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Friday, September 30, 2011

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 30, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

PREVENTING HUMAN SMUGGLERS FROM ABUSING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM ACT

The House resumed from September 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act and the Marine Transportation Security Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was asked to speak this morning regarding Bill C-4, which would prevent human smugglers from abusing Canada's immigration system. I am pleased to rise this morning to say how much I strongly oppose this bill.

I will start by saying that this bill makes it even more clear that we have a repressive, backwards and irresponsible government that is severely lacking in humanity. I must say that this is not very surprising to me, as this bill is simply one more example, among many others. Once again, the government wants to make a disadvantaged segment of the population suffer, for unknown reasons, instead of lending these people a hand at a time when they need it most.

I am strongly opposed to this bill because every day, in my riding, refugees and immigrants come to us for help. They ask for only one thing: to live in this country with dignity; to have a second chance. With this bill, they will not get that second chance. This bill authorizes an officer or the minister to refuse to consider applications for permanent residence. How can we grant this power to an individual when the applicant may be in danger? What criteria will the officer or the minister use? Will they refuse applications based on how they are feeling that day? This bill would give them the power to do so.

I do not think that the government understands that being in power means making decisions for the well-being of the entire population, by consulting the people and listening to their needs and by avoiding

randomly and unfairly punishing people who are simply seeking refuge. Being in power does not mean authorizing oneself to single-handedly make a decision that could have a huge impact on the lives of several people or even several families. This bill would require some individuals to report to an immigration officer and to respond to all of his questions for no real reason. That is discrimination, pure and simple.

How can we convince people to establish themselves here if we treat them as detainees as soon as they arrive, without knowing the full story, and without even knowing why they chose Canada? Under this bill, claimants, including children, will automatically be detained when they arrive or at the moment they are designated. How can the government violate international rules that were created for the well-being of all communities? This would leave the door open for indefinite or arbitrary detentions. Where are we headed? Where is our country headed? It is a great place to live, a place where immigrants are welcome and where we extend a helping hand to refugees so that they can see a bit of light at the end of the tunnel.

Under this bill, a designated person cannot apply for permanent residency for five years. Five years. Then, if the person breaches any of the conditions imposed, this period can be extended by five or six years. A person could wait more than five years to see their family members who remained overseas. In addition, designated persons are prohibited from leaving the country until they receive permanent resident status. Not only are they kept from bringing their families to Canada, but they are also prohibited from going to visit them. What has happened to the family values that we have always defended here? Can someone tell me? Does the government have this little respect for the family unit, the first community where a human being grows and flourishes? The minister must not know what it is like to be separated from loved ones for five years; otherwise, he would not be trying to impose such rules.

This bill would punish refugees or those trying to help them instead of punishing the criminals—the smugglers and traffickers. This proposed refugee process is arbitrary and completely discriminatory.

Government Orders

A few months ago, Parliament passed balanced legislation concerning refugees. It would make a lot more sense to simply enforce that legislation better, instead of treating these people like criminals, when they simply need a helping hand. Furthermore, in Australia, similar laws met with opposition from Amnesty International, which started a campaign to condemn the misinformation surrounding refugees who arrive by boat. This government is alienating the international community and severely damaging our reputation. We have a responsibility towards refugees. We do not have the right to treat them this way.

• (1010)

We in the NDP recognize this responsibility, unlike the Conservatives, who want to evade it. This approach flies in the face of our country's commitments under the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is not the right legislation to put an end to human trafficking.

Do we want to be recognized as the country where refugees are discriminated against? Where no one wants to go and settle for fear of being detained and treated like a criminal? Where people, if they choose to live here, risk having to go without seeing their loved ones for over five years?

We are losing our values of openness, tolerance, giving, social justice and equality. Many groups strongly oppose this bill. The Canadian Council for Refugees completely rejects this bill. Amnesty International Canada said the bill would lead to serious violations of the rights of refugees. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association says these measures are simply not necessary. Why would we apply measures that are not necessary? The Canadian Bar Association says that this bill violates Canada's international obligations regarding the treatment of persons seeking protection. As I was saying earlier, we have a responsibility to refugees and the government is refusing to treat refugees fairly.

A group of experts from the Centre for Refugee Studies has described this bill as draconian. I think these groups know what they are talking about. Earlier I was saying that we need to listen to the concerns of the people. Here we have flagrant examples of a government doing exactly the opposite. This bill could violate a number of legal provisions, including those pertaining to equality before the law and arbitrary detention. Bill C-4 is contrary to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

As I was saying earlier, we are tarnishing our international reputation and that is serious.

I will say again: I am strongly opposed to this bill because we have a responsibility to refugees. The government does not have all the rights. No. It would be a serious mistake to ignore these responsibilities in the name of security, especially when we consider that this bill will not in any way—not in any way—stop human trafficking.

I welcome any questions my colleagues might have.

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for her very passionate and clear speech on the issues in this bill.

My colleague mentioned that a number of organizations are opposed to the bill because it infringes on the rights of refugees. It is well known that my parents came from Vietnam, and many Vietnamese people have arrived by boat. Could my colleague talk about the repercussions of this bill for refugees who seek asylum in Canada?

• (1015)

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Some refugees who arrive by boat already need someone to lend a hand, they need help, and they need to see the light at the end of the tunnel. These people will arrive here and be detained, even the children.

It is very traumatic psychologically for a child to be detained for no real reason upon his arrival. I also believe that refugees who arrive here will not be guilty of any crimes. They will not have done any human trafficking or anything wrong. They are certainly not smugglers. They will arrive here looking for help and hoping for a second chance, but they will not get it. I believe they will want to go elsewhere, and with just cause.

[*English*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite described the government members in the House as repressive and deeply lacking in humanity.

Rather than hurl insults at hon. members in the House, perhaps she could tell us what she would say to the families across the country who want to keep their streets, families and communities safe and free from danger.

I remind the member that the bill is called the “Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act”.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin: Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank my colleague for the question.

As I was saying, my aim was not to insult members of the government party or anyone else. I merely wanted to present the facts, as these are the facts. I do not believe that we can jeopardize the rights of refugees in the name of security. As I was saying as well, this bill will in no way prevent human trafficking, and thus does not provide a solution to that problem. The solution is to enforce the existing law on human trafficking. That is the solution we need here.

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot just explained very clearly, Bill C-4 is very restrictive, particularly when it comes to privileges and to the image that Canada has traditionally portrayed to other countries of the world.

Government Orders

I am somewhat troubled when I try to understand why the Conservative members want to once again introduce this bill and ignore the amendments that we, the members of the NDP and the members of the Liberal Party, are proposing. It is important to note the direct impacts of passing such a bill, such as the violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the violation of international treaties. I have difficulty imagining how anyone would want to pass this omnibus bill, which was already debated in the previous parliament as Bill C-49, if I am not mistaken. Many debates were held, many witnesses were heard and many facts were put on the table in this regard. The bill was not passed. However, the Conservatives are once again trying to pass this odious bill.

This is even more surprising since Canada will find itself in a difficult position with regard to international treaties if, in the end, this bill is passed as is. The government just wants to do what Australia did and it is very difficult to understand those objectives.

On top of all this, it is very worrisome to see that there will be fairly serious consequences if immigration officers are given more power. Many rights and liberties will be violated. One major problem involves the discrimination that people who are deemed to be designated claimants will face. They will not have any rights. What is even more worrisome is that these people will basically be put in prison for at least a year. This completely violates the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

The New Democratic caucus therefore has serious concerns about passing this bill, as introduced by the Conservatives. We stand firm. We want this bill to be amended and we want it to give some reprieve—to ensure that everyone in need—everyone who is a true refugee—is treated equally. It is important to remember that our proposals are in no way meant to be weak or condescending toward criminals or those who, for political purposes, use certain methods of transportation to transport refugees. In my opinion, immigration officers are trained and are capable of determining and knowing who the real bad guys are. The problem with this bill is that, in reality, we are lumping everyone into the same category.

•(1020)

And that is not acceptable.

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech on the problems that exist in Bill C-4. He said that certain aspects of the bill are contrary to the law. This bill flies in the face of international conventions and the rights guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on this, and I would also like him to explain the consequences this bill would have on Canada's international reputation.

Mr. José Nunez-Melo: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question.

Everyone here has heard all about these unacceptable violations, specifically the violations of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When the charter was created, Canada gained respect in the eyes of the world and all the nations around the globe. Canada set an example and many countries have drawn inspiration from it. But everyone should be questioning the true objectives of this bill, as it now stands, because it violates every international convention, specifically those related to children. Putting children in jail is

unbelievable; it is unheard of, the world over. Even countries ruled by dictators would not be able to propose a similar bill.

•(1025)

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his response.

Could he also explain the impact this bill might have on Canada's reputation? He spoke about the fact that this bill is an attack on children's rights. The government says that this bill targets smugglers—that is what is written in the title—but the hon. member raised the point that it will also attack the rights of refugees. Could the hon. member speak about the impact this bill will have on the rights of refugees and on Canada's international reputation?

Mr. José Nunez-Melo: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

The topic of children is one that affects us all. Long ago, the ancestors of our wonderful nation of Canada built a reasonable immigration system, able to support the productive force and workers. The children of some immigrants integrate better than their parents. If the bill is implemented as it stands now, there will be some serious and unfortunately very restrictive consequences for the intellectual and physical development of the children.

The hon. members from the Conservative Party should agree to the amendments proposed by the Liberal and NDP caucuses, to ensure that we are treating children humanely and that the bill targets human smugglers more directly.

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-4 attacks refugees. It has no place in Canada because it proposes measures that are completely unacceptable. Some provisions of the bill respect neither the charter nor Canada's international human rights obligations. It is a discriminatory bill because it penalizes refugees for their method of arrival. It reintroduces provisions from Bill C-49 from the previous parliament, which was widely condemned by the community across the country.

This bill was previously rejected by all the opposition parties in Parliament. Many legal experts have said that it violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and international law. The government is telling us that it wants to target the smugglers, but is it really necessary to risk our reputation within the international community? Is it really necessary to violate the constitutional and international rights of refugees? We deplore the reintroduction of the anti-refugee legislation.

This bill allows the minister to order the detention not only of the asylum seekers, but also of their children, even if our security is not at risk and the detainees are not a threat. The bill allows the minister to order the detention and imprisonment of persons seeking refugee status.

Government Orders

It is a government's duty to take responsible measures to deter human trafficking. It is Canada's duty to take clear and transparent measures to put an end to dangerous and abusive behaviour. We must take measures to end the behaviour of criminals, in other words, smugglers, who violate the rights of refugees and the vulnerable. We agree with putting an end to all that, but Bill C-4 targets the refugees and not the smugglers.

Canada is committed to protecting refugees and implementing measures that respect the rights of refugees and immigrants. But now we are increasing the burdens on our refugees. With regard to the former version of this bill, Alex Neve, of Amnesty International, recently said:

Bill C-49 does not get it right in drawing the line between tackling crime and upholding rights. It goes after smugglers, in large part, by punishing the individuals who turn to them—in desperation—for assistance. Those provisions of the Bill that are discriminatory and will lead to human rights violations must be withdrawn.

I believe Mr. Neve is still right.

The bill creates a second class of refugees. Even people whose refugee status has been confirmed cannot obtain travel documents or file an application for permanent residence for five years. These provisions also violate the international convention, which requires countries to issue travel documents.

The bill will result in indefinite detentions, and a designated person will not be able to submit an application for permanent residence until five years have elapsed. Why such a long time? This measure applies even if the person's refugee status in Canada is confirmed. This bill will prevent refugees who have been duly accepted from being reunited with their families and spouses. It will certainly not help the integration of refugees into our society. This bill seems very difficult to justify.

● (1030)

In addition, as long as designated claimants do not have permanent resident status, they will be deprived of the right to travel outside the country. This provision of the bill appears to violate article 28 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The bill contains discriminatory provisions. Designated claimants cannot appeal decisions regarding their claims to the Refugee Appeal Division. Since when does Canada fail to abide by its international commitments? Since when does Canada deny the right of appeal?

We have to wonder. Why do the provisions of this bill appear to violate the provisions of refugee conventions and even those of the charter? The bill imposes mandatory imprisonment on groups of refugee claimants, including children, despite the fact that these same individuals have not given us any reason to believe that they represent any sort of danger or threat. The minister will even have the power to decide to imprison any refugee claimant upon arrival if there is even the slightest suspicion of smuggling. The minister will also have the right to imprison refugee claimants simply because their identity cannot be established in a timely manner.

As hon. members know, refugees are often fleeing a war zone, a place where circumstances are less than ideal. It is difficult to justify placing additional burdens on these people. It seems as though the legislation even violates the international Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which prohibits the imposition of penalties on

refugees fleeing persecution on account of their illegal entry. Human smuggling is a serious problem. Resources and co-operation with foreign governments are required to deal with smugglers. However, human smuggling does not justify the violation of constitutional and international rights.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association wrote to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism to express its concerns about this bill. The president of the Canadian Council for Refugees, Wanda Yamamoto, has said, "We are celebrating this year the 60th anniversary of the refugee convention, but instead of honouring this treaty, the government is proposing to violate it." She went on to say, "Let us not forget that the convention was adopted because many countries, including Canada, had closed their doors on Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis, and we said 'Never again!'".

I completely agree with her. After the second world war, the international community went through a period of reflection. Together, we decided that we never wanted to violate refugees' rights ever again. The ship filled with Jewish refugees that had travelled around the world was denied entry to Canada and many other countries. They were forced to return to Germany and in the end, suffered the same fate as so many of their fellow Jewish citizens under the Nazi regime: they were killed.

The measures being proposed here today will mean that people who want to come to Canada, which has been an internationally-recognized safe haven, will no longer believe that to be true. Where will these people go? Will they be forced to stay in their country? Passing this legislation could lead them to their deaths. Is that not disturbing? It seems very clear that the bill currently before us does very little to deter smugglers. One has to wonder why the government is so intent on attacking refugees and their children. The government must know that we already have legislation to deal with smugglers and traffickers. They already face life imprisonment and fines up to \$1 million.

If the Conservatives want to discuss the existing deterrent effect, let us talk about it. Why are they so intent on attacking refugees? Our commitments mean that we cannot harm them gratuitously. Bill C-4 punishes refugees.

● (1035)

[English]

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with some interest to several speeches by our NDP colleagues today. A few moments ago, one of them said this bill was repressive, backward and oppressive, referring to the government that way. This member now claims that we would be oppressing refugees by this bill. He brought up the issue of the *St. Louis* and the tragedy of the Jewish refugees fleeing Hamburg who came to our coast and were turned back.

I have actually met some of those survivors, there were a few. I can assure members that none of them would be seeking to go back for a vacation in the land they had supposedly fled. Refugees are not refugees because a smuggler says they are. We have the ability to determine genuine refugee status in this country.

Government Orders

This bill would crack down on the smugglers. It would actually bring some accountability and increase our ability to prosecute smugglers, mandatory minimum prison sentences for convicted smugglers, and it would hold the shipowners to account. It would provide for a maximum of one year of detention, so that legitimate refugee status could be determined by our very generous provisions in our country. Refugees are very well looked after in this country. It would prevent abuse of our system and, frankly, it would ensure that health benefits of refugees do not exceed those of Canadians themselves who support these—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, the health of our newcomers is certainly topmost in our interest. We certainly want to ensure that all people who come to Canada are welcomed. In large measure I agree with him that when somebody comes to this country, we need to treat them well. We need to give them access to health care. We certainly do not need to imprison them. I do not think that sending the refugee to prison would in any way stop the smuggler from trying to make a profit off of people's misery.

• (1040)

Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again, I see the government lacking vision and even effort.

Being a father myself, I do not understand what I am supposed to tell my son when I see this happen. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is supposed to be for everybody in this land. Yet, again, with a lack of effort, the legislation that is being brought forward is very broad and does not attach itself to specifics. There is exclusion.

[*Translation*]

The roots of this country have touched the soil of every nation on the planet and everyone should be welcome here. We should not be resorting to repression. The charter is far-reaching, and we send our military around the world to say that this charter must exist. We encourage democracy and yet, here at home, we are starting to exclude people.

Perhaps the hon. member has a comment to add about this.

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member.

The rights bestowed on us by the Canadian charter are clearly rights that we value. They are upheld by the Supreme Court and they belong to us all. We cannot deny the rights of refugees just because we think that we will control smugglers by targeting refugees. That is backwards. It is the opposite of what we should be doing.

To get to the root of Canada's smuggling problem, we need to target smugglers. The bill before us does not seem to do that. Instead, it targets refugees who already bear a heavy burden. Constitutional rights exist in Canada. I have a hard time seeing how the bill before us today could do anything to help control smuggling, which is a real problem. If the government wants to table a bill that actually deals with smugglers, I am completely open to discussing it. However, the fact that we are talking about targeting refugees is something quite surprising and, I feel, something that goes against our international law agreements.

[*English*]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to rise and speak to Bill C-4 because we need evidence-based solutions to address human smuggling. Unfortunately, this backward legislation targets legitimate refugee claimants and not the real criminals: human smugglers.

It was 60 years ago that the government expressed its solidarity with refugees by signing the 1951 refugee convention, and 2011 is a special commemorative year. The UN refugee agency is calling on the public to reaffirm its support for refugees. It is calling on governments to show humanity and respect for human rights and refugee rights.

The UN has developed the “1 is too many” campaign to strengthen global protection in this anniversary year. The “1 is too many” campaign concentrates on the central tag line: one refugee without hope is too many.

There is a portfolio of other tag lines such as: one family forced to flee is too many; one refugee without hope is too many; one refugee returned to danger is too many; one refugee longing for home is too many; one child without a nationality is too many; one family without shelter is too many; one refugee denied a safe haven is too many; one child growing up in a camp is too many; one family torn apart by war is too many; one girl raped at gun point is too many; and it goes on.

As legislators we must all ask ourselves, if our family was in danger, our lives threatened by the government that is supposed to protect us, what would we do and how would we want the world to respond?

Each one of us should remember how many of us are children or descendants of immigrants. Each one of us should consider the economic, cultural and social benefits Canada has gained by accepting immigrants and refugees to our country. We must all remember our long-standing dedication to humanitarian values and human rights.

Instead of the government reaffirming Canada's commitment to protect refugees in this anniversary year, the government is fearmongering, demonizing, and punishing refugees through its treatment of asylum seekers and through its proposed legislation.

I have the honour of representing Etobicoke North, which is one of the most diverse ridings in the country. Each week we hear from desperate families, such as: a sister trying to bring family from Africa because her brother is hiding in a bush afraid of political persecution; an uncle giving up his job and leaving family in Toronto to rescue three orphan nieces in India.

Government Orders

During the humanitarian disaster in Sri Lanka, I heard daily from my Tamil community. One man came into my constituency office and wrote down the names of 100 family members who were missing and he did not know whether they were alive or dead. Each weekend during the humanitarian crisis I met with my Tamil community for four months.

Bill C-4 was originally introduced in Parliament by the government in October 2010 as Bill C-49 and it was reintroduced in June 2011 in the new parliamentary session. If the bill is approved by Parliament, it will make significant changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, affecting the way refugee claimants are treated in Canada.

The government claims that the bill is about stopping smugglers who are bringing people illegally into Canada. However, the bill focuses on punishing the people they are smuggling, including refugees who need to get to Canada to save their lives.

All of Canada's laws must respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees basic rights. Several aspects of Bill C-4 likely do not respect the charter. For example, Bill C-4 says that designated persons are detained for one year without review.

● (1045)

The Supreme Court of Canada has recently clearly stated that detention without review for long periods is contrary to the charter. If Bill C-4 is approved by Parliament, it could be challenged in the courts and the courts would probably decide that some parts of the bill are illegal because they do not respect the charter. Unfortunately, while the courts are deciding the case, refugees would suffer in detention.

Canadian laws must also respect international human rights conventions that Canada has signed. These include the convention relating to the status of refugees and the convention on the rights of the child. Many parts of Bill C-4 do not respect one or more international conventions. If Bill C-4 is passed, Canada would therefore be failing in some of its international obligations.

The following are examples of the ways in which Bill C-4 violates human rights protected by international law.

Punishing refugees for illegal entry. The refugees convention says in article 31 that governments must not impose penalties on refugees for illegal entry. However, Bill C-4 does exactly this by punishing designated persons in various ways, including by detaining them.

With regard to arbitrary detention, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights says that governments must not detain anyone arbitrarily. Arbitrary detention is detention without the proper legal protections; for example, detaining people without giving them the possibility of having a review of their detention by an independent judge. Bill C-4 does exactly this by saying that designated persons must be detained without possibility of review for one year.

With regard to separation of families, various international conventions say that governments must protect the rights of families to be united but Bill C-4 does the opposite by denying designated refugees the right, for five years, to apply to reunite with their children overseas.

With regard to the best interests of the child, the Convention on the Rights of the Child says in article 3 that governments must take into consideration the best interests of any child affected by a decision. However, under Bill C-4, some children could be deported from Canada without any consideration of their best interests and application on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Bill C-4 is deeply unfair to refugees. It fails to honour obligations under Canadian and international law. It deprives individual cases from the independent review that justice requires. It would involve huge costs in unnecessary detention. Australia tried punishing refugees to deter them. It did not work.

At the same time, Bill C-4 would do nothing to prevent human smuggling. More laws would not catch the smugglers who are overseas. Mandatory minimum sentences have been shown not to work as deterrents. Smuggling, under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, is already punishable. The reality is that under Bill C-4 refugees would be victimized three times: first by their persecutors; second by the smugglers; and finally by Canada.

The reality is that most refugees want to go home but simply cannot return safely. We should admire and honour their courage and determination as they strive to pick up the pieces and start over, and we should recognize the richness and diversity they bring to Canada.

I would like to close by reminding us all that many refugees have made a difference and distinguished themselves on the world stage: actress and singer Marlene Dietrich; physicist Albert Einstein; and our own Michaëlle Jean. Finally, one refugee without schooling is too many. One refugee child behind bars is too many.

● (1050)

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her presentation. I have a couple of questions.

Basically, the bill says it is preventing human smugglers from abusing Canada's immigration system act. We have a member of the government saying that this will make streets safer. What is the member's opinion regarding whether the bill will make streets safer and who will be affected by it? Is it the smugglers or the refugees?

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, It is important for people to understand that the bill has been harshly criticized because of what it would do to refugees. Refugee advocates denounce the bill as an attack on refugee rights. In particular, critics say that the bill contravenes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canada's obligation under the UN Convention on Refugees.

Statements by Members

Janet Dench, the executive director of the Canadian Council for Refugees, says:

It is difficult to understand why the government would be proposing to bring this legislation back without change when it has been so widely condemned by legal experts, is clearly a violation of our charter and clearly in violation of international standards of human rights. There is no ambiguity about this. It does not conform to our international legal obligations.

She goes on to say:

—refugees...would be detained for up to a year, and even those accepted as refugees would be held in suspended animation for five years without any right to travel, to reunify with family or get on with their lives.

• (1055)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member agree that one of the prime responsibilities of any government is to ensure that its borders are protected and when its sovereignty is challenged, that its various agencies have the ability to protect its sovereignty?

However, for those who seek asylum in Canada, when they arrive in the fashion that the bill would seek to address, our authorities need the ability to not only take care of the health and welfare of those people on the boats, but they also need the ability to ensure they are who they say they are, that we can check on who they are and can use our international partners to ensure that nobody who should not be in Canada does not arrive here. Surely the hon. member can appreciate the need to do that.

I keep hearing the Liberals and the members of the NDP say how the bill would seek to jail asylum seekers. They seem to want it both ways. Often they talk about how great our forces are. Many of the people who came to Canada on the boat in the last round now live in my riding. They are living in hiding, in fear of the people to whom they owe money.

Is that the type of system that member wants to continue to support, or would she support a system that goes after the people who illegally bring these people to Canada and force them into a life of hiding in Canada?

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that our sovereignty is not under attack.

It is important for people to understand that refugees are often classified unfairly. Refugees flee their country, not for economic gain but to escape persecution, the threat of imprisonment and even threats to their lives. They need a safe haven where they can recover from mental and physical trauma and rebuild their hopes for a better future.

Intolerance is often at the root of internal displacement and it is also present in some of the countries to which refugees flee.

It is also important to point out that the minister can designate a group as an irregular arrival, which happened, for example, with the MV *Sun Sea* that arrived in British Columbia.

However, the bill does not say that the refugee claimants must have arrived by boat in order to be designated. A group could be designated even if there were no smuggling involved. Once a group is designated, everyone in the group is punished. The bill creates two classes of refugees, with one class treated worse than the other.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to join so many voices in opposition to Bill C-4.

It is a bit of a déjà vu, having been part of the team in the last parliamentary session that stood against Bill C-49. It is interesting to note that, while all opposition parties joined to oppose that bill, we are in the new Parliament assuming, yet again, that Canadians want this kind of legislation.

As we have heard, Bill C-4 is deeply flawed. Not only is it deeply flawed, but it also goes against the very image of Canada that we have built over decades, an image that Canada is welcoming, that it is inclusive, that it is open to not only the diversity of people from around the world, but also to the diversity of people who must often escape difficult situations, whether they come from backgrounds of poverty, or racial persecution or discrimination in their countries.

Many of these trends are ones that we, as Canadians, have responded to over the years.

I see my time is up. I look forward to standing once again in opposition to Bill C-4 at a later time.

The Speaker: The hon. member will have eight and a half minutes left to conclude her remarks when the bill is next debated, but right now we will move on to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

INNOVATION CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the St. Thomas Innovation Centre for Entrepreneurs, or ICE, is a cool example of a mixed use business incubator. ICE offers clients just the right mix of counselling, mentoring, administrative support and professional location to help businesses grow and succeed.

Visiting the centre, I discussed progress with some of the business start-ups, including computer specialists, a fastener company, people with home health care expertise and a great customer service entrepreneur in the home maintenance field, sharing great ideas with me and with each other. This type of business start-up and growth interaction can only take place when under one roof.

The collaboration of local economic development agencies, the Elgin Business Resource Centre and the generous help of local sponsors have made jobs happen.

Yes, it starts with passionate people with an idea. When we add some expertise and mentorship and include a great location like ICE, a perfect concoction is created: jobs, jobs, jobs.

*Statements by Members***COURAGE CANADA**

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to tell members about a remarkable and courageous young man, a constituent of mine, named Mark DeMontis.

Mark lost his eyesight at the age of 17 and his dream of playing professional hockey was darkened. Mark is currently rollerblading across Canada to raise awareness of the ability of blind kids to play hockey.

I am proud and honoured to welcome Mark and his family to Ottawa today. I invite all members to join me on the steps of Parliament Hill next Tuesday, October 4, after question period, to help send him on his remarkable journey.

This courageous young man has founded a not-for-profit organization called Courage Canada to further his goal of funding learn-to-skate programs and skills development sessions for blind youth across Canada. His ultimate goal is that blind hockey become a sport.

As long as we have young people in Canada like Mark, who are determined to succeed no matter what obstacles they face, we can all continue to have hope for the future of our country.

* * *

TAKE THE PLEDGE

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one week ago today, on September 23, the employees of Labatt Canada shared their company's responsible drinking philosophy with customers and consumers across the country.

This year's Be(er) Responsible Day was tied into Labatt's new program called "Take the Pledge". This program, aimed primarily at young people, appealed to all Canadians to sign a pledge that they would not drink and drive. In appreciation for taking the pledge, Labatt donated \$1 to the True Patriot Love Foundation for each pledge signed by a Canadian.

There have been far too many tragedies involving drinking and driving. I commend the thousands of employees of Labatt Canada, particularly those working in the Labatt brewery located in my riding of London—North Centre, for this initiative.

On behalf of all members of the House, I would encourage all Canadians to take the pledge to put an end to drinking and driving.

* * *

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Liberal parliamentarians, I extend my warmest wishes to the people of China and to all Chinese Canadians as they celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Since former prime minister Pierre Trudeau initiated diplomatic relations with China 41 years ago, the Liberal Party has proudly cultivated the friendship between our two great countries. China is Canada's second largest trading partner and the business relationship between our countries continues to flourish.

In my riding of Vancouver Quadra I am pleased to host and attend many events where I can foster shared prosperity and stronger cultural ties between our two countries.

I send my sincerest thanks to China's ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Zhang Junsai, and Madam Yin Guomei for hosting me at their embassy celebration this week.

Liberals look forward to another successful year, working with our Chinese communities and further strengthening the warm relationship between the peoples of China and Canada.

* * *

MISSISSAUGA YOUTH GAMES

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, I will be attending the sixth annual Mississauga Youth Games, a not-for-profit organization in the city of Mississauga, which increases access to sport and fitness programs by offering youth free access to activities like baseball, cricket, dance and soccer, among many others.

Through the children's fitness tax credit, our government has proven our commitment and appreciation toward the role of sport and fitness in a child's development. With this being a priority for our government, I would like to applaud the organizing committee and volunteers of the Mississauga Youth Games.

Programs like these teach youth to become effective and engaged citizens through the promotion of sport, volunteerism and civic action, and by placing an emphasis on physical well-being.

Organizations like the Mississauga Youth Games continue to complement our government's efforts to ensure that Canada's youth have access to sport and fitness programs.

I would like to thank the organizing committee of the Mississauga Youth Games for its dedication to sport and fitness in Mississauga.

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● (1105)

[Translation]

MICHEL BERNIER

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to one of my constituents in Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Michel Bernier, who retired in July after dedicating 51 years of service to fire safety, a distinction that is unmatched in all of Quebec.

This man is very passionate about the safety of his fellow citizens. In over five decades of service, Mr. Bernier fought fires and saved many belongings and lives, and he often risked his own life in doing so.

In 1984, he was the recipient of the Governor General's Medal of Bravery. He is deeply dedicated to the fire department and to the public, and he is involved in a wide variety of activities within his community.

Statements by Members

Mr. Bernier is seated in the public gallery today. His 51-year career within the community and the fire department is unparalleled and is worthy of the recognition of this House.

* * *

[English]

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the University of Calgary is a vibrant, comprehensive research university that produces an economic impact of \$1 billion in the Calgary area alone.

I would like to congratulate the University of Calgary on its new strategic vision entitled, “Eyes High”, as well as on the opening of the Taylor Family Digital Library, a new state-of-the-art learning and research facility. The building houses a library, archive and art gallery, and features unique technologies like editing suites, touch tables and a wall-size visualization screen.

This exceptional facility, one which our government is proud to have supported, fosters research and innovation, integrates art and culture, and is focused on enhancing the student experience.

In addition, it has received the prestigious gold leadership in energy and environmental design certification, meaning it operates with a focus on limiting its impact on our environment.

I congratulate the University of Calgary on opening this cutting-edge facility, as well as on the launch of its collaborative and ambitious “Eyes High” vision.

* * *

BAHRAIN

Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Bahrain has hit a new low.

After months of crackdowns on legitimate protests, courts are now handing out ridiculous sentences to doctors who have treated protestors. In fact, some 20 doctors have been sentenced to up to 20 years in jail; their supposed crimes: doing their jobs, their duty under the Hippocratic oath. These rulings are unacceptable and fly in the face of international human rights law and Canadian values.

I call on all hon. members to join me in condemning these outrages, in calling for clemency for these Bahraini doctors and in supporting the democratic ambitions of all Bahrainis.

* * *

PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week I had the pleasure of reintroducing my motion to return passenger rail service to Thunder Bay and the spectacular north shore of Lake Superior. This line was cut by the Mulroney Conservative government despite being VIA's busiest route.

Today rail has been experiencing a renaissance, because it is environmentally friendly, energy efficient and a great way to travel. This is one small but very important step toward getting Canada back on track with a national transit strategy.

Returning passenger rail service to one of the most scenic routes in our country, through Marathon, Terrace Bay, Schreiber, Nipigon and Thunder Bay, will be a huge boost to those communities and to rail tourism as well.

I call upon the Minister of Transport and all parties in this House to support my motion to renew passenger rail in Canada.

* * *

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the 100th anniversary of the appointment of Canada's first Judge Advocate General.

[Translation]

On October 1, 1911, Colonel Henry Smith was appointed Judge Advocate General. This marked the first time that a Canadian officer was responsible for the provision of legal services to the Canadian Forces. For 100 years now, military lawyers have served with distinction, both in Canada and around the world.

● (1110)

[English]

The JAG is legal adviser in matters of military law to the Governor General, the Minister and Department of National Defence, and the Canadian armed forces. The JAG also superintends the administration of military justice in the Canadian Forces.

Today 208 regular and reserve force military lawyers provide legal advice to Canadian military contingents in Afghanistan, the Gulf, north and central Africa, Europe and the United States. Nearly 100 legal officers were deployed to Afghanistan, ensuring that our military efforts there were in accordance with the rule of law.

Canadians can take great pride in the achievements of their military lawyers. I congratulate the current Judge Advocate General, Brigadier-General Blaise Cathcart, and his entire team on the 100th anniversary of this great institution.

* * *

TORONTO AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one would think communities living near the building of a major transportation infrastructure should be able to participate in some of the gain instead of all of the pain.

In the case of the air-rail link being built from Pearson airport to Union Station, the very folks who through their taxes are helping to pay for this service have to live through the disruptions of it being built, and have to live with the health consequences of the decisions of the Ontario Liberal government, with money from the federal Conservative government, to use diesel trains instead of electric trains.

Statements by Members

Toronto will be the only major city in the world to be running an air-rail link using diesel. Diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen that is particularly dangerous to children and the elderly.

Hundreds of thousands of people live within a kilometre of this line in Toronto, including many in my riding of Davenport. The people in my riding are hard-working, progressive and honest folks. They know we need better and more mass public transit, but they want it built right the first time and they want it accessible to their community. And when they get on one of these trains, they want that train to be an electric train.

* * *

SENIORS

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to mark Canada's first National Seniors Day, which will happen this Saturday.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to rise here today to mark National Seniors Day this Saturday.

[*English*]

It is important to celebrate what seniors have done and continue to do for our country. They deserve our gratitude and recognition. That is why we passed a bill last year to officially establish October 1 as an annual celebration of seniors. This coincides with the UN International Day of Older Persons. It is an occasion for all Canadians to show their appreciation for our older generation.

Today we recognize the many contributions seniors have made and continue to make as mentors and leaders in strengthening our families, communities and workplaces. I invite everyone to join me in thanking Canada's seniors for making a positive difference in all our lives. Together we will recognize that many seniors who give so generously of themselves make this country a better place to live in the world.

This October 1, let us celebrate National Seniors Day.

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, three young Canadians did us proud last summer at the 2011 National Geographic World Championship held in California.

Alexander Cohen, a student at Ashbury College in Ottawa—Vanier, and his teammates, Aoife O'Leary of Surrey, B.C. and Alejandro Torres-Lopez of North Vancouver, won the silver medal to Russia's gold and Vietnam's bronze.

The National Geographic World Championship, hosted by Alex Trebek, is a two-day international geography competition held every two years. Seventeen teams of geography students from around the globe met to take part in this tournament. After three years of being in the top three of the Great Canadian Geography Challenge, Alexander placed first this year and made the Canadian team for the championship.

Today Alex turns 16. I wish him a happy birthday. May his gift this year be to win the gold for Canada. We are proud of him.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government received a strong mandate to keep our streets and communities safe. Part of that means ensuring we have a correctional system that actually corrects criminal behaviour.

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, at the urging of our government, has undertaken a study on how illegal drugs that get into our prisons impact the safety and effectiveness of our correctional system. However, yesterday the NDP member for Châteauguay—Saint-Constant shockingly said that taking drugs out of prisons makes them less safe. That is unbelievable. That is the same party that has consistently voted against our tough-on-crime measures.

Our Conservative government believes in delivering on our campaign commitment to establish drug-free prisons. Canadians expect no less. I call on the NDP to finally stop putting the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of law-abiding citizens.

* * *

● (1115)

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 1985, the United Nations General Assembly declared the first Monday of October every year World Habitat Day.

As our housing critic, I particularly wanted to mark this day, which will be on Monday, October 3, this year.

The right to housing is recognized by the UN as a basic human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The right to housing also appears in most constitutions around the world, which recognize every individual's right to decent, safe and affordable housing.

I would therefore like to draw the House's attention to the exceptional work being done by non-profit organizations dedicated to protecting tenants' rights.

In closing, I would like to point out to the government that their demands are not unreasonable; they simply want the government to maintain the current number of affordable housing units and build new units so that all Canadian families can have access to affordable, adequate and safe housing.

*Oral Questions**[English]***TAXATION**

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while our Conservative government is focused on helping create jobs and growing the economy with our job-creating pro-trade and low-tax plan, the NDP is publicly demanding higher taxes.

Yesterday, the NDP MPs also publicly attacked our Conservative government's reduction of the GST from 7% to 5%, bemoaning the fact that Canadian families were keeping more of their own hard-earned money and not big government. NDP members have stated that cutting the GST was probably the worst measure that this government could have adopted. The member for Beauport—Limoilou said that reducing the GST was a serious problem. Now the NDP finance critic has demanded Canadians and Canadian job creators be forced to pay yet another new tax, this time on daily financial transactions.

Our ambitious pro-trade low-tax plan to create jobs and economic growth is working. Meanwhile, the NDP's anti-trade high-tax job-killing plan is reckless. The NDP's anti-trade high-tax plan is yet another worrying example that the NDP is not fit to govern.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[English]***THE ECONOMY**

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported that the government's fiscal plan is unsustainable. Its ill-conceived corporate tax cuts are responsible for the fiasco we are facing.

The cuts, which amount to \$15 billion a year in lost revenue, are almost exactly the same amount as the PBO's estimate for the structural deficit. That is further evidence of the Conservative government's mismanagement of the economy.

When will the Conservatives listen to reason and cancel the next gift to profitable corporations?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's facts are very deceiving. In fact, the low-tax plan that the government has put in place is actually addressing the issue he is talking about.

The long recognized aging population issue will impact Canadians, as would the \$10 billion hike in taxes that the NDP would need.

Our low-tax plan will help seniors prepare for retirement.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's priorities are quite clear. It wants to give \$60 billion in tax cuts to mostly large, profitable corporations. As we have just heard, it is using the bogus argument that this will result in jobs for Canadians. At the same time, the government is imposing a \$16 million EI tax hike on the payrolls of small businesses and the paycheques of workers.

It is rewarding corporations for non-performance and is over-charging Canadians for an employment insurance program that the Conservatives are using as a deficit-fighting tool.

When will the government put middle-class Canadian families first?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last three budgets that the NDP voted against included plans to help ordinary Canadians. In fact, the tax reductions we have put in place provide a Canadian family of four over \$3,000 in additional moneys, leaving it in that family's pockets where it should be.

That is what helps Canadians, not a \$10 billion tax hike.

[Translation]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two million Canadians are unemployed and will be for a long time because the Conservatives' economic inaction plan is a disaster. This particularly holds true for young people. There are approximately 200,000 more unemployed youth than there were before the last recession. This is mortgaging the future of our country, but the Conservatives are satisfied.

Why do the Conservatives refuse to admit that their policy is not working? Why not invest in people?

• (1120)

[English]

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are not satisfied if one Canadian who wants to work is still looking for a job. That is why our last budget focused on jobs and growth.

We continue to put forward tax reductions for businesses that actually hire young and middle-age Canadians. The most important contribution we can make is to provide an avenue for businesses to create more jobs for Canadians. That is witnessed by the fact that there are 600,000 more Canadians now working than there were at the end of the recession.

* * *

*[Translation]***PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER**

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. The NDP agrees that the cost of private members' bills should be calculated, but the government is tying the Parliamentary Budget Officer's hands. It has slashed his budget and is refusing to provide his office with the resources he needs to do his job. It makes us wonder whether the Conservatives really want the cost of private members' bills to be calculated or whether this is one of their political manoeuvres to overload him and prevent him from examining public finances.

Will the government give the Parliamentary Budget Officer the means to do his job?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we believe the people of Canada, as well as the members of Parliament who are making decisions on legislation, deserve to know the cost is of that legislation.

Committees are the masters of their own business. That is where that motion originated. However, there is merit in what the suggestion that Canadians should be able to know what the cost proposals are. It is a very good value.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have already said that the NDP supports the costing of private members' bills. However, it is obvious that the Conservatives are attacking the Parliamentary Budget Officer for telling the truth about the Conservatives' poor fiscal management. Suddenly, they are saying they support his mandate. Will they use the same logic with their crime bill? All week, the ministers refused, over and over again, to give this bill a price tag, despite our repeated requests.

Will the government allow the Parliamentary Budget Officer to cost its bills before they are passed in the House?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer reports to Parliament and offers opinions all the time on all kinds of things. Recently, I have noticed that some of the media have commented on how accurate those comments are. People can make their own judgments on that.

However, the government's perspective is clear. We set out clear budget plans. We follow them. The costs of what we are doing are clear. We issue supplementary estimates and estimates all the time that set out those costs.

The one thing that is different regarding the costs set out by the government and what they would be under the NDP is that we are actually respecting tax dollars. We are trying to keep spending down. We are not looking at ramping up the costs of government the way the NDP would.

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ETHICS

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians are struggling just to get by, Conservative ministers are abusing private jet privileges and are using helicopters to pick them up from fishing trips.

Now we learn that the Minister of Foreign Affairs insists on having golden business cards, this despite the fact that using gold on business cards breaks Treasury Board rules because it is too expensive.

Why is the minister breaking government rules? Why is he giving taxpayers the gold finger?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I arrived at Parliament this morning I was deeply

disturbed when I realized that the President of the Treasury Board was not here to take this question.

I remember a time when the Liberal Party of Canada used to think big on foreign affairs. Its members would think about big issues around the world. When it came to Canada and domestic issues, they would think about big issues. Now they are returning to a time when they are dealing with \$400 worth of business cards. That is exactly why Canadians have them sitting in the far corner.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems to be quite the quid pro quo going on over there. The Minister of Foreign Affairs gives the President of the Treasury Board a \$50 million slush fund for his riding. Then the President of the Treasury Board lets the Minister of Foreign Affairs break the rules to get his golden business cards. It is a very expensive game of “you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours”.

When Canadians are struggling just to get by, why are Conservative ministers showering each other with gold? Why the golden showers?

• (1125)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, I sat down with the President of the Treasury Board and I said, “Have I got a deal for you. I'll give you \$50 million worth of infrastructure funds if you will give me \$400 worth of business cards”.

[Translation]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, whether it is millions of dollars in a local slush fund, useless advertising or fancy business cards that are against the rules, this government will stop at nothing to promote itself.

In 2009, the former industry minister spent \$20,000 on photography services in the national capital region alone. How is such outrageous spending on shameful self-promotion justified?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if we compare the records of the current Minister of National Defence to those of his Liberal predecessor, we would find that the former Liberal minister of national defence used the Challenger significantly more than the frugal current Minister of National Defence has, but of course the Liberal minister was only the minister for 18 short months.

We are ensuring that taxpayers' dollars are spent wisely and well. We are focused on returning Canada to a balanced budget. We are focusing on jobs and economic growth. The good news is that plan is working. We have seen the creation of literally hundreds of thousands of net new jobs over the past two years.

*Oral Questions***VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for several years now 6,800 veterans who are disabled have been fighting the government over what is called SISIP benefit reduction. Two DND ombudsmen have said that this is unfair. The veterans committee, the Senate committee and the House all voted to change this practice.

Why is the government spending over half a million dollars of hard-earned money fighting these disabled veterans in court? Why does the government not stop the court proceedings, deal with these veterans and reach a comparable settlement?

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, injured personnel in the Canadian Forces are covered by a long-term disability insurance plan similar to the RCMP and other public servants. As the member well knows, they are also eligible for a Veterans Affairs Canada disability award of up to \$270,000 under the new veterans charter, as well as an accidental dismemberment benefit of up to \$250,000 under the Canadian Forces accidental dismemberment insurance plan.

If the member opposite is referring to a matter that is now before the courts, it would not be appropriate for us to comment on that at this time.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the hon. member, as he is new to the House it is quite possible that he does not understand what the SISIP benefit reduction is. It is a sinful, disgraceful act wherein disabled veterans get one aspect of an insurance policy clawed back from their regular benefits. That is why they have gone to court.

This court action can stop right now. All it takes is for the Prime Minister to nod his head and stop the court proceedings. He should stop taking these disabled veterans to court and stop Dingwalling this Parliament, as the Treasury Board president and the defence minister are doing, and deal with the disabled heroes of this country in a fair and proper manner.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite cares to review the real statistic, he will find that this government has done more for veterans and more for members of the Canadian Forces than any government in history.

The member's party voted against our missions in Afghanistan and Libya, voted against new equipment purchases under Canada's economic action plan, and questioned the minister's effort to do his duty by honouring the families of fallen soldiers during repatriation ceremonies. I would ask the member if he and his party have an ounce of support left for the Canadian Forces.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs thinks he can do whatever he wants. Today we learn that he broke the rules against having gold-plated business cards. Unfortunately, that is not the worst of it. There is not a word of French on these business cards.

When the minister travels, does he represent all Canadians or just those who speak English?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to send over a business card that is in both official languages.

• (1130)

[Translation]

It says, "Minister of Foreign Affairs, 125 Sussex Drive". All the information is available in both French and English.

[English]

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I sent him my card just as an example and actually it is in three languages because some of us also include a language for the visually challenged.

I wonder if the member might help with that because when the jet-setting Conservatives have their ministers—

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Oh, come on.

Mr. David Anderson: It's a question for the leader. That's a leadership question.

The Speaker: Order. The least members could do is wait until the question has been asked before they try to answer it.

The hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the members can make fun of people who have disabilities. Frankly, it is about example, and what this minister is saying is that it is better to have gold on a member's card than French.

Will he commit today to getting rid of his unilingual gold-plated card and actually represent this country the way it should be represented?

[Translation]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I have business cards in both official languages. I will give one to my colleague.

[English]

While I am up, let me congratulate the member opposite. Sunday will be a very big day in Ottawa Centre. The member for Ottawa Centre will be announcing his campaign for the leadership of the NDP. On behalf of all my constituents in Ottawa West—Nepean, I want to wish him the very best of luck .

*Oral Questions***CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Treasury Board policy dictates that the minister must provide a detailed cost analysis for any policy, regulatory or legislative change that is introduced. Could the President of the Treasury Board table today the cost analysis done for the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board? If he cannot or will not provide that analysis, perhaps he would explain how he can dismantle a \$6 billion-a-year corporation and throw the entire prairie agriculture economy into chaos without doing a cost-benefit analysis.

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the root of all of this is marketing freedom for western Canadian farmers. We intend to deliver on that. Farmers have done the cost-benefit analysis farm gate by farm gate. They have voted with their air seeders and their trucks and have moved on to new commodities.

They have taken away market share from the wheats, durums and barleys in Canada. We know there is a global market demanding more of those products. If we look at the Australian model, it is producing up to 30% more of those commodities for a hungry world.

That is all the cost-benefit analysis that Canadian farmers need. They know they can step up and produce. I wish the member would get on board with them.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food wants to dismantle the largest and most successful grain marketing company in the world based on a whim. It is becoming a hallmark of the government to hide the true costs of its policies, whether it is the crime and punishment cost of prisons, or the true cost of the F-35 or, now, the real cost of dismantling the Wheat Board.

KPMG says that it will cost \$500 million in closing costs alone, never mind the impact to the prairie rural agriculture economy.

How can the government justify indulging the notion and the whim of the minister, at such an extraordinary cost, to abolish the Wheat Board without even knowing the cost-benefit analysis?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will give the member some homework this weekend. When he goes home to his riding in downtown Winnipeg, he should check with—oh, yes, there are no farmers there. Or, maybe when he goes on to his principal residence on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia, he could check with—oh, they are not under the Wheat Board.

He does not have a clue what he is talking about.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled in favour of InSite and against years of Conservative interference. The Supreme Court found that the government arbitrarily infringed on the rights of individuals to receive the treatment and help they so desperately need.

The government has an opportunity here to take off its ideological blinders and support a vital public service that has saved lives and given people hope. Will the government do that?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, although we are disappointed with the Supreme Court of Canada's decision today, we will comply.

We believe that the system should be focused on preventing people from becoming drug addicts. A key pillar of the national anti-drug strategy is prevention and treatment for those with drug dependency. As part of our strategy, we have made significant investments to strengthen existing treatment efforts through the treatment action plan. We will be reviewing the court decision.

• (1135)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what InSite does.

Since it opened in 2003 in my riding, fatal overdoses have dropped by over one-third. More people get treatment, as InSite is there to connect people with the services they need. Today, the people who use this service have had their voices heard. The Supreme Court agrees, health professionals agree and international health experts agree.

Will the Conservatives admit their failed approach and acknowledge that InSite protects public health and saves lives? Will they stop being the barrier to this very important service?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, our government believes that spending more money on treatment and support to help people get off drugs is the best investment we can make.

As I also said earlier, we will be reviewing the decision. In fairness, the decision was made two hours ago. I stated that we will be reviewing it, and we will be reviewing it.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling is clear. Insite saves lives without compromising public safety. Nonetheless, instead of looking at the facts and scientific studies, this government has spent years in court, at the taxpayers' expense, trying to shut down the Insite clinic.

Will this government finally put aside its ideology and act in the best interest of the health and public safety of all Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, we are disappointed with the decision but we will comply. I also stated earlier that we believe the system should be focused on preventing people from becoming drug addicts in the first place.

The key pillar of our national anti-drug strategy is prevention and treatment for those with drug dependencies.

I said earlier that we will be reviewing the Supreme Court decision, and we will be doing that.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I read the news this morning and took delight in what I saw. It was basically a bad Austin Powers movie in which I saw Dr. Evil and Goldmember deciding how to order around government resources.

What possesses the Minister of Foreign Affairs to actually order around Treasury Board as such?

The irony is that the Conservatives just put forward a private member's bill in the House frowning on getting rid of the flag or the word "Canada", and that is exactly what he just did.

Would the hon. Goldmember please rise and answer to this?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the member and pleased to inform the House that the word "Canada" is on my business card.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough that the defence minister has become a frequent flyer, abusing both government jets and search and rescue helicopters, but it is completely unacceptable that the Prime Minister uses our courageous men and women of the armed forces to justify that minister's abuse.

Repatriation ceremonies are planned days in advance. It is no wonder he is so "highly regarded". He is on the frequent flyer program.

How can other ministers manage to use commercial flights, while that minister uses the government fleet as his own personal airline?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the attendance at ceremonies for the repatriation of soldiers who have fallen in Afghanistan is a serious affair. They are not planned well in advance. Obviously, they are a product of unfortunate events abroad.

The Minister of National Defence has felt it important to attend those ceremonies. The use of government jets by him, notwithstanding that those events did not occur so much in the past under the

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Liberal government, has still been significantly lower than that of the Liberal government.

In 2004-2005, from August to August, the member for Wascana used government jets for 135 hours. By comparison, in 2010, the entire Conservative cabinet used them for 136 hours, almost exactly the same amount.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Etobicoke North.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of the Environment suggested that I do my own research instead of listening to the media.

Did the minister do his own research and consult with scientists about the impact of his proposed cuts to ozone research?

If the minister doubts the reports of an international witch hunt in the media, will he either unmuzzle his scientists or at least state that there will be no cuts to the ozone monitoring network?

● (1140)

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister and myself have said repeatedly in the House that we are not cutting our ozone monitoring program. We will continue to monitor ozone. I invite the member opposite to review those statements as well.

* * *

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians spend, on average, 75 minutes a day getting to work, which is 32 working days a year. Days wasted being stuck in traffic is costing the economy \$5 billion a year. Traffic gridlock and crumbling roads are all around us and Canada is the only G8 country without a national transit strategy.

Does the minister agree with me that Canada is falling behind on public transit?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to correct the facts. Like all other G8 countries, Canada assigns responsibility for public transit to the provinces and municipalities.

Since 2006, we have invested \$5 billion into public transit across Canada, and we will continue to do that.

Oral Questions

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is time to get Canada moving. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, big city mayors, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Urban Transit Authority have all been calling for a national transit strategy.

My bill sets a plan for all levels of government to work together to establish a national vision for public transit.

Will the government get Canada moving and join together with the New Democrats to finally establish a national transit plan?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government recognizes the value of modern and efficient urban transit. We have been a strong partner with the provinces and municipalities to help them build some of the best transit systems in the world. However, it is not the role of the federal government to tell cities how to run their transit systems.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in all of the country's major cities, workers are encountering frustrating traffic congestion every day. Our road infrastructure is crumbling. In Montreal, people are afraid to cross the Champlain Bridge. In Toronto, there is no longer any such thing as rush hour; every hour of the day and night is rush hour.

Is the government going to respond to the unanimous demands of cities and business people and provide public transit that is reliable, accessible and affordable?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, never in the history of this country has a government invested more in the development and repair of infrastructure than this government has. We have invested a significant amount of money in the Toronto Rocket project in the greater Toronto area, among other things.

What has the NDP done? Today, they will talk the talk but then, when it comes time to act, they vote against the projects.

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities can try to defend himself, but Canada is still the only G8 country that does not have a public transit strategy. There are needs in every major Canadian city. The mayors of these big cities have been asking for a public transit strategy since 2007. I believe that the Conservatives were elected in 2007.

When will this government listen to the needs of the people of Canada and provide an accessible public transit system?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the hon. member's preamble. Canada, like all G8 countries, lets the municipal and provincial governments handle public transit in all areas of the country.

In any case, her party wants to centralize everything in Ottawa. On our side, we think that municipal and provincial representatives are

much more aware of the needs of their people and that we, here in Ottawa, are not in the best position to tell Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto or Vancouver what is right for their municipalities.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's national anti-drug strategy aims to prevent Canadians from starting to take drugs and to provide treatment for those with drug dependencies.

This morning, the Supreme Court of Canada rendered a decision that may have an impact on those with drug dependencies.

I wonder if the Minister of Health would like to provide further comment to the House on that decision.

● (1145)

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, although we are disappointed with the Supreme Court of Canada's decision this morning, we will comply.

We have always believed that the system should be focused on preventing people from becoming drug addicts in the first place. Our government believes that spending more money on treatment and on support for individuals to get the help they need to get off drugs is the best investment we can provide to Canadians.

As part of that strategy, we have made significant investments to strengthen existing treatment efforts through the treatment action plan.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been 113 days and still no response from the Muskoka minister—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Davenport.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board is responsible for implementing the rules on access to information, but here he is conducting government business on the side from his personal Blackberry account so that he can cover his tracks.

Why is the minister using every trick in the book to hide? Why will he not agree to be accountable in the House?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board has an outstanding record of public service.

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The President of the Treasury Board voted for the Federal Accountability Act, which expanded access to information to a huge number of new agencies. For the first time in Canadian history in the House, every New Democratic member voted to withdraw access to information, to bring a cloak of secrecy over the Canadian Wheat Board.

The NDP is no party to lecture this government on access to information. We are the ones who made it more open.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the subject of accountability, the Muskoka minister has brought a new innovation to Conservative cover-up. It is use of a personal email account to conduct government business. There is no need to worry about access to information. There is no need to worry about doing a little government business on the side.

We have emails from the minister to the mayor of Huntsville.

Would the government agree to release the rest of the minister's G8 slush fund emails?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board is excited to have the opportunity to visit the committee to address any concerns it may have.

I have some good news for my friend from Davenport. Not only will the President of the Treasury Board be at that committee hearing, but I have even offered to go with him to assist in any way I possibly can. I do hope the member for Davenport will be there. He can rest assured that if the President of the Treasury Board does not have the answers, I will be more than pleased to stand up and respond.

[Translation]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after 113 days, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka still refuses to answer to Canadians. We recently discovered that he personally intervened to have a project included in the building Canada fund. The Prime Minister's guide for ministers states, and I quote, "You must answer all questions pertaining to your areas of responsibility...".

So why does this minister refuse to abide by that and to answer questions that pertain to him?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is because the minister is not here. That is why he cannot stand up and reply today.

[Translation]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka should be capable of answering for his actions to all Canadians.

The NDP revealed that he found a job for one of his friends and that he intervened in an internal review of G8 spending. Through his personal emails, we were able to see what happened with the \$50 million of public money.

Should the minister not be able to rise and respond?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to tell my colleague that the President of the Treasury Board will appear before a House committee to answer all the questions that members have for him. I have good news for my colleague: he will get two for the price of one, because I will be there too. As always, I am happy to answer questions with my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board.

* * *

• (1150)

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, doctors around the world have been saying it, the CMA has been saying it, and now the Supreme Court has said it unanimously: Insite in Vancouver saves lives. That is why the Liberal government supported it from the start, choosing life over death.

With today's hearty slap in the face by Canada's highest court, will the government finally admit it was wrong in its ideological attacks against Insite? What does the minister mean by "We will be reviewing it"?

Will the government respect the Supreme Court's decision and stop attacking Insite?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not to repeat my answers that I provided earlier, the decision was released two hours ago. We will review the decision of the Supreme Court.

I am sure the members opposite have not had the opportunity to review the decision either. We will do our part and our due diligence and review the Supreme Court decision.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2010 the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism exceeded his targets with overall immigration, but fell short when it came to families.

The greatest backlogs today in immigration deal with parents. We have Canadians who are trying to get their loved ones, their parents, to be able to come to Canada. The government, more than any other government in the history of Canada, continues to add to the backlog. It fell short in the area where there is the greatest demand in terms of trying to get families reunited.

Why does the government not believe in allowing parents to be reunited with—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the louder the member yells does not necessarily mean it is going to bring more people into this country.

Oral Questions

I can tell the member one thing: when we took over government, we were left with a mess from the previous Liberal government in terms of backlogs, in terms of its fear of making decisions with respect to immigration, its fear of increasing the number of people who could come to this country to start a new life.

That fear is gone. This government understands where it is going on immigration. It understands why it is doing it. Families across this country understand what this government is doing.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is time for this government to agree to study hydraulic fracturing. The problem, however, is that this practice is already taking place. Communities have good reason to be worried about the chemicals being used and the groundwater being contaminated.

Will the minister respect the government's mandate, which is to regulate this practice, instead of simply waiting until new studies are published?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my colleague that this is mainly a provincial and territorial responsibility.

I had the pleasure of debating this very issue during adjournment proceedings last week. I can tell the member opposite that a greater understanding of environmental impacts will benefit us all. That is why we have put forward two studies that we mentioned last week.

Let me remind my colleague that our government has created nearly 600,000 new jobs and that responsible development of shale gas has a potential to create even more.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only does hydraulic fracturing require enormous amounts of water, but the process also uses a toxic brew of chemicals to pollute groundwater. Exactly what chemicals remains a mystery, as companies are not required to disclose that information.

When will the government close the regulatory loopholes and force companies to reveal what chemicals they are injecting into our groundwater?

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said last week in adjournment proceedings, the Minister of the Environment has recommended a proposal to the Council of Canadian Academies for an independent expert panel assessment of the state of scientific knowledge on potential environmental impacts. He has also asked it to review mitigation options.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is focused on the economy and helping create jobs with the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

In fact, across Canada small businesses are expanding with help from job-creating measures like the hiring credit for small business that was in the last budget. Manufacturers are also growing, with new tax relief for new productivity-improving machinery and equipment, a measure that was also extended in the last budget.

Can the Minister of State (Finance), the pride of Claresholm, Alberta, please update the House on the state of the economy and the impact of these specific measures?

● (1155)

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chair of the finance committee, who is doing a great job on that committee, for a wonderful question.

In answer to that question, again today Statistics Canada has reported that July's GDP numbers have actually grown. That is good news.

Why have they grown? It is because we have a plan to get people back to work. We have a plan to increase jobs in this country. In fact, there are 600,000 more people working now than there were in July of 2009. The plan is working, and so are more Canadians.

However, we do need to remember that the economic recovery is fragile around the world, and we need to be—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Wascana.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is concern across the country among many law-abiding Canadian citizens and taxpayers about the long arm of the U.S. tax collection department. Even the Canadian Bankers Association is upset. The Americans are trying to enforce their laws beyond their borders and are threatening Canadians to that effect.

So far, the government has offered Canadians tea and sympathy. Will the government do something a little more tangible? Will it set up an advocacy centre to actively inform and assist Canadians who are unfairly being put upon by the extraterritorial excursions of the U.S. IRS?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly we are concerned with what is happening to many honest taxpaying Canadians who were not expecting this to be imposed upon them. The finance minister has spoken to his U.S. counterpart, saying in no uncertain terms that we do not want this unfair treatment to Canadian taxpayers who are honest law-abiding citizens. We are encouraging the U.S. to be very fair with our citizens.

CANADIAN AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with no notice, Downsview Park closed the doors on the Canadian Air and Space Museum and ordered Canadian veterans to remove all of their artifacts. The historic de Havilland factory will now make way for a hockey arena.

Yesterday and today the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages claimed that apparently the Conservative government was elected on a mandate to invest in Canadian museums.

Why will it not order this museum opened again, and defend it and the historic Avro Arrow?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, Downsview Park is a crown corporation that is at arm's length from the government, and this was a business decision that Downsview Park took.

As we know, this is a private museum, and I applaud the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages because he has directed his officials to see if the Canada Aviation and Space Museum could work with this museum to see if there is a way that it can accommodate its historical treasures.

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CANADA-ISRAEL RELATIONS

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I attended a meeting on Tuesday for the election of a new executive for the Canada-Israel group, I was most disappointed to see how few opposition members bothered to show up. Only three Liberal MPs and, shockingly, zero NDP MPs chose to attend. Let us compare that with the 60 Conservative MPs present.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration inform the House how our government is taking action on issues that are important to Canada-Israel relations and to the Jewish community in Canada?

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very disappointing that not one member of the NDP actually chose to attend this event and that only three Liberal members attended.

Whether it is our refusal to participate in the Durban II and III conferences, standing up for a negotiated two-party solution between Israel and Palestine, supporting a national task force on Holocaust research, or becoming the first country to sign the Ottawa protocol, our government's record of taking a principled stand against anti-Semitism and standing up for the Jewish community is clear.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, suicide prevention should be a national priority. Tragically, Canada's aboriginal youth suicide rate is five to six times higher than the Canadian average.

We know that providing healthy alternatives is the key: investments in education, recreation centres and the necessary

Oral Questions

programming. Prevention requires investment and does not mean waiting for the suicide rate to go up in communities.

When will the Conservatives work with aboriginal communities, listen to the needs of aboriginal young people and stand up to build hope for so many of these people across our country?

• (1200)

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, too many Canadian families have to deal with the anguish of losing a loved one to suicide. That is why our government is funding programs to build their strength on protective factors, such as ensuring that family and community supports are there. In budget 2010, \$75 million was spent to implement the national aboriginal suicide prevention strategy to assist over 150 community-based projects.

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[Translation]

MONARCHIST SYMBOLS

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are clearly impressed by princess stories and seem willing to spare no expense to impose monarchist symbols: displaying the Queen's portrait at the Department of Foreign Affairs and in embassies, installing a stained glass window in the Senate, redesigning passports to include the crown, adding "royal" to the designation of the air force and navy, spending millions of dollars on royal visits, and I could go on.

Instead of applauding, is the already discredited President of the Treasury Board not ashamed to be spending so much money on archaic symbols rejected by the Quebec nation, when he is imposing such drastic cuts on services to the public?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that when this member first arrived in Ottawa, he put his hand on the Bible and took an oath to Queen Elizabeth II and her rightful heirs and successors. He did not do it once; he took an oath to the Queen at least for four or five times, and so did each member of the House.

Queen Elizabeth II is our head of state. I know there is great enthusiasm for the great work the Minister of National Defence did in going back to the old symbols of the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force.

We are also very pleased that portraits of Canada's head of state now proudly adorn the walls of all of our museums around the world.

*Routine Proceedings***POINTS OF ORDER**

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do have a point of order. I know that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is having a bit of a hard day today as he shuffles through all his business cards, trying to figure out which one he is actually using, gold or not. I know he might be happy that a certain member is not here today, but I would gently remind him that he does know the rules of the House, that he should not refer to a member who is not present in the House. I would just remind him of that. I know he is having a hard day today.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the wise counsel from my friend from Vancouver East. If the President of the Treasury Board or his family or any of his constituents were offended by my unacceptable actions, I apologize.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: On two occasions this week, during statements by members, once by a member of the government caucus and once by a member of the official opposition, individual members took it upon themselves to recognize special guests who were in the galleries. I want to remind all hon. members that it has been a long-standing practice in the House that this is a prerogative of the Chair.

As O'Brien and Bose's *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states at page 284:

Only from the Speaker's Gallery can distinguished visitors (such as heads of state, heads of government and parliamentary delegations invited to Canada and celebrated Canadians) be recognized and introduced to the House, and only by the Speaker. Members other than the Speaker may not refer to the presence of any visitors in the galleries at any time.

[Translation]

Only distinguished visitors can be recognized and introduced to the House, and only by the Speaker.

[English]

I ask for the co-operation of all members in respecting this approach, as it ensures fairness and safeguards the time of the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32 (2), I have the honour to table in both official languages three treaties.

They are: first, exchange of notes between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America, constituting the agreement amending Chapter 4, Annex 4 of the Treaty between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America concerning Pacific salmon, done at Washington on December 21, 2010; second, third protocol amending

the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia, done at Hanoi on July 23, 2010; and third, agreement between Canada and the Hellenic Republic concerning youth mobility, done at Athens on May 28, 2011.

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty. I have two copies of each treaty to table.

* * *

● (1205)

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-304, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act (protecting freedom).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this House to introduce a bill entitled "An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act (protecting freedom)".

Freedom of speech is a fundamental principle in our democracy and one which Canadians have fought and died for, for over a century. This is not a fight that one Canadian can take on himself, but rather an issue that all Canadians must engage in vigorously.

In this, I would like to thank my friends and colleagues such as Senator Finley and the member for St. Catharines, who have rigorously pursued a freer, more open society and resisted the tyrannical instincts of bureaucracy to censor speech in our great country.

Freedom of speech is the freedom that all other freedoms are built on. It cannot be restrained to the politically correct. The best way to fight bigotry is to ensure that we protect and enhance our fundamental freedoms in this great country of ours. That is why I ask all members in this House to support this bill that protects the fundamental building block of democracy: freedom of speech. God bless.

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

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NATIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT STRATEGY ACT

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-305, An Act to establish a National Public Transit Strategy.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges, to introduce a bill to establish a national public transit strategy for Canada.

[Translation]

I rise today to introduce this bill, which would establish a national public transit strategy.

[English]

The strategy would secure a permanent federal investment plan in innovation research. It would provide federal leadership in working with all levels of government to coordinate planning. This strategy would get Canada moving in line with other G8 nations by helping to provide public transit that is fast, accessible and affordable to all Canadians.

Government Orders

[Translation]

This would help move Canada forward.
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-306, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (political affiliation).

He said: Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore, for seconding this bill and for the excellent work he has done for a number of years on bills that are important to Canadians. I am honoured and very pleased to introduce my first bill in this House regarding political affiliation. This bill follows up on one of my party's election promises: to ensure that politicians are held accountable for the choice made by their constituents, and to prevent them from playing politics to benefit their personal careers by changing political parties when they feel like it.

[English]

With it we are helping to fix Ottawa.

[Translation]

The bill provides that a member's seat in the House of Commons will be vacated and a by-election called for that seat if the member was elected to the House as a member of a political party, as the case may be. However, the seat will not be vacated if the member, having been elected as a member of a political party, chooses to sit as an independent.

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

* * *

●(1210)

[English]

PETITIONS

JUSTICE

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank one of my constituents for organizing this petition. I am honoured to present a petition to the Government of Canada which draws its attention to have offences against children broken down into categories such as inappropriate touching, pornography, assault, and battery and rape, with each carrying a sentence commensurate with the crime. Rape seems to cause the most damage psychologically and physically; therefore, the petitioners would like to see longer than three-year jail sentences, preferably 10 to 20 years for pedophiles with no chance of parole and no pardons.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give thanks to a constituent in my riding for providing me with this petition from Calgary which states that immigration processing time for sponsoring parents is causing great hardships and is preventing families from being together. Due to lengthy processing times in some immigration categories thousands of

families every year are being kept apart. This picks up on the issue that I raised today in question period, which is that the government needs to have more of a caring heart in terms of speeding up the process of enabling parents abroad, in a fair and more timely fashion, to come to Canada as quickly as possible.

* * *

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.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS CALENDAR, 2012

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 28(2)(b), I have the honour to lay upon the table the House of Commons calendar for the year 2012.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SENATE REFORM ACT

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC) moved that Bill C-7, An Act respecting the selection of senators and amending the Constitution Act, 1867 in respect of Senate term limits, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to begin debate today on the Senate reform act, Bill C-7. The bill has been a long time coming. Reform of the other place has been the subject of strong passions across the country that have crossed party lines for the better part of a quarter century. While the government's priorities are unchanged and the economy remains a top priority, we have an opportunity to take the first steps on this road.

Our government has always been clear about our commitment to bring reform to the Senate chamber. We pledged to do this in our most recent election platform and we repeated our promise in the Speech from the Throne. I am proud to present this legislation and to start the work in the House to fulfill our commitments to Canadians.

The Senate can play an important role in our parliamentary system. It reviews statutes and legislation, often from different perspectives than those found in this place. It serves to represent regional and minority interests in a different way than they are represented in the House. Many of its members and committees have demonstrated and provided appreciable research and investigative skills and thoughtful recommendations. It can be a place where a broader range of experience and expertise can be brought to bear on the issues facing our country.

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Unfortunately, the contributions of the Senate are overshadowed by the fact that senators are selected and appointed through a process that is neither formal nor transparent, with no democratic mandate whatsoever from Canadians.

Moreover, there are no strict limits on the number of years an individual can sit in the Senate. Under the Constitution, an individual can be appointed to the Senate at the age of 30 and serve until the age of 75. That means a senator could serve for as long as 45 years.

Taken together, the Senate lacks any essential democratic characteristics. Its effectiveness and legitimacy suffers from the democratic deficit.

We must then ask ourselves the simple question. Is this good enough? Our answer and Canadians' answer is no. Our government does not believe that the current situation is acceptable in a modern, representative democracy, and neither do Canadians.

Our government has long believed that the status quo in the Senate is unacceptable and therefore it must change in order to reach its full potential as an accountable and democratic institution. The alternative is the continuation of a situation where senators are appointed to long terms without any democratic mandate. We say enough, and Canadians are with us in saying no to the status quo in the Senate.

In July of this year, polling found that seven out of ten Canadians reject the status quo in the Senate. Although striking, this is not shocking. The Senate and its reform has been the subject of numerous reports, proposals and studies over the past several decades.

While recommendations on how to reform the Senate have differed, and differ still, there is one consistent theme that runs throughout. Nearly all reports and studies agree that the Senate is an important democratic institution and that reform is needed to increase legitimacy in the context of a modern, democratic country. It is clear that while there may be different approaches to solving this problem, all parties agree that reform is necessary.

Senate reform of any kind has proven to be a complicated process. Under our Constitution, reforming fundamental aspects of the Senate, such as its powers or the representation of the provinces, requires the support of seven provinces representing 50% of the population of the provinces. Achieving the necessary level of provincial support for particular fundamental reforms is a complex and lengthy process with no guarantee of success.

Canadians do not want drawn out constitutional battles, battles that will detract from our government's focus on the top priority of Canadians, which is the economy. But a lack of agreement on large fundamental reform does not leave us with a lack of options if only we have the sufficient will to do so. If we are to begin the journey toward reform, we must do what we can within the scope of our authority in Parliament.

Our government believes that Senate reform is needed now, and we are committed to pursuing a practical, reasonable approach to reform that we believe will help restore effectiveness and legitimacy in the Senate. That is why we are moving forward with the Senate reform act.

Through the bill, our government is taking immediate and concrete action to fulfill our commitment to Canadians to increase the effectiveness and legitimacy of our upper chamber and to work co-operatively with the provinces and territories.

•(1215)

The Senate reform act includes two initiatives that would help bring the Senate into the 21st century.

First, the act provides a suggested framework to provinces and territories that wish to establish a democratic consultation process to give Canadians a say in who represents them in the Senate.

Second, it introduces term limits for senators appointed after October 2008, which would ensure that the Senate would be refreshed with new ideas on a regular basis.

While each of these initiatives can stand on their own merits, combining these measures allows our government to act quickly to implement our promise to Canadians to bring about reforms.

As I have already noted, our government has long been committed to Senate reform. Our commitment to reform remains as strong as ever, and we are now in a position to act on our commitment. We have consistently encouraged provinces and territories to implement a democratic process for the selection of Senate nominees. The Senate reform act will give clarity to our flexible approach.

The act would require the Prime Minister to consider the names of individuals selected from the holding of democratic processes with Canadians when making recommendations on appointments to the Governor General. The act would not bind the Prime Minister or the Governor General when making Senate appointments. Nor would it change the method of selecting senators.

Therefore, Parliament is able to enact this provision through its authority under section 44 of our Constitution. Under section 44 of the Constitution Act, 1982, Parliament has the legislative authority to amend the Constitution in relation to the Senate.

The act also contains a voluntary framework, attached as a schedule to the act, for provinces and territories to use as a basis for developing democratic selection process to consult voters on the preference of their Senate nominees. The framework is based on Alberta's Senatorial Selection Act. The framework is meant to provide enough details to facilitate the development of provincial or territorial legislation, without limiting provinces and territories in the establishment of a consultation process or in the precise details of such a process, which may differ between jurisdictions as local needs may demand.

This is, after all, a co-operative venture. Provinces and territories would not be required to implement the framework precisely as written. Rather, they would be encouraged to adapt the framework to best suit the needs of their unique circumstances.

It is our hope that this built-in flexibility will further encourage provinces to provide a democratic consultation process to give greater voice to their citizens and their provinces in the Senate.

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Before moving on to explain other aspects of the bill, I would like to note that the approach proposed in the Senate reform act has already been successful and this type of reform has already gained a toehold in the Senate.

In 2007 the Prime Minister recommended the appointment of Bert Brown to the Senate. Senator Brown was chosen as a senator in waiting by Alberta voters in 2004 in a selection process held under the authority of Alberta's Senatorial Selection Act, which was introduced in 1989.

Senator Brown's tireless work on reform both inside and outside the Senate is greatly appreciated, not only by me and our government but also by the many Canadians who want Senate reform and who have campaigned for it for many years.

Alberta may have been the first province to pass this type of legislation and to see its nominees appointed, but it is not the only province that has taken steps to facilitate reform.

In 2009 Saskatchewan passed the Senate Nominee Election Act, which enables a provincial government to hold a consultation process on Senate nominees. Saskatchewan has not yet held a consultation process, but I encourage it to do so at the earliest opportunity. Our government continues to be welcoming toward discussion and co-operation wherever possible.

In British Columbia, the previous parliamentary secretary has introduced a bill that would provide the provincial government with the authority to hold consultation processes. I will be following the progress of the bill closely and would encourage my provincial colleagues in the British Columbia Legislative Assembly to support the passage of the bill.

More broadly, I would encourage our colleagues in all provincial and territorial legislatures and assemblies to consider supporting and moving forward with similar initiatives.

Let us move on to the other major initiatives of Bill C-7.

In addition to encouraging the implementation of democratic selection processes for Senate nominees, the act would also limit Senate terms, which can span several decades under the current rules. Polls have consistently shown that over 70% of Canadians support limiting the terms of senators. When we began to talk about specific reforms, that amount of support for one particular provision is impressive and encouraging.

• (1220)

Under the Senate reform act, senators appointed, after the bill receives royal assent, will be subject to a single nine-year non-renewable term. The nine-year term will also apply to all senators appointed after October 2008, up to royal assent. The nine-year clock for those senators will start upon royal assent.

As with the earlier provisions, limiting the terms of senators would amend the Constitution, but, again, it is a reform that can be accomplished by Parliament, through section 44 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Similarly, in 1965, Parliament acted alone to introduce mandatory retirement at age 75 for senators. Prior to that, senators were appointed for life.

As I have outlined, the Senate reform act presents practical, reasonable and achievable reforms within Parliament's authority. In order to do all that we can to ensure these reforms will be supported, our government has also consistently demonstrated our willingness to be flexible. We believe that we must work with our colleagues to ensure that change is achieved. Let me outline just a few examples.

Concerning the selection of Senate nominees, we have given discretion to the provinces and territories to develop their own consultation processes. As I noted, the Senate reform act includes a voluntary framework that is meant to provide a basis for the development of consultation processes. However, we have been clear that provinces and territories are not bound to the rules proposed in the framework.

For example, the framework proposes that consultations use an electoral system known as plurality at large, which is a version of our first-past-the-post electoral system applied to multi-member districts. Despite this, the Prime Minister has indicated that he is willing to consider the names of any nominee that is selected by voters in a democratic process. This means that provinces and territories are free to choose an electoral system that will ensure effective representation for their citizens and that will account for local or regional considerations as may be determined necessary.

Turning to term limits, our government has made a number of amendments to respond to comments made during previous examinations of this proposal.

One change was to increase the term limit from an eight-year term to a nine-year term. From the beginning, the Prime Minister was clear that he was willing to be flexible on the length of the term, as long as the principle of the bill, a truly limited term, was respected.

Our government decided to increase the term limit by one year in response to concerns that in the future, eight-year term limits could allow a two-term prime minister to appoint the entire Senate. In modifying the term limits, we are demonstrating our flexibility and desire to work with colleagues in order to ensure that this important reform is adopted.

I would note that this is not the only change we have made with respect to term limits. When the bill to first limit the terms of senators was first introduced in 2006, the bill allowed for senators to be reappointed for further terms and proposed elimination of the mandatory retirement age for senators. Following study of the bill, a number of concerns were raised that renewable terms could compromise the independence of the Senate, since senators might modify their behaviour to attempt to have their terms renewed by the government of the day. Therefore, our government responded to this concern and all subsequent versions of the bill have proposed a single term.

During its study of the bill, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs recommended that the mandatory retirement age of 75 be maintained. When the bill was reintroduced in the last Parliament, the mandatory retirement age for senators was retained, illustrating our willingness to listen to our Senate colleagues. The Senate reform act would keep the mandatory retirement age for senators.

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I raise these points because I want to be clear about our commitment to both change and flexibility. Our goal is to begin the reform process and we want to be as constructive as we can while ensuring we move forward.

I believe it is fair to say that, while many in this House agree that changes to the Senate are necessary, we sometimes disagree on the way forward.

In contrast to the position of the other parties, it is clear that our government's approach is the practical and reasonable way forward. It is the approach that can truly achieve results. In fact, the stated positions of the opposition parties are essentially arguments in favour of the status quo. Their proposals have such a low chance of success that they might as well not even propose them at all.

For example, the official opposition would try to abolish the Senate. This position is untenable for a number of reasons.

First, there is no consensus among the provinces to abolish the Senate. To take away the Senate, without significant other reforms, would be to seriously damage the effective representation of large sections of our country in our Parliament.

•(1225)

A second reason why this approach is undesirable is simply because Canadians do not support this idea. Polls have consistently shown that this proposal does not garner popular support. Our second chamber, though flawed, can serve valuable democratic functions if we can reform it to make it more effective and legitimate.

We should have enough respect for institutions and our democracy toward the implementation of an institution in need of repair.

The position of the Liberal Party, on the other hand, has been to advocate for a process, not a result. The Liberals do not support the reform of the Senate. Their 13-year record of inaction demonstrates their opposition. They have been clear about this. Yet their suggestion is to open the Constitution and begin a process that we know would end in a bitter, drawn-out national conflict, without Senate reforms being achieved. Their approach is a recipe for accomplishing nothing.

I reject Liberal obstructionism and encourage the them to join us in implementing constructive reforms that are reasonable and achievable.

Let us be clear. Our reforms are reasonable and achievable. They are absolutely within Parliament's authority to enact.

Our government is dedicated to reforming the Senate so that it better reflects the values of hard-working Canadians across the country. My constituents tell me that they want change. I believe that the time for change in the Senate has come.

With the Senate reform act, our government is presenting modest but important and attainable changes that would improve the Senate by providing it with greater legitimacy in the eyes of Canadians. I consider the enhancement of our democratic institutions a significant responsibility and I am privileged to be working with my hon. colleagues to meet this common objective.

I encourage all my colleagues to work toward achieving these reforms, giving Canadians a stronger voice in determining who represents them in the Senate.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, my first comment for the minister would be this. Just because the government says that it will have reform, that does not make it good reform. We saw that with former Ontario Premier Mike Harris when he said that he would change the education system. The problem is that he made it worse. That is how we see this bill. It is reform, but it is bad reform. It takes us in the wrong direction.

My question is very straightforward. One of the key fundamental components of democracy is accountability. Given that no senator, under this law, is allowed to run for re-election, given the promises they make to get elected, how on earth are they ever held accountable for whether they kept those promises for the actions and the votes they did in office if the law prohibits them from being accountable? Where is the accountability?

•(1230)

Hon. Tim Uppal: Madam Speaker, first, it is obvious that the status quo in the Senate is unacceptable. Canadians have said this. Seven out of 10 believe it is unacceptable.

It is unfortunate. Although the NDP members talk about the reforms, they have not suggested any reforms that would be reasonable or practical, that could pass in this place and that would be a part of parliament's authority to move forward on. They have no ideas.

As for accountability in the Senate, the important thing is that the senators are not to be renewed. There would be one nine-year term limit. This would ensure that senators could not rely on a government to reappoint them. They could act independently, do their studies independently, they can speak independently and not have to rely upon a prime minister or a government to reappoint them. That is accountability.

Also, as term limits are over in nine years, this would continuously bring new and fresh ideas and new people in to the Senate, which is important.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, up to now, the minister's co-operation with the opposition has been very good. I want him for that. He should be an example for many of his colleagues and the staff of the government.

On the contents, though, we have, for now at least, a very deep disagreement.

First, section 42(1)(b) of our Constitution states that changing the method of selecting senators requires a 7/50 formula. The title of the bill is, "An Act respecting the selection of senators", so it is clearly an unconstitutional bill if it is done only by Parliament.

However, in relation to it, I would like to ask the minister this. Why is he willing to penalize his province this way? The very moment the Senate will be elected, since his province has only six senators, while New Brunswick, for example, has ten senators, it will be terribly powerful and unfair for the province of Alberta and the province of British Columbia. Why is he penalizing the west this way?

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Hon. Tim Uppal: Madam Speaker, the member talked about the constitutionality of the Senate selection process. It actually does not change the Senate selection process. We are asking the provinces to provide nominees. The Prime Minister would consider those nominees in making recommendations to the Governor General. That process will not change.

Under section 44 of the Constitution, these Senate reforms are completely within Parliament's authority to do. I will give two examples. The Liberals, in 1965, changed the lifetime term limit for senators to a term ending when a senator turned 75 years old.

Currently, Senator Brown has been selected in this way. There are precedents for both reforms in the Senate reform act.

As for changing the number of seats, the hon. member well knows that would require us to open up the Constitution. Canadians do not want a long drawn out constitutional battle. They want us to focus on the economy and keeping the streets safe.

We have an opportunity to move forward and make some reforms that would bring the upper chamber into a 21st century democracy. By stalling and requiring us to open up the Constitution, the Liberals are just standing for the status quo in the Senate.

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Madam Speaker, in his speech my colleague had thoughtful comments and ideas about Senate reform.

He mentioned that over 70% of Canadians wished to have reform and flexibility. It is unfortunate that our colleagues across the aisle do not wish to have that degree of flexibility and opportunity for Canadians to bring forward a more robust democracy.

I would ask the minister about the great ideas and responses that he is hearing from Canadians and which need to be implemented.

● (1235)

Hon. Tim Uppal: Madam Speaker, it is important to listen to Canadians and to have a sense of what they are saying about the Senate. I had an opportunity this summer to travel from coast to coast to listen to what Canadians are saying about the Senate. We are hearing over and over that the status quo in the Senate is not acceptable and that things must change.

Senators can serve terms of up to 45 years and they do not have a democratic mandate from Canadians.

Canadians want steps taken to have reasonable reforms to bring the Senate into a 21st century democracy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the minister for his speech. I would like to ask him a question.

The bill preamble states: "whereas Parliament wishes to maintain the essential characteristics of the Senate within Canada's parliamentary democracy as a chamber of independent, sober second thought".

Given that elections would make the Senate even more partisan, I am trying to understand how this reform could maintain the Senate as a chamber of independent thought.

[*English*]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Madam Speaker, it is absolutely important that the Senate continue to have its independence to freely do its studies and not be reliant upon the government for renewal or reappointment at any time. That is why we have proposed a non-renewable nine-year term. Senators would have the opportunity to be independent from the government.

We have changed the term from eight years to nine years so that a two-term prime minister could not appoint the entire Senate. A nine-year term is long enough for senators to learn the job and gain the necessary experience. It is also a reasonable amount of time to have new thoughts and new people who could add their perspectives as well.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have the dubious distinction of being the author of the first bill in the history of Canada to be killed in the Senate without debate or consideration or being sent to committee. It was a very distressing and difficult day when that bill which was passed after due diligence in the House was killed in the Senate.

Why do we not get serious about Senate reform and simply do away with this useless appendage to a dysfunctional government?

Hon. Tim Uppal: Madam Speaker, I am surprised that the member is not completely jumping for joy regarding Senate reform. He said that he has concerns about the Senate. That is why we are bringing forward these reforms. Senators elected in their provinces by Canadians who are being represented by them in the Senate would be more accountable to Canadians and voters in their provinces. That is why we prefer to reform the Senate. It is an important institution of Parliament. It is important that we try to make it better, make it more legitimate and democratic so it can serve the purpose that we believe it should.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address this bill. Let me say at the outset that my first reaction to the notion of electing a Senate was probably not unlike that of many Canadians. We have an unelected appointed Senate, we have abolition and then there is election. The Canadian character being what it is, of not wanting the status quo and looking at abolition as maybe too radical, the comfort zone is that election, the bowl of porridge in the middle, is the way to go.

The reality is that the most radical thing we could do in this country is elect the Senate, give it a mandate and create the kind of gridlock we see in the U.S. That is radical. Long before we go down that road, we should be asking Canadians whether they even want a Senate, yes or no. That will tell us what the mandate of the country is rather than just our deciding that we know best in terms of constructing our Parliament.

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I also want to indicate that I have some criticisms of the Senate as an institution, but none of my remarks are meant to reflect on individual senators. In fact, I have the greatest regard and respect for most of the senators that I work with. An example of a great Canadian currently in the Senate is a woman from Saskatchewan. I have spoken about her before. She is a fantastic Canadian who does an excellent job. The only problem is there is no mandate or right in that place to pass judgment on laws. We should be using people like them for the betterment of Canada but we ought to be using them in way where we ask them to do specific work and not necessarily be a part of the law-making process. My comments are not about individual senators, and I say again that I have the greatest and utmost respect for most of them.

Let us recall the history of the Senate and how we got here. This originated back in the British Parliament. It was the House of Lords. The whole purpose was to control all the commoners who were starting to get some rights. As the Magna Carta started to take hold, ordinary commoners like us suddenly had a say in the governing of their country. Therefore, the House of Lords was created to make sure that the unwashed masses did not run amok and screw things up for people who were doing quite well in that country and got more than their share of the cream that the country produced. Even the current Prime Minister has said the Senate is a relic of the 19th century.

I will use my words to describe this bill and I am going to comment on each aspect as I go along. It is radical, dangerous, undemocratic, misleading, and not at all what Canadians need.

Hon. John Baird: Tell us where you stand.

Mr. David Christopherson: Madam Speaker, I am so glad the Minister of Foreign Affairs has joined us. It means we are going to have a very entertaining afternoon. It reminds me of the good old days back in the Ontario legislature. I am glad the minister is here and I am looking forward to the next half hour or so.

I said that it is radical. To me, this is arguably the most important aspect of what we are debating. If we elect the Senate, we would radically change Parliament. I said that just now, but who else said that? The Supreme Court in 1980 said, "The substitution of a system of election for a system of appointment would involve a radical change in the nature of one of the component parts of Parliament".

The Supreme Court said that this is radical. It is not usually known for knee-jerk reactions and going over the top. It is certainly not known as being hard right or hard left. It just looks at the facts. It sees that this is radical, and it is, because if we abolished the Senate and brought proportional representation to this House, we would be more than adequately equipped to govern the 35 million people in this country. The provinces proved this when they abolished their senates.

•(1240)

One of the reasons it is radical is that the Senate killed my colleague's Bill C-311, a bill which passed this House at least twice, and the Senate had no right. Every member of the House, right, wrong or indifferent, has a mandate to be here and to vote and pass judgment on laws. Senators do not. They do not have a moral,

ethical mandate; a constitutional one, yes; a moral and ethical one, no. Is that democratic? Certainly not.

If we elected the Senate and Bill C-311 passed this House again, what would happen over there? The Senate would kill it again, only now the senators would be all puffed up and would say, "We have an electoral mandate to do this. Yes, the House of Commons passed it, and yes they are elected members, and they have the mandate and the trust of the people who elected them, but so do we. We are not with the party in the House; we are with a different party and therefore we will do things differently. One of the things we will do is stop any kind of progressive legislation that actually protects the environment in this country."

If we want to see where we are heading in terms of a radical proposal that is also dangerous for us as Canadians, we only need look at what happened recently in the U.S. Congress. There was a piece of legislation on the debt limit that members had to pass in order to borrow money to keep the economy going. Normally it is a routine thing. It passed under President Reagan umpteen times, no big deal. Because of the partisan split where the House of Representatives is Republican controlled and the Senate is democratically controlled, all the interests of the American people seemed to be set aside as the two parties fought each other to the brink of a crisis. It put the world on alert for a financial crisis because the two houses have their own independent mandate.

Is that what we want? Do we really need to complicate the process of governing more? Do we need to spend more money? That place already costs almost \$100 million a year. Think of what we could do with that \$100 million promoting our own democracy.

The other reason it is dangerous is that the house that would be created would be like the house of Frankenstein, and no one should take that personally. There would be people who would serve until age 75. Under this legislation there would be some people who would serve for nine years and some people who promised to serve only eight years who would get a free bonus year. Then there would be some provinces that elect people and some that would not. There are some provinces that believe, like us in the official opposition, that we ought to abolish the Senate, so they would not elect anyone. We must think about it. It would be like the bar scene from *Star Wars* over there. Never mind the gridlock between us, they would be gridlocked over there. Trying to get anything out of that house would be a serious challenge.

The last reason it is dangerous is that it gives the impression we are making things better. I mentioned that the former premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, used the same technique as we are seeing here. The minister in one of his opening remarks said, "I'm bringing reform". By virtue of that we are all supposed to say it is wonderful and thank him for the reform, but as we saw with Mike Harris, just because it is reform does not make it good reform.

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Hon. John Baird: Don't yell.

Mr. David Christopherson: Madam Speaker, my friend, the foreign affairs minister woke up again and realizes we may be getting into some interesting areas.

The change that was brought in Ontario was a nightmare for our education system. We are still trying to get out of the mess that the change brought us. This reform is the same thing. Yes, it is reform, but it is not good reform; in fact it is very bad reform. One of the reasons it is bad is that it is so undemocratic.

● (1245)

I asked the minister what I thought was a reasonable question about accountability, one of the major tenets of democracy. I said that, when we run for office, we all make promises. At the end of our term, we go back to our constituents and we ask them how we did. We ask if they were satisfied with the representation we gave them or if they want to fire us and hire someone else. We put ourselves out there publicly and the people pass their judgment. That is accountability. Just the fact that someone is elected does not make it a democratic process unless they are held accountable.

The senators will run on promises, get elected, serve nine years and then leave. There is no accountability. By law, they cannot run again, so how can they be held accountable. They will be elected on promises and the other half of a promise in a democracy is to be held to account for it. I am held to account for every word I speak, every vote I cast and every action I take. I am held accountable. I have a constituency office where people can reach me.

Elected senators will not be accountable. They cannot be by law. It is crazy to call this democratic when they will not be held to account because the law prevents it. That is what we are heading into.

It is also undemocratic because of what the Prime Minister said. It is a cute little technique. I am not a lawyer so I do not know if it will pass constitutional muster. However, what he is doing is maintaining the Constitution that says that the Prime Minister appoints senators. He is leaving that in place and all this sort of rests below it. It is the process that leads to a list of names that are put in front of the Prime Minister.

I think there is at least a constitutional argument that they are okay but it does not deal with the democratic deficit that is in this bill. The Prime Minister does not need to appoint those people.

Some would ask how a prime minister of the day could ever say no to an elected Senator from any province. That is a good question, a fair question. Might I also pose: Who would ever think that a prime minister in the same Parliament that he passed a fixed election date law would violate his own law in the same Parliament?

It is quite possible that we could see a political situation where a party that is in government in a province is a real thorn in the side of the government of the day. I will use the present government as an example. It elects some people and one person it elects is somebody who is very loud, very opinionated and who will not shut up when people want him to. The prime minister looks at that and asks himself or herself if he or she really wants to bring this problem into his or her back yard.

There is no guarantee that the democratic choice of the people will be honoured. Therefore, how can one call it democratic?

I would also mention that, under what is being proposed, all the costs get pushed to the provinces. In some situations it might get pushed to the municipalities, believe it or not. In these economic times, does anyone really think the provinces look at the federal government with any kind of affection when it is handing them more things to pay for that the provinces already cannot afford?

The federal government should at least have the decency to pay for its own bill. These people will be federal parliamentarians, so why are they not paid at the federal level? It is misleading. Everything about the Senate is misleading.

One of the things the minister talked about, and I am not quoting so I stand to be corrected, was the important regional representation and interest that the Senate does and can provide. I do not think I am too far off there.

We need to remember that the cover story when the Senate was created was not to keep an eye on the unwashed masses who were suddenly being thrown into the House of Commons. No. The cover story was that these would be regional representatives. They would represent the regions and the provinces of this vast country. We are the second biggest land mass country in the world with a relatively small population.

The cover story for the Senate was that we needed them there, that we would deal with the riding issues and local issues and the Senate would deal with the regional issues and protect the provinces' interests.

● (1250)

It did not turn out that way, not for one second. First, any thought of sober second thought is a joke. The Senate has House leaders and whips, and opposition leaders and whips. Why does it need whips if it has independence? Many senators attend caucus meetings. The whip of the official opposition is a very good fellow but that does not change my argument one bit. That good fellow should get elected and come here, not stay over there. That is a good idea.

The premiers have some strong opinions about these things. It is interesting to note that Premier Wall from Saskatchewan fears that he knows the answer. Earlier this year, when he was asked about the elected Senate, he said:

I think we could get a little bit more enthused even about the whole thing if it became clear that this was not about just an expanded parliamentary caucus for existing parties.

Is that not an interesting quote?

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I have a letter from a certain elected senator, whose name I shall not mention, dated June 15 of this year, addressed to members of the CPC Senate caucus. Where do the sober second thought caucus people meet? He said:

Dear Senators,

Yesterday, in Senate caucus Minister...[for Democratic Reform] was showered with complaints about Senate elections and a nine year term.

The last paragraph is the key, and this is the issue about whether the Senate represents the regions or whether it represents caucus interests. It reads:

Every senator in this caucus needs to decide where their loyalty should be and must be. The answer is simple; our loyalty is with the man who brought us here, the man who has wanted Senate reform since he entered politics, the Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper.

That senator's priority was to be loyal to the Prime Minister, not his region and not his province. Abolish the Senate. This is a bad idea.

• (1255)

The Deputy Speaker: I would just remind all members, as this debate heats up, that it is the custom in the House not to mention the name of sitting members. I trust all members will continue to direct their comments through the Chair.

The hon. Minister of State for Democratic Reform.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech with great interest and I picked up on two things from it.

First, he agrees with us that there needs to be some type of Senate reform, that we need to make some changes to the Senate. He does not agree with the way it is today, the status quo. Canadians agree with us, so that is what this government is doing.

The other thing that I picked up on is the fact that he has no ideas. NDP members do not have any ideas. They have nothing constructive to provide to us. The only idea they really have is to abolish the Senate. I am sure my colleague knows that would require a constitutional battle. It would open up the Constitution.

Does the member really believe that drawn out constitutional battles is the way to go, is what the government should spend its time on, or should we move forward with Senate reforms that are reasonable, measured and within Parliament's authority to do?

Mr. David Christopherson: Madam Speaker, the minister said that we support some changes. No, not really. We just want to get rid of the darn thing.

The minister also said that Canadians agree with his government and then went on to talk about the bill.

The minister also said that we were not proposing anything. We proposed two things. We did it in the last Parliament, we will do it in this Parliament and we will keep doing it until we are government and can make these changes. We proposed a referendum asking the Canadian people if they want a Senate, yes or no. We also proposed bringing proportional representation to that place and making it truly democratic.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, would my colleague agree that because Canada

is a federation, if there is a provision in the Constitution that says that if a fundamental change is made to the Senate that means it would affect not only Parliament but the legislative assemblies of the provinces and the country as a whole? A bill like this will surely be considered unconstitutional if it is supported by Parliament.

Would he also not agree that all the provinces would be affected, but that the minister's province of Alberta and the province of British Columbia would be terribly affected since they are so under-represented in the Senate?

Mr. David Christopherson: Madam Speaker, I would need to look carefully, but I pretty much agree with everything the member had to say. Whether or not it ends up being unconstitutional, my colleague should make no mistake that Quebec will send this to the Supreme Court of Canada, as will some of the other provinces.

The government knows that this bill will never see the light of day in terms of being law. This is a big political charade meant to look like the government is doing something while knowing that nothing will happen. What really hurts is that if it ever actually did, it would hurt our Parliament and our ability to govern ourselves in the most democratic way.

• (1300)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hamilton Centre for his fiery speech and the way he stood up for so many Canadians who supported the New Democratic Party. Many of them refer to our position on the abolishment of the Senate, the way we speak out for them and the position we bring forward to the House of Commons as the key reasons for supporting us.

The member talked about the nature and history of the Senate. The actual structure of the Senate is a relic of our past. For example, I could not be in the Senate because I am under the age of 30. Almost 20 NDP members of Parliament are under the age of 30 and they could not be in the Senate.

If the Senate is supposed to be an institution that represents the Canadian people, is it not inherently discriminatory? Is it not against the democratic right of Canadians to elect whomever they want to represent them, including young people whose voices need to be heard in this Parliament?

Mr. David Christopherson: Madam Speaker, it is amazing that in this day and age it is quite all right for that highly competent MP to represent her constituents here in the House of Commons but, by law, cannot go to that other place. This is one more example of how dumb the whole thing is.

If we were to bring in proportional representation, we would have the ability to ensure that more segments of our population are represented here. As much as each party tries, the House is still not representative of the Canadian people demographically. We have a lot of work to do in this House but the first step is getting rid of that House.

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Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to address the colourful reference the hon. member made to Frankenstein's monster. He said that we would have a variety of different kinds of mandates, and that when members of the House are elected with different kinds of mandates, we would have different kinds of responsibilities, which would lead to a dog's breakfast of Frankenstein's monster.

I could tell that he felt strongly about it because his voice went up an octave when he did it and I heard a wine glass shattering somewhere.

He favours proportional representation, the multi-member proportional system for the House of Commons. Under that system, some members came from a party list and some were elected from individual ridings.

Given that he feels so strongly that different kinds of mandates lead to this kind of Frankenstein's monster, why is he advocating turning this House into a Frankenstein's monster and removing all checks and balances and giving it complete control over the affairs of the country? That seems inherently incompatible with his statements about mixed mandates in the Senate.

Mr. David Christopherson: Madam Speaker, I knew when the hon. member got up it would be a thoughtful, intelligent question and probably a little tough. It was all of those things.

I stand by what I said. I am disappointed that it was wine glasses I shattered; I would rather it would be a thoughtful, intelligent question and probably a little tough. It was all of those things.

I understand the question. I would just say that the Frankenstein, to use that reference, was because of the cherry-picking, all these different ideas and different pieces that do not fit together.

The notion of proportional representation does contain the element that the member says, but let us understand that this is only one model of proportional representation. We have not said anything about a particular model being cast in stone; we just think we ought to start a dialogue with Canadians about what kind of proportional representation model we should adopt to bring into the House.

The second thing is that most of the models are well established. In reality, we are very far behind in terms of democracy. We think of ourselves as a mature modern democracy, and we are in so many ways, but with that Senate over there, we are not.

Proportional representation is about as mainstream as it can get in Europe and many other countries. The fundamental aspect that some people have a direct election and some are on a list is an issue, but it is a systemic issue that is built into a model that has been tested and used in many countries around the world, whereas this hybrid monster really is not anything.

We will have senators over there fighting among themselves over all kinds of issues. As I said, that is a gridlock in and of itself, and that is before we even get to the point of the gridlock that happens here.

My friend from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville raised this point, and I want to give him credit for it: if we do get into the gridlock that the Americans have, the Americans at least have a mechanism, the

conference committee, to deal with it in some way. We do not have one. We have no ability to deal with the gridlock that exists between two elected houses.

Not only is this a bad idea, it is not even well thought out.

• (1305)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague is completely right to raise the issue of the danger of a gridlock and blockages and so on.

At a time when the economy is doing so badly and the United States situation is so awful, how can the government claim that they care so much about the economy, and that it is a priority, when it is planning to create a stalemate here in the Parliament of Canada?

Mr. David Christopherson: Madam Speaker, I suspect, based on the question he is asking, that the government thinks it is a fine idea because it controls the Senate right now. If it did not control the House under the current system, it would still control the Senate, so it probably does not give much of a darn.

It works for the Conservatives the way it is now. These plans will work for them. Everything works for them. The problem is that the bill does not work for Canadians.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Liberal Party does not oppose Senate reform, but it must be done right and in accordance with the Constitution.

There are three reasons the Liberal opposition cannot support the bill.

First, it is the conviction of the Liberal opposition that such an act would be unconstitutional. The fundamental changes it proposes cannot be implemented by Parliament alone. These changes would require the support of at least seven provinces, representing 50% of the Canadian population, notably because appointing senators through a patchwork of voluntary provincial senatorial elections is clearly a fundamental change; limiting the senators' tenure to nine years is a significant change; and giving the Prime Minister the power to name the totality of senators at the end of two mandates of four and a half years would strengthen his power considerably, another significant change.

Second, such an act would be against the interests of two of our provinces, Alberta and British Columbia. Here is why: practically speaking, an elected upper chamber would carry more weight in its dealings with the House of Commons than it does in its present form. The problem is that both western provinces are better represented in the House than they are in the Senate, and both provinces have only six senators, while some provinces have 10 with a population four or six times smaller.

Third, such an act could provoke frequent blockages in Parliament in the absence of a constitutional mechanism to resolve any conflicts that might arise between an elected House of Commons and an elected Senate.

For those three reasons, we propose that the government abandon this bill, or at least refer it to the Supreme Court to verify its constitutionality.

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[Translation]

I would like to elaborate on each of these three objections, which have led the Liberal opposition to determine that this bill is not in the interest of Canadians. One issue is that if this bill becomes law, we will have to expect arguments that would pit one elected chamber against the other elected chamber, creating delays and roadblocks in Parliament. Just think of the frequent intercameral paralysis experienced by our neighbours to the south.

In fact, the situation could be even worse here than in the United States, because Canada does not have a constitutional mechanism to bridge the gaps between two elected chambers. Both could claim the same legitimacy and claim to speak for the people.

What is the government thinking? What does the minister have in mind? Does he really want to bring the same paralysis we see in the United States or in Mexico here to Canada? Do we not have enough challenges here in Canada without thoughtlessly burdening our decision-making process?

This seems like a very bad idea, especially when we consider that Canada is a decentralized federation with 11 governments—14 including the territories—that have important powers and responsibilities. In such a decentralized federation, it is important that federal institutions, common to all citizens, work well and quickly, before drafting legislation or making decisions that may or may not be popular, but that at least are not constrained by the ritual opposition of two elected chambers, an opposition that would be exacerbated by the absence of a constitutional dispute resolution mechanism.

It is important to realize that the government's muddled plan would have senators appointed through a patchwork system of optional provincial elections. Funding for these federal elections would come from the provinces, and even though they would be federal elections, the federal parties would be excluded from the electoral process. The provincial parties would control these federal elections. What a mess.

It is not surprising that a number of provincial governments have said they are not planning to put up funds for these federal elections. This bill is the antithesis of common sense and it is unconstitutional to boot. If this bill passes, the resulting legislation would be declared unconstitutional because the fundamental changes it would cause could not be implemented by Parliament alone. These changes could only be made with the support of at least seven provinces representing 50% of the Canadian population. This unilateral initiative is another manifestation of the Prime Minister's style of government: controlling and centralizing. This attitude shows disrespect for the provinces and a lack of understanding of what Canadian federalism is.

• (1310)

[English]

Indeed, many of the provinces have said that they believe this proposal is not something that can be done unilaterally. They believe they should be involved, and they want to be involved in these proposed Senate reforms. In other words, it is not just we who are saying the federal government cannot do this alone: the provinces say that, and they want a voice.

Wrong for the whole of Canada, this bill is especially ill-conceived for the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. We are far from being alone in saying that. Both British Columbia Premier Christy Clark and former Alberta Premier Don Getty rightly point out that this version of Senate reform would be bad for their respective provinces. As the *Edmonton Journal* wrote, “second thoughts” must be given to this plan.

Let us look at the numbers. Alberta has 9.1% of the total number of members of Parliament, but only 5.7% of the senators. The gap is even larger for British Columbia, with 11.7% of the members in the House of Commons and only 5.7% of the members of the Senate. Let us compare these provinces with New Brunswick, which counts 10 senators for a population 4.8 times smaller than Alberta's and 6.1 times smaller than British Columbia's.

This unbalanced distribution of Senate seats, an historical artifact, is a problem for the two western provinces and an anomaly for our federation. The government's reform would make the situation much worse.

In the existing unelected Senate, this problem is mitigated by the fact that our senators play the constitutional role with moderation, letting the elected House of Commons have the final word most of the time. However, in an elected Senate, with members able to invoke as much democratic legitimacy as their House counterparts—if not more, since they would represent provinces rather than ridings—the under-representation of British Columbia and Alberta would take on its full scope and significance.

Of course, elected senators from the other provinces would not be hostile to the interests of Alberta and British Columbia, their duty being to address the interests of the whole country, but these senators would be more familiar with, and closer to, the interests of the voters of the province where they were elected.

Premier Charest has already announced that his government will challenge the constitutionality of this unilateral Senate reform in the courts. Premiers Stelmach and Clark will serve the interests of their provinces well if they join their Quebec colleague in this court action.

Do Canadians need and want the waste of time, effort, money and goodwill that the government's initiative would cause? I think not. It is time for the Prime Minister, a Calgarian, and the Minister of Democratic Reform, an Edmontonian, to give this issue a second sober thought and abandon this ill-advised and ill-conceived Senate reform plan, an ill-advised and problem-fraught plan for Alberta, British Columbia and the whole of Canada in English *et en français*.

• (1315)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague has indicated that regional unfairness is an issue. I am notorious in my own party as a supporter of greater equality between members in selecting our leaders, so I have natural sympathy with that.

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However, I wonder if he really supports what he is saying. He is quite right that there are 10 senators each for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick—actually, there are 12 each. There are four senators for Prince Edward Island, which results from the fact that because of another provision of our Constitution, Prince Edward Island has a minimum number of MPs, causing the average riding in P.E.I. to be about one-third the size of a riding in Ontario, and so on.

Is he in favour of eliminating all these things? Would he be willing to start, for example, by doing something that I personally do not support, which is cutting the number of senators for New Brunswick and Nova Scotia down to six, or perhaps fewer, in order to have some kind of population balance with British Columbia and Alberta?

If he is not, or if he is not willing to suggest an amendment that would lead to the opposite conclusion, then I suggest he is just coming up with these objections as a way of trying to prevent any progress from being made and is repeating the old Liberal line that until we have perfect reform, which is unachievable, we should have no reform at all and stick to an appointed Senate, which in due course would be appointed by Liberal governments based on Liberal partisans as it was in the past.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, it is true that in Canada there is no agreement about the number of senators each province should have and it is a problem for two provinces that are very underrepresented. But why make this problem worse and significantly worse by the reform my colleague and his party are proposing today?

Between 1945 and today the Senate rejected only seven bills from the House. So the Senate has been quite prudent and reserved about its own role. Imagine if they were elected? Do members think there would only be seven bills during half a century that would be stuck by an elected Senate? No, it would be daily life, it would do it all the time. Only six Albertans would be there to make their mind known. It would be terribly unfair. I care about each province in my country and it is why I am clearly against the bill.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for an excellent speech and an excellent analysis. I particularly enjoyed the analysis because it comes from a respected academic perspective which is about the antithesis of everything that I bring to it with a grade nine education, but I do have an experiential viewpoint from 26 years of being elected at all three orders of government. That is why my question is about accountability.

From my limited academic point of view, it looks to me like there is no room for accountability. I asked the minister as my first question, where is the accountability given the importance of that in a democracy and the minister either could not, or would not articulate an answer.

I would ask my colleague, have I missed something? Is there an element of accountability that I am not seeing, or is it clearly missing from this reform bill?

• (1320)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to say that I understand the appetite for having members of Parliament and senators elected in a democracy. I understand that and it is popular in Canada. The second step is how can we do it in a

way that will help the country and every region of the country. The way the minister wants to do this will be awful. It would create stalemates. It will paralyze us. It will not create better policy-making, to the contrary, and it will accentuate this proportion of unfairness for some regions of our country, especially Alberta and British Columbia.

By definition, I am not saying it is wrong to have elected senators. I am saying it is wrong to do it this way for everyone.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's knowledgeable speech on this. I am from one of the most affected provinces, British Columbia, so I would like to pose to my colleague this question. Could he give us a greater idea and more details about the kind of inequities that would be placed on the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta by this Conservative government proposal?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, on every bill in the Senate, British Columbia and Alberta would be very underrepresented and in any democracy that I know of, to be underrepresented is bad news. Today it is a problem, but it is manageable because the Senate at the end of the day almost always gives the last word to the House.

British Columbia and Alberta are much better represented and we will work on some things that will make their representation even better in the House in the coming weeks, but not in the Senate. In the Senate it cannot be changed and the minister did not answer my question. He said that the distribution of senators by province cannot be changed other than by the Constitution. I agree with him. So that means that forever British Columbia and Alberta will be terribly underrepresented in one of the two elected chambers of this country. Is that really what he wants for his province?

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is curious that the minister is not taking the opportunity to ask my colleague some questions with respect to what I would regard as a very thoughtful speech and a detailed deconstruction of what is clearly a flawed bill.

We have seen some pretty awful situations in the United States recently with constitutional and political gridlock between two houses which are elected. As others have said, there is a conference mechanism wherein people of goodwill can in effect work out their differences.

It seems to me that one of the core points the hon. member raises in his speech is the institutionalization of gridlock between the two houses. As I think about what he has elucidated, I think he is right. I am curious as to how the hon. member sees that happening over time as each develops its own culture.

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Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, it is a big concern for me. Canada is a complex country to govern, and friends in the Conservative Party are realizing that more and more. It is a huge country, very decentralized. There is little that Ottawa can do alone without at least consulting the provinces. Also the aboriginal people have to have their say.

Why add an even more complex situation when the common institution of the country, the Parliament of Canada will, most of the time, like in the United States, be blocked by partisan differences between the two elected houses, the two elected chambers?

I think it is ill-advised to do so. We should at least have a long debate. I would urge the minister to ensure to have hearings. Many experts will come and explain to the minister how dangerous this bill is for Canada.

● (1325)

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Madam Speaker, 70% of Canadians have said that they want some form of reform. I would just like to ask, does the member opposite really want a constitutional quagmire? That is what he is proposing.

Canadians want action. They elected a strong, stable, Conservative government to create reform. We are moving forward with that. Why does the member opposite want to put us in a constitutional quagmire?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, in fact, it is the bill that will create the quagmire. The hon. member must understand that.

Alberta and British Columbia will see that on every bill they will be so unfairly represented that they will request a constitutional change to be sure that they will have their fair share. It will be completely understandable.

As the member well knows, there will not be one politician in Quebec or Ontario who will be willing to change that. So we will have the quagmire that the member is speaking about, and it is what I do not want. I am sure she does not want it either. So the member should say no to this bill.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I had come with the intention of giving a fairly dry speech full of historical references. I am a comparative historian, so I was going to make all kinds of comparisons to other countries, but I have heard so many things today that just do not seem to bear with what I would consider to be the facts. So I thought I would, instead, turn my attention to responding to some of the, I am sure, sincerely meant but completely incorrect statements made by some of my colleagues today.

I want to start with the completely erroneous and baseless statement that this amendment would represent some kind of unconstitutional change to our Constitution. Let me start with that.

First, I should draw the attention of members to the fact that the bill contains two parts. Part of the bill is an ordinary piece of legislation that deals with the subject of how senators would be elected using the advisory election process. That process then causes individuals' names to be submitted to the Prime Minister. I will read

that part of the bill, if I could. It is very brief. Part 1, clause 3 of the bill states:

If a province or territory has enacted legislation that is substantially in accordance with the framework set out in the schedule, the Prime Minister, in recommending Senate nominees to the Governor General, must consider names from the most current list of Senate nominees selected for that province or territory.

There is then a schedule that outlines what the rules would be for such an election to qualify the individual to be treated in that manner by the Prime Minister.

Part 2 of the bill is actually an amendment to the Constitution of Canada. My colleague from Saint-Laurent—Cartier made a reference to unconstitutionality and he can correct me if I have misunderstood what he was asserting, but I believe he was referring to Part 2 of the legislation. On that basis, I will now turn to dealing with any objections to constitutionality that he may believe exist.

I should first correct something he said. He said that the changes to the Senate are governed by subsection 42(1), the amending formula, of the Constitution Act and that is only partly true. I have subsection 42(1) with me and it reads as follows:

An amendment to the Constitution of Canada in relation to the following matters may be made only in accordance with subsection 38(1)—

Subsection 38(1) is the 7-50 formula.

Paragraph (b) of subsection 42(1) states, “the powers of the Senate and the method of selecting Senators”. That is the paragraph he referred to. Paragraph (c) says, “the number of members by which a province is entitled to be represented in the Senate and the residence qualifications of Senators”. These two things require the 7-50 formula. Seven provinces with half the population must approve it or it cannot go forward. This is the kind of discussion that tends to lead to constitutional quagmires.

By contrast, section 44 of the Constitution Act, 1982 is the amending formula. Our Constitution has five amending formulae for different parts of our Constitution. Section 44 says, “Subject to sections 41 and 42, Parliament may exclusively make laws amending the Constitution of Canada in relation to the executive government of Canada or the Senate and House of Commons”. The question is: Does this proposed change fall under section 44 or is it not in fact under that section and, therefore, does it fall back under the 7-50 amending formula? The answer to that is it does, indeed, fall under section 44. This is established law.

Section 44 is the governing formula because of the fact that it is the replacement for another section that allowed the Parliament of Canada to make amendments exclusively in certain areas. There is widespread acceptance that section 44 is the replacement for the subsection 91(1) amending formula that was put in place for Canada in 1949.

● (1330)

That formula read that, “It shall be lawful for the Queen, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate and House of Commons, to make laws” dealing with the following classes of subjects:

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The amendment from time to time of the Constitution of Canada, except as regards matters coming within the classes of subjects by this Act assigned exclusively to the Legislatures of the provinces, or as regards rights or privileges by this or any other Constitutional Act granted or secured to the Legislature or the Government of a province, or to any class of persons with respect to schools or as regards the use of the English or the French language or as regards the requirements that there shall be a session of the Parliament...at [least] once [every] year, and that no House of Commons shall continue for more than five years from the [date] of the return of the Writs for choosing the House....

The subsection 91.1 formula was used in 1965 by the Pearson government and the Parliament at the time to change the Constitution, causing senators to no longer be elected for life, but rather to be elected until age 75.

There are the precedents for doing it this way.

I want to take a few moments to mention some other considerations here.

The practice of having a section 44 amendment, that is an amendment to the Constitution authorized under section 44 of the Constitution contained in a piece of legislation, a bill dealing with ordinary legislative matters in one part and then with an amendment to the Constitution in the other part of the same bill, is an established practice. It has done been a number of times. I would point, in particular, to the act passed in 1999 that created the territory of Nunavut. That act contained some ordinary legislation and also an amendment, an amendment that dealt with the Senate of Canada because it awarded a senator to the territory of Nunavut.

Therefore, the established practice of doing things in this manner, as authorized by this section of the Constitution, has existed for no small amount of time, it is well-precedented and there is considerable scholarship to back up the assertion that the subsection 91.1 amending formula is the parent of the section 44 amending formula.

I turn now to some other issues that were raised in the earlier debate.

I mentioned my frustration with the argument that we cannot engage in piecemeal reform, that we must engage only in a complete reform. I think this leads to a constitutional quagmire. The perfect becomes the enemy of the good and we achieve no change whatsoever. That is a very strong reason for opposing the arguments made by the hon. for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

I want to mention in particular that we do deal in this bill with some very significant points. We do not deal with the issue of regional fairness. That is quite true. We do deal with the election versus appointment issue. Members would be, in a formal sense, appointed by the Governor General, and the Governor General's powers are very carefully protected under the text of this bill. However, nonetheless, a de facto election takes place. On the term length of senators, they cannot be appointed at age 40 and serve for 35 years. That is also dealt with.

As for regional fairness, and this is always a vexed question, it is in the nature of upper houses to tend to not reflect representation by population or the principle of one person, one vote; one vote, one weight and therefore that presumably justifies some inequality. I think the inequality in our current upper house is excessive. On the other hand, to argue that therefore we must ensure that the upper house is powerless is to say that we must eviscerate one of the basic

concepts of federalism because of the assumed belief that, as the member said, no politicians in Ontario or Quebec would support a change to correct that unfairness of representation. That would be a very wrong thing.

Remember, every long-standing federation in the world, every successful federation in the world, has an independent upper house, which is based, at least to some degree, on considerations other than representation by population. There are two senators per state in the United States. In Australia it was originally six per state, then eventually 12 per state. It of course have only six states. In the upper house in Switzerland, there are two per canton. There are some what they call half-cantons, such as Appenzell Innerrhoden and Appenzell Auserrhoden, which get one senator each, but everybody else gets two. Germany has a somewhat different system but, again, it is not based on representation by population. There is some over-representation for the smaller *länder*s.

• (1335)

The idea of having some kind of equality is there. We could work towards a more principled kind of equality. I really think there is sufficient good will. However, we should not halt any progress because we are searching for perfection on that point.

Let me deal with something else on the same subject. The idea that the upper house ought to be kept effectively illegitimate so it cannot second guess the lower house, leads logically toward the NDP position to abolish the upper house rather than to the position taken by the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

We have to be realistic about this. The upper house cannot be abolished without a 7/50 amendment, without 7 provinces with half the population agreeing to that amendment. The chances of getting that kind of success—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Unanimity of provinces. It is unanimity.

Mr. Scott Reid: I just heard the member say “unanimity”, and he may well be right. I may be incorrect on that statement. The point is that it is very difficult to achieve that kind of change. Getting that change is also not really an option.

The fact is that the only option aside from leaving an appointed upper house, which simply reflects the partisan interests of either the government of the day or the government of recent memory, is a pretty undesirable alternative to any kind of reform whatsoever. I do not think that is the approach we ought to take.

The hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville said that the Senate has only blocked seven bills since 1945 and warned against the danger of it blocking bills. I would just ask this question. Surely no one will argue that the House of Commons and Senate together have not passed more than seven bad acts of Parliament since 1945? Surely there have been things that should have been stopped in the Senate.

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Surely the point of having checks and balances, which is a principle in our government, a principle in the government of all those other federations, and indeed in any civilized government, is something we ought to be protecting and honouring. This means that certain decisions that I personally would like to see would be blocked by an elected Senate, and also some that I would like to see stopped.

In general, the search for a greater consensus, something that does not simply reflect the will of a mandate achieved at one instant in time on election day in a certain election, is a worthwhile endeavour.

On that basis alone, it is absolutely vital we have a Senate that can be effective, as our Senate currently and most emphatically is not.

I mentioned a bit about the Frankenstein's monster argument that was presented by the member for Hamilton Centre. After he made his comments in response to my question, he noted that the multi-member proportional system, which has multiple mandates, is one that is precedented, it exists elsewhere, unlike the idea that an upper house has multiple types of mandates.

In fact, that is actually not correct. The Swiss upper house has multiple types of mandates. The members sent from different cantons are elected by different methods. They are elected by Landsgemeinde, an assembly of all the citizens in some of the so-called mountain cantons in the eastern part of the country. They are elected by different systems elsewhere. That is the decision of the individual canton.

There is a system that exists, and has been in existence for many years, quite successfully with more than one kind of mandate. In fact, if one looks around, they can discover that there are many legislatures in many parts of the world where multiple mandates are used. I think one should be careful about these things. One does not want to overdo it.

I point out that in this case what is being proposed is simply a method for transitioning out of the status quo where some people were appointed after 2008, promising to serve a mixed mandate, others were appointed before that time, having made no such promise, and those coming in after the passage of this amendment to the Constitution would be under a third system.

In the long run, there would one type of mandate for everybody. We are simply going through a transition process, and not one that I think would be damaging.

I also want to deal with the suggestion made by the member for Hamilton Centre that this is in some respect undemocratic. The whole point of this is to be democratic. His argument was that a prime minister might not recommend the individual who won an election. Let us remember the relevant part of the act, which I read to everybody, and I will read it again:

If a province or territory has enacted legislation that is substantially in accordance with the framework set out in the schedule, the Prime Minister, in recommending Senate nominees to the Governor General, must consider names from the most current list of Senate nominees selected for that province or territory.

● (1340)

It is binding on the Prime Minister. In true theory it is not binding upon the Governor General.

I think the point the member was making, and he will be able to reiterate that point if I do not get it correct, was that a prime minister might simply ignore this advice. The fact is that there is no penalty in the bill for doing so. Therefore, I see his point.

I would point out that in the discussions that took place for the parallel piece of legislation on Senate reform proposed in the 39th Parliament, the opposite objection was made by a number of witnesses. They said that the problem was that we would be establishing a convention which would become too firmly rooted and that the Prime Minister would, regardless of what objections he might have, be forced to follow the advice by the enormous political pressure. The argument then went on that this convention would cause this to be a de facto power of appointment being given to the people and that would mean the Governor General would lose his independent ability to appoint the senators and therefore it would be unconstitutional.

I will not go into the absurdity of that argument, although it was absurd, but I will point out that the feeling was very much the opposite. Therefore, the member's fears might be allayed by reviewing some of the testimony from that committee.

I would also point out the fact that there is an historical example we can draw upon. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney stated that until the Meech Lake accord was enacted into law, and at which point the Senate would be elected using a new set of mandates, he would accept senators appointed by provincial governments.

Therefore, in 1989 the legislative assembly of Alberta held an election for the Senate and General Stan Waters won it. His name was then presented to the prime minister who was very resistant. He tried to wiggle out of making that appointment, but in the end the heat was too great and he appointed Senator Waters to the upper House, where he served very well. Unfortunately it was not very long because he passed away as a result of cancer a couple of years later.

There is a precedent which indicates that prime ministers will have a very tough time ignoring who and what people choose.

Our whole system is based upon constitutional conventions. Our entire Canadian political system and its British ancestor are based upon the idea of conventions. On paper, the Governor General has an independent power with regard to the appointment of senators. On paper, the Monarch has tremendous arbitrary powers. In practice, a person not even mentioned in the Constitution, the prime minister, has most of those powers and exercises them via the House of Commons. In practice, we have responsible government, something which is absolutely responsible to the House of Commons and is absolutely not written down anywhere in the Constitution.

These rules are absolutely binding. They are not legal rules; they are constitutional rules. Those who would dream of trying to ignore them would do so at the cost of their political career.

I suggest that much the same dynamic would be at work with regard to the Prime Minister following the letter of this law and making a recommendation to the Governor General as to the appointment of senators who come from that provincial list.

Government Orders

There is no question that prime ministers in the end would lose the power they have to appoint partisans or people of their choice and would be forced to follow the will of the people of the relevant province. That would be a very good thing.

• (1345)

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Madam Speaker, I found the speech given by the hon. member across the floor rather incoherent, especially when it comes to giving powers to the provinces. The bill supposes that the provinces could, at their expense, hold elections to elect senators, but it very clearly states that the Prime Minister would not be obliged to accept those elections or that choice of senators. Where is the democracy in this bill?

Also, the member across the way added that it would be unconstitutional to give these powers to the provinces. What do the Conservatives ultimately want from this bill? Do they want to give powers to the provinces or not? Where is the democracy in that?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, we want to give powers to Canadians, in their respective provinces. Regarding the issue of democracy, the prime minister is obliged to accept the decisions of the voters in the provinces. To quote the bill:

If a province or territory has enacted legislation that is substantially in accordance with the framework set out in the schedule, the Prime Minister, in recommending Senate nominees to the Governor General, must consider names from the most current list of Senate nominees selected for that province or territory.

[English]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington for his very thoughtful and personal speech. It is a refreshing change from the kind of canned speeches read for the first time by so many of his colleagues in his party. He came with something personal and I hope it will stay this way. I hope that he will not one day come in repeating slogans as if he were unable to come up with his own personal view.

However, he made some comments that were in contradiction to what the minister and some of his colleagues have said. For example, he said that, yes, the bill would be unfair for some provinces. It is a fact and he does not say that it is not true. However, he thinks that there will have enough goodwill elsewhere in the country to address these issues *une fois que le mal sera fait*, once the wrong is done, and that this goodwill will come from other provinces.

In to order to justify the bill, the member is saying that we should not to worry, that we will have a constitutional negotiation after writ. Therefore, the constitutional nightmare his colleague spoke of before, he is hoping for it. That is what he said. I think that is a very dangerous contradiction within the Conservative Party and he will need to explain that to Canadians.

Do Canadians want a constitutional fix after the wrong the government would have made for the whole country, especially for British Columbia and Alberta?

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, it would be truer to say that what I said was that it was not that the bill was unfair, but rather that it does not deal with one of the issues that confronts us today, and that is absolutely true.

I would be willing to do this sort of thing, but whether there is a national willingness is not for me to decide. Whether the nation says that it is satisfied with the way things are is not for me to decide.

I would point out the goal of the original Confederation deal on the subject of Senate representation. There was no illusion at the time that we were trying to achieve representation by population in the Upper House, quite the contrary. Nor was there the goal to achieve what the Americans had done, which was equal representation for each of the states. The goal was to achieve equal representation for each of the regions. At that time, we perceived Canada as consisting of three regions: Quebec, Ontario and the Maritime provinces. The west was contemplated but did not come in. When it did, a change was made to the Constitution to allow for equal representation for the western region. That regional principle of representation inequality, more or less, stays in place.

There is a separate issue one could point to. There are 24 senators for each region except for the Atlantic region, which is, population wise, less than half the size of the next region, and yet it has seven extra senators because Newfoundland entered in and was given extra senators.

These are things I genuinely do think can be dealt with by means of goodwill. I do not lose faith in the goodwill of all members, both people in the regions that are under-represented and understand that is not the end of the world, and those who are in the over-represented regions who have a sense that we might want to make corrections. However, I leave that to them. I should not be making decisions on their behalf.

• (1350)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for taking the time to listen to my remarks and include them in his responses. It is enjoyable debating with that parliamentarian at committee.

The member commented that the Prime Minister would consider that if it became a convention it would, therefore, have the effect of law. However, that takes time. My point is that the Prime Minister violated his own law in the same Parliament that he brought it into. Therefore, it is quite possible that we may never get enough time to have a convention.

He mentioned Sweden, which was an excellent answer. My response is that, again, it is a recognized model. It may be unique but it is a model. What we have in the Senate, by virtue of what is being proposed here, is not a model, it is a mishmash of things that were hangovers from before; new immediate short-term fixes. I mean, it is just a patchwork and that is why I used the Frankenstein example.

The member mentioned deliberately built multiple mandates. Again, when it is a deliberate mandate that is built-in, that is a lot different than saying that we need to leave this piece here because we have people appointed for that length of time and we need to put this piece in here to cover that. There is a huge difference.

Government Orders

I will come back to the point that was just made about the regions. The member said that we do not deal with regional fairness. That is quite true. The member prides himself in being intellectually honest and, for the most part, I believe he is, but could he please comment on, or however he wants to skate over this, how this bill would entrench the serious problems that are being referenced not only in Alberta and B.C. but also the eastern provinces and the northern part of our country?

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, I also I enjoy debating with the member at committee. He is always a gentleman and very fair-minded. While we honour all colleagues, perhaps they are not all equally fair-minded in the proceedings of the House. I appreciate that from him and from the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville too.

I think the member was inadvertent in referencing Sweden. I was actually referring to Switzerland.

The more substantive issue he pointed out was he continued to say that we have a model here that is a mishmash. I would suggest another word. I would suggest the word “transition”. I want to point out that we would not be the first country to face this kind of problem.

When the senate was being set up in the United States following the 1787 constitutional convention, there was a basic problem. Its senate was to consist of members, all whom would have six-year terms, but some of whom would have their six-year term expire six years from then and others would have it expire only four years into the future within a de facto four-year term, and some of whom would have only a two-year term. This was a problem. Every state wanted to have one of the four-year and one of the six-year senators and every candidate for the senate wanted to be one of the four or six-year senators. No one wanted to be a two-year senator. This was a short-term political problem and it did not prevent it from functioning as a very august institution and to grow in depth with time.

As well, I should mention that when the U.S. senate in the early part of the 20th century, exactly 100 years ago, was in transition from being an appointed body to being an elected body, what happened was initially one state, the state of Oregon, started electing its senators. That practice gradually spread, first through the west and, within a few years, an amendment was passed to the constitution, I believe it was the 17th amendment, that called for all senators to be elected. But again, there was a transition that lasted about a decade. It did not cause, as far as I am aware, any catastrophic problems.

The member had one last question, which was the one he was most vexed about, but it has slipped my mind of what it was.

• (1355)

Mr. David Christopherson: Regions.

Mr. Scott Reid: Thank you, regional representation. As I mentioned, if there is a national desire to have a discussion on that point, then that discussion would occur, but I do not think that should keep us from having a discussion on this point.

I will ask my Alberta and British Columbia colleagues this question. Would they prefer being represented by six unelected senators or six elected senators?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

I recognize that it is a privilege to have the opportunity to address the House today. This is a privilege granted to me by the democratic principles of our country. Based on the supremacy of the rule of law, Canadian parliamentary institutions recognize this fact and often serve as an example throughout the world. Whether it be our Supreme Court, our Constitution or the House of Commons, the international news constantly reminds us that it would be very dangerous to take our democratic institutions for granted or to simply handle government business in a manner that is inconsistent with the most basic parliamentary rules.

This opportunity to speak about Bill C-7 is an opportunity to express my concern about the profound changes that this government wants to make to Canadian parliamentary institutions and, in particular, about the questionable manner in which it intends to go about doing so.

First, I would like to draw the House's attention to one thing, and that is the purely cosmetic nature of this bill. It is like a face lift that merely serves to superficially hide the signs of aging. This proposed Senate reform does not do much to hide the wrinkles. It is what I would call botched surgery. This bill does not address the real problems with the Senate.

First, this government is not above the laws, and certainly not above our Constitution. How does the Conservative government plan to justify the fact that it is blatantly thumbing its nose at the most basic rules of our state? In the preamble of the legislation, the government says it plans to use section 44, which, subject to sections 41 and 42, allows Parliament to make an ordinary law to change the way senators are appointed. This move would very clearly violate subsection 42(1) of our Constitution, which states:

An amendment to the Constitution of Canada in relation to the following matters may be made only in accordance with subsection 38(1)...

The Constitution unequivocally states that the powers of the Senate and the method of selecting senators cannot be changed without the consent of seven provinces representing at least 50% of the population of Canada.

This provision is in the Constitution in black and white. How does the minister justify ignoring it? If the government wants to reform the Senate, it must do so in accordance with the rules that have been established.

The government is saying that the scope of section 44 covers everything else, including, it says, what it is trying to do with this bill. This argument does not hold water, given the name of the bill: Bill C-7, An Act respecting the selection of senators and amending the Constitution Act, 1867 in respect of Senate term limits. That kind of language cannot go unnoticed. I urge the government to honour the procedure for amending the Constitution.

Government Orders

I would like to add something here. I took a look at the government's previous Senate reform bill, Bill C-20. It was very interesting. In the preamble, it states quite clearly that the reform based on consultative elections was to be a transition process that would lead to a more permanent constitutional reform of the Senate to provide for a means of direct election. This statement, which is quite significant, does not appear in Bill C-7. This is yet more proof of the superficial nature of this bill. This is all that the majority government plans to bring to Senate reform. It is amazing that this is being used for political games.

This government feels justified in using an undemocratic method to make an antiquated institution that is ill-suited to modern political realities more democratic. All I am seeing here is another attempt by this government to unilaterally move forward with institutional reform in the least collegial and transparent way possible. What is more, the government is saying that this is all there will be in the way of Senate reform. What a lost opportunity.

Flouting the process for amending the constitution would create a dangerous constitutional precedent. Is this the historic legacy this government wishes to leave? I would like to take this opportunity to say that the New Democratic Party will always defend the rule of law and stand up for healthy, friendly and constructive debate on the future of this country and the issues that directly affect Canadians. No government can avoid meeting this country's constitutional obligations. No government can do that.

I do not think it could be any clearer that the use of section 44 is a way to avoid debate and especially to avoid obtaining the consent of the provinces, which are also concerned about these changes. By proceeding in such a unilateral way, the bill sends an ambiguous and underhanded message to the provinces. Last I heard, they were an integral part of this country. Is this government afraid that this reform bill will not obtain the required consent? This kind of attitude tells me that the government is incapable of generating the support it needs to make these reforms. This bill, in its current form, is an excellent way of short-circuiting the provinces' opinions.

• (1400)

The provinces that had an upper chamber in their own legislature abolished it a long time ago. Furthermore, a number of provincial premiers have opposed this unilateral reform. It is blatantly obvious that the government is saying, "You do not agree with us? Oh well, too bad for you. Our mandate is too strong for us to worry about you. Here are the wonders of Canadian constitutional law, covered in Conservative sauce." What a fabulous message to send to Canadian citizens. Does that really represent the actions of a responsible majority government that claims to work for all Canadians?

The role of the Senate has been controversial since the early days of Confederation. If I may, I remind the House that the Senate, as an institution, was meant to be a chamber of sober second thought, a chamber of wise people chosen to represent the territorial diversity of the country and act as a counterbalance to the decisions made in the House of Commons. Today, the makeup of cabinet reflects one of the requirements for regional representation, which was previously a responsibility of the Senate. The role of the Senate has increasingly weakened since it was created at the time of Confederation.

Above all, the Senate must be absolutely devoid of partisanship. I am in no way questioning the wisdom of the current senators. However, it is clear that the Senate has never consistently attained the other objectives laid out for it. Territorial representation, a concern at a time when it took several days to reach the federal capital, is no longer relevant and does not protect remote regions. The Senate rarely opposes the decisions made by the House of Commons. When it does, it hinders the proper functioning of the democratic process. The perception of voters is not that the Senate is a chamber of sober second thought, but that it is the chamber where bills that are too controversial remain in limbo. Finally, and this is the key point, Senate partisanship is legendary. That is the greatest complaint about the Senate. Far from correcting the situation, Bill C-7 will only makes things worse.

To get an idea of its partisan nature, we need only watch the news. My colleague from Winnipeg Centre recently gave an interview in which he criticized the involvement of a Conservative senator who was serving as the election campaign co-chair and leading spokesperson for the Manitoba Conservative Party. It is clearly unacceptable for a member of the Senate, who is paid by taxpayers, to use his time for that purpose. If he wishes to get involved in the Manitoba election campaign, he should never do so at the expense of Canadian taxpayers. This example highlights how the Senate, in its current form, is poisoned by partisanship.

Canadians expect the Senate to act as independently as possible. Can the minister clearly tell this chamber that reforming the way senators are selected—by adding an election process—will make the Senate less partisan? No, I do not think he can, unless the minister outright contradicts a Progressive Conservative senator who told the *Hill Times* last June that Bill C-7 could be a threat to the Canadian parliamentary system. He maintained that the proposed reforms could politicize the Senate even further instead of making it free of partisanship. He also stated that a senator is more effective when there is no partisanship.

What more is there to say? This bill would clearly exacerbate the partisanship that is already all too prominent in the Senate. How can this bill possibly be described as an improvement to the democratic legitimacy of the Senate? The proposed nature of the method of selecting senators would poison the Senate's mandate, which is supposed to be as independent as possible. If we look closely at the government's line of thinking, there would be a huge divide among senators appointed before October 14, 2008, and those appointed after. How will these new, elected senators with fixed terms serve alongside senators who were appointed without any fixed terms? How will Canadians perceive this dual reality?

Government Orders

On that topic, I have a few questions I would like to raise. Approximately 60% of the current senators were appointed before October 14, 2008. This means that they would be able to fulfill their senatorial duty and enjoy the generous privileges of their position until the age of 75. The coexistence of the former kind of senators with the new kind of senators would go on for several years, perhaps even decades. Consider the example of a senator who still has 35 years of service ahead of him. How would the legitimacy of the former kind of appointed senator compare to that of the new senators with a fresh mandate from the electorate? The legislative process and the reputation of the Senate would definitely be undermined. This simply does not fit in with the vision of an independent Senate whose mandate is to remain as impartial as possible.

The *Hill Times* tried to contact the 37 senators currently serving who were appointed by the Prime Minister after October 14, 2008, and they received very few responses.

● (1405)

Most of them declined commenting or simply did not respond. There is not even a semblance of unity on this bill from Conservative senators. If their own senators do not support it, it is the ultimate insult to present it to this House. How can this government claim that its Senate reforms are based on increasing its democratic legitimacy? This same government did not hesitate a single second to appoint three candidates from its own party who were defeated in the last election. That is an insult to the intelligence of Canadians who clearly expressed their free and democratic choice.

If this government truly had the intention of reforming the upper chamber, as it has been claiming for a long time now, it would have avoided this unacceptable and irresponsible behaviour. This is yet more evidence of a consistently applied double standard: one policy for friends of the Conservatives, another policy for other Canadians. That is the reality of this government's policy. I doubt that the public takes this lack of respect for their democratic choices lightly. There are strong mandates, and then there are brutal mandates.

There are some aspects of this bill that are worth special attention. Unless they are declared as independents, provincial candidates for the Senate will be free to associate themselves with a political party during their election campaign. If the minister is hoping to cut down on the politicization of the work of the upper chamber through this initiative, I think he has misunderstood the role of the Senate, which is to protect regional, provincial and minority interests, while acting as a chamber of sober second thought to examine legislation in greater detail.

It all comes down to the same thing. How can this government say that greater politicization of the Senate could help deliver this mandate? And how does it reconcile overstepping the opinions of the provinces on this, when the mandate of the Senate is partially entrusted to them in order to balance representation within Confederation? Political party affiliation has a major influence on the work of the Senate. Through this bill the minister is proposing to increase the number of partisan battles by renewing the contingent of senators from each province every nine years.

By introducing a non-renewable term, the reform also denies Canadians an opportunity to reward the work of an elected Senator. If the senator is doing good work, he or she will not be able to

continue and the voters will not have a chance to show their appreciation through a re-election. If, on the other hand, the senator is doing mediocre work, voters will not be able to punish his or her incompetence and the senator will leave when the nine-year term is up. Either way, citizens are denied their say in the matter. One of the fundamental principles of democracy currently seriously lacking in the Senate is accountability and this reform is devoid of it as well. This principle is working quite well in the House of Commons and it forces us to give the best of ourselves.

Again, this government does not know what it wants. It is trying to achieve a number of objectives without any real focus. This bill would give us a partially elected Senate that, according to the government, is more democratic by virtue of repeated partisan elections for a non-renewable and non-punishable term. Where I come from, we call that hogwash.

These things cannot be reconciled with the mandate of the Senate, as I was saying earlier. Allow me again to read part of the preamble to Bill C-7, which states that "Parliament wishes to maintain the essential characteristics of the Senate within Canada's parliamentary democracy as a chamber of independent, sober second thought". I do not think partisanship will create a climate for independent, sober second thought within the Senate. Just look at the climate in this House to see what I mean by that.

The objective of the bill contradicts its actual effects. The government must decide whether it wants to respect the historical mandate of the Senate or whether it wants to make the Senate more democratically legitimate through partisan elections. Regardless, it is inconceivable that the government would introduce this bill to the Canadian public and insist that these two goals are compatible. Frankly, such vague legislation should not be introduced. But perhaps the government is sacrificing finesse for strength.

I was also distressed to notice that the bill, vaguely and without explanation, shifts the responsibility for holding elections to select Senate candidates. Under the bill, Senate candidates would be elected during provincial elections, on a date to be determined by the lieutenant governor, or during municipal elections. Dumping this responsibility seems like a disorganized and very imprecise way of improving the Senate's democratic legitimacy. The government could have taken the time to draft a clear, detailed and intelligible bill, but instead, Bill C-7 is terribly unclear and illogical. For example, when Canadians choose their candidates during an election, they will not even be certain that the one they choose will sit in the Senate. The final choice will remain in the hands of the Prime Minister since the bill imposes no obligation.

● (1410)

I mentioned that this reform seems to be purely cosmetic and here is the evidence. Parliamentary institutions deserve a little more respect and rigour. Unfortunately, when I look at this bill, the public's cynicism about politicians seems justified to me. Nothing now guarantees that this government will take its reform of the Senate any further.

Government Orders

In addition to this important point, we must also consider the costs of this reform. However, Bill C-7 does not make any mention of these costs. As further proof of how vague this legislation is, the bill does not clearly set out which level of government will have to assume the new costs. In these uncertain economic times, the government is adding new costs without having analyzed the proposed reforms to determine how useful they actually are.

Senate elections would thus become a federal, provincial, or municipal matter. Nothing is clear because the bill allows for all three scenarios. How will expenses be shared in these even more complex elections? Moreover, this new use of public money will contribute nothing to democracy. Canadians have long questioned the usefulness of the Senate. I doubt that the public will find the Senate more attractive if it becomes more expensive. In other words, we do not know “when?” or “how?”, and especially not “how much?”. Would it not be preferable to reform the Senate by passing bills that have more substance than grey areas? Is that asking too much of the government?

These are the indicators of a sloppy bill that takes too simplistic an approach to the parliamentary institutions of this country. I am disappointed if this is all that this government can add to the debate on Senate reform. The regions, provinces and minorities of Canada are again left hanging and will continue to be represented by an upper chamber that is completely disconnected from contemporary reality.

This bill, in addition to moving ahead in a manner that is, at a minimum, constitutionally suspect, only masks the problem of the democratic legitimacy of the Senate, without undertaking the mandatory and necessary consultation of the provinces of this country and, above all, without considering what mandate Canadians realistically want an upper chamber to have. The message to the provinces is as follows: this government does not need to consult you to proceed unilaterally with constitutional amendments. The message to Canadians is that this government is not listening to them. Its mandate is too strong for it to worry about them, especially when they indicate their preferences in a general election.

My colleagues are certainly aware of all the attempts made to reform the Senate since its inception. These attempts all have one thing in common: they failed. In the past 100 years, 13 attempts have failed and, today, given the lack of provincial interest and the absence of a consensus on the nature of the reform, there is every indication that this bill will be added to that historic list of failed attempts.

The reality is that the Senate is a problem that no one has been able to fix. So, as our party is suggesting, it is time to consider another option that has yet to be explored—abolishing the Senate. That is why we are proposing that we consult people about this, to see if they believe that the upper chamber still has a place in our democratic institutions. We want to ask them if they feel this legacy from the 19th century still has a place in a 21st century democracy. The provinces that abolished their senates did not stop functioning. Countries like Denmark and New Zealand abolished their senates and continue to operate without any problem.

Yes, I am critical of this bill, but the official opposition will not be content with simply criticizing in a stubborn and narrow-minded

fashion. The opposition will do everything it can to propose well-thought-out and reasonable solutions for the good of Canadians. Our parliamentary institutions deserve more of our time and intellectual rigour. That is why I insist that when difficult issues such as Senate reform are brought before the House for debate, we should be discussing the option of abolishing the Senate and presenting that to the Canadian public as well. That is the spirit of what I consider to be constructive and respectful debate.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):

Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her very interesting speech. I would like to ask her about the solution recommended by her party, that is, to hold a nation-wide referendum on abolishing the Senate.

Would the question read, “Are you in favour of abolishing the Senate?”

This question is problematic. Perhaps the majority of Canadians simply want Senate reform. But if they are forced to choose between abolishing it or keeping it as is, they may vote to abolish it, even if that is not their first choice. Thus, it would be a complex question to ask in a referendum, because Senate reform could be done in many ways. It could be done badly, as we are seeing here today, or it could be done in a way that is much better for Canadians.

Therefore, in my opinion, it is not suitable for a referendum for that very reason. But there is another reason. Let us suppose that the majority of Canadians say “yes” to abolishing the Senate, but a few provinces say “no” and want to keep the Senate, including, for example, Prince Edward Island, which is guaranteed four senators in the Constitution. Does the member believe that the premiers of those provinces—Prince Edward Island or others—would be forced to say, against the majority vote of their respective provinces, that they will agree to abolish the Senate? For if all premiers do not give their consent, it cannot be abolished, since the provinces' decision must be unanimous. So does she not see that her plan for a referendum on this issue, which on the surface appears very tempting, raises many problems?

• (1415)

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

In terms of the referendum question in this context, my colleague is acutely aware that it is very difficult to ask a very clear question in a referendum. Everyone agrees on that.

I agree with him when he says that presenting just one question that asks whether the Senate should be maintained or abolished does not cover all the possible options. In a similar way, the government is simply presenting Parliament with a reform, saying that people agree on having a reform. In fact, all people are saying is that they do not agree with the status quo. It is intellectually dishonest because we do not know whether people truly agree with the reform or whether they simply no longer want the status quo. It is important to verify what people really want and get their approval.

Government Orders

In terms of unanimous agreement among the provinces, discussions will have to be held and a consensus reached. What is being proposed is not simply to abolish the Senate without consideration and keep this Parliament the way it is. We would like to seek different representation in Parliament that could compensate for the fact that the Senate would no longer be there to represent the regions.

We could seek the unanimous consent of the provinces to a proposal for real democratic reform of our parliamentary institutions.

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unless I am mistaken, I think it was the member for Ottawa—Orléans who was recognized, not the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

I would like to hear the hon. member's opinion on the two choices before her now: the status quo in the Senate—where there are senators who have potentially been appointed for 45 years—or a Senate with shorter terms.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Madam Speaker, the problem is that they have tabled this bill, saying that it will be more democratic and will improve the situation. In reality, this bill will not fix the problems inherent in the Senate, such as partisanship and a lack of regional representation. It is not true that senators represent regions; it is simply partisan. This reform bill is being presented as an improvement to democracy and as an accountability measure, but I do not agree with that. I cannot accept the reform as it stands.

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are trying to find some logic in this whole thing. We have heard from colleagues with constitutional backgrounds on both sides of the House, and yet we still cannot make any sense of it.

I am wondering if this move is not a way for the Conservative Party to prepare for a time when the tide starts to turn against them. By keeping the Senate and stacking it in their favour, they are ensuring that they will be able to pursue their agenda in the future and that Parliament would not be able to go back and change things. Does my colleague get the same impression?

• (1420)

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. It would indeed be a dangerous precedent to allow such amendments that are so close to being constitutional. This is an extremely sensitive issue. Making these amendments without any consultation would set a very dangerous precedent of completely unilateral constitutional amendments.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the NDP member for Louis-Saint-Laurent for her very detailed and interesting speech. However, I must say that I was very disappointed when she proposed a constitutional dialogue on abolishing the Senate rather than a consultation with the provinces to see how we could improve the Senate. Abolishing the Senate is a major debate.

Does the hon. member think that this would be an effective use of our time during this period of economic uncertainty in our country and the world? Is it a priority for the Canadian public, the provinces and the members of the House to start a constitutional debate at this time?

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Madam Speaker, I would like to sincerely thank the hon. member for her question. In fact, it is the government that introduced this bill on Senate reform in the House. I do not know if it is a top priority to reform the Senate or reopen the Constitution, but it was the government that introduced the bill before us today.

Personally, I believe that it is not worth reforming the Senate in this manner without having consulted the provinces and the public. When we talk about some form of abolition, we are not talking about simply abolishing the Senate. We will have to really reform our parliamentary institutions so that they are more representative of everyone in Canada. It would be possible to seek a consensus and see what the public thinks.

[English]

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent provided an excellent analysis and a great speech outlining the problems with the bill. She actively put forward what we as the official opposition believe should be happening.

One of the things that those members over there pride themselves on is the sober second thought. The member made reference to many of them toeing the line. There might be one person here who ran as an independent and was elected as an independent, but I do not think so.

Therefore, given that most of the new senators would likely be partisans elected under the new legislation, would the hon. member expect more partisan toeing of the line or less as a result of senators being elected on the party ticket?

• (1425)

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Madam Speaker, it is fairly clear that organizing partisan elections with partisan confrontation will serve only to further increase the partisanship that already plays a major role in the Senate and makes its mandate even more difficult to carry out.

[English]

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak in support of Bill C-7, Senate Reform Act.

In our platform and in the Speech from the Throne, we outlined our commitment to Senate reform, promising Canadians that we would take action. With the introduction of the Senate reform act, we are taking the first steps toward meeting this objective.

Calls for Senate reform are not new. Senate reform has been a part of the political discussion for nearly as long as there has been a Senate. In fact, within two years of the founding of Canada in 1867, arguments for reform began to surface.

In all the studies and reports on Senate reform that have been completed, a common theme has emerged. The studies concluded that while the Senate is a valuable part of our democratic institutions, the status quo is no longer acceptable. Reform is required.

Government Orders

Canadians have overwhelmingly indicated that they feel the same way. They want to see action on Senate reform. In a recent poll released in July this year, 70% of respondents indicated support for Senate reform. Despite the countless calls for reform and citizen dissatisfaction with the Senate, it has survived virtually unchanged in its fundamental features since Confederation. In part, this situation exists because fundamental reform of the Senate requires the support of the provinces, which has been difficult to achieve.

In order to build support for fundamental reform, our government has been pursuing an incremental approach to reform that falls within the federal government's legislative jurisdiction. One of the most pressing concerns about the Senate is that it has no democratic mandate from the citizens it serves, and the current rules allow individuals to stay in their positions for as long as 45 years.

The fact that Senators are not accountable to Canadians contributes to a perception that the Senate lacks legitimacy. That is why we introduced the Senate reform act. The act proposes measures that will give Canadians the opportunity to have a say in who represents them in the Senate. It will also limit the terms of senators to nine years.

The changes proposed in the Senate reform act do not purport to completely resolve the debate over Senate reform. It is our hope that these reforms, once implemented, will be the first step down a path toward more fundamental changes.

Before continuing, it is important to outline, briefly, the elements of the bill. Let me first present the issue of the selection of Senate nominees. The Senate reform act encourages but does not compel provinces and territories to establish democratic consultative processes to give citizens a say in who represents them in the Senate.

The bill then requires the Prime Minister to consider the names of these individuals selected as a result of these processes when making recommendations to the Governor General on Senate appointments.

The Prime Minister has always been clear that his preference is to appoint senators chosen by the voters, and he is committed to respecting results of any democratic consultation with voters. However, the act does not bind the Prime Minister nor the Governor General when making appointments to the Senate. It does not change

the method of selecting senators, and therefore does not require a constitutional amendment.

To assist provinces and territories in establishing their consultations, a voluntary framework is attached as a schedule to the act which provides guidance and direction on consultations. Again, I stress the framework is voluntary. Provinces and territories would not be required to adopt the framework word for word. In fact, they are expected to adapt the framework to suit their unique circumstances and culture.

The framework is simply meant to be a tool to facilitate the implementation of the consultative process. At the end of the day there is only one requirement related to any consultative process that is established. Senate nominees must be selected as a result of a democratic consultation with citizens.

The act illustrates our government's support for the development of consultative processes with the provinces and territories. It is our hope that all provinces and territories will take advantage of this support and help to create a more democratic Senate with enhanced legitimacy.

The Senate reform act will also introduce term limits for senators. The act will restrict the length of time that senators can sit in the Senate to nine years. This would apply to all senators appointed after the royal assent of the bill. It would also apply to current senators appointed after October 2008 whose terms would end nine years after royal assent.

• (1430)

We believe that nine-year terms provide enough time to enable individual senators to gain the experience necessary to carry out their legislative functions while also ensuring regular renewal of the upper chamber.

The Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary. She may pursue her comments when this debate resumes.

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

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

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MS. DENISE SAVOIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BRUCE STANTON

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

MS. CHRIS CHARLTON

MS. JUDY FOOTE

HON. ROB MERRIFIELD

MR. THOMAS MULCAIR

HON. GORDON O'CONNOR

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	Ontario	CPC
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency	Nunavut	Nunavut	CPC
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	Ontario	NDP
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	CPC
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Armstrong, Scott	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Fredericton	New Brunswick	CPC
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	NDP
Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	Québec	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	NDP
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	Québec	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	Québec	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	NDP
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Boulerice, Alexandre	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Québec	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine	Hochelaga	Québec	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik	Saint-Jean	Québec	NDP
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen	Berthier—Maskinongé	Québec	NDP
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	CPC
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	Ontario	CPC
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	NDP
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	Ontario	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	NDP
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	Ontario	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Choquette, François	Drummond	Québec	NDP
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	Saskatchewan	CPC
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	Ontario	NDP
Côté, Raymond	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	NDP
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	NDP
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	NDP
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	Québec	NDP
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Associate Minister of National Defence	Vaughan	Ontario	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Findlay, Kerry-Lynne D., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Transport)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	Québec	NDP
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	NDP
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	Québec	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	Québec	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	Ontario	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Groguhé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	Québec	NDP
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	NDP
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	NDP
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Hoepfner, Candice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	Ontario	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasung	Ontario	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	NDP
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	NDP
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	Ontario	NDP
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	Ontario	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lake, Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry ...	Edmonton—Mill Woods— Beaumont.....	Alberta	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	Lib.
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet— Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	Québec	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent.....	Québec	NDP
Lauzon, Guy.....	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary	Ontario	CPC
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean.....	Québec	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour.....	New Brunswick.....	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hélène.....	LaSalle—Émard.....	Québec	NDP
Leef, Ryan	Yukon.....	Yukon	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture.....	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell .	Ontario	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism ...	Willowdale	Ontario	CPC
Liu, Laurin.....	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.....	Québec	NDP
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville .	Ontario	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce.....	Ontario	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre.....	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunney, James.....	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island....	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Mai, Hoang	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	NDP
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek .	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Pat.....	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Masse, Brian.....	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe.....	Ontario	NDP
May, Elizabeth	Saanich—Gulf Islands.....	British Columbia	GP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville.....	Ontario	Lib.
McColeman, Phil.....	Brant	Ontario	CPC
McGuinty, David.....	Ottawa South.....	Ontario	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood.....	Ontario	Lib.
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.....	Kamloops—Thompson— Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Menegakis, Costas	Richmond Hill	Ontario	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance)	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Michaud, Éline	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.....	Québec	NDP
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound...	Ontario	CPC
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.....	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Hon. Rob	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude.....	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	NDP
Mourani, Maria.....	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	Québec	NDP
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	NDP
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	Québec	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval.....	Québec	NDP
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills....	Ontario	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.....	Calgary East.....	Alberta	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre.....	Ontario	CPC
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel ..	Québec	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec.....	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable.....	Québec	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	NDP
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat.....	Alberta	CPC
Péclet, Ève.....	La Pointe-de-l'Île.....	Québec	NDP
Penashue, Hon. Peter, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	CPC
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm.....	Québec	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London ...	Ontario	CPC
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	NDP
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Rafferty, John.....	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert.....	Alberta	CPC
Ravnat, Mathieu.....	Pontiac.....	Québec	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	Ontario	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik —Eeyou	Québec	NDP
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	British Columbia	NDP
Savoie, Denise, The Deputy Speaker	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CPC
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	Ontario	CPC
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	NDP
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	CPC
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	NDP
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River— Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	NDP
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Mark	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	Ontario	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	Ontario	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Public Safety	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix— Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	NDP
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	CPC
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Québec	Lib.
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	Ontario	CPC
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	NDP
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie)	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	British Columbia	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
VACANCY	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	CPC
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance)	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	CPC
Findlay, Kerry-Lynne D., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Delta—Richmond East	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
May, Elizabeth	Saanich—Gulf Islands	GP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	NDP
Savoie, Denise, The Deputy Speaker	Victoria	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification	North Vancouver	CPC
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	NDP
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Mark	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
MANITOBA (14)		
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	NDP
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	CPC
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Transport)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Saint Boniface	CPC
Hoepfner, Candice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Lib.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Public Safety	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	CPC
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Fredericton	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Hon. Rob	Fundy Royal	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie)	Madawaska—Restigouche	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	NDP
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	NDP
Penashue, Hon. Peter, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Labrador	CPC
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Armstrong, Scott	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence	Central Nova	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
NUNAVUT (1)		
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency	Nunavut	CPC
ONTARIO (105)		
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga—Brampton South	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Ajax—Pickering	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	CPC
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	CPC
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	CPC
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Associate Minister of National Defence	Vaughan	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	NDP
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	NDP
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	NDP
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	CPC
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	CPC
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
Menegakis, Costas	Richmond Hill	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	CPC
Poillievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	CPC
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	NDP
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	CPC
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	CPC
VACANCY	Toronto—Danforth	

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue	Egmont	CPC

QUÉBEC (75)

Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	NDP
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Beauce	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	NDP
Boulerice, Alexandre	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine	Hochelaga	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik	Saint-Jean	NDP
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen	Berthier—Maskinongé	NDP
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	NDP
Choquette, François	Drummond	NDP
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Côté, Raymond	Beauport—Limoilou	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	NDP
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	NDP
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	NDP
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	NDP
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Groghé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	NDP
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	NDP
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	NDP
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent	NDP
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	NDP
Label, Hon. Denis, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
LeBlanc, Hélène	LaSalle—Émard	NDP
Liu, Laurin	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	NDP
Mai, Hoang	Brossard—La Prairie	NDP
Michaud, Éline	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	NDP
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	NDP
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	NDP
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	NDP
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	NDP
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval	NDP
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	NDP
Péclet, Ève	La Pointe-de-l'Île	NDP
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	NDP
Ravignat, Mathieu	Pontiac	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	NDP
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	NDP
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	NDP
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	NDP
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Lib.
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	NDP
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Lib.
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Leef, Ryan	Yukon	CPC

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of September 30, 2011 — 1st Session, 41st Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:	Chris Warkentin	Vice-Chairs:	Carolyn Bennett Dennis Bevington	
Ray Boughen Rob Clarke Linda Duncan	Jonathan Genest-Jourdain LaVar Payne	John Rafferty Greg Rickford	Kyle Seeback David Wilks	(12)

Associate Members

Eve Adams	Nathan Cullen	Ed Komarnicki	Michelle Rempel
Mark Adler	Joe Daniel	Daryl Kramp	Blake Richards
Dan Albas	Patricia Davidson	Mike Lake	Lee Richardson
Harold Albrecht	Bob Dechert	Kevin Lamoureux	Romeo Saganash
Chris Alexander	Dean Del Mastro	Guy Lauzon	Andrew Saxton
Mike Allen	Earl Dreeshen	Ryan Leef	Gary Schellenberger
Dean Allison	Rick Dykstra	Kellie Leitch	Bev Shipley
Stella Ambler	Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay	Pierre Lemieux	Devinder Shory
Rob Anders	Hedy Fry	Chungsen Leung	Joy Smith
David Anderson	Royal Galipeau	Wladyslaw Lizon	Robert Sopuck
Charlie Angus	Cheryl Gallant	Ben Lobb	Kevin Sorenson
Scott Armstrong	Parm Gill	Tom Lukiwski	Brian Storseth
Niki Ashton	Shelly Glover	James Lunney	Mark Strahl
Jay Aspin	Robert Goguen	Dave MacKenzie	David Sweet
Joyce Bateman	Peter Goldring	Colin Mayes	David Tilson
Leon Benoit	Jacques Gourde	Phil McColeman	Lawrence Toet
James Bezan	Nina Grewal	Cathy McLeod	Brad Trost
Kelly Block	Richard Harris	Costas Menegakis	Bernard Trotter
Peter Braid	Laurie Hawn	Rob Merrifield	Susan Truppe
Garry Breitkreuz	Bryan Hayes	Larry Miller	Merv Tweed
Gordon Brown	Russ Hiebert	Christine Moore	Dave Van Kesteren
Lois Brown	Jim Hillyer	Rob Moore	Maurice Vellacott
Patrick Brown	Randy Hoback	Rick Norlock	Mike Wallace
Rod Bruinooge	Candice Hoepfner	Tilly O'Neill Gordon	Mark Warawa
Brad Butt	Ed Holder	Deepak Obhrai	Jeff Watson
Paul Calandra	Bruce Hyer	Ted Opitz	John Weston
Blaine Calkins	Roxanne James	Pierre Poilievre	Rodney Weston
Ron Cannan	Brian Jean	Joe Preston	John Williamson
John Carmichael	Peter Julian	James Rajotte	Stephen Woodworth
Colin Carrie	Randy Kamp	Brent Rathgeber	Terence Young
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