect democracy, rule of law and minority rights, but say explicitly, when it comes to Egypt, that the rights of Coptic members of the Egyptian community are respected, and through the UN. It is absolutely critical that we do it directly and bilaterally but also within the UN. I hope that is something the government is planning to do because Coptic Christians are a vulnerable population, particularly in that milieu.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member made a great point by saying he would like Canadian policy to be declaratory.

I am a little surprised that there is one declaration that the member did not make in his speech and I wonder if he would like to take the opportunity to make it today. Would the member agree that any future government of Egypt would be expected by this country to fully respect the peace treaty that it signed with the State of Israel and that it would fully expect the government of Egypt to continue to play a constructive role in the peace talks in the region? Does the member agree that is a declaratory principle of Canadian foreign policy that is just as important as some of the others he has mentioned?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, yes.

● (2000)

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not accept what the member is saying, that Canada does not have a position.

The minister spoke a few moments ago in this debate and very clearly outlined the concerns of Canadians, the concerns of the government for the safety of people in Egypt, the need for democratic reform, the need for democratic institutions, the need to move quickly, and the concerns for Canadians there who are trying to find their way home. Canada is acting responsibly in this.

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When the member says we need to align ourselves with the democratic movement going on there, I am not sure what he expects us to do at a time of instability. Does he expect Canada to condemn the outgoing government and somehow pour oil on the flames, as it were, and ignite a situation that is very delicate?

Canada is taking a responsible position in pursuing democratic reforms. I take exception to the member implying that we are not taking a position at all.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, most people would view the comments and statements of the government as being lacklustre at best.

It took the government a while to have a statement. Initially the statement was to tell both sides to remain calm while protestors were being shot at with water cannons and tear gas.

I made that comment because it happened. That is what we are living with. It is important that the government be declarative to support democratic development and democratic aspirations. That means when things are happening, not just when it is convenient for the government to use it for its own political purposes. That is what I meant.

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the hon. member for Toronto Centre, the Liberal critic for foreign affairs, who initiated this important debate in the House tonight, because the situation in Egypt has riveted many Canadians. They are following these events closely and it is helpful that we in the House provide perspective and some sense of where Canadians and Canadian legislators stand on the events that will surely change the face of at least one very important country.

I would like to take a different perspective on these events because I have just recently been appointed as Minister of State of Foreign Affairs with particular responsibility for consular services. It may be of interest to people following this debate if I talk about consular services. We saw in Egypt as the situation became more unstable that our government, through its consular services in Egypt ably assisted by personnel from other missions in the region, sprang into action to support and assist Canadians who wanted to get to a safe haven.

I am splitting my time with the member for Newmarket—Aurora.

To set the stage, Canadians should know that millions of other Canadians are abroad at any given time. Canadians live, work and study in other countries. Canadians actively travel to other countries.

What do Canadians need to know as they travel abroad and as we saw in recent days they can be caught up in unanticipated events? First, we recommend that Canadians who are travelling abroad consult the website. The Department of Foreign Affairs puts up a website named simply [travel.gc.ca](http://travel.gc.ca). This website gives advice about unexpected situations that Canadians might face in a particular country.

It also allows someone travelling abroad to register on a website called “registration of Canadians abroad”. Why should anyone do that? If a person goes missing or gets caught up in some violence and nobody knows where he or she is, it is very hard for our consular people to make contact and give assistance. In Egypt, we were able

to call or attempt to call those who had registered even though communications were down and offer services to get people to a safe haven.

In the case of Egypt, we had about 6,500 Canadians, who were living, working, or travelling in Egypt. However, less than 1,400 were registered. Only a fraction of people register and it is very helpful if they do. Every minute of every day, the Department of Foreign Affairs receives two requests for assistance at some point in the consular service landscape.

● (2005)

In 2010, over one million Canadians received some form of assistance and in the last five years demand for consular assistance has actually increased by 32%. In budget 2008, we put more resources into these services to allow us to better support Canadians.

These funds were partly used for the construction of a new emergency watch and response centre. That was a new initiative. Also, my appointment and the addition of consular duties to this particular portfolio is a new and heightened emphasis on providing good consular services.

There are two main categories of consular services. One is prevention and education and one is assistance. Of course, we hope that knowledge is power and if people have the knowledge they need they will not need assistance. We try to provide people with information and advice as they travel in order to prepare them to handle emergencies that might arise.

Of course, people who decide to travel assume a certain risk. There are things we can do to prepare ourselves. One is to take note of the emergency consular telephone line. It is staffed 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. That number is 613-996-8885. Through the number of calls received from Egypt, this line somehow crashed. That helped us to realize we needed backup for the technology. We are going to be prepared for that kind of eventuality.

In the last few days we have received almost 14,000 calls on the emergency lines from people abroad wanting to know how to get assistance and perhaps get to safe havens, as well as families and friends in Canada wanting an update on what was available.

The website that I mentioned, [travel.gc.ca](http://travel.gc.ca), receives more than 12,000 visits a day. We know that some Canadians are beginning to use it. It gives reports of over 200 countries where Canadians might want to travel. It talks about the security situation in the country, it provides official travel warnings advising against travel and how to contact the nearest mission. It is a good website for people to consult and register with so the government knows how to reach people in case of emergency. We also have some other products to help educate Canadians, which can be found at Service Canada and other places.

We are proud of the consular services. I visited one of our consular operations overseas in January. One of the officers said something very interesting to me. He said, “We do not consider what we do, helping Canadians, to be a job. We consider it to be a calling”. They are very passionate about supporting Canadians and it was heartwarming.

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We have a network of these services. They provide assistance to Canadians 24/7. We are always looking to do better and we want to support and help Canadians, some of whom face very distressing situations abroad, sometimes very unexpected ones.

The earthquake in Haiti and now the situation in Egypt are two fairly recent examples of what can happen when people are travelling and need to reach out to the services that are provided by the Canadian government to support and assist them. We encourage Canadians to be informed, as prepared as they can be and to be alert while they are travelling. That being said, I assure everyone that when Canadians require assistance abroad, as they have recently in Egypt, they will receive it from this government.

● (2010)

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important for Canadians to hear some of these explanations, but there is one reality that I hope she will start to address in her new job as Minister of State of Foreign Affairs for the Americas and Consular Affairs. This is the first opportunity I have had formally in the House to congratulate the minister. I did not have a chance to personally say that it is an important job and I look forward to working with her.

One of the difficulties of the Canadian foreign service at the moment, which is not a new phenomenon but one that has not improved over the last while, is we still have too heavy a component in Ottawa and not enough people serving overseas. One of the realities of our time is with the restrictions on government budgets, which we can only anticipate will continue because of the deficit we are facing, it is very difficult for the Department of Foreign Affairs to deal with this problem.

Would the minister agree that when there are more people serving in Ottawa than we have overseas, we are going to continue to have a serious issue with how we can help Canadians in emergency situations?

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member has raised this concern before.

My understanding, if I am correct and I will double-check on this, is that at any given time approximately 60% of the employees of foreign affairs are in the field and about 40% are in Ottawa. People rotate. No posting is forever; it is for three or four years.

People serve abroad and they come back into the policy-making area here in Ottawa. They put to use in policy-making the knowledge and perspective they have gained abroad. Canada is active on a number of fronts. We are well respected on the world stage. We are involved in a multitude of multilateral fora and multilateral programs. We are active in every part of the globe. People who have served in missions abroad in various capacities come back and work in various ways to strengthen our programs, to advance our policies and to advise people like us who have a particular leadership role.

I guess we could argue about whether that 60-40 rotation is the right rotation. It seems to have worked for many years. I appreciate the member raising the issue. I think it is a valid discussion, but that is some background that may be helpful.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns people have raised in the past, not just in the situation with regard to Egypt but in other emergencies, is the support and resources for people on the ground for consular services.

I am sure the minister is aware that when a Canadian purchases a passport, \$25 of the fee goes to consular services. This has been an outstanding issue not just with the present government but with previous governments. The Auditor General has been very clear on this. The monies were intended to go for consular services.

The data from a year ago shows we are bringing in roughly \$100 million, and it is probably more now. That money is not going to consular services alone. I wonder if the minister could tell us why that is not happening.

Does the minister not think that money should be going to consular services so that there could be better support? We could give people more than a 1-800 number, saying that they should sign the contract and then we will help, which is what happened in this case. In fact, they have already paid a fee for these services.

● (2015)

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** Mr. Speaker, the member raises a good point.

He should know that we have an overseas network of 260 consular offices in 150 countries that stand ready to assist Canadians.

Not only the amount of money that goes into passport fees but more goes into supporting these kinds of services. As I mentioned, many if not most of our consular people abroad are very dedicated in finding creative and humane ways to help Canadians and also to respond to emergencies like we just saw in Egypt.

We are very proud of that. It is a non-partisan issue. Whatever government of the day can take a great deal of pride in the dedication and assistance that consular services provide to our citizens abroad.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Calgary—Nose Hill giving me a portion of her time.

In the past week, Canada and the world have witnessed an unprecedented level of political change and civil turmoil in Egypt. Today, to our sadness, we learned that the formerly peaceful demonstrations had turned violent, resulting in more than 400 injuries, some serious, and at least one death. We deeply regret the loss of life and our condolences go out to the family and friends of those injured in these violent clashes. The violence that has occurred is unacceptable.

The people of Egypt have spoken out and demanded profound political change. While hearing the change demanded by the Egyptian people, the world has an interest in ensuring Egypt remains stable and secure.

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Egypt has been an important partner for Canada in particular, not just in our bilateral relationship, but also in the pursuit of our shared interest in peace, stability and security in the Middle East and beyond.

As the Prime Minister said yesterday:

Canada reiterates its support for the Egyptian people as they transition to new leadership and a promising future. As Egypt moves towards new leadership, we encourage all parties to work together to ensure an orderly transition toward a free and vibrant society in which all Egyptians are able to enjoy these rights and freedoms, not a transition that leads to violence, instability and extremism.

Egypt is at another crossroads in its long and vibrant history. The choices the Egyptian people and their government make in the coming days will be important for the country, the region, and the world. Egypt matters, and Canada is pushing for political and economic reforms that will allow Egypt to continue to play an increasingly positive and constructive role in the world. This global engagement means that the entire international community has an interest in ensuring that Egypt remains a stable and peaceful presence on the world stage, particularly in the Arab world where Egypt's positive influence has been perhaps most strongly felt.

From the onset of our bilateral relationship when Canada and Egypt opened embassies in Cairo and in Ottawa, our two countries have worked together in support of regional stability and prosperity. Egypt, a key Arab and African partner, has been a key factor to stability in the Middle East. A shared commitment to a just and comprehensive peace in the region is one of the core elements of Canada's bilateral relationship with Egypt.

It is in its relations with Israel where Egypt has proven to be a moderate force in the Arab world. Where other countries avoided a politically difficult decision, Egypt's far-sighted leader, Anwar Sadat, took a principled stance toward peace and stability. He became the first Egyptian president to visit Israel and, in 1979, signed a historic peace agreement based on the Camp David accords. This decision to normalize relations with Israel and advocate for peace in the region is something that Egypt continues to do to this day.

The pursuit of this ideal came at an extremely high price as Egypt lost Sadat to hate-filled extremism. It is up to the international community to ensure such a visionary commitment to peace and stability continues to prevail in Egypt over extremism and an ideology of hate.

It is also important to realize that Egypt's role in the region has brought economic benefit to its people. Partnership with Israel yielded \$500 million in bilateral trade between the two countries. The peace accord has been a positive factor for both countries since, for example, the absence of a major military threat from Egypt has allowed Israel to cut its defence spending from nearly a quarter of its gross national product in the 1970s to less than 10% today. For over 30 years both countries have been free of the devastating social and economic threat and associated costs of war.

● (2020)

Today Egypt also sells a considerable amount of natural gas to Israel. In 2005 the neighbours signed an agreement to ensure that the arrangement continues for the next 20 years. The pipeline is run by East Mediterranean Gas, an Egyptian-Israeli joint venture. The presence of an agreement has also promoted a great deal of foreign

investment in both countries. Clearly, this serves as an example for others in the region to follow, one which can unlock the true potential of a troubled region, a region constantly under threat by extremist elements.

Egypt also plays a role in maintaining stability along its southwest border with Gaza despite relentless efforts by extremist groups to destabilize it. Continuing Egyptian co-operation on limiting arms smuggling into Gaza is essential for regional security.

It is clear that the Egyptian people have made a profound decision. They are insisting on choosing their rules, defining their system of government, and defining the values behind that government's policies, both domestic and foreign. We sincerely hope that in this time of political change both the people and their government will remain true to those values and actions that have made Egypt a positive force in the region and one that has upheld its commitment to peace, stability and security.

Terrorism cannot prevail. Extremism cannot prevail. Hate cannot prevail.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague on her appointment and her elevation to the Privy Council. We had a chance to share some thoughts about that in committee this afternoon.

We on this side of the House share the concern with respect to the question of the relationship between Egypt and Israel. It is important to get those issues on the table.

The concern that a number of us on this side have, and we have expressed it as strongly as we can, is that the steps President Mubarak and the regime around him have taken so far have not had the effect of getting the demonstrators off the street. They have not had the effect of convincing Egyptian public opinion from what one can tell that they are really serious about making the changes that need to be made.

I wonder if the member could tell us, in her new role as parliamentary secretary, what additional steps she thinks Canada and other countries, because we will not be doing it on our own, could be taking to make sure that we are doing everything possible to encourage the kind of change we believe needs to happen in Egypt.

● (2025)

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's kind comments and good wishes. I look forward to my new role with respect to international co-operation.

Like all Canadians, we have been watching closely the events as they have unfolded in Egypt. We are very distressed at how things have turned violent today. We do encourage all Egyptians to take a deep breath. Hopefully they will be able to manage this within their country.

We are going to continue to be a staunch supporter of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. These principles are the foundations of our political system and they will continue to guide our foreign policy.

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**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is a constant refrain from the government that it supports freedom, democracy and the rule of law, and I get that. Most people understand that and support it. The problem people have is that this regime was repressing the population in Egypt. It was not following the rule of law. We did not see any support for real democratic development in any way and yet we see a regime that is hanging on. The government seems to be reluctant to say it is time to go.

I wonder how the member could square that when the government says it believes in these things, yet there is a regime that does not believe in these things and the government supported it. When it is time for that regime to move on, the government is reluctant about whether or not it should go. I wonder if my colleague could help us figure that out because it is confusing for many. One day we are supporting a repressive regime and the next day we are supporting freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. It is confusing to me and to many people.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Speaker, our government has long been engaged with Egypt both diplomatically and politically. We believe it does need to bring about these reforms, but we recognize that Egypt is a sovereign country. Canada will stand by and participate as we are asked, but it is a sovereign country and we do hope that it has the opportunity to resolve these issues.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

I am pleased to participate in this evening's debate on the situation in Egypt, a debate called for by my colleague, the hon. member for Toronto Centre.

I am especially pleased to take part in this debate because my riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard is home to many Canadians of Egyptian origin, a community that is very involved and very engaged.

In addition, Canada has enjoyed a close relationship with Egypt since the Suez crisis in 1956. Since that time, we have shared a broad range of common interests, and I will mention only a few: trade relations, the Francophonie and most importantly, the desire for a fair solution in the Middle East.

But what happened so suddenly that caused all of Egypt to erupt? To understand the current situation, we must not forget history. There are many well-known causes, including youth unemployment, food shortages, the unchallenged domination of the National Democratic Party, President Mubarak's party, and the fact that during the next election, one of the president's sons, Gamal, might run for president.

But the success of the uprising in Tunisia was certainly the trigger. When he saw the scope of these protests, President Mubarak responded by shuffling his cabinet. However, the opposition forces rejected this change and called for the president to step down. I should note that in response, for the first time in 30 years, the president appointed a vice-president, Omar Souleiman, who, according to the Egyptian constitution, would become president, in the event the current president stepped down, until the next election.

In the meantime, the alliance of all of the opposition parties has asked Mohamed ElBaradei, the former director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to negotiate a transition with the president's regime. Mr. ElBaradei has received extensive media coverage abroad but is relatively unknown in his own country. Jean-Noël Ferrié, the director of research at the CNRS, feels that he is not the right man for the job because he is "too alone and too absent".

But what does the opposition want? In short, it wants to see the president gone. What would happen then? The new president, Mr. Souleiman, would temporarily take over the presidency for a transition period, during which both houses of parliament would be dissolved and the constitution would be revised with a view to presidential and legislative elections.

But would this scenario be acceptable to the coalition? Members must remember that this coalition is very divided and has opposing goals and visions. We must remember that these protests were initiated by the April 6 Youth Movement, led by Ahmad Maher. This group was started during a workers' uprising in the Nile delta in 2008. Mr. Maher is calling for not only political reforms, but also social and economic reforms.

Another party, the Muslim Brotherhood, which is prohibited by the government, is still represented by a number of independent members of parliament. This party is a big question mark and is a very big concern for Israel. Furthermore, there are 20 or so political parties that make up the legal opposition, including the Nationalist Party, the New Wafd Party, and the El Ghad Party, created by Ayman Nour, a candidate who lost in the 2005 presidential election.

Where does that leave us today? The coalition is continuing to put very strong pressure on the current government through massive demonstrations. People are speaking out around the world. Catherine Ashton, the head of European diplomacy, has called on President Mubarak to act as soon as possible to carry out the political transition. The British Prime Minister told the British Parliament that this transition should be urgent and credible and that it should start now.

On this side of the Atlantic, President Obama has said that an orderly transition must be significant and peaceful and must begin now. Canada is closely monitoring the situation. The crucial role of the army should not be forgotten because, since 1952, all Egyptian presidents have come from the ranks of the army. Furthermore, only the army has veto power with respect to presidential succession. Is the army prepared to give up this veto during future negotiations on constitutional amendments?

I believe there is no turning back. Through diplomacy, Canada must play a much greater role than it does at present in searching for an equitable solution. After 30 years of unchallenged rule, future negotiations will be arduous, long and very difficult. That is where Canada must make a contribution.

● (2030)

Every effort must be made to ensure that human rights and freedom of association, movement and religion are guaranteed not only in the constitution, but in reality.

S.O. 52

The violence must stop and Canada must now play a role not only in the establishment of meaningful dialogue, but also in the reconstruction of such a beautiful country.

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard who is very much aware of geopolitical issues and knows Egypt well.

Like the other members of the House, my thoughts go out to Sylvain Castonguay, the Radio-Canada cameraman who, unfortunately, was attacked while accompanying Jean-François Lépine. We hope that all is well with them.

I would like my colleague to tell me a little bit more about Egypt's constitutional situation. Basically, we have two key concerns. First, we want to ensure that Egypt can have a democracy; we stand in solidarity with the people. Second, we need to think about the major impact such a climate of instability and the domino effect may have.

I would like my colleague to explain the significance of the appointment of a vice-president. Will this help to solve the problem?

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Under the Egyptian constitution, the vice-president must become president. However, in the 30 years that Mr. Mubarak has been in power, there has never been a vice-president. When Mr. Sadat was assassinated, there was no vice-president. All presidents have the fear, in the back of their minds, that if they appoint a vice-president they will be killed. I was told that this was one of the ways of thinking in Egypt. As a result, there have been no vice-presidents.

Mr. Mubarak sent a very clear message by appointing Mr. Suleiman. First, it means that the presidency will not stay in the Mubarak family as expected; it was thought that Mubarak's son Gamal would become president after his father. Second, Mr. Suleiman truly brings stability to the region because he is the first negotiator for Israel, Palestine and the wider region. Mr. Suleiman is a very competent individual. Even Mr. ElBaradei, who is acting as a negotiator for the opposition parties, welcomed the appointment of Mr. Suleiman. They are prepared to work with him.

• (2035)

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard on his speech and comments.

This issue is very serious and troubling. I am concerned about the fact that the Egyptian people, the protestors, have said they trust the army. I hope that their trust is justified and that the army will keep the peace and accept the protests and not try to stop them by force. It is also clear that the people were not satisfied with yesterday's comments from Mr. Mubarak. They want change and they want it now.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that.

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Change will not happen overnight. The first part of change is knowing that change is coming, since there has been very little for the past 30 years. That is what is most important.

I am not saying that the army is either on the government's side or that of the people, but from the reports on television, we see that the army is remaining very silent right now, which is to the people's advantage.

It is especially important to remember that this is a little like what happened in Tunisia. This revolution, on the heels of the one in Tunisia, is still a result of the April 6 movement, which originated in the Nile delta. In that region, people wanted political reforms, but above all, they wanted social and economic reforms. In a large country like Egypt, with a population of 80 million, there are no jobs and the people have no future. That is what people want the most, and I think the fact that President Mubarak appointed Mr. Suleiman means that he is going to step down very soon.

[English]

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I, like Canadians and many people around the world, am watching and listening in real time to what is happening in Egypt. I find myself reminded of previous conflicts, most particularly the Gulf War where, for the first time, people in the world stayed glued to their television sets as they watched a war being played out before them.

Yet today, it is social media, Twitter, Facebook, which not only changed the way the world learned of the events in Egypt, but was in fact the very catalyst of the demonstrations throughout the region, beginning in Tunisia. I, like many Canadians, have been transfixed and engaged and I expect we will be so in the upcoming days and weeks.

As my colleague from Toronto Centre has said, it is not for us to determine the outcome of events in Egypt, but we are undoubtedly witnessing a powerful movement for change, which underscores the importance of peace, stability and the universal values of free and fair elections, free assemblies, freedom of the press, equality of men and women, freedom for minority groups and, indeed, non-violence.

After the recent peaceful transition to democracy in Tunisia, the world watched with great concern, anticipation and hope as peaceful demonstrations in Egypt progressed. Until today, we saw huge, peaceful gatherings and we were relieved to see an absence of real and widespread violence.

As we all know, today's events, however, have reiterated the importance of an orderly and non-violent transition to democracy that respects the will of the Egyptians and that reaffirms the civil liberties and universal rights of the Egyptian people and all of Egypt's neighbours.

According to some reports, and some of them have been coming through Twitter, three people have died today alone, over 600 have been injured and we have learned that some clinics are receiving 20 new patients every five minutes. There have also been reports of attacks against foreign journalists, including a cameraman for Radio Canada, who was apparently beaten by an angry mob in Cairo. These are disturbing developments and only underscore the need for a peaceful and orderly transition to democracy, which has been the wish of the Egyptian people.

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I think all members in the House share the real concern of Canadians, concerns for family members living in Egypt, concerns for family and friends who are among the over 6,000 Canadian citizens who were in Egypt when the demonstrations began on January 25 and a profound concern for the future of Egypt and the region as a whole. We are concerned for the well-being of those Egyptians who have been a part of the peaceful demonstrations. Once again, today's violence must stop and an orderly and peaceful transition must continue.

In terms of Canadian citizens caught in Egypt, as the situation escalated, I was pleased to see that flights were leaving Egypt and that additional consular services had in fact been deployed by the Department of Foreign Affairs. It was concerning, however, and remains concerning, that the Canadian government failed to move quickly when the crisis began, so sufficient consular service were available to all Canadian citizens who required them. I have heard too many stories of Canadians who were unable to get through to a representative of Foreign Affairs, their phone calls not answered, their emails neglected and great concern about family members in Egypt.

I would hope this is not due to an under-investment in consular services by the government. I know my colleague from Toronto Centre has raised this issue a number of times. If this is the case, it has to be addressed and it has to be addressed quickly. We cannot leave Canadians in jeopardy.

As we go forward over the coming days and as the Egyptian people continue their demonstration, we must emphasize that democratic elections are not enough. The civil liberties of all Egyptians must be upheld. Universal human rights of minorities, of women and the civil liberties of Egypt's neighbours must be upheld through positive engagement and the enshrinement of the peace treaty with Israel.

● (2040)

All members in this House understand the critical role that Egypt plays in the stability of that region, particularly the key role that Egypt's 30-year peace treaty with Israel has played in ensuring stability, not only for the two countries but for the region as a whole. For this reason, it is not only Egyptians but its neighbours who look forward to not only democratic elections, but to a future where stability, respect for the peace process and the promotion of human rights and values are firm.

In this country, it is not time for partisan rhetoric and politics. The issues are too important and the stakes are too high. We must respect the will of the Egyptian people and support a bottom-up, real political reform. We must make clear our resolve that the future of Egypt and of the region must be premised on a continuance of respect of past peace agreements between Israel and Egypt and a continuing recognition of the state of Israel.

I was pleased to hear Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu say in the Knesset today:

All those who value freedom are inspired by the calls for democratic reforms in Egypt. An Egypt that will adopt these reforms will be a source of hope for the world. As much as the foundations for democracy are stronger, the foundations for peace are stronger.

We support the will of the Egyptian people to transition to democracy but we must keep in mind the critical importance of stability and respect for the peace agreements and for the universal values that we hold dear. Any government must renounce violence and respect and adopt democratic values and norms.

I had an occasion not too many minutes ago to speak to an Egyptian-born relative living here in Canada. I asked him what was happening and what he wished for. He told me of the tremendous longing of members of his family for democracy, for free and fair elections and for a free press. He spoke of the importance of Canada's role in assisting this to come about. Whether it is through diplomatic processes, aid or support for the institutions of democracy, there is a role for Canada and it is an important one. It should be to assist the Egyptian people as they undergo this historical transformation while guaranteeing the civil liberties of all Egyptians and of Egypt's neighbours.

● (2045)

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we talk about democracy, I think Mr. Mubarak has to leave now. We talk about stability. There may be a domino effect with what is going on right now.

We salute the people of Egypt, like the people of Tunisia, for their democratic revolution. I agree that Canada has a role to play. I do not want to talk about consular affairs. I want to talk about what the role of Canada should be to help the Egyptians and the region accomplish those reforms.

I would ask my colleague what she perceives to be the role of the Government of Canada and what it should do to improve that role.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to answer that question without knowing the realities of the situation and what the country of Egypt will be dealing with.

I think it is incumbent upon Canada to assure Egypt that it is there to assist in the transition to democracy, to listen to the people and to provide the supports that are required, whether they be diplomatic, for building capacity, listening or training. I think it is too early to prescribe what would be required but I think what is needed is an open mind and an open heart to respond to the needs as are articulated by the Egyptian people.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member about her request for consular services.

Just to preface my question, last Saturday morning I spent the day in my constituency office responding to correspondence and making phone calls. Sometime after I left, a message was left on my answering machine about a young lady from my constituency who was in Egypt and looking for assistance. When we retrieved that phone message on Sunday afternoon, we did respond to the family in question. However, by the time we had responded, the young lady, within 24 hours, had been evacuated by plane to the United Kingdom and was safely on her way back home.

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We have seen these situations arise in countries, Tunisia being the first one. No one at the time anticipated that there would be a problem in Egypt. It has developed fairly quickly. How does one predict where extra consular services might be required? Is there a formula we should be using? How do we make those evaluations?

● (2050)

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the young woman who contacted my colleague was able to find her way home back to Canada in a quick and orderly fashion.

It is not for me to prescribe how one predicts. It is incumbent upon the government to ensure that consular services are available both here in Ottawa and abroad when a situation arises. We have heard too many stories of people not being able to get through on phones, that perhaps more people could answer the phone and that emails were not being responded to. The Department of Foreign Affairs has very fine people working for it but it clearly does not have enough people assigned to consular services. Part of the planning for any crisis is an immediate response team, and that clearly was not in place.

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Elmwood—Transcona.

This is obviously an evening for delicate debate. The situation in Egypt is, at best, one could say fluid, but extremely risky at this point. The information we are being fed from the ground is that all sorts of maneuvering is going on by the various elements of power in that country. There is really a great risk of a great number of people being injured if it turns violent, more than it has up to this point.

I want to personalize this a bit because of the feedback I have been getting from my Windsor community. We have a fairly sizable Coptic Christian community in Windsor and we also have a large number of members of the Egyptian diaspora from the Muslim community living in the Windsor-Essex county area. Although they have different concerns, there are basic concerns that they both have, and that is very much a fear for the safety of their relatives and friends still in Egypt, particularly in Alexandria and Cairo. Within the Coptic community in particular, there is a desire for change because it is the only way they can foresee any release from the bondage they have been suffering under, the systemic discrimination they have suffered under the current administration, leading, at times, as we have seen, particularly during the last few months, to a number of incidents of murder in the Christian community.

Their real hope is that if the Mubarak regime is gone it will be replaced by a democratic government that recognizes international human rights standards, including the right for that community to practice their faith free from discrimination and certainly free from the type of violence they have been subject to the last number of months and year, specifically in terms of number of murders that have occurred.

However, they also have, which was expressed very clearly to me, a very real concern that may not be what happens. This brings forth the role that Canada and democracies across the world can play. They need to make it very clear to whatever administration comes in next that those international human rights standards must be respected.

Obviously we want a democracy established there, a meaningful, informed, vibrant democracy that recognizes those international standards. Fear and hope commingle now and into the future for the Coptic community.

In terms of the Muslim community, a good number of people from the Windsor area, as I said earlier, have friends and close family still living in Egypt. They are very worried because many of them have not been able to find out about them.

● (2055)

There is a young woman who was a close friend of my daughter through elementary and high school. I believe she is back. Knowing her and how engaged she was in politics in Canada, she is probably very much one of those young people who precipitated this thrust for democracy in Egypt. I am sure her father is very worried about her, if in fact she is still there, as are any number of other members of the Windsor community about children, brothers, sisters, parents and friends.

They share with the Coptic Christian community the same concern, the hope that Mubarak leaves, the expectation that people will have a right to hope that democracy will be established, that there will be real freedom, a real and vibrant democracy, with the young people in particular having a major say in that. I am not talking of teenagers; I am talking of people in their 20s and 30s who, clearly, have led the way in these demonstrations and in forcing the president to announce his intent not to run again.

Both communities are very worried about what is going to happen over the next 24, 48 or 72 hours, because they are hearing the same things as us. Other groups are moving in and attempting to control the situation, groups that are operating with a significantly different agenda from the young people who created this movement in a very short period of time. If that happens, it will be a tragedy of monumental proportion.

What has happened is that a very large segment of the population, the youth of that country, in the last 8 or 10 days, has had its hopes raised that finally people would be able to live in a free society, a society, a government, an administration in which they would have full and meaningful participation. If that gets usurped by some of the other groups that appear to be attempting to move in now, it will be a tragedy.

This comes back to the role I believe Canada should be playing more aggressively, not just as an individual country. We certainly have to recognize the sovereignty of that country, but at the international level, it obviously begs the question of whether we would not be in a much better position if we had secured that position on the Security Council last year and been able to speak with greater authority from that position. It is water under the bridge, but we still have a role to play.

We have a role in saying to the rest of the democratic world that we have to bring whatever pressures we can to bear to get Mubarak and his administration out, and assisting in whatever ways we can in providing the democratic forces there, representing the Egyptian community as a whole, the opportunity, first, for an interim government and then for meaningful, free and informed elections for both the presidency and parliament.



That is a role we can play and we need to be doing it publicly. That is why the NDP foreign affairs critic, the member for Ottawa Centre, has been critical of the government for not taking a more aggressive stance in that regard. We have to be able to do that, because if we do not, there is a huge risk not only of more violence, which would be very tragic, but also that the democratic movement there will be lost, even without violence.

I urge the government to consider moving more dramatically than it has been willing to, and for it to provide some leadership at the international level as well.

• (2100)

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member made reference to the issue of the Security Council seat, the issue that was dealt with by the government a few months ago. I would ask him to expand on how important he thinks that whole situation was and, had we been successful in getting that position, whether it might have impacted on our situation right now.

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Mr. Speaker, this is not an evening to be bashing the government for some of its ineptitude in the past, because we still have a role to play at the UN. We still have some credibility there, albeit much less than we would have had we secured that position on the Security Council.

There is no question that at a time of such turmoil in a country like Egypt that is part of the UN, the opportunity for the UN to act as a catalyst to assist in the democratization of that country, the real democratic forces in the country, is quite substantial. A good deal of that, I have to admit, occurs behind the scenes, if one understands international diplomacy and how the UN functions. That maneuvering behind the scenes and the bringing to bear of pressure basically flow out of the Security Council. Thus if we were there and taking the position I advocated earlier in my speech, we could push that position much more effectively than we can now because we are on the sidelines.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am interested to have heard repeatedly about the issue of the Coptic Christians. As my colleague said in his speech, I understand there is a large community of Coptic Christians in Windsor. I am wondering if he could possibly elaborate on that and tell the House how concerned that congregation is about what the events might lead to. Perhaps he could enlighten us on what he has heard.

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that question, because I do want to add one additional point.

They are so concerned, and this is farther down the road, one of the inquiries I've had is whether Canada would be there to provide assistance in terms of refugees if the Coptic community became a focused target of some violent extremists within Egypt. I could not give him any assurances that we would.

However, this is one of the areas that we should be prepared to deal with, if the situation turns violent or, if in some of the maneuvering that is going on, there is a fanatical group that somehow positions itself in a position of power and begins to target that community. They are quite worried about that and would like some assurances from the government that, at the very least, we are considering that.

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Beyond that, as I said in my opening comments, there is a very deep sense of fear but also a great hope that this may improve their lot significantly.

• (2105)

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to the emergency motion that was introduced by the member for Toronto Centre. I listened to some very interesting presentations this evening.

It seems to me that the situation has certainly deteriorated in Egypt and, actually, across the region over the last couple of weeks. I think we might have been slightly premature in proceeding with the motion and the debate today because it seems that as each day passes, we see a different dynamic over there. Nevertheless, we are in the middle of the debate right now and there are a few observations that should be made on this situation.

As the member for Windsor—Tecumseh had pointed out, we are not here to point fingers at the government. We are just making some observations. We recognize that it is in a different role than we are. We are opposition and it is our job to point out inconsistencies that we find, just as it is the government's job to be able to make judgments that, we hope, are correct in a given situation.

The member for Toronto Centre talked about consular services. He saw that an important part of the equation that was not being properly deployed. That may well be. However, once again, the government has a role. It has to be able to make its judgments as to where these services have to be deployed. There are a lot of unstable countries in the world and things can change rather quickly.

In my own experience, a number of years ago, in 1983, I found myself in Grenada just prior to the American invasion, having met with government officials, even the finance minister, the prime minister, over a three-week period there, in the summer of 1983. I had absolutely no inkling of what was to happen. Within a month, we had the situation change dramatically and the end result was one where Ronald Reagan led an invasion of the island of Grenada.

I also found myself in Chile as an election observer in 1989, and then again for the election in 1990.

I can tell members that the member for Ottawa Centre has been in situations like this as recently, I believe, as last year, in his international travels. He knows that a situation can get out of hand very quickly and that it can be very unpredictable when large crowds are involved.

I recall being tear-gassed in a huge demonstration in Santiago just because I happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I was with a contingent of election observers that included United States senators and politicians from the EU and other places, so I was well taken care of and directed. However, I still managed to get tear-gassed.

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When one gets into situations like this, it is very hard to come up with conclusions, whether as the government or the opposition, especially in a country where we are as far away from the situation as we are here. We are taking advice from people in the field. The government is in a very strong position because it actually has an embassy there, it has people on the street, and probably has better information in many respects than we do.

Also, members have pointed out that Egypt itself, and I have been to Egypt a number of years ago, is a fairly poor country. It was mentioned that 40% of Egyptians live on less than \$2 per day; the unemployment rate is high; the education system is not what it should be.

This has been the situation since Anwar Sadat was shot, as many in this House will recall, and Hosni Mubarak took over from him. It is hard to believe that was 30 years ago. A leader who can last for 30 years in any kind of environment is quite remarkable.

• (2110)

However, when we look behind the veils, we see that he was not a leader in terms of what we see in a democratic situation. He ran a government that was hardly an example of democracy in action. That is what the people in Egypt want right now. Young people have hit the streets and have made it known they want change in the government.

It has been noted that the United States, which is not normally a leader in demanding regime change, is further ahead than we are in Canada. Canada is being more conservative than the Americans. We know the Americans have a big investment in Egypt for a number of reasons. They have investment in the military support in Egypt. They have a big interest in the canal, the oil fields and so on, so this is a huge interest for them.

Normally we would see the Americans being very proactive, but they are evidently saying that Mubarak has had his day, it is time to move on and replace the regime with one that is more democratic. The Canadian government seems reluctant to draw that same conclusion. We wonder why that would be the case.

At the end of the day, their strategy may turn out to be correct because, as I indicated, it is a fluid situation. We are concerned about a number of minorities in Egypt. The member for Windsor—Tecumseh mentioned the Coptic Christians. He has a number of them in his constituency, as do other members in the House. Especially Egyptian Canadians who live in our country are very concerned for their families back in their country, as well they should be.

It has been mentioned that the government is involved in providing flights. Our member asked earlier why Egyptian Canadians were not being given the same treatment as Lebanese Canadians were four years ago. I knew a person who was involved in the Lebanese situation and the Canadian government paid the airfare. The government has already answered that question by saying there have been a number of Canadian flights already. Canadians have been removed from the country. They have done so at their own expense. Evidently they went in with their eyes open and agreed to pay the \$400 and the case is over.

It is possible that we may have to put on more flights, so the government should not just eliminate the suggestion of the member for Nickel Belt offhand because there is an argument to be made for consistency. We had a situation of inconsistency, which I raised earlier this year, when we had the earthquake in Haiti and the government was quick to match funds donated by Canadians. Shortly thereafter, the Chilean earthquake happened and the government refused to do it. A lot of people in the Chilean community and supporters are saying that there is a double standard. It really would not have cost the government a lot of money because there was a much smaller donor base. While the government put out several million dollars of matching funds for Haiti, because there was a large outpouring of support, in the case of Chile it was much smaller because there was not that big a base to donate in the first place.

• (2115)

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member's speech. Repeatedly we hear allegations that our government has been slow to direct the events in Egypt.

I have looked at the chronological order of how things have unfolded. We watched the first demonstrations that took place on January 25 and the security forces that exercised unusual restraint. On the January 28, we did not see the army ramp up or use force. Although we are seeing some violence and we are seeing some things that are very disturbing, for the most part, most people would agree that what is taking place is unfolding the way that possibly would be the result of the will of the people.

Would the hon. member care to comment on that and would he agree that what is happening is transpiring in a normal manner? Again, we are very pleased that we have not seen the violence from the army side and that in the end, it is the will of the people that is being expressed. Is that not what is taking place and is that not what is unfolding in today's events and through the previous days events?

**Mr. Jim Maloway:** Mr. Speaker, I said the same thing as the member for Windsor—Tecumseh. We both have pointed out that we are not here to point fingers at the government. We recognize that our role is opposition. We are asking questions and the government is the government and it has a certain amount latitude, but it has a responsibility. We just wondered why it was not out as far as the Americans were. The Americans are suggesting that it is time for Mubarak to leave.

While I am on my feet, perhaps the Conservatives should look at being a little more co-operative with the opposition. Perhaps daily briefings with the critics might be in order in a situation like this.

I ran into Premier Filmon over the Christmas holidays and I asked whether he had been in contact with the Prime Minister over the years about how to run a successful government, as Filmon did in Manitoba for two years. He said that he wrote the Prime Minister a long email about how to deal with opposition, get the opposition on side and set up committees with opposition members on them to take on initiatives like Meech Lake, but he said he had not heard back. It was a number of years ago when he sent that message.

The government has a lot to learn about trying to make minority government work. We have been reading lots of stories about how successful the Pearson government was in the same length of time and how many things it got through versus how little the Conservative government has accomplished in five years. The Conservatives should learn something before they are not in government anymore.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the issues we brought up tonight, and we asked members of the government to clarify it, was the issue of passport fees that should go consular fares. For every passport that is purchased, \$25 should go to consular affairs. According to the government's numbers, it means over \$100 million. That is from a year ago. It is probably more now.

The money is not going there, which it was supposed to. The previous government did not do it and the current government is not doing it. We are seeing problems on the ground and lack of capacity.

Does my colleague think it is about time the government actually takes the money that was supposed to go to consular fares and invests it in consular fares so we have support on the ground for our officials to help Canadians when they are stranded in Egypt or anywhere else in the world?

● (2120)

**Mr. Jim Maloway:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent idea. This is not the only area where the government collects money. It collects \$25 on each passport for consular services, but is not provided for consular services.

Canada now has the highest airline taxes in the world. Canadians are streaming across the border. Some 50,000 people a year are going to Fargo, North Dakota to fly on American carriers, avoiding Canadian airlines. The government is spending way less than what it is collecting on this tax on airport security.

Once again, if the government is collecting money for consular services, the money should be provided for consular services.

**Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member from Chatham-Kent—Essex.

I will not spend a lot of my time repeating the well-intended and well-founded heartfelt wishes that we have heard from members in the assembly. I certainly echo those. It is important to send those well wishes.

I will not repeat the many efforts already put forth by the Canadian government to assist Canadians who are in Egypt. I congratulate all consular officials for everything they are doing there. I join all of my colleagues in condemning the violence that has taken place and may take place in future.

I want to weave somewhat of a cautionary tale here. As we watch what is taking place there on television and on the Internet, there is almost a sense of excitement and a muted euphoria that is inevitable following these very large demonstrations. For the majority of those if not young people then people who are motivated by a sense of hope for something better, there is this sense that there will be almost an automatic transition to a democratic form of government.

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I want to put out some cautions to that and a couple of tests. As Canadians, we fully understand that we only have a limited ability, as do other countries, to directly intervene and that there are cautions related to that. There is even international law related to that. However, we can send encouragement. We can offer what we know about democracy and how to establish that. However, at this point, a warning should be among the assistance we send.

This moment we are watching is not like East Berlin and people getting on the freedom train riding to freedom, which we all knew was inevitable once the wall finally came down. This is not even similar to the Orange Revolution. At least in those two cases there was some form of movement toward a platform of understanding of democracy. Historically, Egypt has not had nor does it have such a platform.

The historic caution here is, if we think back to Iran in 1979, there was a great sense of euphoria once the Shah was out. I have heard similar comments here, "Get Mubarak out. Just get him out and everything is going to flow in a wonderful way". That may not be the case. The Shah was out and a moderate came in, Mr. Bakhtiar. He was there for less than six weeks and the entire democratic hopes were taken over by the ayatollahs, and we know the rest of the history that flows from there.

As Iran has shown, it is a country where the polls show that the majority of the people want freedom and democracy. However, if there is an element in control that is vicious enough and willing to do anything to suppress people, then millions of people who want something better can in fact be intimidated and controlled.

I am concerned by comments I have heard, and not necessarily in the House, that the Muslim Brotherhood is renouncing violence and that the Muslim Brotherhood can be trusted. If there is a message that we can send along with our message of encouragement, it would be our observations and an understanding of history. The Muslim Brotherhood cannot be trusted. There are already stories coming out, intelligence reports, where it is somewhat involved in some of this movement. It has not renounced violence. It took that particular course though. It was renouncing violence some decades ago and what resulted after that when Anwar Sadat would not follow its way was his assassination.

We have seen flowing from the Muslim Brotherhood the movement that is known as the Islamic Resistance Movement a.k.a. Hamas. Hamas still has in its charter the destruction of Israel. There are Middle Eastern proverbs that say people can be judged by who their friends are at times. These types of friendships, whether we are talking about the Muslim Brotherhood, or Hamas, or a charter to destroy another country, are things of which I would encourage our friends to take great cautions toward.

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• (2125)

The leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna talked and wrote in a very intelligent and articulate way about the necessary use of terrorism when the time came. He talked about using politics and he talked about using propaganda.

President Nasser tried to work with members of the Muslim Brotherhood, or Al-Ikhwan as they were called, up until they tried to assassinate him. Then he used very repressive means, driving many of them into Saudi Arabia. When they fled to Saudi Arabia, we saw that joining of the Saudi-Wahhabi and the Muslim Brotherhood Salafi group, leading to the modern terrorist Islamist movement. I am not talking about Islam, I am talking about the modern terrorist Islamist movement today.

That is what is existential in Egypt now as we speak. From time to time the Muslim Brotherhood speaks against violence, as they did in 1998 with the embassy bombings. But in reading further in their denunciation, it was only because Muslims were killed not because others were killed.

As recently as 2008 their supreme guide, Mahdi Akif, praised bin Laden as a Mujahid. He called for jihad in Egypt. That was as recently as 2008. Their motto is still that "Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."

This is the Muslim Brotherhood. I would encourage our Egyptian friends not to be fooled, not to be led down the path by some of the academic attainments of some members of that Brotherhood. Their goals have never changed.

It is something in the DNA of those of us in the west that we incline ourselves to appeasement before, at times, the most evil forces. That is regarded as a weakness. That part of our DNA is actually based on hope. We try to appease, hoping that rational minds will prevail. It is actually a virtue, I believe, of western civilization, that particular hope.

Hope without reason can lead to great catastrophe. I am concerned about that. There should be a couple of tests that I hope and encourage our Egyptian friends would put before those who would want to be involved. We have already heard that there has been what looks like progress.

Mr. Mubarak has said that there will be a new constitution, and there will be elections for a prime minister and a president. There is some hope there.

As we have heard other people say, trust but verify. I would encourage that if there is any Muslim Brotherhood involvement in a new government or a new constitution, they absolutely and completely renounce violence in all its forms, including their intended violence towards Israel. Would they be willing to do that?

In the area of freedom of religion and the expression thereof, and I am not just thinking of the Coptic Christians who are feeling greatly threatened at what might be the new governing power in Egypt, but those who are Christians themselves or of other religions. We know often that their fate in Egypt has been martyrdom and death.

The mark of a society that really embraces human freedom, is to embrace freedom of religion. From freedom of religion comes

freedom of speech. We have heard about the importance of freedom of association. There will be freedom of association. There will even be freedom of the media.

These are some tests that I would encourage our Egyptian friends to put to those who want to implicate themselves into what we sincerely hope will be a true democratic movement and one that respects all human rights.

This is a momentous time. We do watch, but as we watch and see these things develop, let us not be fooled into thinking there is going to be an immediate transition to the type of democracy that has taken 150 to 200 years to develop in Canada, and which still, which we admit among ourselves, has its weaknesses even in the House.

We are willing to send what we have learned. We are willing to send our diplomats. We are willing to send our academic people. We are willing to send our parliamentarians to help and to assist. We will also send our prayers for those people at this time and we send hope. We encourage them to move carefully, to not rush into a place where they may have some deep regrets and to apply these tests to those who would want to be a part of what we hope will be a great new democratic movement in Egypt.

• (2130)

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the President of the Treasury Board for a thoughtful presentation tonight. He was speaking from the heart and speaking with a great deal of realism as well as a sense of idealism that inspires all of us.

I hope the government will look at what I see as an absence in our foreign policy and the whole area of governance which is really what we are talking about. We are talking about applying tests but we have to have the capacity to really assess those tests. Right now the governance area falls in between DFAIT and CIDA. In between the foreign affairs department and CIDA there is a bit of a black hole which used to be filled with some efforts that were made in governance that were paid for on both sides.

The minister talked about how he was prepared to send members of Parliament to Egypt. Many of us are prepared to go. Many of us are interested in engaging with our Egyptian friends and there are other ways in which we can do this.

The government has to understand that the governance revolution is not over, that the process of change in the Middle East, which many people thought would not happen in this way, is clearly under way. What we saw take place in the post-Soviet period, which was different but which also had its governance challenges to which Canada responded, is one which we now still continue to have to respond to.

I know the minister will think of this as being some kind of special pleading but I am really saying that when we look at the area of how we help countries deal with these challenges, and he put it on the table something which I thoroughly agree with, that we should go into these situations with our eyes wide open, with a sense of our own historical experience as he has described it, the experience of appeasement, the experience of Iran, and we can go back further with the experience of other revolutions which have gone awry and have not worked to the benefit of the people. We know that.

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There is no room here for a kind of naïveté on our part as we look at the demonstrators on the street. If the government is going to take this approach, which I hope it does, that it realizes it is going to require a modest shift in terms of resources and look at how we can deal more effectively with this challenge of governance at the international level.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the observations of my friend, the foreign affairs critic for the Liberal Party.

We have been in a position in other situations to offer that kind of guidance where asked. I am sure my friend will recall the great participation of Canadians in what we now refer to as the orange revolution and the re-establishment of more proper elections following that.

I meet on regular occasions, as does our Prime Minister who takes the lead on this, with those from other countries who want to have and simply desire, as the Latin expression talks about, a better country. They come to Canada and say they see something in Canada that they do not have. They ask if they can send their officials or have an exchange, whether it is us sending our judicial experts to places like China. The head of state of Mongolia recently asked Canadian officials to help his officials in terms of establishing processes within the public service. Canada gets many of those calls.

Recognizing slight partisan differences here, not to any detriment, I hear what the member is saying. I believe under our Prime Minister we have demonstrated that and we have an opportunity to continue to demonstrate that. A lot of it is if we are asked. These are sovereign issues of other countries. The past and the present clearly shows that Canadians at a variety of levels are ready and willing to do that.

• (2135)

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's excellent speech, maybe for the first time in the debate tonight, pointed out to members of the House the urgency and possible dangers. I am very thankful that he laid that out so clearly for us tonight.

I want to return to the topic of the consular response to the Egyptian crisis by our government. Our government and Canadians are gravely concerned with recent developments in Egypt. Although the desire for a political change is a positive one, security deteriorated sharply after the initial mass demonstrations. Shops and businesses have been closed for several days, leading to difficult conditions for Egyptian residents and visitors. We deeply regret the violence and loss of life that has taken place and we continue to call on all parties to use peaceful means to work toward a constructive solution while respecting freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

On Tuesday, February 1, President Mubarak announced his intention not to stand for the next election, but it remains to be seen whether the Egyptian people will accept his offer to lead the transition.

As the situation in Egypt remains unpredictable, the safety of Canadians is our number one priority. We have been quick to take action. On Sunday, January 30, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that the Government of Canada was offering chartered flights to Canadians wishing to leave Egypt. These flights take them

to safer destinations, such as Frankfurt, Paris or other European cities. Canadian citizens will make their own onward travel plans. Standing by at these locations, Canadian consular representatives are present to provide further assistance.

The first of the Canadian evacuation flights arrived in Cairo less than 24 hours after our government offered to assist Canadians who wish to leave Egypt through voluntary evacuation. Five flights have now left from Egypt over the course of the last three days. The first flight carried 175 Canadians and the second carried 43. A third flight left Cairo yesterday with 131 Canadians on-board. A fourth flight left from Alexandria earlier today with 29 Canadians on-board and a fifth flight from Cairo that left recently carried 81 Canadians.

We also co-operated with other states doing what was right and included other nationals on our flights, including from the U.S., U. K., New Zealand and Australia. In return, these countries are offering space to Canadians on their flights and some 21 of our citizens have been evacuated in this way.

We have been working closely with these like-minded countries, whose plans for evacuation for their citizens are similar to ours. In this way, we expand the opportunities to Canadians who wish to leave Egypt. This collaboration has been valuable and we are grateful to these partners.

At the moment, we, along with our like-minded partners, have been looking at options to evacuate Canadians from cities other than Cairo. The flight today from Alexandria carrying 29 Canadians serves as an example. The safety of Canadians is our priority and we are advising Canadians outside of Cairo to remain where they are rather than make their way to the capital where the protests may put them in danger.

The government is committed to ensuring that Canadians wishing to leave Egypt are able to do so with their families. As such, priority for the government-organized charters is being given to people holding a Canadian passport and their immediate family, defined as a spouse and/or children. Passengers are required to sign an undertaking with the Government of Canada agreeing to repay the costs related to evacuation in the amount of approximately \$400.

In order to ensure that Canadians and their families are able to evacuate the country as quickly and easily as possible, staff from Citizenship and Immigration Canada are on hand at the Cairo airport to issue documents to spouses and dependent children of Canadian citizens being evacuated. Non-Canadian family members have been urged to bring all available civil and relationship documents to assist in this process. As I have said before, there has been an outstanding level of service and responsiveness to the situation in Egypt.

• (2140)

In order to deal with the large number of calls and emails we have received from Canadians on the ground in Egypt and their friends, families and loved ones here in Canada, the Minister of Foreign Affairs requested additional staff be placed at the emergency operations centre here in Ottawa and that additional staff be flown into Cairo to better assist Canadians.

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The large increase in staff at our emergency operations centre has resulted in an increased capacity to answer and return calls from Canadians and their families as quickly as we can. Likewise on the ground in Cairo and in Frankfurt, we have bolstered our consular teams to assist evacuees.

Canadian missions around the world have stepped in to assist with calls and logistics. We have set up telephone numbers specifically for this crisis. We strongly encourage Canadians to call this number rather than the number of the Canadian embassy in Cairo. It is: 1-613-996-8885. A dedicated team of consular officers is waiting to help. Our government is proud of our professional consular team and of the services that the team provides to Canadians.

I reiterate that Canadians themselves are best placed to manage their own safety. We encourage all Canadians to be as informed and prepared as they can be before they travel and to be alert while they are travelling. I assure members that when Canadians require assistance abroad, they will receive it from this government.

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like all other Canadians I have been watching the events unfold in Egypt with great interest. Our government's main priority is the safety and well-being of our Canadian citizens. I am certainly proud of the speed and efficiency with which we have acted to ensure their security. Almost 350 people have been evacuated and, as my colleague has mentioned, more than 2,300 have received consular assistance and advice.

I think we would all agree this is a time of unprecedented change and great unpredictability in Egypt.

Today we learned that formerly peaceful protests have turned violent. Sadly, at least one person has been killed and as many as 600 have been injured, some very seriously. As well, a number of journalists and even Canadians have been attacked. We certainly deplore this brutality and we regret any loss of life and the injuries on both sides. We call on the Egyptian government and the protestors to refrain from escalating the situation.

Stability in Egypt is important to Canada and to the world. By virtue of its strategic location, Egypt has long been a bridge between the Middle East and Africa. Egypt plays an important regional role in Africa as a mediator of peace talks in Sudan and as a contributor of the largest contingent of peacekeeping forces to the United Nations African mission in Darfur, as well as the provider of humanitarian assistance, especially in Sudan and Somalia.

Egypt is one of the top five financial contributors to the African Union, which makes it a mainstay of the organization.

In addition to providing troop support for African Union missions, it ranks fifth in the world for United Nations police and troop contributions. It also is home to the Cairo Regional Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa. Egyptian and Canadian soldiers have served side by side in many missions, and officers from both countries regularly attend each other's staff colleges.

Two years ago, Egypt hosted the African Union summit, where a range of issues of importance to Africa were discussed.

Egypt also contributes to regional stability in Sudan. Egypt regards itself as the natural Arab and regional leader on Sudan and has supported efforts to resolve the conflict in Darfur. For Egypt, Sudan represents a key transit country for almost 95% of its water and most of its illegal migrants. Egypt is concerned about the access to those Nile waters which flow through southern Sudan. Therefore, Egypt, like Canada, has a strong interest in maintaining the stability of the area.

Egypt supported the comprehensive peace agreement in Sudan and undertook development projects in the south. Though it did prefer a unified Sudan, Egypt said early on during the voting that it would respect the results of the January referendum on independence. This was an important and positive gesture.

Egypt has invested in building electrical power stations, medical clinics and a university in south Sudan. Egypt is also a major contributor to the two peacekeeping missions in Sudan, with over 2,000 personnel deployed.

Egypt has been a crossroads for trade and culture in the Arab world. Its institutions and its intellectual legacy have left deep imprints and influence in the region's social and cultural development. In the modern era, Egypt has been a bridge builder between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa as well, while also taking an active role in building the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Egyptian officials have continued to work hard in promoting unity and building stronger political and economic relations with the Arab Union countries.

Egypt exercises a leadership role in the Islamic world. It is the current chair of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and home to the headquarters of the Arab League. It is also an important member of the African Union. It continues to play a leadership role in giving voice and influence to much of the third world through the Non-Aligned Movement. It is the current chair of that movement.

Egypt has a long and proud history of engagement in international peace and security matters. It is important that Canada and the world encourage all parties in Egypt to work together to usher in reforms that will enable Egypt to continue to make a positive contribution to regional stability.

Egypt has been an important political and cultural component of the international community. Its ancient civilizations contributed magnificently to what is now our common heritage. It is the repository of many of humanity's common treasures. Its history and culture continue to inspire, amaze and instill in all of us wonder and amazement. Egypt's history, culture, education and religious characteristics have had a profound impact on not just the region, but the entire world.

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● (2145)

Canada is home to a significant important population of Egyptian Canadians who make major contributions to our society and its advancement every day. As a nation, we are culturally richer as a result of the dedication and commitment of Egyptians to Canada and to Egypt. We wish to see the continuation of stronger ties between our two nations.

In the words of the Prime Minister yesterday, Canada “reiterates its support for the Egyptian people as they transition to new leadership and a promising future”. We certainly want to continue to support all the work and efforts of those who stand for peace and reform in Egypt, since accommodating the aspirations, hopes, and dreams of the Egyptian people will no doubt enrich us all.

I would like to offer a cautionary tale. I have been watching with great interest, and as the President of the Treasury Board mentioned earlier, political reform needs to happen. The challenge is how that is going to happen and what it is going to look like. As the critic for the Liberal Party mentioned, part of the process is the things we need to work on and the things we need to be interested in. Just because a dictator is overthrown does not naturally mean it will lead to a democracy.

As we have mentioned, Egypt plays a very important role in the region with some of the peace agreements that it is involved in. We need to be there in the days to come, if Egypt asks for our help, to be part of the process in trying to put political reforms in place, in trying to develop a system that has not been there for many years.

Merely having an election probably will not do the trick. There are institutions that Egypt has not had over the years with a dictatorship and it is important to understand that it will take time for these new institutions to be put in place. I would encourage the world to find ways to help the Egyptian people with their reforms and with their democratic processes. We must understand that helping them get involved in elections again is not necessarily going to change things. We need to help them with their governance and it may take some time for that to happen.

We also want to make sure the Egyptian people will still be involved in the area in a leadership capacity as they have been, working on not only being involved with peace treaties but some of the other things they have been involved with.

We are ready to step in when necessary and we must realize that this process will probably take some time.

● (2150)

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's comments. In continuation of the questions I have been asking this evening, I find it interesting that members of the government would be affirming the fact that there needs to be a stronger institutional response from Canada. What is striking for me is that the government has not always been consistent in its support for those institutions in our own society that have already been in the field and already engaged in dealing with governance questions in the world.

If we now realize that governance is such a critical issue in this part of the world and indeed in other parts of the world, I wonder

what the member would suggest we do as a country to ensure there are not just a series of one-offs as we respond to the Egyptians and the Tunisians and the others that may arise, but that we have a more consistent approach to governance. Perhaps we should give the mandate to either CIDA or Foreign Affairs, but give it clearly to one of them and say that this is their responsibility to run with this. It cannot all be run out of the Prime Minister's office, as was being suggested by the President of the Treasury Board. It is something that has to have the stronger institutional support of the Government of Canada.

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Mr. Speaker, it was mentioned by the President of the Treasury Board and in committee we talked about this. A number of countries are looking to Canada for help in their civil service, for help in a number of different areas. When we are given the opportunity through requests that come to us, it is important for us to act on them. If a country comes to us and says it would like help with its governance, then by all means we should be involved. We are involved in a number of different projects through CIDA with governance issues around the world. As long as we as a country continue to be asked, we should be willing to step into those situations and help out.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is the second speaker who has zeroed in on the danger that may begin to play out when this regime change takes place. The danger of course is that we may see a regime that is worse than the last regime.

We have had a lot of criticism and a lot of challenges, especially from the opposition, in regard to whether the government should challenge that government and insist that it step down.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague would agree with me that the position we have taken as a government is to slowly let these things evolve on their own rather than forcing the issue which could result in something none of us want to see, perhaps a regime like we have witnessed in Iran. That technique of pushing the issue may lead to a very unhealthy regime, which is something that none of us want to see. I wonder if he would want to comment on whether that is a concern of his.

● (2155)

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that we do need to be measured in our response. As I mentioned earlier, there has been a dictatorship for a number of years in that part of the world and, quite frankly, the systems, the processes, the institutions or the institutional capacity is probably not where it needs to be.

I believe that President Mubarak needs to work in a transitional period. I do not believe there should be a vacuum. I believe there should be an opportunity to work together, as my critic from the Liberals mentioned, with outside governments that would be willing to participate if they were asked to step in.

I realize that as we look at what is going on, there is no question that the people sense an opportunity. There is certainly a lot of energy on the ground right now but we need to ensure the systems and institutions are there in order to ensure Egypt is able to move forward in the future.

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**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over the past week, I, like my fellow Canadians, have been watching the events in Egypt. I have been deeply saddened by the loss of life that has occurred during these demonstrations. We strongly condemn all violence that has turned a peaceful protest into a flurry of violence in the streets. This must stop. All parties must embrace non-violence.

Earlier this evening, I was on the telephone with a friend who had recently returned from Egypt. He spoke in such warm terms of his experience there, of the warmth, hospitality and friendship of the Egyptian people, the strong commitment to family, as well as the very difficult times that these people are enduring, not just in terms of the current unrest, but the difficult economic times that they are facing. He went on to say that a large percentage of the GNP of Egypt is derived from the tourism industry. Obviously, with the events that we are seeing unfold, this will certainly have a very negative impact on that industry and will be a devastating loss for Egypt. It will take many months, if not years, to recover that kind of loss.

As members of this House will know, our government's foremost priority is the safety of Canadians. In fact, earlier this evening the Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs) gave some very good advice that bears repeating and that Canadians need to be aware of before and when they travel so that we can minimize any potential negative impact on them.

The Department of Foreign Affairs receives two requests for assistance every minute of every day at one of the many points of service. In 2010, over 1.1 million Canadians abroad received some form of assistance. Over the last five years, demand for consular services has increased by 32%. The growing demand for consular services was recognized by this government in budget 2008. We provided better funding to cope with the demand and enable us to reach out to more Canadians to ensure that they were well-prepared before they left Canada.

These funds have contributed to a strengthened consular function at headquarters to support officers in the field, the construction of a new emergency watch and response centre, as well as the recent appointment of our minister of state responsible for consular services. This shows the government's commitment to expanding this service that is so crucial.

Consular services takes many forms but they essentially belong to two main categories: first, obviously prevention and education and; second, assistance. The Department of Foreign Affairs strives to prepare Canadians for international travel by providing information and advice on safe travel to foreign countries and to help Canadians abroad to handle consular difficulties or emergencies.

The Government of Canada's advice and information on travel abroad can be found at [travel.gc.ca](http://travel.gc.ca). This website receives more than 12,000 visits a day and should be the first step for all Canadians planning a trip abroad. It offers travel reports for over 200 countries, gives an overview of the security situation of the country, any official travel warnings advising against travel to a country or regions of a country, contact information for the nearest Canadian mission and much more.

It is through this website that Canadians can also register with Canadian missions using the Registration of Canadians Abroad system. Registering gives the Government of Canada the means to contact Canadians during an emergency. The Department of Foreign Affairs also provides public communication and outreach products to educate Canadians on how to travel safely and responsibly.

Our government has rapidly responded to this volatile situation in Egypt. To date, our government has helped over 375 Canadians leave Egypt. Within 24 hours of recommending a voluntary evacuation, the first planeload of Canadians safely landed in Europe. We will continue to facilitate this until every Canadian who wants to leave Egypt may leave. My colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was reassured by his colleague, the foreign minister of Egypt, Ahmed Gheit, that they will enable us to do so.

● (2200)

At this time, we have deployed over five charter planes to evacuate Canadians who wish to leave Egypt. We will continue to do that. In addition, we have worked closely with our friends and allies to co-operate and share in each other's efforts. We continue to work with our allies to ensure that our nationals leave the country.

While the situation on the ground does pose logistical difficulties, our government is acting quickly to ensure that sufficient resources are in place to assist Canadians. The foreign affairs minister has deployed additional staff in both Cairo and Frankfurt to support the efforts of those staff who are already on the ground.

As well, our government understands the plight of the friends and families of Canadians who are currently in Egypt. We understand their concerns and their desire to have access to the latest information and advice. We have added capacity to our 24-hour emergency operations centre to take more calls from Canadians who are looking to access help.

The emergency operation centre has fielded over 14,000 calls. In addition, it has placed a large number of outbound calls to those who have registered on the registry of Canadians abroad. We continue to monitor the volume and will reallocate the proper resources to ensure that we meet the demands. Again, I want to stress that we cannot urge strongly enough that Canadians should register with our embassy whenever they travel abroad and, especially at this time, register with our embassy in Cairo.

Canadian missions around the world have stepped in to assist with calls and logistics. We have set up additional telephone numbers. A dedicated team of consular officers is always waiting to help, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Canadians themselves are best placed to manage their own safety when they find themselves in trouble but we are there to help. We encourage all Canadians to be as informed and prepared as possible before they travel and to be alert while they are travelling. I can assure the House that when Canadians require assistance abroad they will receive it from this government.



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I would like to take a moment at the conclusion of my time to report how pleased I was as a member of Parliament during the Haiti crisis to have regular contact by way of my staff and consular officials, to see the diligence, the hard work and dedication that these staff members had to their jobs and the personal care that they provided to Canadians who were in Haiti and needed assistance. Members may recall that the very first Canadian victim of the Haiti earthquake to be identified was a Canadian from my area, so I was deeply immersed in the tragedy at that time.

I want to take this time to acknowledge the great work that our consular officials give in the service of Canadians who have travelled abroad or may be working abroad.

• (2205)

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lend my voice to this emergency debate on the crisis that is occurring in Egypt.

I too condemn the violence that has occurred and extend my condolences to the families of the victims and pray for peace and stability. I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

This is a time of opportunity, not just for one country but also for an entire region, a time of opportunity that is unprecedented. It is also a time of great risk and great uncertainty. All sides must share in the priorities of peace, and Egypt must continue its leadership role in the peace process in the Middle East.

Following President Mubarak's announcement that he will not seek re-election, Canada reiterated its support for the Egyptian people as they transition to a new leadership and a promising future.

As Egypt moves towards new leadership and a new regime, we encourage all parties to work together to ensure an orderly transition toward a free and vibrant society in which all Egyptians are able to enjoy the rights and freedoms we enjoy here in Canada, and not a transition that leads to violence, instability or extremism.

Canada must strongly support an open transition to democratic values and governance in Egypt. The Egyptian government must respond now to the people's demands. There needs to be freedom of expression and assembly, free and fair elections, and freedom from persecution for religious minorities. This is not just about economic and social change. There must be a fundamental change in the manner of governance, proper elections and other steps towards democratic values and respect for human rights.

Canada must also strongly support the rights of people to demonstrate peacefully, and we call on the Egyptian government to reverse the steps it has taken to crack down on such expression, including restoring social media and cellphone service.

We respect the Egyptian leadership's longstanding support of the Middle East peace process, its support in fighting terrorism and its opposition to the Iranian threat. But we will not support or abide the use of force against legitimate dissent and the use of extrajudicial means against the people.

We are encouraged by the army's pledge not to use force against the people.

At this time, not all details are clear, but there are concerns that the government is involved in fomenting the clashes. If this is true, it must stop, and they must start helping to control the violence.

Egyptians themselves will determine the outcome of these historic events. However, we are concerned, as all parties, governments and actors should be, about the possibility that a change in government could bring forth a government that is, in whole or part, averse to peace in the region or that would want to abrogate the longstanding and historic peace agreement between Egypt and Israel.

Egypt has been the linchpin of Middle East peace, and all governments and parties should make the maintenance of peace a top priority for the wellbeing of all of the region's citizens.

I would like to discuss the rights and freedoms of members of my community, rights that have been abrogated in Egypt, and how we as Canadians must be vigilant in standing up for the rights of minorities. I am blessed to have one of the largest, the third largest in fact, Egyptian communities in Canada residing in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. These Egyptians are primarily Coptic Christians, who are the largest religious minority in Egypt. The Copts are the native Egyptians Christians, a major ethno-religious group in Egypt.

Christianity was the majority religion in Roman Egypt during the 4th to 6th centuries and, until the Muslim conquest, has remained the faith of a significant minority of the population until the present day. Copts in Egypt constitute the largest Christian community in the Middle East, as well as the largest religious minority in the region, accounting for an estimated 10% of the Egyptian population. Some officials estimate that these Christians represent 5% to 10% of a population of over 83 million Egyptians.

Members of the Canadian diaspora conclude that there are 250,000 to 400,000 Coptic Christians here in Canada.

Most Copts adhere to the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria.

I have had the pleasure of attending mass at the Church of the Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius, and have been blessed by His Holiness Pope Shenouda, one of the most profound experiences of my life.

As a religious minority, the Copts are subject to significant discrimination in modern Egypt and are the target of attacks by militant Islamic extremist groups.

• (2210)

Many in the Coptic Christian community have expressed frustration, anger, shock and horror at the ongoing religious persecution that has targeted Coptic Christians and been escalating. The Coptic community has been targeted with hate crimes and physical assaults. Members of the U.S. Congress have expressed concern about the human trafficking of Coptic women and girls, who are the victims of abductions, forced conversions to Islam, sexual exploitation and forced marriages to Muslim men.

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Last Christmas eve we witnessed a massacre at Nag Hammadi, where seven were killed and many more injured. Just a few weeks ago, on Christmas eve in Alexandria, 21 Copts were killed and 79 injured. With this growing religious intolerance and open sectarian violence against Coptic Christians in recent years, we are concerned for the Coptic Christians and about the failure of the Egyptian government to effectively investigate and properly prosecute those responsible.

The freedom to practice religion and the protection of minorities are significant rights in a democratic society. These are values that we hold near and dear in Canada. Yet these rights have not been extended to Coptic Christians.

The Coptic community recently issued a statement that it preferred the rule of President Mubarak to that of an unknown alternative. Their fear is that the Muslim Brotherhood, a group of Muslim fundamentalists, could or would fill the leadership void that would exist. That would represent a very concerning and much less stable option. It is important, as Hillary Clinton stated, that there be an orderly transition to a more politically open Egypt.

President Obama stated that Egypt's \$1.5 billion aid package would be reviewed if peaceful protesters were dealt with harshly, and he urged President Mubarak to take the concrete steps to enact the political and economic reforms that are needed. To date, President Mubarak has promised not to run in the next election scheduled for this September.

As Canadians, our priorities must be clear. First, we must ensure the security of our citizens on the ground in Egypt, as they continue to face a dangerous and unstable situation. The government must offer increased consular services to come to their aid and evacuate those who wish to return home to Canada. The safety and security of all Egyptians must also be a foremost priority.

This is an important moment for the people of Egypt. It is a time of crisis and concern, but it is also a time of hope and opportunity. We pray for a return to peace, stability, and security and to an open transition to democracy and reform.

**Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was especially interested in what my colleague said because of my own particular interest in the needier parts of Egypt. We forget there is so much poverty in the region, which led to many of the riots that took place. From the CIDA website, I see that CIDA invests about \$20 million in Egypt, but it is largely for the Egyptian economy. It is part of a regional investment.

Given the unrest we have seen in the last few days, which is quite concerning, I wonder if she has any ideas about ways in which the CIDA money could be better spent to address some of these poverty issues.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. As he well knows, 50% of the population of Egypt lives on less than \$2 a day. The economic conditions that exist in Egypt are one of the primary reasons protesters took to the streets, along with the human rights abuses, torture and corruption. People need economic opportunity and that is why Egypt needs a return to stability and good governance.

As an experienced contributor of aid and development, Canada can play a significant role in this economic reform. What Canada needs to do is to review its aid priorities to best suit the needs of these historic changes.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had the experience this past Sunday of attending a protest in Halifax that included both Muslims and Coptic Christians, who came together in unity to express their hopes, concerns and demands for change within Egypt and their support for the protesters. It was interesting to hear from some of the people in my riding and others in the Halifax area about what they are hearing, their concerns for family who are still in Egypt and their worries about what might happen and possible violence.

I am wondering what concerns my colleague is hearing from people in her riding, as well as what their hopes really are for what is going to happen in Egypt.

• (2215)

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Mr. Speaker, this has been on the minds of many residents, many of my constituents. They are very concerned for their loved ones back home, and it is very important that we stand shoulder to shoulder, particularly with the Coptic community, to ensure respect for human rights, freedom from religious persecution, and enable the Coptic community to engage in their full and legitimate right to participate in transforming the society.

What I want and hope is that Egypt returns to democratic values, that it will share in the same democratic principles we enjoy here in Canada, principles such as freedom of speech, religious tolerance, freedom of association, and the economic stability and opportunity that are so important to a thriving and developing economy, and equality and education for women, good and stable governance and effective government institutions and, of course, we have already mentioned freedom from persecution, from corruption and violence.

What we really want is a good quality of life and peace and stability in that region.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to address this issue from the perspective of being the co-chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association. As such I have had the opportunity over the past few years of learning about Africa, and certainly the country we are talking about tonight and its situation, Egypt, and the role it plays in northern and eastern Africa and the role it played in supporting the pan-African Parliament, in supporting NEPAD, and so forth.

This essentially is what is going on in Egypt and other countries in Africa, whether it is Tunisia, Algeria or even Côte d'Ivoire. It is essentially about democracy, about the will of the people. What is driving some of these changes we are witnessing through the media reports is in part food costs, as we have seen in Algeria and Tunisia, and also the realization by millions of people that their standard of living is not what it could be, and the intolerable inequities they have been subject to, whether between African countries and European countries or African countries and North American countries, and also within countries because, within Egypt, we have heard tonight there are certainly different standards of living that people can afford. The majority of the people in that country are unfortunately living, as we have heard, on a couple of dollars a day.

We have seen this happening now, and as I say, it has been reported by the traditional media, by television, newsprint and radio, but has also been driven in great part by social media. That in turn has been driven by the will of the people to know and be informed, to know what is going on and to have an effect and an impact on their environment so their living conditions can be improved. And then again, I boil it down to what democracy is all about.

Our Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association had the occasion to visit Egypt, Cairo in particular, in March 2007. Even then we could almost sense an end of the regime, because the president, who is still president today, was ill at the time. There was a question of whether or not he would run again. They had just had elections the preceding November, when 88 members of the Muslim brotherhood had been elected. Some thought that number could have been greater and there was a lot of questioning about the method of elections. International observers were not allowed. As we know, in the elections just last fall, those 88 were reduced to a handful, and again there were a number of questions asked about the way in which the elections were conducted. We are seeing a number of factors come into play, and all of this, of course, is being driven by other events in neighbouring countries.

I also want to relate a discussion we had at the time with a Mr. Hisham Kassem, who had been a participant in the *Cairo Times* for seven years, and founder of the first truly independent daily in Egypt. Our delegation had an hour of discussion with him, which we could not fully relate for fear of putting him in a bit of a bind. However, it was a truly eye-opening discussion in terms of the evolution of democracy in that country, how the regime was functioning, how they were allowing him essentially to be able to report independently, and that opened our eyes greatly to the situation. In that sense I am not very surprised that some of the events we are seeing are happening.

I want to take us a few days back, though, to events that happened elsewhere that I believe had an influence.

• (2220)

[Translation]

Naturally I am talking about the events in Tunisia. In just a few days, we saw the end of Ben Ali's regime, which had lasted for 27 years. The people, who are probably a little better off than the people of Egypt, wanted change. The people took charge and succeeded in ousting Ben Ali and are now making sure there is a new regime. Let

us hope this will occur respectfully and peacefully and that it results in a regime that will satisfy the majority of the people.

Let us not forget the events in Algeria. There were riots there too because of the price of food. As a result, the government had to act quickly and reduce the price. We can see the sensitivity that exists throughout northern Africa.

I would also like to mention another country: Côte d'Ivoire. Our association has just returned from visiting the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), which includes Côte d'Ivoire, a country we did not visit. In November, elections were held in Côte d'Ivoire and Mr. Ouattara was declared the victor by all the observers: from the European Union Election Observation Mission, to the United Nations and the African Union of West Africa itself. Everyone agreed that Mr. Ouattara had indeed been elected and that Mr. Gbagbo had to leave his post. However, Mr. Gbagbo is hanging on to power. During our visit to Nigeria, Ghana and Togo, roughly 10 days ago, it was headline news even though other things were going on in Tunisia, as I was saying.

I am very proud of the fact that 13 of the 15 member countries of ECOWAS held a meeting and unanimously supported the need to respect the election results, whereby Mr. Ouattara is to be named president and will take control. They went so far as to say that, as a last resort, force would be used to ensure that the election results were respected. This is very important because there will be 17 elections in Africa this year. If democracy were to experience a serious setback in Côte d'Ivoire because Mr. Ouattara was not sworn in as president, democracy in other African countries would also suffer.

In light of all this, I believe that the situation in Africa is very interesting nonetheless. Democracy is beginning to take root there and looking to flourish. As parliamentarians, as Canadians, as members of the broader international family, we have a role to play. First, we will have to seriously consider accepting the results of free and fair elections. When free and fair elections are held, even if the results are not what we would like them to be, we must learn to accept the outcome because that is democracy. There have been other instances when we have hesitated to accept the results, or even when we have not accepted them, and that is putting us in a rather delicate situation at present.

We must also learn to support these countries by speaking out, by having an active presence, in peacekeeping or international development—and certainly in election assistance or election monitoring. Canada is an expert in this area. Elections Canada is an organization with a very good reputation, and is highly respected and highly regarded by other nations. If we are asked to help, I hope we will be ready to answer the call.

If we were to do so, if we were to take part in the shift to democracy in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire and any other country that wants to move in that direction, if their populations clearly, fairly and freely express their desire to do so, everyone would benefit. The large international family of free and democratic countries would be better off, and so would the human race overall.

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That is the message I wanted to convey this evening. Like my hon. colleagues, I hope that everyone in our respective ridings who is of Egyptian origin can rest assured that their loved ones who are still in Egypt are safe and are being well treated. It goes without saying that we must do everything we can to help them.

• (2225)

I thank the Speaker for giving parliamentarians the opportunity to share their thoughts and wishes here this evening.

[English]

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join with our colleagues in debating this matter of great importance. It is good to see my friend from Toronto Centre who gave the first speech in this debate. I appreciate his ongoing presence here.

A number of my colleagues have already addressed the unfolding crisis and opportunity that we see in Egypt. I had an opportunity to pay an official visit to Egypt in May 2009 at which time I met with senior ministers in the Mubarak government and leaders of civil society and faith leaders, including the late Sheikh Tantawi, the most important Sunni religious leader in Egypt, as well as His Holiness Pope Shenouda III while I was there on a broader trip of the Middle East.

I will say, in my capacity as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, that Canada continues to have an important immigration program from Egypt. Egyptian nationals have immigrated to Canada for, I suspect, well over a century and we count ourselves fortunate to have more than 100,000 Canadians of Egyptian origin, reflecting the diversity of that country.

I know that all of those Canadians of Egyptian origin are watching this evening's debate here in Canada and, more particularly, the developments in their country of origin, with great concern, some with great optimism and some with a fairly high degree of anxiety.

We would like to assure those Canadians, in fact, all Canadians, that all relevant departments in the Government of Canada are taking every necessary step to provide appropriate services to Canadian citizens and/or permanent residents who find themselves in Egypt. My colleagues from the Department of Foreign Affairs have already discussed our efforts to facilitate extraction from Egypt of those Canadians seeking to leave the country during this period of relative instability.

My ministry has played an important role in those ongoing extraction efforts and consular affairs because it is important for us to determine that the people seeking to come back to Canada, either through our facilitation or otherwise, are in fact Canadian citizens or permanent residents. For that reason, we have relocated a number of staff from neighbouring countries in the Middle East from other Citizenship and Immigration Canada bureaus to Cairo.

At the same time, because of the instability in Cairo itself, particularly right in the centre in the government sector in which is situated the Canadian Chancery, where I am sure my friend from Toronto Centre was during his recent visit, we have had to suspend a number of our operations at the Canadian Chancery since January 27 to minimize the risk posed to our locally engaged staff. About 80% of those working at the CIC bureau are locally engaged staff, all of

whom I met with 18 months ago. They are very loyal servants of Canada. We wish them well. However, for the short-term we do not anticipate to be able to provide the same level of normal service for visas or permanent residency applications there.

When the situation stabilizes and allows us to go back to work, we will certainly do everything we can to respond to urgent requests from people who are emerging from the current situation.

We all hope that the relative instability does not descend into further violence or conflict. We all hope that the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Egyptian people, which reflect the universal longing for self-government, for respect for human dignity and for freedom of conscience and religion, are the ultimate outcomes in a stable Egyptian government that reflects fundamental human values.

I would like to emphasize the importance and my particular anxiety about the situation of minority communities in Egypt.

• (2230)

[Translation]

We know that Egypt is not a homogenous country. It is a diverse country with religious and ethnic traditions that go back centuries, at least. For example, Egypt's Christian community goes back to the beginning of the first century.

Recently, terrorist attacks and crime have been directed at the Coptic Orthodox community in particular. And this has been motivated and inspired by a certain type of extremism, so-called Salafist extremism, or by a form of Islamism known as Wahhabism.

That is worrying because in an unstable and unsafe situation, we want to be sure that the rights and safety of vulnerable people, particularly those from vulnerable minorities, are protected.

[English]

I would really like to emphasize our hope, and I am sure it is shared by the vast majority of Egyptians, that those vulnerable minority communities are not subjected to violence, harassment, persecution because, let us be honest. Certain minority communities in Egypt, including the Coptic Christian Orthodox community, have faced pressure. They have faced a double standard. Some people have faced in their day-to-day lives a certain degree of unjust discrimination from civil society and, I would argue, certain policies that could be characterized as persecution from organs of the state. In particular, I refer to the unwillingness of the regime to grant permits to build churches, or even repair churches. These constraints on religious freedom often lead to conflict points.

Behind all of that, we have the presence of a small but potentially deadly movement of Salafist Islamists who hate those who they condemn because of their religious convictions and, as we saw tragically on New Year's Eve in Alexandria, who even seek their death, where 23, I believe, innocent civilians were murdered by a terrorist suicide bomber. Similarly, a year before that, on Coptic Christmas Eve, some six innocent civilians were killed at Nag Hammadi. These incidents were preceded 10 years ago by the terrible massacre at El Kosheh.

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One of the things that concerns me is that in none of these incidents have there been any successful convictions of the perpetrators. This causes vulnerable communities to believe that the justice system is not entirely just in that country in dealing with extremists, perhaps because some of those extremists have a certain degree of political support more broadly. I would characterize the incarnation of that political support as being the Muslim Brotherhood.

I know that we see in the media coverage and in some of the debates in western liberal democracies a great deal of enthusiasm and almost euphoria about the democratic spirit we see being exhibited on the streets of Egypt. To some extent I share that. We all hope that will be channelled in very positive directions, but we must not be naive. We must not forget that there are people, including some associated with the political organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, one of whose founders, Ayman Al-Zawahri, is the number two in command to Sheikh Osama bin Laden, the leader of the international al-Qaeda network. This is a very serious issue. It is serious for our own security. It is serious for the regional security in the Middle East. It is particularly serious for religious minorities who in the eyes of these Salifist Islamist extremists are kafirs, infidels, who do not enjoy the sanctity of human life. Rather, they are seen as people who can legitimately be targeted for violence and for, in fact, murder.

I raise this as a cautionary note. I think this is why we have heard the Prime Minister say it is our government's hope that while the situation will develop toward a democratic form of government that fully reflects the aspirations of the Egyptian people, that it will do so while protecting the rights of these minority communities. Let us be clear. Maybe this is so obvious we do not need to state it, but it should be stated. Democracy is not simply a system of majority rule. A tyranny of the majority over vulnerable minorities is not a democracy at all. Rather, democracy is a system of government predicated on the inviolable dignity of the human person. It is from that dignity that we derive our right to govern ourselves through democratic processes.

● (2235)

The moment that a majority denies fundamental rights such as the freedom of conscience, freedom of religion or of course the first right, the right to life, as has happened to religious minorities in Egypt, then one could say that it ceases to be democratic or has a certainly impaired democratic character.

Let us be careful. Let us be careful to ensure that we use the good offices of Canada, the democratic west more generally, to work with whatever institutions of civil society may exist in Egypt and with legitimate opposition parties in that country to create a reformed constitutional order of a democratic character which will not tolerate the violation of the rights of religious minorities in general and, I would argue the most vulnerable of them in Egypt in particular, the Coptic Orthodox community.

I have met with Pope Shenouda both here in Canada and in Cairo. I have discussed these matters with him and with other leaders, both lay and clerical, of his community. Understandably, they feel great anxiety and great pressure because of the situation they see in certain aspects of the current developments in Egypt, such as the activity of

the Muslim Brotherhood. Let there be no doubt, we have the claim by the Muslim Brotherhood that it has renounced violence and is a mainstream organization willing to participate in democratic life. On the other hand, that does not reflect the historical, ideological or theological roots of that movement. There can be no denying the fact that there is a connection between the fundamental ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood and, at the extreme edge, those who are inspired by those ideas sometimes to commit acts of violence. We continue to be very concerned about that.

Of course it is not for Canada or Canadians to dictate the choices the Egyptian people make as they, we hope, practice their right to self-government. However, we do have a role to play, and we have played a role. There have been many ongoing projects that Canada has supported in Egypt to build stable institutions of civil society.

For example, when I was in Egypt, I announced on behalf of the Minister of International Cooperation certain projects to support young and women entrepreneurs to develop external trade markets for their goods. That is one of dozens of examples.

Similarly, we have sought to promote respectful dialogue within institutions of civil society, between the Muslim and Christian communities and different factions of both of those communities. As well, we have consistently called upon the Egyptian government to respect and protect the rights of vulnerable minorities, including religious communities. We will continue to do so regardless of who the president of Egypt is. We will continue as a government to prioritize this issue of protection of the rights of vulnerable minorities not only in Egypt but in the broader region.

Let us face it, those who set off the bomb in Alexandria at All Saints Church on New Year's Eve 2010, those who shot innocent civilians coming out of a church in Nag Hammadi on Christmas Eve 2010, those who targeted civilians at El Kosheh and those who commit similar acts on an individual basis in Egypt share a similar hateful, extreme, dangerous, violent and destabilizing ideology as in other countries in that region. This of course is one of the most significant challenges that we face in the world today. How can we as a country more effectively intervene as a voice for the voiceless, for the vulnerable?

Next week, for example, I will be welcoming to Ottawa Minister Shahbaz Bhatti, the minister of minority communities for the government of Pakistan, who is the first Christian in the Pakistani government.

● (2240)

He has seen members of vulnerable communities in his country attacked, murdered, tortured, persecuted, be they Ahmadiyya Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Catholics or Protestants. They were attacked by people who shared the same hateful ideology of those who have committed similar acts in Egypt.

It concerns me that some of those people are prowling the streets of Cairo and Alexandria as we speak. It is our hope that the emerging democratic forces will, as a very first order of business, exclude from participation in a government those who would tolerate or excuse those attitudes.

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More generally, I would say that with the broader strategic situation in the region, it is certainly my hope that a future Egyptian government would realize that it has a profound interest in maintaining a peaceful coexistence with the democratic Jewish state of Israel. It is not in the interests of the Egyptian people, regardless of who governs them, to return to the state of war, of uncertainty, instability and violence that plagued Egypt's relationship with Israel from 1949 until 1976.

I am concerned that the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in a prospective future Egyptian government would be a destabilizing influence. There can be no doubt that organization shares certain ideas and connections with such organizations as the Party of God, the Hezbollah in Lebanon, which now is, sadly, a key part of the government of that country, and the organization Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip bordering Egypt.

With the apparent increasing influence of Hezbollah with the rejectionism and extremism of Hamas, with the continued instability of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it is certainly our hope that the Egyptian people will choose wisely in the coming days and months, will choose to embrace the dignity of a great and ancient civilization and reject those who would drag that country into a downward spiral of violence and extremism.

I certainly join with all of my colleagues in hoping for the best possible outcome and commit myself to play whatever role I can in this Parliament and government to offer Canada's assistance in that direction.

• (2245)

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the minister's intervention, as always, is a thoughtful and lively one that expresses so very clearly a profound point of view, which I think in most respects is very widely shared in the House and in the country.

My question will be remarkably parallel to some of the ones I have asked other members of the government.

I find it interesting that the government has identified a clear priority for Canadian foreign policy, the Prime Minister stating very clearly that the promotion of democracy and human rights is a clear priority for Canada, all over the world and in particular now in the Middle East. This comment was repeated by the President of the Treasury Board and by the chairman of the foreign affairs committee.

I plead with the minister, and I know a little about this, when we look at where there are significant gaps in how we actually invest through DFAIT and through CIDA, what will be found is that the great gap now is in this area of governance and in this area of democracy promotion.

I will give the minister one very practical example. In my previous life I was involved in a series of initiatives in Iraq, where the Forum of Federations was working with the national assembly of Iraq and dealing with the question of its constitution, dealing with federalism, but, generally speaking, dealing with how to create a better system of governance in Iraq.

Funding for any project involving governance in Iraq was cut off. It was not cut off for ideological reasons, for whatever. I am not

alleging any political interference. It was cut off because there had been a bureaucratic decision that governance was no longer a priority. CIDA no longer did governance.

My colleague from London can share the same experience with respect to Sudan. When we go to Sudan, the people who are on the ground in southern Sudan are begging for assistance on governance. It is a real challenge. We see this again. We are going to be talking to people in Pakistan. The people in Pakistan are looking for assistance in governance, which looks at federal structures, pluralism, diversity. The government is gladly supporting the Aga Khan Foundation in the establishment of the Centre for Pluralism, which is a great thing.

However, I would ask the minister, in quite a non-partisan spirit, with his colleagues, to have another look at this question of how we do the interventions on democracy. I appreciate his comments today. They were Burkian, thoughtful and engaging as always. In listening to the comments of the President of the Treasury Board, while I did not agree with all of the conclusions he reached, when he said that we needed to match our passion for freedom with our sense of historical experience, I spent several years writing a book on that very subject so I agree entirely with that spirit.

I really reach across the House and say for the minister that I would desperately like us to be able to get a point where we could in fact make a common move on the question of democratic governance.

• (2250)

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Toronto Centre for his typically thoughtful intervention with which I would like to associate myself. I understand the member has recently published a book on the promotion of democratic principles and governance. I apologize that I have not had a chance to read it yet, but it is in my reading file. It is a very slim book, so it should not take too long.

Although the member makes thoughtful points, I would argue that we do have various programs in the field around the world to support democratic development. I have many friends who have been involved in those projects through the support of other governments, such as the National Endowment for Democracy in the United States, the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, the Westminster Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. We know of many excellent examples.

I know that the foreign affairs committee of this place conducted a very thoughtful and thorough study of programs of this nature. I would underscore that the Conservative Party included in its platform in the last general election a commitment to the creation of a democracy project to advance democratic values around the world and appointed Tom Axworthy, who has been a strong champion of this concept as chairman of an advisory committee.

I believe that in principle we are of one accord on this objective of a greater Canadian role in democratic development. We have a unique role to play because we do not carry the stigma that our friends to the south do in some parts of the world. We do not carry the post-colonial baggage that our European allies do. We have a unique role that we can play and ought to play.

At the same time, for whoever sits on this side of the House, there is the very prosaic reality of a challenging fiscal situation. Every developed country is facing that. I do not know of any democratic country that is expanding efforts in these or similar areas as they deal with some very serious fiscal challenges, and we cannot ignore that. We can throw around rhetorical barbs but the reality is that every advanced economy in the world is facing a significant deficit and new investments in programming areas like this are simply difficult to manage at such a time of constraint.

I think the larger point raised by the member for Toronto Centre is entirely well taken. I hope that we can continue working toward the noble objective of a deeper, broader Canadian participation in democracy promotion programming around the world.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I did not hear the minister's whole speech so he may have covered what I am going to ask. I wonder if he has addressed immigration in preparation of a poor outcome if a group in leadership targets a particular minority. I will not make any suggestions.

First, what would the normal process be as these types of world crises occur where there may be an influx of refugees or requests for refugee status?

Second, has the minister thought about, in this particular case, any preparation for that possibility?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Madam Speaker, as I said, when our embassy is able to go fully back to work we will assess whether there are urgent cases in need of prioritizing. An example would be people who have been victims of violence. Let us say a Canadian citizen has a relative who has made application for family sponsorship and the

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relative had been subject to violence or is in some form of particular risk. In such cases, we would typically give priority consideration to those applications and accelerate them.

We have done that on a wide-scale basis in the wake of large natural disasters, such as the southeast Asian tsunami, the Pakistani earthquake, the Chinese earthquake in Sichuan, as well as the more recent typhoons in the Philippines. We have sometimes created special programs and additional resources to accelerate processing of applications, for example, family sponsorship in those cases.

This is a little different because the definition of a refugee in both our law and in international law is someone who has fled his or her country because of a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of religion, political opinion, gender, ethnicity, et cetera. People who might be on one side or the other of the political conflict in Egypt, but who are still in Egypt, are not considered refugees under our law. It is only if they flee and, if they were to flee in significant numbers, typically we would work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other countries to seek a durable settlement or solution for them. However, that is very hypothetical and I, frankly, hope that it does not come to that in Egypt, and I do not believe that it will

● (2255)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** There being no further members rising for debate, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:56 p.m.)







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