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(HANSARD)

Friday, November 25, 2011

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 25, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CLOSURE AND TIME ALLOCATION

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the thorough examination and debate of proposed legislation on behalf of Canadians is an essential duty of Members of Parliament, and that the curtailment of such debate limits the ability of Members to carry out this duty and constitutes an affront to Canadian democracy; and, therefore,

that the Speaker undertake a study and make recommendations to amend the Standing Orders with respect to closure and time allocation, such that: (i) a Minister would be required to provide justification for the request for such a curtailment of debate; (ii) the Speaker would be required to refuse such a request in the interest of protecting the duty of Members to examine legislation thoroughly, unless the government's justification sufficiently outweighs the said duty; (iii) criteria would be set out for assessing the government's justification, which would provide the Speaker with the basis for a decision to allow for the curtailment of debate;

that the Speaker report to the House no later than February 6, 2012;

that a motion to concur in the said report may be moved during Routine Proceedings, and that only when no Member rises to debate the motion, the Speaker shall interrupt any proceedings then before the House and put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment, every question necessary to dispose of the motion; and

if no motion to concur in the report has been previously moved and disposed of on the 20th sitting day following the presentation of the report, Standing Orders 57 and 78 shall be deemed to have been deleted.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this motion has been brought before the House at this time because of the government's gross overuse of shutting down debate in the House, whether it is by a formal closure motion, which shuts down debate immediately, or by time allocation motions, which provide extremely limited time for debate on crucial issues facing both the House and the country more generally.

It is important that we recognize the effect of the motion. It is not that you, Mr. Speaker, need a greater workload, but that is the thrust of the motion. The motion would remove a government's unilateral ability to shut down debate in the House and would allow the Speaker, as an independent officer of Parliament, to make the decision as to when it is appropriate to curtail debate and when it is

an abuse of the process. Therefore, a request for curtailment of debate could in fact be rejected by the Speaker of the day.

I have done some analysis of other jurisdictions that have similar parliaments to ours, such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. Going back some 20 or 30 years, all of them moved to provide greater authority to the speaker to regulate when debate should be curtailed, limited or ended. In each of those parliaments, it is quite clear that it is the speaker who ultimately makes the decision in that regard.

The authority is different in each of those legislatures, but the general wording and conduct of the speaker has always been: Is the request for curtailment or ending debate an abuse? Oftentimes the term "of a minority segment of that parliament" is used. It may be a large official opposition or it may be a small third, fourth or fifth party, but the speaker has the authority in each one of those parliaments to make the determination as to whether the request by the government to end or limit debate is an abuse of the rights of the members of Parliament.

I will move on to the context in which this motion is being put forward.

In less than two months of sitting days, we have had time allocation applied to Bill C-13, the budget bill, which was 640 pages long. We were given extremely limited time to debate it. It is the only time, that we have been able to determine, in the history of this country that such a limited amount of time has been given to a budget bill. I know the government House leader said that we had some debate on this in the previous Parliament. However, we have 100 new members of Parliament who were not here and had no opportunity to debate this in the last Parliament.

It is fundamental to our process that a budget bill be given a full extensive debate. We can go back to any number of the authorities where that is repeated over and over again, and not just in this legislature, but in every legislature that works off the Westminster model.

We then had Bill C-18 dealing with the Canadian Wheat Board. This is an institution that is well over 70 years of age. It is iconic in this country. However, on two occasions, at second reading and report stage, we were again slapped with time allocation.

Business of Supply

●(1010)

The Wheat Board and the farmers in western Canada were entitled to that debate. The opposition should have been given time in both the House and in committee to deal with that issue. We were given extremely limited time given the significance of what was going to happen if the bill passed, especially when the majority of farmers in western Canada, who use the Wheat Board to sell their wheat, oppose the bill. However, again we were slapped with time allocation on two occasions.

Bill C-10, the omnibus crime bill, is made up of nine former bills brought together. Again the House leader said that we had time to debate this legislation. More than 100 new members did not have time to debate this extremely complex bill because they were not here in the last Parliament.

The Conservatives have accused the opposition of delaying this legislation. On more than one occasion, the NDP has offered to take the part of the bill that deals with crimes against children, sexual predator type crimes, and run it through at all stages. It already passed through the House once before, so we were quite comfortable in having that done. On the more than one occasion that we offered that to the government, it refused and then slapped time allocation on the balance of the bill.

It was the same thing with Bill C-19, the gun control bill. We were given extremely limited time to debate an issue that is topical and very controversial. As the debate has gone on, more and more evidence has come out around reasons to not do away with the long gun registry. There was no opportunity to debate that legislation in the House to any significant degree.

Finally, Bill C-20, the seats bill. The bill proposes to make significant changes to the composition of this Parliament and again we are being limited to a significant degree in our ability to deal with it. I sit on the committee that is looking at the bill and the same thing is happening there. Extreme limitations are being placed at committee with regard to the number of witnesses we are allowed to call.

It just boggles my mind when I try to understand what is going on, and I think I am reasonably intelligent in terms of understanding it. It is a complex process that is being engendered now and it is new. It is not what was here in the last Parliament at all. The bill is a new incarnation of the process. It would make a very significant change, and we are being given nowhere near the amount of time that we will need.

If we continue with the practice as it is right now, Bill C-20 will be out of committee and back before the House either by the end of next week or early the week following, when we have limited time to debate it here in the House and limited time in committee. The same can be said about the other four bills that I just mentioned. They all have had limited time in committee.

That is the context that we have. We have a precedent, if we want to put it that way, in other legislatures.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

As I said earlier, we have this other precedent. If the bill passes, it will mean more work for the Speaker of this Parliament and subsequent Speakers. However, we need to find a much more proper balance in terms of our ability as opposition members to do our job. Our responsibility here is to determine whether legislation coming from the government is appropriate, but we are not able to do that in the amount of time that we are being given at this point. We need to take the government's ability to limit time and place it in the hands of an independent member and, in this case, that would be the Speaker and his successors.

●(1015)

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member a very simple question. How many bills have been debated this fall and have received royal assent? He is looking upward, so I will give him the answer. None.

We were elected to get some things done. The opposition has done its level best to prevent the government from passing legislation this entire fall session. We are almost at the end of this session, and it is unconscionable that this Parliament has not been able to do its work.

The bills that are before us have been debated ad nauseam. The people who watch Parliament must be wondering what is going on. I will tell them that we have not debated one bill that has received royal assent this fall.

What does the member have to say about that?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Actually, Mr. Speaker, if we take this session, the bills that have moved through this House rapidly have been as a result of the initiative that came from this side of the House. With the mega trials bill, as the justice critic for my party, we put before the House that in fact we should run that through.

By the way, the member is not correct; that bill has in fact had royal assent. It is in place at this point, but it was the result of the initiative from this side of the House.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Not this fall.

Mr. Joe Comartin: He is playing, Mr. Speaker; it is not this fall, but it is in this session of Parliament.

Well, let us go with another one. Just last week, or earlier this week, we agreed to go through all stages of Bill C-16, which deals with the judiciary within the military. Again, that was in part an initiative that came from us, at the request of the government initially.

There in fact progress has been made. To finish, the question really is, how rapidly do we run important bills through the House? It is way too fast.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Windsor—Tecumseh for his, as usual, insightful remarks.

Business of Supply

I certainly share the member's concern with respect to the rate at which bills are being jammed through the House and how debate is being limited, especially at committee. The member would be well aware that the omnibus crime bill, before the justice committee, was initially subjected to a five minutes per clause examination until basically the opposition parties kicked back and negotiated a lengthier time period for that.

I wish to draw the member's attention to something that was said in debate June 10, 2002. This was after 10 days of debate on Bill C-2, the species at risk act. The former member for Skeena said:

Mr. Speaker, the government should be ashamed of itself. How dare it rule the country with such an iron fist? The species at risk act is a major piece of legislation... This is the third attempt and it still does not have it right. The government just invoked time allocation which would seriously restrict debate. It does not care to listen to the concerns of Canadians—

The Speaker: Order, please. I am going to have to stop the member there to give the member for Windsor—Tecumseh enough time to respond.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, it is a good question with regard to that particular bill, because it was its third incarnation. I used to be on the environment committee, so I was involved in that. I remember Jay Hill, who was the member he is referring to, the former government House leader, taking that position in spite of the fact that we had had 10 days of debate on it at third reading at that stage. We also had lengthy debates in prior Parliaments. However, I believe it was the Reform Party at that time, the predecessor to the Conservative government, raising this issue and doing that.

It is quite clear that when the Conservatives are in government, they are talking an entirely different line than when they sat on this side of the House. After the next election, when we are in government, we would be quite prepared to live under the terms of this motion.

• (1020)

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the problem that I have is that in a democracy like ours, we have a Parliament where we debate bills. Through our committees we are able to bring Canadians in to help us hear their voices. Under this government we have had nine bills with time allocation. Conservatives are stopping Canadians and members of Parliament from raising questions and bringing their concerns on these bills. Is that not taking away the democratic rights of not only parliamentarians but all Canadians?

I think it is a serious matter when every bill in the House now has time allocation. "It's my way or the highway". That is what the Conservatives are doing right now, and they are going against democracy in our country.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, I never could bring the same passion that my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst brings to these issues, but I totally agree with his description of the underpinning that the rules have for us in order to have democratic debate and the attack on those basic, fundamental rights to have debate in this Parliament.

It is much worse. This is the worst that we have ever seen. The Conservatives were critical of the Liberals when they did this in 2002, but they are actually way ahead of them. They are worse than what the Liberals were.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to rise in the House to speak to this motion, because I think it is truly non-partisan. The motion gives you, Mr. Speaker, the power to decide and the criteria to use for time allocation measures.

In general, under the Westminster system in Great Britain, the speaker can refuse to put the question if the motion appears to be an abuse of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons or an infringement of the rights of the minority. I see that as a way of ensuring that the system is not abused. That makes complete sense.

Obviously, we understand that the party in power can decide to limit debate on certain issues. However, we think that this option should not be overused, misused or used for partisan purposes. We think that putting this in your hands, Mr. Speaker, would help us and the other opposition parties, as well as the party currently in power, since it will end up back in opposition one day. When that time comes, it will be very happy that a motion like this was adopted.

Our colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh started talking about this when a question was raised. I would like to share with the House just how much our colleagues currently on the government side agree with this motion. First, our Prime Minister debated this subject a number of times in the House, for example in 2002, when he said, "We have closure today precisely because there is no deadline and there are no plans. Instead of having deadlines, plans and goals, we must insist on moving forward because the government is simply increasingly embarrassed by the state of the debate and it needs to move on."

It is clear that when the government realizes that attacks are coming from all over, that a lot of people have concerns and do not agree with what is going on and that it has less support, it decides to shut down debate immediately. There is no more debate and it no longer wants to hear from the opposition. All that matters to the government is doing what it wants, regardless of what others have to say. That is unacceptable. Even they agreed with us. They were just as horrified by these kinds of petty partisan practices that make the House less democratic and that silence the people who voted for opposition parties. We can no longer say what we want. It makes no sense.

I could also mention the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, who in 2002 said, "Mr. Speaker, here we go again. This is a very important public policy question that is very complex and we have the arrogance of the government in invoking closure again. When we look at the Liberal Party [and this can be said of the current government] on arrogance it is like looking at the Grand Canyon. It is this big fact of nature that we cannot help but stare at."

Business of Supply

What I want to try and explain is that we do not simply want debate because we want to talk. It is because that is how things work. This is Parliament. There are systems. It is only appropriate that the people who voted for us and for the other opposition parties should be able to express their opinions through members who speak to their constituents to determine what they should be defending in the House. We are here to represent them. It makes sense that we would discuss topics that interest them.

I would like to talk about the speech made by the Prime Minister on the night of May 2, when he was elected as the head of a majority government. He said:

• (1025)

[*English*]

For our part, we are intensely aware that we are and we must be the government of all Canadians, including those who did not vote for us.

[*Translation*]

The Conservatives are telling us that time allocation motions are necessary simply because people voted for them, they now form a majority government and they received a strong mandate from Canadians.

Yes, we understand that they have a majority government. They have said that they are governing for all Canadians, including those who did not vote for them. Those who did not vote for them, voted for us. There are 308 members here. We were all elected democratically and received a strong mandate to represent our people. At the very least, allow the members to debate and explain their points of view and opinions. That is the basic standard. It is quite simple.

Mr. Speaker, when the government introduces a time allocation motion, you will be able to decide whether it is justified, by determining whether it is merely an abusive partisan measure or it goes against minorities' interests. You will be able to decide, in all good conscience, what should be done with it. This will be useful not just to us, but to everyone and particularly to the government, when it sits on the opposition benches. I am sure that it will then use its nice rhetoric to express its indignation about motions that prevent us from debating certain issues.

In 1987, former Speaker Fraser said:

It is essential to our democratic system that controversial issues should be debated at reasonable length so that every reasonable opportunity shall be available to hear the arguments pro and con, and that reasonable delaying tactics should be permissible to enable opponents of a measure to enlist public support for their point of view.

The only thing missing is a measure that would allow you, Mr. Speaker, to regulate all this. We realize that it is sometimes important to limit debate because of certain constraints, because of an agreement reached between the parties and other similar measures, but that should not be done in a partisan way.

If we look at all the bills that have been rammed through using closure and time allocation motions since the beginning of this session in June, it just does not make any sense. There is the omnibus crime bill, which is hundreds of pages long. Then, all of a sudden, the government tells us that it does not want to look at it. The Conservatives do not want any more criticism or debate so as to

avoid putting this legislation in the limelight, particularly since so few people support such measures.

As the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh mentioned, there are many things in these bills on which we could agree. We could decide that a measure is important and also want to proceed quickly to implement it. Some may not agree with certain measures and may criticize them. So when these initiatives are buried in all kinds of provisions and we need time to review them, it is only natural that we should not be pleased and should condemn the fact that the debate gets shortened once again.

Once again, the government is preventing the opposition—those who have reservations and concerns about a given measure—from speaking out. I do not understand how someone can say almost exactly the same thing as me when they are on this side of the House, and as soon as they get into power, refuse to listen to anyone. At one time, the Conservatives criticized the government in power for not wanting to listen to what they had to say, but now, they are turning a deaf ear and do not want to hear what we have to say. They do not want to have a debate, because they know they have very few good arguments and very little support. They refuse to listen and prefer to say that, since they have a majority, it is over.

There is something wrong with this picture. They are playing with the democratic process, with our Parliament and our democracy. We were all elected, so this is an important, even crucial issue.

I have another lovely quote from the Prime Minister:

After limiting debate in the House on the first day of debate, after limiting committee hearings to two days and giving witnesses 24 hours notice, the government now informs us it wants to make a major change...Will the government admit that it should properly consult Parliament, affected parties, experts and Canadians and that the appropriate thing to do is to withdraw Bill...

• (1030)

The Prime Minister, the person who is running our country right now, who is the head of our government, was saying exactly the same thing as we are now saying. I am convinced that this motion could be supported by a majority of the House, because it simply aims to improve democratic debates and how they work, and to give everyone the right to have their say.

One thing is certain: if we ever form the government, as my colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh said, we will respect this kind of democratic principle and we will listen to all Canadians, not just those who voted for us.

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that debating policy in this place is very important, but I believe that equally important is the debate that happens during a general election. Our party was quite clear in the policies we wanted to bring forward for Canadians. Canadians were quite clear that they supported the policies that our party is now bringing forward in the House, such as issues around freedom for farmers in the Wheat Board. Just think about the number of seats that affects. There are about 50 seats, 1 in British Columbia, and we won 90% of those seats. My assumption is that 90% of the people support our policy on the Wheat Board.

I would ask the member, does she not value the debate that took place with the public and the policies that we presented? If she wants to respect democracy, she should respect what the citizens of Canada said on May 2.

[*Translation*]

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

I find it interesting to see how statistics can be manipulated sometimes. He is trying to tell us that the Conservatives had strong backing to abolish the Canadian Wheat Board. We know that plebiscites were held on the matter for those truly affected by this and that the result was quite disastrous as far as the Conservatives were concerned. They claim to want to truly respect the decisions made on May 2. We are simply telling them they were supported by less than 40% of the Canadian public. The government received 39% of the popular vote, meaning that 61% of Canadians said they were not interested in the Conservatives' agenda and that it was not what they wanted for Canada.

I am not suggesting that everyone agrees with what we are saying. That is not it. We just want to add a different perspective. The other opposition parties also want to add a different perspective. However, the majority of Canadians said no to the Conservatives' agenda. If the Conservatives want to respect democracy—

• (1035)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member, who is perhaps stronger in statistics than I am.

I can understand how Conservative MPs from a previous Parliament may have held onto their old way of thinking about things and seeing things, although openness is always appreciated. However, it seems that 100 new MPs in the House of Commons is some sort of all-time record and a clear message from the Canadian public. If 100 new MPs are elected, particularly on this side of the House, then something has changed and the public wants a new vision in this Parliament. I find it especially contradictory that at a time when the government wants to increase the number of seats in the House of Commons to reflect the Canadian population, it is muzzling MPs once they get to the House. Can I—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his question.

That is the essence of the debate. If we truly want an active and living democracy, the government must take election results into account. Yes, they have a majority government. They can now govern for all Canadians and will not have to call elections all the time. Now, could we have sane and reasonable debates with everyone? Everyone here was elected and received a strong democratic mandate from their constituents. We must respect that. It is possible to have sane and constructive debates. If the government proposes something interesting that we can debate and take back to our constituents, we would not have anything against that.

Business of Supply

We are here to work for all Canadians too. I do not understand how the Conservatives can say that we should increase the number of seats in the House of Commons in order to improve democracy and then turn around and say that if we do not agree with them, we have no say, we should shut up and try not to make too much noise, since they do not like that. It is embarrassing for them, and in the papers, everywhere, everyone is against them. What will they do?

There is something really twisted in this way of thinking. I think that you should have the power, Mr. Speaker, since you are non-partisan—

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

[*English*]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time with the hon. member for Macleod.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to today's motion from the member for Windsor—Tecumseh. I also want to acknowledge the two previous speakers for their good work in the House and the privilege of working with them on the procedure and House affairs committee.

On May 2, Canadians gave the Conservatives a strong, stable national majority government. Canadians expect us to fulfill our commitments to them and that is exactly what we are doing. We are moving forward on our election commitments to implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

There are EI measures within this bill that encourage job creation. There is the accelerated capital cost allowance for small businesses to invest in efficient equipment. There are measures to protect law-abiding Canadians. These important measures for the safety of our communities and for the safety of our children and of our grandchildren have been stalled by the opposition. The Conservatives would also provide marketing freedom for western Canadian grain farmers, something Ontario farmers have had for decades but the same privilege has not been granted to our western colleagues. There are measures to eliminate once and for all the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry. There are measures to provide fair representation to all provinces in the House of Commons and move every single province closer to representation by population. As my colleagues across the way will know, we have MPs serving fewer than 40,000 constituents while others are serving four times that many. This imbalance needs to be addressed.

We have introduced legislation in this House on all of these important measures. However, despite the talking points being used across the aisle, not one of these measures is law yet. We have seen delay tactic after delay tactic. Each of these bills has been extensively debated in the House of Commons and at committee hearings.

Business of Supply

As an example, let us look at Bill C-13, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. This bill would implement the 2011 budget. We on this side of the House think that the 2011 budget should be passed into law in 2011. Looking at the calendar, there is not a lot of time left before we get to the new year. The new year, 2012, is only weeks away and we still have not implemented budget 2011 because of opposition delay tactics.

This bill includes important measures from this year's budget, including a job-creation tax for small business. All of us in this House agree that small business is the economic engine of Canada. There is the family caregiver tax credit. My colleague knows first-hand how important it is to make it easier for families to care for gravely ill relatives. There is the children's arts tax credit and the volunteer firefighters tax credit. In rural and remote parts of Canada, it is important that we have recruitment and retention tools for our volunteer firefighters. There is tax relief for the manufacturing sector, as I mentioned, the accelerated capital cost allowance. The bill includes making the gas tax refund permanent. Municipalities are constantly asking for predictable funding for their infrastructure needs.

All of these measures would promote job creation and economic growth. They would help add to the nearly 600,000 jobs already created in Canada since the global economic recession. These measures were supported by Canadians from sea to sea. They were exactly what Canadians voted for when they re-elected the Conservative government on May 2, with a majority mandate. However, we know the opposition has voted against these job-creating measures. For some reason, it opposes these positive and important job-creating initiatives.

I know today's motion is about debate in this place so allow me to outline just how much debate has already been given to the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. The budget was introduced on March 22 by the Minister of Finance. Debate on the budget started before the opposition forced an unnecessary election. Following the 37-day election campaign, which was focused on the Canadian economy, we moved quickly to reintroduce the budget on June 6. That was followed by four days of debate on the budget in June before we rose for the usual summer break in our constituencies.

• (1040)

When we came back in the autumn, we introduced the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act to implement the budget. That bill was debated for four days at second reading before being referred to the Standing Committee on Finance. That committee found time amid its 2012 pre-budget consultations to study the bill. After it was reported back to the House, it was debated for three further days at third reading and report stage. All told, the job-creating measures of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan as set out in Bill C-13 have been deliberated in this House for 12 days. That does not include the two afternoons used for the spring's two budget speeches. Just to repeat, we have had 12 days of debate on these important and urgent economic measures in this House. It is time for action.

I want to turn briefly to a second major bill in this fall sitting, Bill C-10, the safe streets and communities act.

During this spring's election, our Conservative government promised Canadians that we would pass comprehensive law and order legislation within the first 100 sitting days after the election. Looking at today's order paper, I see that today is the 54th sitting day. Just yesterday, the bill was reported from the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. The bill includes important measures, including proposals which would crack down on pedophiles who prey on children, and violent gangs that sell drugs to our children. These are all very important items that need to become law.

Despite some 27 hours or so of committee proceedings dedicated to clause-by-clause study and related business, we already have some 34 amendments to the bill tabled for report stage, which we will have to debate and vote on. I have no doubt whatsoever that we will see that number grow before the bill comes forward for debate on Tuesday morning.

After report stage and third reading, the bill will then go to the other place where the entire legislative process will be repeated.

It is fair to say that we are just about one-third of the way through the passing of Bill C-10 into law. One-third might sound like a breeze to some, but passing the nine predecessor bills to Bill C-10 has been anything but a breeze over the last several years and, in some cases, over three Parliaments. There have already been 95 hours of debate in this chamber alone on these proposals. In both houses there have been 261 speeches. That sounds to me to be pretty thorough debate already.

If I had a lot more time, I would go on about some of the other key priority bills of the government, such as Bill C-20, the fair representation act, and Bill C-18, the marketing freedom for grain farmers act, just to name two. Each has its own important and urgent requirements to become law this fall in order to meet timing demands driven by facts of life outside the House of Commons. Farmers need certainty before they plant their spring crops. Boundary commissions need to know what numbers they are working with, and they need to know that by February.

I cannot help but comment on the proposals set out in the motion put forward today by the member for Windsor—Tecumseh. I have to be honest; I am quite confused by the mixed messages it sends.

The NDP House leader has put forward a motion that would give the Speaker only 19 sitting days to study his proposals. The debate he contemplates following the Speaker's report would appear to last but one single solitary day. If we look at the wording of his motion, the member is basically putting closure on his own motion.

Business of Supply

On top of that, it is totally and completely ironic that the Speaker is required by the Standing Orders to put the NDP's motion to a vote after only two hours of debate in this House. This has to be the shortest debate on any item in the House since we came back in September.

In closing, Conservative members will be voting against the motion which tries to sidestep the fact that the opposition parties are trying to stop good things for Canadians, things which Canadians voted for just six months ago. The NDP wants to stop that great progress, to stop these things from becoming law, despite thorough and extensive debate and study.

● (1045)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to say to my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga that he obviously is confused. In fact, 20 days of debate would be allowed. Mr. Speaker, I am sure you understood the motion which the member obviously did not. There is plenty of time. When he mentioned 19 sitting days, his math may be right on that, but the reality is that given the break period over the end of the year into February when we would expect the report back, it is more like 60 to 70 days. I realize some of those would be taken up as vacation time, but there would be plenty of time. Mr. Speaker, if you need any assistance in that regard in terms of preparing the report, I can assure you that my caucus colleagues and I will be available. Perhaps the member could acknowledge that.

I want to make one point about the 100 day promise that was made by the Prime Minister during the election. If he felt so compelled to keep that promise, why was he not feeling the same way about keeping the promise he and the finance minister made about when they would retire the deficit in the budget? They broke that promise about two weeks ago. If that one was not important enough, why was the other one?

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, it is easy to read the frustration that is building on the other side. We saw last week a very unfortunate event in Parliament when a member of Parliament used parliamentary resources to tweet some very unacceptable language. The day before yesterday in the House we saw that a protester in the gallery actually was applauded and cheered on by some of the opposition members, although I will give credit that not all of the opposition members did that. These events are very unfortunate.

I understand the members' frustration, but even among NDP supporters, there is a growing realization that we are simply wasting time debating and debating. It is time for action. A friend of the NDP, Ian Capstick, said:

Well, I think it's an unfortunate result of the polarization that the opposition is not really ready to let the government pass any of its bills. The government comes back with a majority, but the opposition is determined to dig in and use every procedural trick that they can to hold things up. At some point the government has to use its majority to assume control....probably everything will be time allocation or virtually everything from now on—

● (1050)

The Speaker: I will have to stop the member for Kitchener—Conestoga there to allow another question.

The hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was some confusion earlier about the fact that no bill has received royal assent. For the record, since the election, Bill C-2, C-3, C-6, C-8, C-9, several bills have received royal assent. I do not know where that confusion is coming from.

Nonetheless, I would like to read what I think is the quintessential quote about how we should uphold the principles of debate in the House and that every member of Parliament willing to speak on an issue should have his or her say:

The role of each and every individual in the Chamber is to have an opportunity to stand up and debate legislation. If we want Canadians to have faith in this institution and in the relevance of parliament, we must be able to debate intelligently and to make suggestions, not just to take a wrecking ball approach but to put forward thoughtful suggestions and thoughtful input into legislation.

Who said that? The Minister of National Defence said that several years ago. At the time he was complaining that 30% of the bills were time allocated. The Conservatives are now up to 50%. Half of the bills have been subject to time allocation.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, it is easy to manipulate those numbers. Certainly 50% of a small number looks like a huge number. We came back in September to get some things done. Our colleagues know that we have to get Bill C-13 into law. We are so close to the end of 2011, and we have not even passed the 2011 budget yet.

We have had many opportunities. On Bill C-10, the safe streets and communities act, we have had four days of debate in the House, 11 committee hearings, 37 hours, and 53 speeches in the House in over 16 hours. That has been on Bill C-10 alone. On Bill C-13, we had seven total days of debate in the House. There were more days of debate at second reading than the average budget bill over the last two decades and more than any Liberal majority bill during that time. There have been more days of debate on Bill C-13—

The Speaker: The hon. member is out of time for questions and comments. Resuming debate, the hon. Minister of State for Finance.

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to make a statement that I am sure has never been heard before in this House. Canadians actually gave our government a strong mandate to fulfill our commitments to Canadians, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Despite what the opposition would have us believe, each of our bills has been extensively debated in the House of Commons and at committee hearings.

Bill C-13, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act is an example that I can speak to personally. As the Minister of State for Finance, I have been deeply involved in that.

We have heard that there have been 12 days of debate on the measures in Bill C-13 in this House. It should also be noted that there have been almost 120 speeches and over 32 hours of debate on Bill C-13 itself in this House.

Statements by Members

I would remind hon. members, as was mentioned by my colleague, that the budget was actually tabled on March 22. It was debated extensively throughout the election campaign. I would say it was passed by Canadians, a term that is not often used in connection with elections, but it actually passed because that is what we ran on. The finance committee studied it, including all of its other studies which it had started in 2010 to discuss what was going to be in budget 2011.

We will not allow the opposition to continue playing political games and delaying our important legislative agenda, especially our budget proposals, in today's economic climate.

On Monday, the opposition voted against Bill C-13, despite all the important job-creating measures that are included in this bill and which were extensively debated. I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the proposals in Bill C-13 that illustrate clearly just how the government is keeping our commitment to Canadians and just why we needed to take swift action.

As we all know, Canadians have weathered some very difficult economic times over the last couple of years. Our government has taken unprecedented action to help them through this challenging period, and we are seeing some reassuring signs of economic recovery.

The next phase of Canada's economic action plan builds on the government's record by announcing new measures for families and additional support for communities. This includes encouraging hiring by providing a temporary hiring credit for small business of up to \$1,000 against a small firm's increase in its 2011 employment insurance premiums over those it paid in 2010. We are almost in 2012. Clearly the time is here to implement this hiring credit.

The economic action plan also includes an extension of active or recently terminated work-sharing agreements by up to 16 weeks, so that companies can avoid layoffs by offering EI benefits to workers willing to work a reduced work week while their company recovers.

The government is focused on supporting Canadian families with a range of targeted measures that will help Canadians find and hold onto good, high-paying jobs while improving Canadians' quality of life in big and small communities all across this country.

Lower taxes support businesses by providing them with the freedom to grow and invest. Reductions in corporate taxes increase incentives for firms to invest in new equipment, to undertake innovative research, and to continue creating jobs.

Bill C-13 builds on actions taken by our government by continuing to keep taxes low. We cannot afford to further delay this.

For example, to promote the exploration and development of Canada's rich mineral resources, Bill C-13 proposes to extend the temporary 15% mineral exploration tax credit for an additional year into 2012. The credit helps companies raise capital by providing an incentive to individuals who invest in flow-through shares issued to finance mineral exploration.

• (1055)

Similarly, investments in clean energy technology and innovation are essential to realizing economic opportunities, creating employ-

ment and enhancing the Canadian advantage. Canada is an energy superpower with one of the world's largest resource endowments of both traditional and emerging sources of energy. Canada is increasingly looked to as a source and dependable supplier of a wide range of energy products.

Bill C-13 proposes to expand eligibility for accelerated capital cost allowance treatments for clean generation equipment to include equipment that generates electricity using waste heat. The government will continue to invest in Canadian capabilities, the drivers of our economic growth.

As a trade-dependent economy, Canada benefits from having an open and efficient trading system. As part of the economic action plan, Canada's trade instruments, notably the customs tariff, will be simplified and streamlined in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for businesses as well as government.

More specific, Bill C-13 proposes to reduce the customs processing burden for businesses by reducing the number of tariff items contained in the customs tariff to facilitate the classification of imported goods. By ensuring that Canada's trade instruments are modernized and streamlined, these measures will lower customs processing costs for Canadian businesses, making them more competitive at home and abroad and supporting their participation in global supply chains.

We want to get rid of this red tape now, not later. It is important that we move on with many of these initiatives.

There are many more that I would like to have talked about, but I see my time is up. I could go on and on about all the initiatives the NDP are trying to block, initiatives that businesses and Canadians need now.

The Speaker: The hon. member will have three minutes left after question period to conclude his remarks.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada was built by immigrants and our economic future depends on our ability to quickly accept and integrate newcomers.

I am pleased to be a member of Parliament from such a diverse riding. Because of Liberal neglect and empty promises, a massive backlog accumulated in every immigration category. We are working to fix this problem. Right now, parents and grandparents can expect to wait eight years or more before they receive a decision on their application. This is unacceptable and unfair.

*Statements by Members***JUSTICE**

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are rightfully concerned when the practice of polygamy is exposed in the country.

Polygamy has been linked to a consistent set of harms, including physical and sexual abuse; physical, reproductive and mental health harms; economic deprivation; lower levels of education; inequality, including both gender inequality and marginalization of young men; decreased political rights and civil liberties; and the commodification and objectification of women. The harmful effects of polygamy justify the criminal law ban.

That is why our government has vigorously defended the prohibition against polygamy in the Criminal Code. It is a practice which inevitably leads to the exploitation of women and young girls. This is unacceptable to our party and to our government. We have already acted to raise the age of sexual consent from 14 to 16 and currently have legislation before the House that will crack down on a wide variety of child sexual offences.

I would like to assure all Canadians that they can count on our government to stand up for these important values.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week we have some great news for workers in Canada and the United States. The state of Nebraska and TransCanada Pipelines have agreed to find a route for Keystone pipeline through Nebraska.

Keystone, when approved would mean 20,000 immediate construction jobs in the United States and tens of thousands of jobs in Canada. It will be the safest transportation method for oil in the world, oil from an ethical, safe, democracy that believes in equal rights for all and the rule of law for its citizens.

Yes, the NDP asked the Americans to stop the pipeline and kill tens of thousands of Canadian jobs. It is hard to believe the NDP would work to kill Canadian jobs and would encourage the purchase of oil from countries that do not allow women to vote, do not believe in individual rights and have many of their citizens live in fear and poverty.

Why would the NDP members do this? It is obvious they want to play politics with the lives of Canadians. They are not in it for Canadians; they are in it for themselves. They are not fit to govern.

* * *

•(1105)

[*Translation*]

GLOBAL BUY NOTHING DAY

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is Global Buy Nothing Day.

My constituents were pleased that the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism recently announced that the government would increase the number of parents and grandparents admitted to Canada next year from about 15,500 in 2010 up to 25,000 in 2012. This is the highest level in nearly two decades.

The new super visa for parents and grandparents will allow families to reunite quickly. As of December 1, visiting parents and grandparents who meet basic criteria of financial support and medical clearance will now be eligible to visit Canada for 24 months without renewing their visitor status.

My constituents of London North Centre—

•(1100)

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the aerospace industry in the Laurentian region has seen significant growth in the past 20 years and now includes about 20 companies and 4,000 direct jobs. The riding of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles has a number of world-class small and medium-sized businesses working in this sector. I am thinking of Patt Technologies and Metcor in Saint-Eustache, as well as DCM Aerospace and TMH Canada in Boisbriand.

Although the aerospace industry is booming, it is nevertheless a cyclical industry that must face foreign competitors with better government support. The NDP has long proposed that we develop a concerted industrial strategy for the aerospace industry to better support innovation and promote the modernization of equipment. While this government is handing over a blank cheque to Lockheed Martin, it is avoiding coming up with a real policy that would secure the future for Canadian and Quebec workers in the aerospace industry.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Maikel Nabil is a young Egyptian blogger, one of the early voices of the Tahrir Square revolution, whose words, “the army and the people are of one hand”, symbolized the hopes of the Egyptian Arab Spring. When the military started oppressing civilians, Nabil wrote, “the army and the people are no longer of one hand”, for which he was sentenced by a military tribunal to three years in prison in a process devoid of any legality.

Maikel is now on the 95th day of his hunger strike. He has become a symbol of hope and betrayal of an Egyptian Spring turned Winter, his life hanging by a thread.

I know all colleagues will join me in urging the Egyptian authorities to immediately release him and vindicate the original hopes of the Egyptian Arab Spring.

Statements by Members

We wish to recognize this day as an opportunity to reflect on the issue of overconsumption and how consumerism in wealthy countries affects the planet as a whole in terms of its social, economic and ecological impact.

At present, 20% of the world's population consumes 80% of all global resources. In every country, people are suffering because they cannot get the basic resources they need to live comfortably. In certain regions of the world, some people do not even have access to food every day and many children are suffering as a result.

Global Buy Nothing Day is not meant to hurt the economy, but it is an opportunity for people to reflect on how lucky we are to be able to buy things every day without even thinking about it.

I would like to congratulate an organization in my riding, the Coop la Maison verte, which is marking this event on Sunday by inviting its members to gather at the co-op to raise awareness, without buying anything. It is very important that we all pay attention to our consumption habits and make responsible decisions.

* * *

[English]

GREY CUP

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Sunday millions of Canadians from coast to coast to coast will turn their eyes toward beautiful British Columbia for the 99th Grey Cup. This annual sporting event is one of the oldest in the world.

However, as millions of Canadians know, the Grey Cup is about more than just football. For almost 100 years, the Grey Cup has helped bring our country together. Serving as Canada's unofficial fall festival, the Grey Cup affords an opportunity for all Canadians to come together to celebrate an event that is uniquely Canadian.

I have had the opportunity since 2004 to be a member of the B.C. alliance family as a member of the support group, the "Waterboys". The Lions, which had its first season in 1954, is the oldest professional sports team in British Columbia and is a valuable and important member of our community.

This weekend, along with millions in British Columbia, I will be cheering on the team members of the Lions as they attempt to win their sixth Grey Cup. Go Lions go.

* * *

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from November 16 to 19, I joined the Governor General on a state visit to Vietnam. This visit was the first ever state visit to Vietnam. This visit was to continue establishing our growing relations in trade, education and cultural ties.

While these ties are growing, nevertheless our concerns regarding human rights, the rule of law, religious freedom and promotion of democracy remain. During our bilateral meeting with the president, I emphasized these principles as a major platform of our foreign policy. I also informed him of our plans to open an office of religious freedom.

The next day, on our visit to Ho Chi Minh City, I then paid a visit to the parents of Nguyen Tien Trung, who has been sentenced to 16 years for advocating more democracy. I inquired about Mr. Nguyen's well-being.

Canada recognizes the desire of Vietnam to be a member of the international community. However, it needs to show that it has taken concrete steps to address its shortcomings in human rights, the rule of law, religious freedom and promotion of democracy. Canada is ready to assist.

* * *

GREY CUP

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this Sunday the big blue machine will descend on the hapless and unsuspecting B.C. Lions and regain its rightful ownership of the Grey Cup.

The Winnipeg Blue Bombers have a great history and tradition of triumph and victory. In 1935 it was the first team west of Ontario to ever win the Grey Cup. Since then, it has contested for the championship no fewer than 24 times, one of the best records in the league. The 1950s and 1960s were golden years for the blue and gold, with four Grey Cup victories in five seasons, and we christened "The House that Jack Built", the stadium that our team has called home until this very season.

The Winnipeg Blue Bombers are the pride of the Prairies, with the most devoted and passionate fans in the league. We love our team and our team has always made us proud.

I know that Sunday, November 27, the 99th CFL Grey Cup will be a great day and a historic event, as the big blue machine brings the Grey Cup back where it belongs: to the corner of Portage and Main.

* * *

[Translation]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Today also marks the beginning of 16 days of activism to combat violence against women here in Canada and around the world. This period of activism will end on Human Rights Day on December 10.

Violence against women affects everyone. It destroys families, undermines our social fabric, harms our communities and hinders our economy.

Our government made this problem a priority in the Speech from the Throne. Since 2007, the government has invested more than \$39 million in projects to address this situation.

These 16 days of activism remind us to do everything we can to eliminate violence against women and girls, today and always.

Statements by Members

●(1110)

TADOUSSAC SONG FESTIVAL

Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Festival de la chanson de Tadoussac has been celebrating French song for 28 years. This event features emerging artists who perform various types of music, and it attracts people from everywhere, close to 38,000 in 2010. The festival's economic spinoffs exceed \$1.7 million. This shows how the festival has expanded over the years.

During the Canadian Tourism Awards Gala, which took place on November 24 in Ottawa, the Festival de la chanson de Tadoussac was a finalist for the national award for cultural tourism. I want to acknowledge this recognition, which is the result of the hard work the organizers and volunteers have put in to make this festival a model to follow.

Congratulations, and long live the Festival de la chanson de Tadoussac.

* * *

[English]

TIM HORTONS IN KANDAHAR

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a piece of home for Canadians serving in Afghanistan is now coming home.

The Tim Hortons outlet at Kandahar airfield is closing after boosting soldiers' spirits for over five years. Civilian personnel hired by the Canadian Forces poured over four million coffees and half a million iced capps and served over three million doughnuts. Many of these civilians did multiple tours in Afghanistan.

The Tim Hortons on base provided a meeting place for soldiers from all nations. It was a place to sip on some coffee and have some good conversation. For many, it was a home away from home.

How many Canadians know this: all the proceeds from the Kandahar Tim Hortons went to support our troops and their families.

We salute and thank Tim Hortons for its support of our men and women in uniform.

We salute and thank the civilian personnel whose commitment made life a little easier for those for serve.

We salute and thank our brave men and women of the Canadian Forces who answer the call to duty each and every day.

* * *

A HARE IN THE ELEPHANT'S TRUNK

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Jan Coates is a children's author and teacher from Wolfville, Nova Scotia, who has been writing for children since 2000.

This year her book *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk* was one of five finalists for the 2011 Governor General's Literary Award—Children's Text.

The novel for young adults is based on the life of Jacob Deng, who as a seven-year-old in southern Sudan embarked on a journey of

survival. Jacob fled from a civil war, lived in a refugee camp, endured hunger and aspired to an education as a path away from violence.

In 2003 Jacob arrived in Nova Scotia as a refugee. He has since studied at both Acadia University and St. Mary's University and has established a charitable foundation, Wadeng Wings of Hope, to build schools in Sudan. Forty per cent of the proceeds from the sales of Jan's books is donated to Jacob's charity.

Jacob's life is a story of courage, and Jan's book about it is a lesson on life for all of those who read it.

Congratulations, Jan and Jacob.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Vancouver Quadra is calling for Canada to impose a European-style carbon tax. The member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville wants a global carbon tax. The Liberal scheme for a job-killing carbon tax on everything is back on the table.

If the Liberals had their way, Canadians would be paying substantially more for gas in their cars, electricity for their homes and everything else they buy.

Canadians must not forget the Liberals' hidden agenda of imposing a massive new tax on everything if they get their chance.

It is not just carbon taxes. Recently their interim leader called for the end of tax credits for children, transit users and workers, and despite the current global economic uncertainty, the Liberals continue to call for higher taxes on job creators.

It is clear that the Liberal Party still has no new ideas other than higher taxes for Canadian families.

* * *

G8 SUMMIT

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives were elected on a promise to clean up Ottawa. Instead, the Muskoka minister gets his hands on a \$50 million slush fund. He runs the program through his constituency office. He hides the documents from the Auditor General. Then, when he is pressed for an explanation by committee, he claims that he had no role in the review of the projects. Two hundred and forty-two projects magically became 32. That is simply not true.

We have his letters of rejection to the municipalities. He said in the House that he handed all of the documents to the Auditor General. That is not true. The Auditor General told committee that she was given only a few unrelated documents.

Where is the outrage from Conservative backbenchers on behalf of Canadian taxpayers? Why are they sitting on their hands? Those Conservatives came to Ottawa to change Ottawa, but instead Ottawa changed them. They are now worse than the party they replaced.

Oral Questions

●(1115)

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while our Conservative government is focused on creating and protecting jobs with our low-tax plan and job-creating measures such as the hiring credit for small business, the NDP is constantly opposing them and thus opposing helping Canadian families.

In the coming months, Canadians will endure countless NDP leadership debates. The candidates will each be looking to lead Canada's socialist movement. However, even before the debate, we already know what most NDP leadership candidates want to do for the economy and Canadian taxpayers, and workers everywhere should be very afraid.

First, they want to kill jobs by hiking taxes on employers by nearly \$10 billion a year. Second, they want to impose a new tax on everyday financial transactions. Third, they want to increase personal taxes. Fourth, they want to hike taxes on everyone by implementing a higher GST. The list of tax hikes and ill-considered schemes goes on and on.

When it comes to the NDP and the economy, Canadians know that means three things—

The Speaker: Order, please.

Oral questions, the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this government should be attacking the twin deficits in the job market—the deficit of 2 million Canadians left out of the workforce and the deficit of quality in the jobs being created. The few jobs that have been created are of lesser quality, pay less, are less stable and have fewer benefits. The question is simple. When will the government have the courage to face reality? When will this government change course? When will it create high-quality jobs such as the ones families have lost?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the federal government, our priority is economic growth and job creation. We set out new measures in this fall's bill, but the NDP voted against every one of our proposals aimed at creating jobs. It voted against efforts to help small businesses and measures to lower taxes and make Canada the best place in the world to invest. Economic growth is our priority. We have already created 600,000 new jobs over the past two years. That is a good start, and we will continue to work on economic recovery.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we voted against policies that created 72,000 lost jobs in the month of October alone. We voted against policies that have left two million Canadians unemployed. We voted against policies that have forced down average wages in this country by 2% over the last year. We voted against a program that has left a million Canadians

going to food banks just to make ends meet. We have lost 600,000 well-paid manufacturing jobs on the Conservative watch. That has led to a decrease in wages.

It is very clear that the government does not know where it is going. Where is the real job creation plan? Why—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased with the 600,000 net new jobs created since the bottom of the recession, but we are not declaring victory. We remain focused on the Canadian economy. We remain focused on ensuring that every single Canadian who wants to work has a job.

Let me remind the member opposite of what the NDP voted against. It voted against the family caregiver tax credit, the children's arts tax credit, the volunteer firefighters tax credit and tax relief for the manufacturing sector, something he purports to support. Why will he not stand up and support the good measures that would help job creation and economic growth?

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has failed to deliver on accountability under the current health accords. There is still time to fix that. We have at least two more years, in fact, for the government to deliver on its promises. Canadians do not have the information the federal government promised they would have on what was or was not achieved under the current health accords.

Will the Conservatives agree to bring in a full accounting, now, so that Canadians can have a meaningful debate on what the next health accord should accomplish for this country?

●(1120)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, there have been issues of accountability with the original 2004 accord that was negotiated by the Liberals. However, there is good news: the Minister of Health is having the opportunity to meet with her colleagues from the provinces and territories today to discuss what we have learned from that 2004 health accord.

Our government is committed to the escalation of the 6% to the provinces and territories. We are committed to a universal and publicly funded health care system and to the Canada Health Act. The upcoming discussions will be about just what the member is asking for: accountability; results for Canadians, including better reporting—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

Oral Questions

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the commitment on accountability was made in the last health accord.

We have spent \$160 billion under the current accords. Are Canadians getting value for that money? The truth is that the Conservatives have failed to live up to the current accord. They failed to ensure proper reporting on what we got for that spending.

The meetings in Halifax are not going to advance that. The Conservatives just did not do the work. If the Conservatives are able to demonstrate some leadership and accountability, why not do it right now, rather than three years from now?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are showing leadership. If we compare how the Liberals negotiated with the provinces with how our government has, if we remember correctly, they started by cutting \$25 billion out of transfers. I do not know if the member has had the opportunity to negotiate with the provinces, but he should not start off that way; it does not put them in a very good mood.

We are starting two and a half years ahead of time. We are going to be discussing exactly what the provinces are finding on the ground and working with them to put those benchmarks in, to put accountability in and to put innovation in, because that is what Canadians want from their governments.

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health accords, the federal government's role goes beyond just reaching for its chequebook.

We still have not seen much progress on the government's commitments with regard to electronic health records, a national pharmaceutical strategy, and access to health care for aboriginal people.

When will the government stop denying it has failed when it comes to the health accords? Where is the necessary leadership for improving our health care system?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if we read between the lines, it is clear that the NDP would like to interfere in provincial jurisdictions. In contrast, our government is respecting provincial jurisdictions by increasing support for health care systems by more than 30%, unlike the NDP, which would like to increase federal bureaucracy and unions.

* * *

[English]

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are very disturbed by the government's refusal to stand up to the U.S. and protect Canadian interests. Thousand of Stelco employees have been out of work for over three years because the Conservatives failed to set out clear takeover criteria under the Investment Canada Act.

The government promised over a year ago to define the net benefit test. Why has the minister failed to live up to that promise? Why has he failed to defend Canadian jobs?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government defends Canadian jobs each and every day. We referred this important issue to the industry committee so that it could take the time to study the issue and report back to government. What happened? What stopped the industry committee? It was the Liberal Party of Canada that voted to call an early opportunistic election, rather than allowing the industry committee to do its important work.

If we had not had an early election, the industry committee would have finished its good work.

[Translation]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Conservative government has not been defending Canadian interests is very disturbing.

The Conservatives buried their heads in the sand when the United States was moving ahead with its Buy American policy and so many other irritants. Now they are on the verge of signing a perimeter security agreement with the Americans.

Why is the Prime Minister getting ready to sign this agreement on December 7 when so many issues remain unresolved? Why kowtow to the United States?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had his way, he would not sign any agreement until every challenge had been dealt with.

We have a good working relationship with the Obama administration under the Prime Minister's leadership. He has been working incredibly hard to try to take down barriers that hurt Canadian jobs.

Sometimes in the manufacturing sector parts will go back and forth as many as 7 to 12 times. These border problems have a huge impact on the Canadian economy, and the Prime Minister has been working incredibly hard to tear down these barriers to protect and promote Canadian economic growth. No final deal has been reached but, under the Prime Minister's leadership, I am confident it will.

* * *

● (1125)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at committee yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources was caught misleading the Canadian public. She was asked point blank if she stood by her statements about how long it takes the average Canadian to receive an employment insurance cheque. She said, yes, that she stood by her statement. Minutes later, the head of Service Canada came as a witness and said that she was actually wrong.

Would the minister rise in the House, apologize to 1.4 million unemployed Canadians today and reverse the decision about cutting the EI processing centres across this great country?

Oral Questions

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our goal is to get EI cheques to people who are qualified for them just as quickly as possible. We have a standard. It is 28 days 80% of the time, and we are just a little below that right now.

I apologize if there was any confusion when the member opposite did not understand what all went into that statistic. However, we are changing the system because we want to improve it. We want to deliver services to Canadians better, faster, more efficiently and more affordably.

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[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Attawapiskat First Nation declared a state of emergency four weeks ago. Families are living in tents, in shacks and in trailers. People are in danger because of cold temperatures, yet no federal official has bothered going to see the community.

Yesterday, the government promised \$2 million in assistance. Can the government confirm this and does it have a long-term plan to improve the situation in Attawapiskat?

[English]

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are deeply concerned about the situation. The community is facing a number of challenges. We have had ongoing discussions with the chief and council in order to make progress on addressing these issues. My officials will be in the community early next week to discuss the next steps.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Attawapiskat is a community that has tried to do things right and yet it has continued to fall behind from chronic underfunding and systemic negligence in terms of infrastructure, education, housing and health. The situation is causing an international outcry and Canadians are rightly wondering how this can happen in a country as rich as Canada.

Will the government commit to take the lead with eight officials and with the community to fix the situation in Attawapiskat so that we can return to the community to the kind of dignity that these people deserve?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are taking this situation seriously. The community has a number of challenges, one of them being its financial challenge. It is in co-management. It has an indebtedness that is getting in the way of a lot of other progress that could be made.

Part of our overall next steps is to get to a place where proper local administration and governance can ensure there is progress being made in the community.

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it took hearing the testimony of representatives of the Norwegian government yesterday at the Standing Committee on National Defence for people to realize that the Associate Minister of National Defence cannot add. Norway expects to pay \$10 billion U.S. for just 52 F-35s and another \$42 billion for maintenance over 30 years. That is five times more than what this government says it will have to pay.

Since the Conservatives' numbers are simply wrong, should we be asking the Norwegian government to do our math for us?

[English]

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is as onerous a statement as I have ever heard. Comparing our situation with Norway's situation is a quick fix that goes nowhere.

This morning, I met with a secretary from Norway. We discussed the issue broadly. Canada's program is on track, and our figures reconcile. The member needs to do her homework.

● (1130)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Auditor General indicated that the government does not even have enough money to ensure basic maintenance of our aircraft. According to the Norwegian government's realistic cost calculations, an estimated \$40 billion will be required over 30 years to maintain 52 F-35s. It seems that this government is trying to fob off its miscalculations to future generations.

Will this government stop misleading Canadians and show us the real numbers?

[English]

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the excitement is overwhelming indeed.

I will just quote the minister from Norway, who stated categorically, among other things, "I want to say that my government is strongly committed to the F-35s". He has also encouraged us. We will stay with that program.

Our budget for the purchase of F-35s remains on track and the figures are calculated accurately. The member opposite needs to do her own math to get to the bottom of what she is alleging, which is not true.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the associate minister is making facts up as he goes along.

Yesterday he claimed that his F-35s would be able to communicate with our ground troops as soon as we get them, but his own department says that is simply not true, putting our troops at risk of friendly fire.

The associate minister is in way over his head. Will he finally put this contract out to tender so our troops are not stuck with planes that put them in danger?

Oral Questions

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only danger here is the rhetoric coming from the opposite side.

Contrary to the member's misrepresentation, the facts are that Canada is scheduled to receive its delivery of F-35 aircraft, equipped with the ability to locate and communicate with other aircraft and know where friendly ground units are well in advance of deployment on operation.

Our plan is on track. Things are working. The aircraft are coming off the production line. They are being flown and delivered to partner countries as we speak.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a mountain of evidence from multiple reliable sources that contradicts what the associate minister tells the House every day. The associate minister is at odds with his own minister, his own ministry and now with our allies.

Yesterday, the Norwegians told us that they expect to pay five times what the Conservative government will pay for the F-35s, \$40 billion for 13 fewer planes, and they acknowledge that it may go up.

How did Canada qualify for an 80% discount, or is the minister just making these numbers up?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all reasonable people agree that we need the aircraft to defend Canadian sovereignty. Our plan is on track, and we will provide the air force with the equipment it needs to defend that sovereignty.

If the opposition had its way, it would cancel the equipment that our air force agrees is the best for it to do its job safely and effectively, never mind the reference to our men and women.

This government is the one that has been rebuilding the equipment and providing the resources that our air force and military people need and we will keep on doing it.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this government announced very quietly the establishment of an advisory committee to determine whether it is possible to work in French in federally regulated businesses in Quebec. We do not know who will sit on this committee, which businesses will be targeted, what timeframe will be set and, more importantly, whether the committee's report will be released. The New Democratic Party did its homework and has already drafted a bill on this issue.

Why waste time, instead of simply supporting our initiative?

● (1135)

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to French, we will not take lessons from the NDP. It is important to promote French and also English. We are a bilingual country and I am proud to be a Canadian.

As regards the legislation, our government always passes laws that are based on facts. We will see what is going on in Quebec before supporting any bill.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is nice rhetoric. The government is really dragging its feet, improvising and trying to create a distraction. If setting up a committee were such a good idea, the government would have done it during the previous session, when the hon. member for Outremont introduced a similar bill.

This government is constantly showing a lack of respect for francophones in Quebec and across Canada. We know that some federally regulated private companies in Quebec, such as National Bank and Air Canada to name only two, do not care about French in the workplace.

The NDP is proposing concrete measures. Will the government stop trying to save face and work with us to settle this issue?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the committee will look at the facts and then report to Canadians. The most important thing for us is that we live in a bilingual country and we must promote the two official languages of that country. This is what we are going to do.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this nice rhetoric is fine, but there is no need to redo the job 10 times. The issue of French in federally regulated private businesses was reviewed in depth a long time ago. This is evidenced by the fact that, today, the NDP is introducing a bill on this issue and it will be debated this afternoon.

Will the government support us in our efforts to quickly pass this legislation? Does it prefer to waste time and taxpayers' money by setting up another committee?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed to hear the opposition member talk about wasting time. Taking a close look at an issue before making a decision is not wasting parliamentarians' time.

* * *

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, without a plan and without rules, documents reveal that the government has been spending millions on border infrastructure projects in Quebec, Ontario and the Atlantic inappropriately.

In Atlantic Canada, the government has been promising such a strategy, the Atlantic gateway strategy, since 2007. It was not until March 2011 that the government finalized and posted these rules and only after a quarter of a billion dollars had already been spent.

Transport Canada's departmental performance report reveals what the minister will not, that the gate to the Atlantic gateway is now closed. The funds are all gone.

How does the minister explain this mismanagement—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We continue to work on the Atlantic gateway strategy.

For the edification of the member opposite, he should recognize that St. John's, Newfoundland, is in a perfect position to become the gateway to the northern part of Canada. There is great potential not just for an Atlantic Canadian gateway but for a northern gateway for Newfoundland, which we will continue to work on with our colleagues from Atlantic Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during question period yesterday, when the government was asked what it planned on doing to resolve the problem with prescription drug shortages, it responded that it was prepared to look at regulations if no other methods were effective.

My question is simple: can the minister tell the House what regulations the government is considering imposing to resolve this worrisome problem?

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, I disagree with the premise of the question.

Our government is taking a leadership role in the world. The minister has spoken to the drug companies, and I am pleased to report to the House that the companies have responded positively to her request. Information about the drug shortages will soon be available on public websites, giving patients and medical doctors the information they need to make the proper decisions.

Final details are still being worked out, but I am very encouraged to see how the industry has responded to these concerns.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question was about regulations and how those were going to change.

In 2004 the health accord created innovative solutions to the real problems facing the health care system, including a national pharmaceutical strategy to make sure that prescription drugs were safe and available for everyone who needed them.

However, the Conservatives killed this plan which, as the Auditor General pointed out this week, has prevented many life-saving drugs from reaching the market while keeping many unsafe drugs on pharmacy shelves.

As negotiations on the next health accord begin, will the government admit its error and bring forward a plan to ensure that Canadians have a safe, affordable supply—

• (1140)

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

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, Canadians can be assured that we have one of the safest drug supply systems in the world.

The member brought up the Auditor General. We actually agree with the Auditor General's findings. Work is already under way to address the concerns of the Auditor General. For example, we have already taken steps to ensure that drug reviews are done in a thorough and timely manner.

The health and safety of Canadians is a priority for our government. It is obvious that a better process needs to be put in place to ensure that the products on the market are safe, efficient and reliable for all Canadians. We are committed to that.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year when Canadians heard that CIDA would be streamlining the application process for developing programs, they expected improvement.

It turns out that for Conservatives, streamlining just means delaying. Fifty groups have waited for over three months to hear whether they are getting the funding. Critical programs in developing countries are being cut.

Why is the minister putting these important development projects at risk?

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to assistance that is effective, focused and accountable.

We ensure each project is an effective use of taxpayers' dollars. The amount of time to review proposals varies, depending on the overall number of applications and the size, complexity and risks associated with each proposal.

The proposals are under consideration. I cannot comment further until the due diligence and evaluation process is completed.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, these people are trying to help the world's poorest, and all they get from the government is doublespeak and off-base attacks.

CIDA was four months past its own deadline, waiting for a media event, to announce the Muskoka initiative funding. The International Aboriginal Youth Internships were timed so the minister could announce them on a particular day.

Why is the minister more interested in flashy press conferences than actually getting the job done?

Oral Questions

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no organization is entitled to receive taxpayers' dollars indefinitely.

Our responsibility is to Canadian taxpayers. It requires us to ensure that the official development assistance is more effective, more focused and more accountable.

The proposals are under consideration, and I will not speculate on when the due diligence and evaluation process will be completed.

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GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the president of the Treasury Board appeared before the government operations committee yesterday to explain holes in the government's spending estimates. As we have come to expect from that minister, we received a lot of runarounds, but few answers.

However, the minister did confirm that Conservatives are throwing away \$20 million on private sector slashing experts and threatening to shut down entire programs.

My questions is the following: which programs and services that Canadian families rely on are on the chopping block of their private consultants?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is not immune to the problems facing other countries. Reckless spending and out of control debt are key causes of problems in other countries today.

Canadians gave us a strong mandate to protect and complete Canada's economic recovery. Our government has a plan to keep taxes low, focus on jobs for Canadians, and growing the economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this government should put its rhetoric aside and think about the families who need government services. Departments are announcing huge cuts without telling us where they will be made. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Infrastructure Canada, Industry Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada have all announced cuts, but they are not saying where the millions will be cut.

Before wasting \$20 million on private contracts, will the government ensure that it understands what is going on in its own departments?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under our government, Canada has created nearly 600,000 new jobs. Canadians gave us a strong mandate to protect and complete Canada's economic recovery. While the opposition is calling for higher taxes that would kill jobs and hurt the economy, our government has a plan to keep taxes low, focus on jobs for Canadians, and growing the economy.

Reckless spending and out of control debt are the key problems facing other countries today and we do not intend to follow that path.

• (1145)

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Supreme Court prevented Saputo and Kraft Canada from challenging the cheese compositional standards that our government brought in a few years ago. This will ensure that processors continue to use real Canadian milk in the production of Canadian cheese.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture please update the House on what this decision means for consumers and supply managed farmers in the dairy sector?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2008 our government introduced a cheese compositional standard to ensure that real Canadian milk was used in the production of Canadian cheese. This decision by the Supreme Court is beneficial to both consumers and Canadian dairy farmers because it ensures that our world-class cheese continues to be made with world-class milk.

This is yet another example of how our government stands up both for consumers and our supply managed farmers. It demonstrates clearly that we put farmers first.

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ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the jig is up for the asbestos industry. After spending hundreds of millions of dollars subsidizing this industry and trying to block international efforts to curb its use, the last remaining asbestos mine is finally on the ropes.

Instead of shovelling even more corporate welfare into this deadly and dying industry, why do the Conservatives not use that money for economic development in the region to help those people transition out of this deadly and dying industry into an industry with a future?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (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, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for more than 30 years, the Government of Canada has been promoting the safe, controlled use of chrysotile both here and abroad. All of the scientific studies have shown that chrysotile can be used safely in a controlled environment.

Oral Questions

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' broken record will not create any jobs tomorrow morning. By passively watching the industry slowly die—just as people are dying of respiratory illnesses in India and other developing countries—the government has turned its back on asbestos workers and an entire region's economy. Asbestos production has stopped and workers are finding themselves without jobs and without a transition program.

Is this government so pro-cancer that it cannot recognize that it is making the wrong choices by trying to make people believe that there is still a future for this industry?

Mr. Jacques Gourde (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, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all the scientific studies have shown that chrysotile can be used safely in a controlled environment. We on this side of the House have nothing to learn from the party on the other side, whose members do not even know what is going on in Quebec's economic regions.

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[English]

SENIORS

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is failing Canadian seniors. It consistently refuses to put in place measures that would allow our seniors to age with dignity. On pensions, it offers retirement roulette. On GIS, the government offers little. On affordable housing and health care, the government offers absolutely nothing.

Why does the government refuse to defend the dignity of Canadian seniors?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposite is what is true. In fact, it is our government that increased the earnings exemption for the GIS from \$500 to \$3,500. It was our government that brought in pension income splitting to help seniors lower their taxes so they would have more money to spend. It was our government that invested \$400 million in affordable housing under the economic action plan just for seniors.

The list goes on and on, but we only have a short period of time. I suggest, though, that the NDP, instead of railing against it, should actually have supported some of these measures.

[Translation]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to have a dialogue on the current needs of seniors, but this government is changing the subject to avoid answering the question, which is worrisome. I guess the minister does not realize that not every senior is going to have a pension as cushy as his.

FADOQ, the largest seniors' organization in Quebec, personally told me that many seniors simply do not have access to the services they need. FADOQ is disappointed by this government's false promises, as are we.

How can seniors trust this government if the only thing it can offer is feigned indignation and empty promises?

• (1150)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have done a lot for our seniors, those who built this great and wonderful country. Unfortunately, the New Democratic Party has opposed every one of our efforts to help seniors. For example, yesterday, an NDP MP insulted every senior in Canada. That is unacceptable.

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[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has fought 752 ground fishers in court over the last five years over millions of dollars that are owed in back taxes to the fishers. After the government lost the court case, it has reluctantly agreed to settle. The problem is there are over 1,400 other fishers involved in the same program who are owed millions of dollars in back taxes.

Will the government commit right now to pay back every single tax dollar that is owed to the ground fishers?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, service to all Canadians is important, and we have acted immediately after the court decision. We created a dedicated team to review each of the fishers' requests, and our expectation is that reassessments will begin to be issued in the coming weeks.

I would, however, like to point out that the member for Cardigan was at the cabinet table, and was really a member when the previous Liberal government came up with a poorly worded policy that led to confusion and a decade of unfortunate legal battles.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but the parliamentary secretary is wrong. It is the Conservative government that has fought fishers in court for five years—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Cardigan has the floor.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: They hate to hear this, Mr. Speaker, but when the government lost the court case this year, the minister waited to the very last possible day before telling the fishers she would not appeal the case, fighting them tooth and nail to the last drop.

Now there are over 1,400 other fishers in this program who have not received this money. Will the government assure the fishers today that they will be paid the millions of dollars owed to them, along with the 752 who have won the court case after five years?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, it is unfortunate that the Conservative government is having to clean up the Liberal mess on this issue.

Oral Questions

However, I do want to reassure the House, because it is very important for the fishers, that a dedicated team has been set up to review each of the fishers' requests. Our expectation is that the reassessment will begin to be issued in the upcoming weeks.

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HEALTH

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives promised there would be no cuts to the Public Health Agency of Canada, but now they have said there will be new criteria and a new application process for HIV-AIDS funding. The clock is ticking, yet the Conservatives still have not said what those criteria are, or even how to apply.

HIV-AIDS community organizations are now concerned they will have to close their doors and cut community services before they can even submit applications. Why are the Conservatives putting HIV-AIDS community services at risk?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want the member to know that I disagree with him. I am very proud of the work this government has accomplished in helping combat HIV-AIDS not only in Canada but in the world. The Canadian HIV vaccine initiative, for example, CHVI, led by our government along with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, highlights Canada's world-class HIV and vaccine research expertise. This initiative will help our government advance the science for the development of a safe and effective HIV vaccine. In addition, last year alone our government provided \$42 million in HIV-AIDS research funding through CIHR.

[Translation]

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, HIV-AIDS organizations rely on this funding to offer help to Canadians. These organizations have already waited much longer than usual to get confirmation from the government that their funding would indeed be renewed.

Is this another example of the government's mismanagement, like all the other examples the Auditor General raised this week? Does this government plan to withdraw funding from HIV-AIDS organizations or not?

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I suppose the member did not hear my answer. Our government has taken a leadership role and has made unprecedented investments into research for people who have HIV and AIDS. The sad thing about it is each and every time we do that, NDP members stand in the House and vote against it. That is the sad state of affairs that this party has to deal with. We are committed to helping people who need help in our country and around the world with HIV and AIDS.

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• (1155)

MARINE ATLANTIC INC.

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Marine Atlantic Inc. offers commercial and passenger ferry services between

the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. This is a vital service to those people living on Canada's eastern coast.

On November 28 at one minute after midnight, Marine Atlantic Inc. and the National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada, Local 4285, will acquire the legal right to strike or lock out. Can the Minister of Labour provide an update to the House on the situation with Marine Atlantic Inc.?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Canadians have given our government a strong mandate to focus on the economy and to make sure that we do what we can to help Canada's recovery.

In the case of Marine Atlantic, we are referring the matter to the Canadian Industrial Relations Board for its ruling on whether any activities need to be maintained because the ceasing of the activities would pose an immediate and serious danger to the public health and safety for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I made that referral today.

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UKRAINE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we recall the Holodomor genocide in Ukraine nearly 80 years ago, we are also concerned about the fragile state of Ukrainian democracy today. Interference in the legal system is used to stifle free political activity and now some mysterious illness seems to have befallen the leader of the opposition.

Will the Canadian government press Ukrainian authorities to allow Ms. Tymoshenko independent medical treatment? Will Canada offer to provide that treatment if necessary and will Ukraine be warned that anything untoward happening to Ms. Tymoshenko would severely affect relations with Canada?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member for Wascana that is probably the best question we have had all day. I completely agree with him that we are tremendously concerned about the political prosecution of the former leader of the opposition there. We are tremendously concerned about her well-being. I will certainly endeavour to follow up to ensure that Canada speaks strongly, that she get the medical care that she needs. If necessary, we would certainly be prepared to offer her support here in Canada.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

LAPIERRE ISLAND

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Environment Canada determined that the real market value of Île Lapière was \$14 million. A year earlier, the value of the island was estimated at \$400,000. This island is essentially a dump. It has no ecological value. All of the officials who have worked on this file have said that it has no value. Yet businessman Alfonso Argento received \$14 million in tax credits for this island. Fourteen million dollars for him, and \$15 million for 85,000 volunteer firefighters. It is clear that the Conservative Party's friends are more important than volunteer firefighters.

[English]

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did hear something about tax credits for volunteer firefighters, and that gives me the opportunity to remind all members in the House that it was only this side of the House that actually voted for that measure the other night. The NDP, and in fact all of the opposition, voted against it.

There are a lot of things wrong in the world. What we can do is help Canadians right now. We have offered Canadians incentives to get people back to work and tax credits to help them, but every time we do, those members vote against it.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's international focus continues to be deepening our trade relationships. Increased trade creates economic growth and jobs here in Canada. With one in five Canadian jobs generated by trade, this is a no-brainer. Despite these clear benefits, the NDP continues to lobby against the creation of Canadian jobs.

Could the parliamentary secretary please explain to the House how the NDP views trade?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the NDP pretends to be mainstream, but its anti-trade agenda has no credibility.

Here is how the NDP views trade: exports means sending NDP MPs abroad to lobby against Canadian jobs; imports means flying socialists to Canada to criticize Canadians working in our oil sands.

The NDP's anti-trade, anti-Canadian jobs agenda is proof that the NDP is unfit to be the official opposition.

* * *

● (1200)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have seen what happens when the government and industry do not consult on major projects like the northern gateway.

The coastal first nations have made clear their opposition to the project and process. Now Kinder Morgan is proposing to double the Trans Mountain pipeline that would run through at least 15 first nation reserves and 30 traditional territories. Failure to negotiate in good faith has left a cloudy picture of rights and title in British Columbia.

When will the minister commit to government-to-government talks with the affected first nations?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment has referred the northern gateway pipeline project to a joint review. It is the highest level of scrutiny possible. The review is an open and independent process whereby interested parties, including aboriginal groups, can freely express their views.

Our government, as the member knows, supports the diversification of our exports; however, we are committed to ensuring that any project is environmentally sustainable.

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[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government was doing magic tricks yesterday to try to get people to forget its recent appointments of unilingual anglophones. By launching a consultative committee whose mandate and composition are not yet known—nor is it known whether this committee will report to Parliament—the government is embarking on useless consultations, since the problem is well known. I have a very simple suggestion that will save the government time and money: pass the only bill that the Bloc Québécois has ever introduced in this House, which makes employees of federally regulated businesses in Quebec subject to Bill 101. It is important to point this out.

Will the government stop waffling and really protect French as the language of work in Quebec?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will continue promoting and protecting the French language, not just in Quebec, but also in Canada. The government announced that it will launch a consultative committee that will work on the ground to speak with Canadians and ensure that employees of federally regulated businesses in Quebec are fully able to work in French. We will examine the facts and take action if necessary.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PROTECTING CANADIANS ABROAD ACT

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-359, An Act to Protect Canadian Citizens Abroad.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a bill to protect Canadian citizens abroad in support of the foundational principle that all Canadian citizens, without discrimination, who are detained, stranded or captured, or who have disappeared abroad, deserve the protection of the Government of Canada.

There are a number of high-profile cases, including those of Maher Arar, Omar Khadr and Abousfian Abdelrazik, and those who were the subject of the Iacobucci commission report—Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad Abou-Elmaati and Muayyed Nureddin, as well as the related jurisprudence—that have underscored the need for legislation. This legislation would set forth both the rights of Canadian citizens as well as the threshold obligations of the Government of Canada and its consular services.

Accordingly, this legislation, the first ever of its kind in Canada, would affirm these rights and obligations, including rights to consular access, consular visits and repatriation; reporting requirements for Canadian officials when they suspect a Canadian detained or captured abroad has been or may be tortured; and requirements that the government request the repatriation of a Canadian detained abroad in situations where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Canadian has been or may be tortured, is being subjected to conditions constituting cruel or unusual punishment, or is being arbitrarily detained.

I would like to thank the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel for seconding the bill. I trust it will be supported by all members in the House.

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

* * *

●(1205)

CANADIAN FOOTBALL ACT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-360, An Act to support Canadian professional football.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to present a bill, an act to support Canadian professional football.

From coast to coast to coast, Canadians' eyes will be riveted on Vancouver this weekend for the 99th Grey Cup, where the BC Lions will take on the Winnipeg Blue Bombers from eastern Canada.

I know there are Blue Bombers fans in the House. Of course, I am a BC Lions fan, and last weekend I was pleased to see, in BC Place stadium, a sea of orange, of supporters coming out for the BC Lions. Of course, I am mighty partial to orange, and waves of orange. It was great to see that many people in BC Place stadium.

What the Canadian Football League does is very important. It has the right balance. It is not multi-millionaires playing, but mainly guys who have worked all their lives, often with other jobs, but

Routine Proceedings

through their love of football, they continue to push forward and to represent their communities. On behalf of football fans across the country, I am presenting this bill that would allow the Canadian Football League to continue to prosper right across the country for future generations.

[Translation]

Long live the Canadian Football League!

[English]

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations on this following motion for travel. I move:

That, in relation to its study on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union, six members of the Standing Committee on International Trade be authorized to travel to Brussels, Belgium and Paris, France in the fall of 2011 and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table today a petition signed by literally thousands of Canadians from all across Canada who call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer the world has ever known. In fact, they point out that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial or occupational causes combined. Yet Canada remains one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world, spending millions of dollars subsidizing the asbestos industry and blocking international efforts to curb its use.

Therefore, these petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to ban asbestos in all of its forms, institute a just transition program for asbestos workers and the communities they live in and end all government subsidies of asbestos, both in Canada and abroad. They call upon the Government of Canada to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam convention.

PREVENTING HUMAN SMUGGLERS FROM ABUSING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM ACT

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to this House from some of my constituents in Kitchener Centre regarding Bill C-4 on human smuggling. I do so not because I necessarily agree with the petition but because I think everyone has a right to have his or her voice heard in this House.

Business of Supply

These constituents believe that Bill C-4 would place refugees in detention only because they are seeking safety in Canada, and they do not see any other reason. Therefore, the petitioners think that would be arbitrary. They believe that Bill C-4 would place accepted refugees in limbo for five years, preventing them from seeing family members, travelling outside of Canada or integrating into Canadian society because they are not permanent residents. They believe that this measure is intended to punish refugees and they see no other reason for it.

The petitioners also believe that smuggling is already punishable by life imprisonment or by a fine of up to \$1 million under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. For that reason, they call on the government to withdraw Bill C-4.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 177.

[Text]

Question No. 177—**Mrs. Carol Hughes:**

With regard to the purchase of insured mortgages by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC): (a) how many mortgages purchased by CMHC have defaulted, broken down by (i) relative value of the mortgage, (ii) date of default; and (b) how many mortgages purchased by CMHC are in arrears, broken down by (i) relative value of the mortgage, (ii) number of months in arrears?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC, has been at the forefront of mortgage securitization since 1986, when the corporation introduced National Housing Act mortgage-backed securities.

During the global economic crisis in 2008, it was harder for major financial institutions to secure short- and long-term financing and for Canadian consumers to obtain mortgage financing for property purchases. To help Canadian financial institutions raise longer-term funds and make them available to consumers, home buyers and businesses in Canada, in October 2008 the federal government introduced the insured mortgage purchase program, IMPP. Under this program, CMHC purchased securities consisting of pools of insured residential mortgages from Canadian financial institutions. These were high-quality assets backed not only by the overall strength of Canada's housing market but also by the government's own guarantee of the insured mortgages.

The total program envelope, initially \$25 billion, was increased to \$75 billion in November 2008 and then to \$125 billion when budget 2009 was tabled. Thus CMHC, on behalf of the Government of Canada, was authorized to purchase up to \$125 billion in National Housing Act mortgage-backed securities from Canadian financial institutions. The National Housing Act allows CMHC to make investments of this nature as part of its commercial activities.

When the IMPP came to an end on March 31, 2010, CMHC had expended \$69.4 billion of the up to \$125 billion available for purchase of mortgage-backed securities. This program was instrumental in moderating the impact of the global financial crisis on

credit conditions in Canada and helping ensure continued access to credit for Canadian consumers and businesses.

All of the National Housing Act mortgage-backed securities purchased by CMHC under the IMPP are backed by high-quality residential mortgages that are insured through CMHC or private insurers, Genworth Financial and Canada Guaranty. As a result, there is no additional risk to taxpayers or to CMHC. This was an efficient, cost-effective and safe way of providing secure and reliable long-term funding to Canada's financial institutions that benefits Canadian households, businesses and the economy.

To date IMPP has not incurred any losses on its National Housing Act mortgage-backed securities purchased investments from Canadian financial institutions.

In response to (a), there were approximately 662,948 mortgage loans backing the National Housing Act mortgage-backed securities when they were originally issued, which were purchased by CMHC under the IMPP, and there are approximately 332,762 mortgage loans remaining. Of the total number of mortgage loans purchased by CMHC under the IMPP, 2,595 have defaulted. However, mortgages that CMHC purchased under the IMPP are insured against mortgage default, either by CMHC or one of the private mortgage insurers. As such, any losses on defaulted mortgages can be claimed against their mortgage insurance policy. CMHC is compensated by the mortgage insurers and as a result has had no losses under the IMPP program.

CMHC is unable to provide the additional information requested under (i) and (ii) as the data are held, in part, by third-party private insurers.

In response to (b), the percentage of loans in arrears by three or more months under the IMPP is 0.478%, which is comparable to the Canadian Bankers Association arrears rate which, in August 2011, was at 0.40%.

● (1210)

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CLOSURE AND TIME ALLOCATION

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will share my time with the hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor.

Business of Supply

I find it a little sad that, with this government, we always start with the end instead of the beginning. Regardless of what we may think, this government does what it wants and cares little about parliamentary procedures and tradition.

Since the last election, we are seeing too much abuse. This government is abusing its majority, thinking that with the support of 39% of Canadians it can do anything. And this is an inflated number because it does not include the 40% of Canadians who did not vote. So, it is not even 30% of Canadians who supported the government. Therefore, it should at least respect the opinion of all Canadians. It is not the first time that we raise this issue.

Today, we are talking about the government cutting debate short after introducing a bill, and not even after several hours of debate. This government has shown repeatedly its contempt for our institutions. In the case of Senate appointments, it has also shown that it does not respect its own promises. Indeed, the government had committed to appointing only elected senators. However, two weeks after the election, the Prime Minister not only appointed to the Senate individuals who had lost their election, but he did so without consulting the provinces, as he had promised to do.

Recently, we saw that this government had even set criteria to appoint an officer of Parliament. I am not going to get into details, but there were two basic and very simple criteria to select the Auditor General. First, the individual had to be an accountant and, second, he or she had to be bilingual. This government ignored the fact that the appointee had to be bilingual and it hired an accountant who had some experience in a small province. We can already see the abuse of power.

As we have seen so far, there is always a double standard with this government. We believe the government is abusing its power by constantly resorting to closure to avoid debate. That is the only motive we can find today. It has already done it close to ten times over a period of a few weeks, when none of the bills involved were urgent.

[English]

We have seen time allocation invoked on six out of 10 bills. That does not mean time allocation has been invoked 6 times. It means time allocation has been invoked on 6 bills at different stages. Just so that listeners are aware of how many stages a bill would go through, normally a bill would go through second reading, report stage and third reading. If we multiply six bills times three, that would be 18 times that the government could potentially invoke time allocation. To date, we have a calculation of about 10, so we can look forward to seeing more of these bills undergoing time allocation for the next few steps.

The government House leader has stated that the issues on the government's legislative agenda so far this session have been discussed in detail since the government took office. I do not understand it.

The point is that during the elections the Conservative government made promises. However, if we look at the makeup of the House, at least 40% of the members are new parliamentarians, so this debate never took place. Also, what was said during the election campaign

was not necessarily in a legislative format. Our job as parliamentarians is to debate these pieces of legislation.

That brings me to another subject, one that is not necessarily tied into the debate today. I am a member of the scrutiny of regulations committee, and we see that if legislation is not properly worded, then a lot of this legislation and, in turn, a lot of its regulations get bogged down. We then have things that are not necessarily clear, Canadians are not happy with how the legislation is worded, and the courts have to get involved. It is all just a churning of bureaucracy and a waste of money.

The claim that the government has already consulted Canadians is far from what the government has actually done. It has not consulted Canadians.

It is saying that three or four hours of debate it is sufficient for a bill. However, let us look at some of the bills that have been tabled. As an example, the budget is made up of 600 pages of legislation. It is a government omnibus bill. As a lawyer, I sat in on some of the committee hearings and I can tell members that it was not the easiest thing to follow. I just cannot imagine how a couple of hours of debate would suffice for a proposed bill that is going to affect all Canadians, not just the criminals. It will affect all Canadians, because one day they will have to deal with these issues, and if they do not have to go before a court of law, they will have to at least pay taxes to pay for all the costs that are going to be incurred in trying to monitor these pieces of legislation and put them into force.

We are trying to avoid just passing these pieces of legislation blindly. We are trying to ensure proper vigilance before these pieces of legislation are passed; however, that does not seem to be a valid argument for the government.

We in the Liberal Party are trying to do our job, but the government is making allegations that we are obstructing and we are using unreasonable amendments. I can understand the government's point of view, because sometimes the NDP acts irrationally and tries to filibuster and makes ridiculous amendments. However, I think the Liberal Party has made pretty reasonable amendments up to now. We have been first up to bat on making amendments on proposed bills. I think that we have done our job, but the government refuses to allow us to continue to do our jobs. We want the public, whether it be experts or third parties who are affected by these bills, to come forward to testify and make suggestions so that we can actually make these bills work properly.

Let us look at some of the bills for which time allocation has been introduced. The budget implementation bill was introduced and read for the first time on June 14; there was time allocation at all stages, and it was voted on June 15.

This is nothing new. Budget implementation bills are introduced twice every year, plus the budget. The budget implementation bill is not a partisan issue. It is normally the bill that introduces the legislation to put the budget into application.

Business of Supply

•(1215)

Usually it is technical. It requires people affected by the budget to provide us with their input and tell us what changes they would like to see; if there are no changes, they at least come forward to give us their interpretation of that particular bill.

In the past, whether it was a majority government or a minority government, we have always been able to get consensus on how many hours of debate we needed in the House and in committee. However, the government seems to be using its majority at will and is just punching the legislation through. It has done that for the two budget bills, Bill C-9 and Bill C-13.

On Bill C-10, the omnibus crime bill, the Conservatives invoked time allocation not only in the House but in committee as well. I was there. They suddenly said that they did not want to hear what we had to say. They had made up their minds. It was impossible that they would need opinions from experts. They did not even have to hear from the bar association. They did not even have to hear from the provinces.

Even though members from the province of Quebec had numerous valid amendments to introduce into the bill, the government had already decided it was not going to listen to anyone. I understand that the NDP had numerous amendments that were not relevant to the case and had to be rejected, but my colleague, the member for Mount Royal, introduced some pretty important amendments that were backed up by Minister Fournier from the Quebec government. We are going to have report stage next week, and I am hoping that the government can change its mind and adopt some of the amendments.

With regard to the Canadian Wheat Board, it was not a matter of procedure. Again, that was just rammed through. These farmers are working, and they do not have the time to come here and be notified because everything has to be rammed through.

I see my time is up. I am hoping that I will have some good questions and that I can continue.

•(1220)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned the budget implementation bill, Bill C-13. Within that bill there are some terribly important measures that we have to get passed, including EI improvements and accelerated capital cost allowance for business, as well as work sharing.

He also implied that bringing this budget bill to a vote to finally get it implemented is somehow something new. Bill C-13 has had more hours of debate at second reading than the average budget bill over the last two decades, and more than any Liberal majority budget bill during that time.

Here we are a few days away from the end of 2011, and we are debating the implementation of budget 2011. Does my colleague not think it reasonable that we should implement budget 2011 in 2011, rather than letting it slide on into 2012?

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on the nomination to your new post. I hope you are getting at least a

fraction of what the real Speaker gets. You should be justifiably compensated for your work.

That is a great question from the member. This is one of the areas in which I probably both agree with the government and actually disagree, because they probably allotted too much time on second reading.

I love to get these bills to committee and I love to consult with Canadians. I am not a fan of time allocation, but I am not opposed to it. If there is ever a time that a government should use time allocation, it should be at second reading, in order to get the bills out of the House and sent to committee so that they can really be worked on there.

Ways and means is one way to introduce things that are urgent in the budget. There other mechanisms. A budget implementation that has important items in it does not have to be passed overnight. If there are items that need to be passed overnight, they can be put in a ways and means motion and the House will vote on them right away.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with respect to our parliamentary democracy, does my Liberal colleague agree that we are dealing with a very fragile construct that exists only by the collective will of the people to maintain the integrity of a system of governance that is the envy of the world when it is working well? It is a tragedy to see it diminished or undermined.

Is my colleague concerned, as am I, that we may in fact be witnessing permanent and irreversible damage to the institution of Parliament as we allow ourselves to stray from the stipulated rules that we have committed ourselves to, which is respecting the roles of both the government and opposition sides in this Parliament, testing the mettle of the legislation put before us through robust and vigorous debate? Is he concerned, as am I, that we may never get the genie back in the jar if we let it erode and diminish any further?

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg Centre always makes his questions much more animated than they need be. However, I understand and agree with the gist of his question. I do not agree 100% with it but I agree that we are eroding the traditions of Parliament slowly but surely. It is a little sad to see that some of the government backbenchers, as they are called, do not stand up for some of the things that should go on in committee and do not listen to Canadians.

I think there is room for change. I think that after a couple of years the government backbenchers will be on the backbenches realizing that they are not doing anything and at one point or another will need to react because they will need to account to their electorate.

I think the government is treating Parliament more as a nuisance than an actual voice for Canadians. That is the troubling part in all this.

•(1225)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I serve on the finance committee. When we went through clause by clause of Bill C-13, we did that pretty quickly. I believe it took a couple of hours. The time that took the longest was the section where we would stop taxpayer money from going to the election process.

Business of Supply

The argument is that if there is such a concern, why was there not more time taken in committee where we would expect to see that dialogue take place?

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member. If there is time that is needed to be spent on a bill to make it perfect it probably should be spent in committee because that is where we can actually have third party, people who are interested and actually have the minister come forward. I agree with the member that there should be more time.

Bill C-13 was a 600-page bill and there were a lot of technicalities. More time should probably have been given to the witnesses to prepare so that they could come forward at committee.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made a very interesting speech. The motion today proposes a non-partisan measure. The members on the other side of the House said that there were many good reasons to limit debate. All we want to do is to give this power to the Speaker.

I wonder if their opposition to our motion has to do with the fact that they do not think they have enough reasons to convince the Speaker to accept their closure and time allocation motions. I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is true that the government will oppose the NDP's motion because it will no longer have control over closure and time allocation motions. The government knows that it cannot control the Speaker.

The Liberal Party does not necessarily want the Speaker to have control over these motions. However, we would like the issue to be examined by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. That committee would be able to find solutions with all parliamentarians. It is a decision to be made by Parliament and not necessarily the Speaker. It certainly is not a decision that should be made by the government. We are in favour of this motion in principle, but we do not agree with all of the details.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for allowing me to speak to this motion. I also thank my colleague for Windsor—Tecumseh for bringing this motion forward at this point. I want to look at the motion in detail because it is not just a simple statement that this is a bad sort of thing and that the government should not use time allocation as much as it does. The member provides some detail in the motion that I would like to talk about.

For instance, the motion states:

...a study and make recommendations to amend the Standing Orders with respect to closure and time allocation, such that: (i) a Minister would be required to provide justification for the request for such a curtailment of debate;

That is certainly something we ought to talk about simply because when time allocation is brought into this House we hear little justification for doing so. We are given short explanations that are basically passed over. The reason for that, on many occasions, is that there is no justification and no requirement to justify it. I agree with the member in many respects on that. I think that justification should

be brought to the House and presented to all of us. A big reason for doing that is that some of the fundamental questions as to why time allocations are brought sometimes go unanswered, such as, if bills have passed over a certain period time such that members of Parliament could consult their constituents. A lot of the time, items are promised during campaigns, which is what the Conservatives go on about, and on which they are now delivering.

In 2008, there was a basic promise in dealing with Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia regarding the Atlantic Accord and some of the money that would be withheld within the province because of oil revenues. The promise was that the equalization formula would be made such that non-renewable resources would not play a factor in tabulating each provinces' ability to raise money.

However, when the budget implementation bill came out, much later than the broad principles, it was realized that the devil certainly did lay within the details of what was happening in the budget implementation. It ended up that the promise, by which 100% of non-renewables was to come out of the formula, was not in the budget implementation. Essentially, they had put an agreement that was outside of normal equalization and brought it back in. Former member, Bill Casey, was one of the members who left the party as a result of this. He voted against the budget for that and sat on the opposition side shortly thereafter.

I only put that into context because there is a certain amount of time from when the broad principles of the budget are announced by the finance minister to the time of budget implementation. Once we look at the legislation and a lot of the details that are involved, sometimes these broad principles get watered down or are not what they had appeared to be. Therefore, I think time allocation works against this principle.

The government will remark that the Liberals did this back when they were in power, but a lot of times, such as the Species At Risk Act, time allocation was brought in at third reading. At that point there had been a substantial opportunity to discuss and debate.

Canadians can review the cut and thrust of debate, enough to see what the principles are about, how the legislation is laid out and then, coming back from committee, how the proposed legislation was fine-tuned or not.

I commend my hon. colleague for bringing this motion. I think he brings up some decent questions as to how we can deal with time allocation, filibustering and the limitation of debate within the House.

We also now use the terminology "constituency weeks". For instance, when the House is shut down for a week, people say that members have a week off. However, no, they are in their constituencies dealing with constituents and they can find out at that point how their constituents feel about certain pieces of legislation. Time allocation works against that, in my opinion.

Business of Supply

•(1230)

One of the comments that was made earlier was that we have had so much time to deal with this, that the budget implementation bill has been in the House for quite some time and that we have dealt with it thoroughly, therefore, no bills, as was stated, have received royal assent. However, that is not true. At the end of June, we had Bill C-2, Bill C-4 and three other bills that received royal assent at that time. Those measures went through.

When the Conservatives say that the budget implementation bill needs to be passed in 2011 because it is budget 2011, that may be a valid point but, if it is valid, why are we spending all these hours talking about copyright legislation, the long gun registry and other measures, such as Bill C-10?

What the Conservatives could do is put that on the agenda each and every time. Every member in the House, at that point, could certainly speak their piece on how they feel about the budget implementation bill or the budget bill for this coming year, 2012.

I do want to point out that in this motion the other thing that it goes on about is that:

(ii) the Speaker would be required to refuse such a request in the interest of protecting the duty of Members to examine legislation thoroughly, unless the government's justification sufficiently outweighs the said duty....

There is a great deal of responsibility in what the Speaker must bring to this legislature, beyond the obvious, which is the running of the House. The Speaker also the responsibility of judging whether the normal legislative process is adhered to. We saw examples of that when our former speaker was here. He made big rulings, certainly rulings that made history, and will always be looked upon as a key moment in the speaker's career, because of the judgments that he brought.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the way you do your job, one of the key responsibilities is to look at legislation that has been accepted in principle and scope in second reading, then you must decide if, within the committee, its work went beyond the scope and principle of the bill. You have the authority to overturn those amendments, even if everybody in this House, as I have said time and time again, says that they agree with the amendments that were made, you, Mr. Speaker, have the authority to turn them down despite that.

It has been done before. It happened in a private member's bill some time ago on back-to-work legislation, or what people call "anti-scab" legislation. There was an amendment to exclude essential services and there seemed to be a lot of agreement with that, certainly the majority of members agreed with that, but the speaker turned down that particular amendment because it went beyond the scope and principle of the bill.

Therefore, this brings up a good point, which is that this motion would say that you, Mr. Speaker, should have that responsibility to turn this time allocation down, if it is not justified, certainly in dealing with the history, the principles and the spirit of how this House of Commons operates. I think that is a good thing. Why can the Speaker not be involved in this and say that he or she finds that it is not a very justifiable answer as to why we have to slap time allocation on this when we are dealing with something as large and complex as the budget?

Another valid point, I believe, is the fact that following the election there seems to be a lot of new members in the House. I only say "seems to be" because I think all the new members in this House of Commons are doing a fine job. I think they are holding the bar up there when it comes to representation of their constituency.

Time allocation runs in the face of that because a lot of these new members have not had their say. It is their first time in the House and I think compassion should be given, if not by the government then certainly by the Speaker to say, "Well, just a moment". This legislation in regard to budget 2011 needs to be done soon, therefore, new members in the House should have a chance and the opportunity to speak to that.

I think that, in and of itself, is a good reason why we should have a filter upon which time allocation is used in this House. It has been used throughout history. I cannot justify a lot of the time allocations that have been used because, in many cases, it was wrong. Does the minister not agree? Whether it was red, blue, orange or any other colour, it was wrong in many cases. Depending on the issue, depending on the people involved and depending on the fact that some people have not had their say about this legislation, and that there has not been as much consultation, time allocation is used in a very crass way.

•(1235)

If we look at the situation in front of us now, there are several pieces of legislation deemed important, but some more so than others. Therefore, I would humbly suggest to the House that we should support this simply because it brings a new element into the House where no one party has the authority—

The Speaker: The member has run out of time.

We will move on to questions and comments, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one thing that has been very concerning since the Conservative majority came to power is the realization that our parliamentary system, which is built on the Westminster model, has always been based on a sense of understanding of the greater role of parliamentarians and that there is a lesser role for the crass partisan attack message box politics. However, that has been flipped in the government. We hear again and again that democracy is the fact that the Conservatives have won the election, so why does Parliament get in their way.

That is a very disturbing concept because it is a direct attack on the parliamentary tradition. Democracy is the system that was set up so constituents would send their members here to debate the issues of the day. That is my right and obligation as a parliamentarian.

Does my hon. colleague think that time allocation is actually part of a larger pattern of contempt for the traditions and the importance of the parliamentary system in our country on the part of the Conservative government?

Business of Supply

•(1240)

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I can always depend on my colleague to give me a new turn of phrase that I thoroughly enjoy. I just got one and I would love to share it with the House if people are just tuning in on CPAC. I will even grant him copyright privileges. Message box politics is exactly what it is.

Message box politics is about the same message over and over again, void in interpretation of a member's particular riding. Members' statements that are heavily partisan should be looked at by the Speaker as well. They run one minute long. When they are extremely partisan, they forget one thing. At the very end they forget to say "I am the Prime Minister and I approve this ad". That is the only thing missing from those members' statements.

It is unfortunate, but message box politics is not putting out the message as to what the legislation means for the average Canadian.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have great regard for my colleague across the way in matters of democracy and parliamentary process, which he clearly has studied.

In everything there is balance. Even John Stuart Mill, the great promoter of liberalism and democracy, said that there were limits on freedom, limits on freedom of speech. What is the limit? We heard my colleague earlier today speak about the hundreds of hours that had been expended, the hundreds of debates that had already been committed to the topics Canadians wanted us to develop into laws and wanted us to move in a productive fashion. What is the limit? We could go on forever and there would be freedom, but there has to be freedom to limit, so said John Stuart Mill, and I believe my colleague would accept that principle as well.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I have a great respect for my colleague also. There is an east coast, west coast connection there.

I agree with the quotation from John Stuart Mill about the limitations of freedoms. However, the context is a little different. The context is about limitations and expressions of freedoms as long as they do not harm other people. I think that is probably what John Stuart Mill was getting at as opposed to the actual limitation in time within the House. I could be wrong, nonetheless I do believe that is what he meant.

What troubles me is the fact that the debate itself is what Conservatives are focusing on. The actual words spoken in the House has exceeded a certain number by which we have exhausted that. Respectfully, I put to the House, look at it from another way. If there are any limitations to be put on debate, they should not be put on members of Parliament who are now unable to speak on this issue simply because other people have spoken before them. That is where I get to the point about new members of Parliament having their say. This is brought to their riding and following that, they come here as the true representatives. The limitation should not apply to the individual member of Parliament not having his or her say.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

I stand today in support of the motion before the House. It is quite ironic that today I heard a colleague across the floor in the ruling

party, admittedly a party that won a majority, say, "everyone has a right to have his or her voice heard in this House". That is what he said when he was presenting a petition with which he did not agree. I was heartened by that, thinking there must be many Conservative MPs who agree with this motion.

If everyone has a right to have his or her voice heard in Parliament, then surely parliamentarians in the House should also have the same right to have their voices heard. I often hear the argument in the House that this bill was debated last March or this bill was debated last September. I have to remind all colleagues that Parliament dissolved, it is sitting again and this is a new session. Many of us were not in the House when the bills were previously introduced. When the legislation is reintroduced, it is new legislation. That is how it gets moved and spoken to. Because we have over 100 new MPs in the House, not only the newly-elected MPs but also the experienced MPs who have returned to the House should have the same right to discuss and debate the bills before them.

There have been a number of bills moved in the House that I have wanted to speak against, not because I want to hear the sound of my voice but because I want to represent the voices of my constituents. I have not been given that right because closure or time allocation has been moved. Surely, that cannot be right.

As a history teacher for years, I taught all about parliamentary democracy. We argue and we are very proud of the fact that democracy is fundamental. It has many flaws, but despite all its flaws, it is the best that we have. A parliamentary democracy is the best form of democracy we have. MPs are elected and the majority forms government, but then they come to the House to debate the issues. Having a majority does not make government a dictatorship. It does not mean that because it has a majority, the voices of those who oppose its points of view have to be silenced by moving procedural motions to close debate.

Parliamentary democracy, at its fundamental level, absolutely requires informed debate in the House. The government gets to take the time to present its perspective and the opposition gets to present its perspective both in comment and later in amendments, if there are any. However, what I personally have experienced in the House is that more and more I feel my voice has been muzzled, that I am not allowed to represent my constituents or a different point of view. This process is a threat to parliamentary democracy.

We are very proud of the role we play internationally in promoting democracy. In Egypt, we speak out for democracy. In Libya, we helped to overthrow a regime because we believed in democracy.

•(1245)

We talk about the importance of democracy in all these other countries, and this is an appeal to every parliamentarian. Surely we cannot sit in the House and undermine the very parliamentary democracy that we try to promote in other nations. We sound like hypocrites.

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When we talk about the Middle East, whether it is Libya or Egypt, we talk about the right to protest, the right to free speech, the right for the opposition to express its point of view. When it comes to Ukraine, we speak out against the treatment of the opposition, and justifiably so. That is our role. Then surely my colleagues across this floor cannot sit silent, while their own colleagues' voices are muzzled in Parliament by the government moving closure time and time again.

I looked at some of the facts and figures, because I wanted to take a look at some of the history behind this. In 53 sitting days, the Conservative government has used time allocation 10 times and 8 times in the last 39 days. What do the Conservatives have to hide? They have legislation. Let us debate it, let us express our points of view and let us hear the debate. The Conservatives have the majority and will be able to pass their legislation without muzzling the voice of the opposition.

Then I think, what is the real agenda here? Is the majority government in a hurry to prorogue Parliament and go off, back to its constituencies? Or has it become so arrogant and out of touch with Canadians that it thinks the majority it received now allows it to behave more like an autocracy than a democracy? We really have to pay attention to those things.

Every parliamentarian needs to support this motion if we believe in a parliamentary democracy. Parliamentary democracy is not about shutting down the voices of the parliamentarians. It is not as if the debate has been a nuisance debate. On a bill that is the size of a phone book for many of our townships, we have had so little debate and many members have not even had the chance to speak. That is the budget bill. Surely, when it comes to the budget, how we spend the money of Canadians, the opposition should have the right to speak out and ask questions. If the government has nothing to hide, why does it keep cutting down debate?

When the Conservatives were in opposition, they had a totally different attitude. I have this wonderful quote. I want to remind members what has happened on the omnibus crime bill as well. That is also being rushed through, nine bills being rushed through in a few days of debate without much time for us to ask questions and for us to digest what is out there. Once again, why?

This is a quote from the Minister of Public Safety, on November 27, 2001. How things change when the Conservatives have a majority. He said:

For the government to bring in closure and time allocation is wrong. It sends out the wrong message to the people of Canada. It tells the people of Canada that the government is afraid of debate, afraid of discussion and afraid of publicly justifying the steps it has taken.

My appeal to all parliamentarians is this. If the government has nothing to hide, let us debate and let us support this motion.

• (1250)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is new to the House, and it is nice to have her here. There are a few new colleagues on the other side.

However, I was here in the last Parliament when many of these debates did take place. All of these issues were presented to the

Canadian public. Canadians did have a vote on May 2. The voters of Canada gave this government a very strong mandate to take forward these issues that we had been presenting in the House since 2006, when this government was first elected with a plurality. These issues have been debated here for many, many hours. Many speeches have been given.

What does the member think the election was all about?

• (1255)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, the election was about Canadians sending MPs to represent them in Parliament right here on Parliament Hill. That is exactly what Canadians did. They did not elect every Conservative candidate as an MP. They elected some members of the opposition, and they want the opposition to play a role.

I am getting really fed up with being told that things were debated before and that they are old history. When Canadians vote, they do not vote on specific bills or specific actions. Canadians are not aware of every line and every aspect of the bills that have been presented here. What we are hearing is a lot of rhetoric from the government side.

What I am saying is that elections are about electing MPs and sending them to the House so they can represent the diverse points of view from across this country. That is what elections are about.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the hon. member for her excellent speech, which explained really well how this kind of time allocation motion undermines the credibility and democratic nature of our Parliament, and how it silences those who would like to be able to debate these issues and who have concerns about certain bills.

All we are proposing is to allow a non-partisan person, someone who is outside all of these partisan debates, to decide whether a time allocation motion is justified. If the government believes that it has legitimate reasons for moving such a motion and that doing so is very important, it can give its reasons. The decision will be left to someone other than the government itself, which otherwise decides everything.

I would like the hon. member to comment on that.

[English]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. This motion is phrased in such a way that it is neutral. It is non-partisan and will apply to all political parties, no matter which party is in government. It actually gives the authority to the Speaker to make those determinations.

I want to read a quote that will add to this:

Parliament is derived from the French word "parler" which means to speak. It is the place where the representatives of the common people speak to issues that affect the common good.

That was said by the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. That is all we are asking for, the right to speak for the common good.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I am the only one who can see the irony of what we are doing here today, but let me put it in context. There are only about 16 sitting days left before we adjourn for the Christmas break.

While our government is putting forward legislation and trying to pass it on behalf of all Canadians, the NDP members have chosen this day, their supply day, to debate, not an important bill like perhaps the Wheat Board legislation, the budget or the gun registry, all of which they have complained they have not had enough time to discuss in Parliament, but what topic did they choose for their opposition day? They chose to engage in a debate on how much debate constitutes enough debate. It is unbelievable. They are abusing the parliamentary process on one hand by debating something frivolous and on the other hand, ignoring the issues of the—

• (1300)

The Speaker: Order. I have to stop the member there, as the member is out of time.

The hon. member for Newton—North Delta has less than 30 seconds to respond.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more fundamental than debating the value and salvation of parliamentary democracy. I am sorry that my colleague does not understand that what we are debating here is something that is fundamental to our parliamentary system. For him to call the debate a waste of time shows me why the Conservatives move closure so many times. They do not value speech in this House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to the NDP motion. And quite sincerely, I am especially pleased to speak since it directly concerns your role, Mr. Speaker, which you fulfill so well out of respect for your title in the House. I am a new member. I have the advantage of a fresh outlook, and I can say that I truly appreciate the work you do.

I have a quote here from May 2, 2011: “We must be the government of all Canadians, including those who did not vote for us [I would like to repeat that last part: “including those who did not vote for us”], and that includes the great Quebec nation.”

That is an excerpt from the first speech the Right Hon. Prime Minister, our current Prime Minister, made as the leader of a parliamentary majority.

That was how he felt on May 2, after years in opposition and years of leading a minority government. And now here we are, just a few months later, having to defend the idea of the opposition's right to speak in the House.

I would also like to quote an excerpt from an excellent column that was published in Quebec in *La Presse* on November 23, 2011. It does a wonderful job of expressing the opinion of a very large majority of Quebecers and likely Canadians as well:

...sometimes, when a leader reaches his goal [in this case, a majority in Parliament for the current Prime Minister's party], blind partisanship gives way to some magnanimity [lending a compassionate ear, let us say], a word that apparently is

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not in the vocabulary of...[I will not quote directly, since we cannot use the current Right Hon. Prime Minister's name in the House] and his key ministers.

Do not forget that this government enjoys a majority in the House, but it was elected by only 39.6% of Canadians (16.5% in Quebec, a province particularly badly crushed by the bulldozer).

When, on the night of his victory, [our hon. Prime Minister] declared that his would be a government of all Canadians, it was apparently just empty words devoid of any real intention....

The column used the Prime Minister's last name followed by the words “the bulldozer”.

That is what the columnists who are by far the most popular among Quebecers are saying in black and white, without mincing words. The same thing is happening in English Canada. We should be worried that things have gotten to this point and that something like this is happening in a democracy as old as ours.

It is all caused by a problem involving overuse of what is called the “gag order”. Before digging more deeply into the problem, I would first like to correct a statement by the government, which is inaccurate to say the least, in response to our motion today. It relates to Bill C-13.

I would simply like to point out that the bill is to implement certain provisions of the budget. We are not postponing passage of a budget, this is about implementing it. Bill C-13 was introduced on October 4, 2011. Contrary to what some of my colleagues opposite have said, we have not been delaying passage of a budget since the throne speech in June. That is simply not the case. We were questioning an extremely important document. One of my colleagues has said it was as thick as a phone book. It was only introduced on October 4. The budget is 644 pages long. There have been only seven days of debate in the House and there was time allocation at each stage. There was time allocation at second reading, at report stage and at third reading.

It is completely incorrect to use this example when we look at what has in fact happened and the very proper behaviour of the opposition, which was simply asking for more time to discuss the 640 or so pages of the budget.

Let us come back to the main problem. The government has the unilateral power to invoke rule 78 concerning time allocation. This is where we have a problem. Canadians already have a democratic deficit.

• (1305)

With our first past the post electoral system, we can end up with a House like this one, where 60 % of Canadians find themselves represented by a minority of members in the House. So we have a serious democratic deficit that has been corrected in a number of modern democracies. I could talk for 25 minutes on this subject alone, so I will not dwell too long on it.

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This means we are stuck with this flawed poor first past the post system which distorts the results. What is left for the Canadians who make up that 60 % and more? There is only one thing left for them: the right for their representatives, who have been relegated to a minority, to speak, to introduce numerous suggestions by motion and to be heard. If we take away the very essence of the very little bit of what is left of democratic rights in the present system, we have to wonder what will remain of democracy in Canada. It is as serious as that.

Gagging the opposition seven times in a short time span means gagging six Canadians out of ten, seven times in a few months. If we still think that the government is a responsible government, that the House is a House of representatives, gagging this side of the House seven times means gagging six Canadians out of ten, seven times in a few months. I would like to hear it, if a single one of my colleagues opposite disagrees with this perception or this view of democracy. Can they rise in the House and say that if the opposition is gagged seven times, that is not the equivalent, in the present situation in the House, of gagging six Canadians out of ten, seven times in a few months?

The gag was applied in the case of Bill C-18 on wheat management, a foundation of the economy, a foundation of Canadians' food supply, which is a somewhat important question. The gag was applied twice. The gag was applied in the case of Bill C-10. It was even done in committee, even in that separate kind of place where we are supposed to be able to hear experts and speak with them. Even there, the gag was applied. And we still have to point out over and over again in the House that Bill C-10 is opposed by the Canadian Bar Association, by the lawyers' organizations in all provinces and by a majority of the provincial governments. And the gag was applied.

I want to come back to the speech by the Right Hon. Prime Minister about governing for all Canadians. He had a perfect opportunity to prove that between his words and his actions, there might one day be some consistency. We moved a very simple motion more than six times to introduce a Bill C-10A on everything to do with sexual assault against minors. The House would have stood up the next day and adopted the motion. Those six motions were never once considered by the current government, led by a prime minister who began, on the first evening of his first-ever win as a majority government, by saying he would govern for all Canadians.

The first definition that appears after a simple little search on the Speaker's site is as follows:

To ensure the orderly flow of business, the House of Commons observes parliamentary rules and traditions, both written and unwritten. It is the Speaker's duty to interpret these rules impartially, to maintain order, and to defend the rights and privileges of Members, including [the first right mentioned in black and white] the right to freedom of speech.

What the motion is calling for is quite simple, Mr. Speaker. It is to give you this responsibility, which is part of your role, and to give you more powers. We are not playing with something here that does not exist in other countries or inventing a very complex democratic mechanism. We are simply saying that the role of Speaker is indeed to be impartial—a role that the current Speaker is fulfilling very well in the House—and that we are all giving him the role to address this

antidemocratic abuse of Standing Order 78 to gag debate to no end, and to ask why there needs to be a gag order.

● (1310)

We have to ask if there are excellent reasons to gag debate and why the government should quickly silence the official opposition, which, in our system, represents the majority of Canadians.

Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. At 11:35 a.m. today in question period, the member for Beauce said it is very important that bills be studied thoroughly. I wonder if my colleague could comment on that statement. Why does this government seem to have so many double standards?

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for raising this particular issue. I would like to quickly read a quotation that is even more to the point:

After limiting debate in the House on the first day of debate, after limiting committee hearings to two days and giving witnesses 24 hours notice, the government now informs us it wants to make a major change....Will the government admit that it should properly consult Parliament, affected parties, experts and Canadians...?

Who said these words of wisdom? It was none other than the current Right Honourable Prime Minister on December 8, 1995. How is it that this was so important in 1995, yet it is so trivial now? Our colleagues across the floor are the ones who should be answering that.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us just make sure we get one thing straight here.

While the NDP members are complaining that they are not given enough time to debate a piece of legislation, they are not really interested in debate. Their motive and their rationale is to try to defeat government legislation. That is it.

They do not want to debate; they just want to kill the bills. They have tried to kill so many bills, Quentin Tarantino would be impressed. That is what NDP members are attempting to do here.

I would simply ask the member, does he not think that over 100 speeches and over 50 hours of debate on bills like Bill C-10 is adequate?

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague even more for raising this issue than the previous issue. It is absolutely absurd to claim that having a debate on a bill would be useless simply because the opposition is likely to vote against it. To take that reasoning a little further, why do we not just shut down the House of Commons tomorrow and be done with it? We could play a recording that simply repeats, "Canadians gave our government a strong mandate for the economy" and we could all go do something else. If we take that reasoning a little further, Canadian parliamentary life would look a little like what I just described.

The Speaker: Order.

It being 1:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Private Members' Business

[English]

The question is on the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Monday, November 28, 2011, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

• (1315)

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I ask that you see the clock at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP) moved that Bill C-315, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (French language), be read the second time and referred to committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to see that this House is going to take a few minutes today, even if it is a very few, to discuss the private member's bill I am sponsoring, the objective of which, I would recall, is to give workers in Quebec who are employed in a work, undertaking or business under federal jurisdiction the same language rights as are provided by the Charter of the French Language in Quebec.

It is actually difficult to understand why, or how, an employee who works in a bank in Quebec, for example, would not have the same language rights as his or her counterpart who works in a caisse populaire across the street, in both cases within Quebec. So this bill is a matter of common sense and I find it hard to see anything that might prevent us from voting unanimously for once in this House.

A well, the purpose of this bill is to recognize the language rights of the francophone majority in Quebec. Because those rights are already recognized for the anglophone majority in the rest of the country, it would seem that we can give to Quebec without taking anything away in the rest of Canada.

On November 27, 2006, this House adopted a motion that stated:

That this House recognize that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada.

What I would hope, following on the proposals made to the Quebec nation by my late leader Jack Layton, is that by this bill and others that my colleagues in the NDP will be proposing we will contribute to better defining the place and rights of Quebec within Canada in concrete terms.

Today, with this bill, we have a golden opportunity to begin to recognize that uniqueness through concrete action. There are more than 200,000 workers in Quebec who would thus have the language rights that are taken for granted by all Canadian workers formally recognized and secured. Over seven million people in Quebec would be hearing: "Welcome to Canada, you will soon feel at home with us."

The day after I was elected, and right up to today, whenever people on the Hill who imagined that the Bloc had virtually disappeared congratulated me for playing a part by defeating a Bloc candidate, I replied that Quebec had chosen to give federalism another chance because with his asymmetrical federalism approach, Jack Layton had succeeded in persuading them that they could hope to rejoin Canada in style one day.

The time has come to take the first step toward Quebec. I refer indeed to a first step, because the process will not end with this bill. While I do not want to be a prophet of doom, we cannot hope that Quebec will offer us a perpetual opportunity to walk together on the path toward building a new Canada that will not deny in practice what it has been happy to recognize in theory. Many years ago, this was what my little catechism called the difference between wishful thinking and real achievements. And so at a time when the Conservatives have Quebec in their sights with bill after bill that is contrary to the broad consensus of our society, it is high time for action and not studies.

Now, for all the francophones in Canada, members of minority language communities, whether in British Columbia or Manitoba or Nova Scotia, and I will be forgiven for not naming them all for want of time, who might be worried when they see this bill that they are seeing the disappearance or decline of the concept of the linguistic duality in Canada, the concept that is the guarantee of their development, I can reassure them and tell them it is nothing of the sort.

Moreover, this bill does not apply to federal institutions, it applies to works, undertakings and businesses. The institutions are subject to the Official Languages Act. And so the communities throughout Canada have nothing to fear and nothing to lose with Bill C-315. Their language rights will still be protected by the Official Languages Act. As well, through my work on the Standing Committee on Official Languages, I will continue to mount a strong defence of their interests for as long as I hold this position.

Private Members' Business

The same is true for the anglophone minority language community in Quebec, with whom I have had excellent discussions and who now understand that it is possible to be in favour of Bill C-315 without being against the anglophone minority in Quebec.

• (1320)

Now, let us get to the heart of Bill C-315 to assess the impact and to pick up on any problems, because we know that, all too often, the devil is in the details.

With the current wording, federal works, undertakings or businesses carrying on their activities in Quebec would be subject to the following requirements: using French in their written communications with the Government of Quebec and with corporations established in Quebec; giving their employees the right to carry on their activities in French; drawing up communications to their employees in French; preparing collective agreements and their schedules in French; preparing offers of employment in French and publishing them in a daily newspaper at the same time, and with at least equal prominence as any offers published in a daily newspaper in a language other than French.

I should also point out that the intent of this bill is not to prohibit the use of another language, but no other language may take precedence over French. This bill would make it impossible for an employer to dismiss, lay off or demote an employee because the employee demanded that a right arising from the provisions of this bill be respected. This is not rocket science for anyone living and working in Quebec.

What types of businesses would likely be affected by this bill? Banks, airports, transportation companies that operate between Quebec and one or more other provinces, telecommunications companies and radio stations. In the last case, imagine an English-language radio station working for the anglophone community in Quebec and operating in English. This business could even ask the governor in council to grant some exemptions to reflect this business's reality.

This is more proof, if it was even necessary, that this bill is not dogmatic, but that it was designed to reflect a majority of Quebecers and to ensure that they feel acknowledged at home in Quebec and also within the Canadian federation. Need I remind members that when the Supreme Court of Canada was examining the constitutionality of certain provisions of the Charter of the French Language, it ruled that the objective of this legislation was to promote and protect the French language and to assure that the reality of Quebec society is communicated through the "*visage linguistique*" ? That was also an important recommendation in the Larose commission report, presented in 2001.

While some here in the House do not feel that this bill goes far enough, I know that for others it creates undue fear. It is understandable that they have those fears, though, because our country's language battles often cloud our vision. With the help of the members of my party, we have done our homework and the NDP caucus is unanimous in recommending that this bill be passed. It is part of the huge legacy left to us by Jack Layton when he mapped out his vision of the Canada of tomorrow.

And although he has left us, his vision remains and all those who believed in him and who believe in an inclusive Canada where Quebec can reclaim its place are waiting for us to roll up our sleeves and get down to it. That is our Canada, and it is up to us to build it. No one will buy into the idea of more studies instead of action. The government's waffling will get us nowhere.

So let us take action and work to build today's Canada together, right now, and make it a place where the Quebec nation will find some recognition.

To conclude, I would like to sincerely thank the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst for seconding my bill as well as all the members of the House who are taking the time to debate this bill, which is so important for Quebec, of course, and I would dare say for Canada's future.

• (1325)

Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, has the member for Trois-Rivières consulted French-speaking minority groups outside Quebec or English-speaking minority groups inside Quebec? I am wondering whether the member might share some views as to how French-speaking minority groups in the other provinces see this bill.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I may have spoken too quickly, but that was part of my speech. I have met with francophone minority groups from throughout Canada and I have also taken the time to talk with representatives of the anglophone minority language group in Quebec, who came to see me at my office to voice their concerns. We took the time that was needed to reassure them. Each of these groups came away with the impression not only that they had been heard, but that they had been listened to. That lessened their concerns about the requirements in this bill.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague carefully. I intend to speak later. Did I understand correctly when he said that his bill would also include airports? Would corporations like Old Port of Montreal or Canada Post be included? I would like him to tell us whether he has made a list of works, undertakings and businesses that are considered to be federal that would be included or not included.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I have not drawn up an exhaustive list, to answer my hon. colleague's question. However, it is clear that this bill only covers works, undertakings and businesses under federal jurisdiction and not the institutions that are already covered by the Official Languages Act. When we refer to transportation companies, we mean the ones engaged in interprovincial transportation.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague for his exceptional oratorical skills. He is a proud representative of the French language and a great advocate of this bill. Does he not find it somewhat surprising that his bill seems to be so appropriate and so well thought out that it has prompted the sudden idea on the part of our colleagues opposite of creating committees to discuss it?

Private Members' Business

• (1330)

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I admit that I find it difficult to take a position on this strategy. It looks like some clever stick-handling to try to hijack a situation that could be settled unanimously in the House, if we took the time to discuss it for only a few hours. There is nothing in the bill for anyone in Canada to be afraid of. This issue has been under study for years. It is high time that we deliver a bill that will recognize the language rights of francophones in Quebec. It will not hurt anyone else in Canada. We have done our homework and made sure of that. Is it really a source of political shame to support a bill that comes from a party other than the government party?

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate my colleague from Trois-Rivières. One very important point in this bill has to do with the rights of workers in Quebec. We are talking about people's right to speak the language of their choice at work, especially since this House has recognized the Quebec nation.

I wonder if my colleague could elaborate on the importance of French in the workplace in Quebec and how this bill will help improve the situation.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent question. These days, there are some examples of anglophone executives who come and work in federally regulated businesses in Quebec. The goal of the bill is not to conduct a witch hunt and demand the systematic expulsion of all anglophone executives. Of course, we want them to be sensitive to the fact that they are working in a francophone environment and to learn to speak French themselves, but more importantly, we want the workers under their supervision to be able to exercise their fundamental right to work in French when responding to the request of a unilingual anglophone.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (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, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-315, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (French language), introduced by my colleague from Trois-Rivières.

To begin with, I think it is important to explain the situation in Quebec to my colleagues as it relates to the language of work.

In Quebec, there are two separate sets of rules governing the language of work, which cover different categories of institutions, businesses and workers. First, there is the Official Languages Act, which applies to all federal institutions that carry on their activities in Quebec, with the exception of private businesses under federal jurisdiction, such as Bell Canada, to name one example. That important legislation covers about 76,000 employees in Quebec. It stipulates that English and French are the languages of work.

Second, there is the Charter of the French Language, which recognizes French as the official language of the province. The Charter of the French Language lays down the rules to be followed in relation to the use of French in workplaces under provincial jurisdiction. Those rules apply to nearly 3.8 million Quebec workers.

About 130,000 employees in the private sector, in some 1,750 businesses under federal jurisdiction in Quebec, are not covered by either the Official Languages Act or the Charter of the French Language.

It is also important to note that the provincial and territorial governments, with the exception of the Government of Quebec, do not regulate the use of languages of work in businesses in the private sector. The same is true of the federal government, with the exception of former Crown corporations such as Air Canada and CN, which are subject to the Official Languages Act.

What Bill C-315 is proposing is to include provisions in the Canada Labour Code so that French would be used in all private sector businesses and organizations under federal jurisdiction that carry on business in Quebec. It must be pointed out that this bill could impose potentially costly statutory and regulatory requirements on some private sector businesses under federal jurisdiction, and particularly small and medium-sized businesses, that operate in Quebec—requirements that would not be imposed on them if they were operating elsewhere in Canada, need I remind the House. I do not think this is the right time to be adding new statutory and regulatory requirements to the already heavy burden on private enterprises in this time of economic uncertainty. We should rather be reducing administrative burdens, and that is what we are doing.

There are many private businesses under federal jurisdiction that voluntarily comply with the Charter of the French Language. Those businesses are setting an example. We support their determination to promote the use of French as the language of work in Quebec.

Our government is sensitive to the desire of Quebecers to work in French. It is also sensitive to the importance of the French fact in Canada. In that regard, I would like to quote from the 2010 Speech from the Throne:

Canada's two official languages are an integral part of our history... our Government will take steps to strengthen further Canada's francophone identity.

For the time being, we do not have any conclusive data to show whether Quebecers working for federally regulated private businesses have difficulty working in French. In fact, there is little information to support the argument behind Bill C-315. The labour program has yet to receive a complaint. Furthermore, in the 2006 census, close to 96% of all francophone Quebecers reported that they used French at work most often.

We need conclusive data. We need to clearly understand the situation facing federally regulated workers and private businesses in Quebec. We must listen to what they have to say. That is why our government announced that it planned on creating a consultative committee, which will assess whether a problem exists with regard to the French language in federally regulated private businesses.

• (1335)

French is widely used by Quebecers at work. We believe that the consultative committee that will be created will help us move forward in the debate on this important issue. I urge my colleagues in the House to join me in opposing Bill C-315.

Private Members' Business

I also urge them to support the government in its decision to appoint someone to help the Minister of Labour learn about this important issue.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-315 introduced by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières—whom I am getting to know and for whom my respect is growing—is of great interest, primarily because it highlights contradictions, both on the government side and on the official opposition side.

Let us begin with the government and the first contradiction. We all remember the Conservatives' reaction last summer, when the Commissioner of Official Languages decided to investigate the nature of linguistic services provided by private businesses in the national capital region.

At the time, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages said: "It is not the federal government's business to monitor the language used by private businesses with their customers."

Yesterday, the Minister of Industry and Prime Minister's political lieutenant for Quebec said: "I have the privilege of announcing today in the House that our government is going to set up a consultative committee that will be responsible for determining whether a problem exists with regard to the French language in federally regulated private businesses. "

This is some contradiction. In light of this contradiction, a few questions come to mind. First, what has changed? Second, if an assessment of the use of French is now the "federal government's business", as the minister said yesterday, why not ask the Commissioner of Official Languages to tackle that job? He is equipped to do so. Moreover, are the Conservatives beginning to feel the heat regarding official languages? Could it be because of the appointment of a unilingual Auditor General, who is an officer of Parliament, despite the opposition of all parties in the House, except the party in office?

Let us also not forget another contradiction, and I am referring to Bill C-17, An Act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act. It took the Conservatives six years to finally come up with this legislation, and they still do not seem to be in any rush, because we have not heard about this bill since it was first introduced, on October 16.

And what about the gaping holes in the bill? For example, there is no reference to part IV, namely the right to work in the official language of one's choice. The right of employees to communicate with their supervisor in French or in English seems to worry the Conservatives in the case of National Bank, but not Air Canada's subsidiaries or the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. That is another big contradiction.

• (1340)

[English]

As for the official opposition, its most glaring contradiction is to claim to be protecting Canada's linguistic minorities yet to ignore the concerns generated by Bill C-315 in Quebec's anglophone community.

Here is what the Quebec Community Groups Network has to say about Bill C-315:

The QCGN continues to oppose federal legislation that asymmetrically addresses the language rights of Canadians. We appreciate the time that... [the hon. members for Trois-Rivières, Acadie—Bathurst and Outremont] spent explaining the proposed legislation to us on October 18, and accept at face value their reasons for continuing to introduce bills which would asymmetrically extend language rights to some Canadian citizens depending on their official language, and place and type of employment. The QCGN has not supported previous attempts by the Bloc Québécois or the New Democratic Party along these lines, nor is it likely to in future. We firmly believe that Canadians living in the nation's English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada are best served, and their rights best protected by maintaining the equality of our two official languages.

[Translation]

Furthermore, in the spring of 2010, Nicola Johnston, co-chair of the QCGN Youth Standing Committee, appeared before the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Here is what she had to say, and I quote:

But the reality is that the English-speaking youth in Quebec face lower political participation and representation and higher unemployment rates compared to their francophone counterparts. We are effectively barred from the Quebec civil service, with a participation rate of 0.2%.

...but I know that it will be a major challenge, and perhaps even an obstacle, for me to be able to serve in the public service of my own province, because I am an English speaker. In contrast, many of my classmates will return to their home provinces to work in the provincial civil service, building on a sense of identity, belonging, and ownership that is perhaps not available to me and others like me.

When studying such a bill, we cannot underestimate its impact on Quebec's anglophone population, especially the younger population.

Here are some other contradictions from the official opposition. The bill contains two main provisions. My colleague talked about the first, which describes in detail the right to work in French in so-called "federal" businesses in Quebec. But there is no mention of a customer's right to be served in French or English.

By so-called "federal" enterprises, are we talking about corporations such as VIA Rail, Canada Post, Air Canada, the airports, which he mentioned, or the Old Port of Montreal? There may be some confusion and it is not clear. Finally, and this is likely the most juicy contradiction, there is the addition of the second section that gives the governor in council, or cabinet, and therefore the Prime Minister, the power to exempt every so-called "federal" enterprise for all manner of reasons. Why bother legislating if all the power is being given to the Prime Minister?

What can we do about all these contradictions? I believe that two big ideas and two major, fundamental principles must prevail. First, given our history, our Constitution and our desire to all continue living together harmoniously, it is up to the Canadian government to promote linguistic duality, in other words, our two official languages: English and French.

Second, the Canadian government has the duty to protect and support official language minority communities in their development. If there is a legal gap in the Canada Labour Code and there is a willingness to fill that gap—it is not clear whether that is the case—allow me to humbly suggest in this House that it should perhaps be filled by the Official Languages Act, federal legislation that represents quite well the will of Canadian Parliament and the Canadian people.

If there is a desire to extend the Canadian government's responsibility for official languages or linguistic requirements toward the private sector in Quebec and elsewhere in the country, should we not look to quasi-constitutional legislation that covers both the promotion of English and French—linguistic duality—and respect for linguistic minority rights? That is what every minority community in the country wants, including the anglophone minority community in Quebec. That is the position of our party and I am very proud of it.

• (1345)

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-315, introduced by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières. I would like to congratulate him on this bill. This is the second time that a similar bill has been introduced in the House, but this one is more specific. It does not target the public service and federal institutions because they are already covered by the Official Languages Act. I would also like to comment on the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier's speech on this bill.

There was a debate in the House that was brought forward by the Conservative government. There were discussions with our former leader, Jack Layton, and we agreed to recognize Quebec as a nation. The Liberals voted in favour of that. I do not want to get into the definition of a nation and on what it should be given. In terms of labour law, it is hard to believe that in Quebec, where there is a provincial law, workers, as my colleague from Trois-Rivières so rightly said, have the right to work in their language at a credit union, but not in a bank. How can that happen in Quebec?

We also met with the association representing anglophone minorities in Quebec. Anglophones are not entirely comfortable with this bill because it will help only one province instead of the entire country, but they are not overly concerned. They understand. I got the impression that they understand what is happening, especially in Quebec.

The House made the effort to recognize Quebec as a nation. The labour code of that nation gives people the right to work in French and to have their collective agreements in French. However, in federally regulated private businesses, people do not have the same right. That is very difficult to accept.

The bill introduced by the member for Trois-Rivières does not say that anglophones cannot work in their language. Members must not try to muddy the waters and make people believe that we are trying to take something away from anglophones in Quebec. We are simply saying that francophones have the right to work in their language. They are the majority and they have the right to work in their language. Quebec is the only province in Canada and in North America that is truly francophone.

After the bill was introduced, the Minister of Industry and Minister of State for Agriculture said that as far as language of work was concerned, the NDP had clearly not done its homework. He has the nerve to say that in the House when his government just appointed a unilingual Auditor General of Canada. They have the nerve to stand up in the House and say that the NDP did not do its homework when they have the power to appoint judges to the Supreme Court.

Private Members' Business

This is 2011. Our country has been bilingual for 40 years, but the Auditor General of Canada is going to go before the press to report to Canadians without being able to speak one of our country's official languages. They have the nerve to tell us in the House that we did not do our homework? We are doing our homework by introducing a bill like this one, to allow a francophone employee working for a private company in Quebec to speak his language and have his collective agreement in his language.

The House cannot support that, but it can recognize Quebec as a nation?

• (1350)

It is not enough to just unanimously accept that Quebec is a nation. We need concrete actions. One of the best actions that can be taken is to ensure that all workers in Quebec can work in their language without taking anything away from anglophones in Quebec. This bill does not take anything away from them. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier tells us this bill might prevent clients from being served in their language. Let us be reasonable. The bill does not do that. We are not in Moncton, New Brunswick, the only bilingual province in Canada, where you cannot get served in French at the casino. In Montreal, you can get served at the casino in both official languages. We are not in Moncton, New Brunswick, where they thumb their noses at the French language. As a New Brunswicker, I am not shy to say so. I hope the Prime Minister hears me as well.

That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about respecting workers and their community in Quebec, without taking anything away from the other community. If there is anyone being trampled on in Canada in terms of language, it is francophones, because of the way today's Conservatives are treating official languages. With the new rules of the House of Commons and the Government of Canada, I had to file a complaint with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages to get a new voice mailbox.

[*English*]

During the initialization, the voice mail will address the person in English, the system's default language. Once the person's voice mail initialization is completed, the person will be allowed to easily change it to French, should he or she choose to do so, by following these steps.

[*Translation*]

This is 2011. Are they trying to say that Bell Canada does not have the technology to put both official languages on their voice mail? All it would take is to add "press 2 for French and press 1 for English". This is November 25 and we still have to file complaints with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Now they are worried because a bill will give workers in the Quebec nation the right to work in their language and to have a collective agreement in their language when they work for a federally regulated company. I have a hard time seeing how someone could not be in favour of this bill. I do not see how that could be the case.

Private Members' Business

Otherwise, perhaps we should have another vote in the House of Commons. Are they sure they want to recognize Quebec as a nation within Canada? We should ask that question again. Were they being sincere the evening of the vote when they recognized Quebec as a nation within Canada? Were they being sincere when they rose? If they were, they must take action and make some changes in this regard. They must be able to tell Quebecers that they are not only welcome, but that they are also part of Canada, that they are Canadian citizens, regardless of whether they are from Quebec or any other province, and that we will work together and respect them.

It shows a lack of respect for the entire province of Quebec that, these days, people still cannot get their collective agreements in French. The government tells us that it will create a committee to take care of it and do its homework, but where have the Conservative members from Quebec been this whole time? It is true that there are not many left. Where were the Conservative members from Quebec when they voted to recognize Quebec as a nation?

That is why this bill is a way to show Quebec that it fits in with the rest of Canada and that we will work to keep Quebec with us in a united Canada. As colleagues, we will do it together.

• (1355)

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières is proposing that the Canada Labour Code be amended to introduce requirements for the use of French in federally regulated enterprises that carry out activities in Quebec.

What would that really mean in practice?

There are currently two distinct language regimes in Quebec. First is the federal Official Languages Act, which applies to all federal institutions, and prescribes English and French as the language of work. This act covers 46,000 employees in the core of the federal public service and a further 30,000 employees in the crown corporations and certain private sector companies in Quebec.

Second, we have the Quebec French language charter that designates French as the official language in the province. The charter covers approximately 3.8 million employees in the province's public and private sectors. That leaves about 130,000 private sector employees in federally regulated firms in Quebec who are not currently covered by either federal or provincial language of work legislation.

The bill before us today would change that by amending the Canada Labour Code to place new requirements on federally regulated employers operating in Quebec. This would mean that these employers would need to: use French in their communications with the Government of Quebec and with corporations established in Quebec; give their employees the right to carry on their activities in French; draw up communications for their employees in French; prepare and publish French offers of employment at the same time as any offers published in a language other than French; prepare collective agreements and their schedules in French; and translate arbitration awards into either English or French upon request of one of the parties.

Before I go any further, I want to make it clear that our government understands the importance of language in preserving

culture and heritage. Our two official languages are not just part of our history, they are an integral part of our Canadian identity. This is clearly reflected in the Official Languages Act and in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which both state that English and French are the official languages of Canada. The role of the federal government and the federal language legislation is to promote the use of both French and English across the country and not to favour one over the other.

At the same time, this government has made a commitment to take steps to strengthen further Canadian francophone identity. I assure members that we fully appreciate the importance of the issue before us today.

However, we also feel an equal responsibility to undertake a full and fair evaluation of the issue before us today and it is important to consider the context.

I want to underscore that, in looking at all the issues, we have so far found little documented evidence that francophones face difficulty working in French in federally regulated private sector enterprises in Quebec. In fact, in the 2006 census, close to 96% of all francophone Quebecers reported that they used French at work most often and a further 3.4% said that they used French at work regularly. To date, the labour program has yet to receive a single complaint from a federally regulated private sector employee in Quebec claiming that he or she could not work in French.

Second, the adoption of the bill would represent a departure from past practices in that it would extend the scope of language requirements to the private sector.

From an economic perspective, we need to consider the potential negative implications for the businesses that would be affected by the bill. These businesses need to compete with their counterparts outside of Quebec where other provincial and territorial governments do not regulate the language of work in the private sector firms. As we know, many private sector employers in the federal sector voluntarily conform to provincial language of work legislation. It just makes good business sense to do so.

We need to ask ourselves: Is this really an area where the government should be intervening? Is this the best time to consider imposing additional regulatory burdens on employers?

As members know, our government's first priority is the economic recovery. We are focused on jobs and growth. To that end, we are trying to reduce red tape, keep taxes low and give Canadian businesses more freedom to succeed. Surely, the member for Trois-Rivières would not want to disadvantage the businesses that operate in the province of Quebec.

• (1400)

Do we really need to hurry to impose new laws and red tape on businesses in Quebec in the absence of concrete evidence of a genuine problem?

Private Members' Business

The Minister of Labour understands the language of work is an important issue in Quebec. That is why the government intends to name an advisory committee to examine the situation and determine whether the working and private sector federal jurisdiction establishments in Quebec are fully able to work in French and will provide its observations in that regard to the government.

As with any important issue before us, we will strive for a clear and comprehensive understanding of the situation and, in turn, make informed decisions on the best way forward. That is what Canadians expect us to do, that is what we intend to do and that is why our government must say no to this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by pointing out a rather interesting fact. Today is November 25, which means that two days from now marks the fifth anniversary of this House passing nearly unanimously a motion recognizing Quebec as a nation.

Recognizing a nation is not something that one should take lightly. Although I was not here at the time, I am sure that no one in this House made the decision lightly, and yet, about 250 members—I am sorry I do not recall the exact number—voted in favour of the motion. After supporting such a motion, one should then walk the talk. So far, however, no concrete action has been taken in that regard.

It is very interesting because yesterday, the government surprised us by revealing some lovely projects. It plans simply to launch a committee to work on the issue of official languages. In a press release, the government said it is committed to promoting and protecting the French language in Canada. That is rather interesting, because I do not really understand how it can do that, when some of the people in the highest positions of governance in this country are not even bilingual, such as the Auditor General and Supreme Court judges. That is definitely an argument for another day. The fact remains that I do not understand how, with all of that in mind, the Conservatives have the nerve to come to this House and boast about defending the French language. This really amazes me and I am having a hard time understanding it all.

At the same time, it is interesting to see that the member who spoke before me talked about the absence of a problem. He said that no complaints have been received and there is not really a problem, so we would create a law to solve a problem that does not exist. If there is no problem, why form a committee? Why talk about it? Why take the initiative to try to solve a problem if there is none? It seems to me that this is an admission that there is indeed a problem.

We have to ask ourselves another question. If we are determined to protect the French language, is the fact that complaints may or may not have been filed such a big issue? We are simply asking for the harmonization of the existing provisions of the Charter of the French Language with the Canada Labour Code.

I am going to quote a specific part in the preamble of the Charter of the French Language. It reads:

The French language, the distinctive language of a people that is in the majority French-speaking, is the instrument by which that people has articulated its identity.

In that sentence I see an idea that complements in a very concrete fashion the recognition of the Quebec nation. Yet some government members are opposed to our bill, which simply affirms this recognition through a concrete measure.

Let us get back to the committee that will look at this matter. Things are still vague. We do not really know the committee's mandate, which stakeholders will be asked to appear and what specific issues the committee will attempt to solve. The government is setting up a committee, but says that it wants to look at the issue and solve the problem.

That is very odd, because when we, on this side, want to look at problems or delve into issues raised in other bills, the government ends the debate and moves on to something else. However, when the issue is the French language, the government is in no hurry. The NDP is proposing concrete measures, but the Conservatives want to take their time and review the matter. Meanwhile, Quebecers have clearly told us what their needs are. Complaints may not have been filed regarding the Canada Labour Code, but Quebecers expressed their views in another way, a very important way, on May 2.

Let me explain. During the election campaign, we, the NDP candidates, and particularly our leader, Jack Layton, said clearly that if we were elected we would look at the issue to really ensure that the Charter of the French Language and the Canada Labour Code were harmonized. As we all know, Quebecers voted massively for our party, because of the concrete initiatives that we want to take in this House. Quebecers did not ask for a committee to look at the matter. After all, this issue has been dragging on for a long time.

We know that, among other initiatives, the hon. member for Outremont introduced an almost identical bill during the 40th Parliament, and we are simply tabling it again. This is not the first time that it has been debated. Moreover, we are well aware that, in our country, linguistic issues have been very important issues for decades.

● (1405)

These are in no way new issues. In fact, it is practically the opposite: these issues need to be dealt with immediately.

I know that often, when we debate bills, the best way to make government members understand is by talking about an economic aspect. So I will speak to these issues by giving an economic argument to support this bill.

This is a labour right, a right for Quebec workers. This government claims to be a great defender of people who wish to work, who wish to find a job and who wish to meet their family's needs in uncertain economic times. This is one way of helping those people.

Private Members' Business

My riding is more than 95% francophone. For these people, it is a labour right. When people work to meet their families' needs, to make ends meet or to earn a living, they have a fundamental right to work in their language. This reality should be even more concrete since Quebec has been recognized as a nation. This issue of language rights has gone on far too long. To me, that is clear. It is interesting because, none of the arguments made by the government or the Liberal Party are in opposition to the bill. They recognize that there is a problem because they want to form a committee. So do not try to tell me that there is no problem. Obviously, if they are willing to form a committee, it means that they recognize that there is a problem.

They talk about respecting both official languages, but do nothing to protect them. This is a concrete measure, an opportunity to show that we are willing to do more than just pay lip service. This is an opportunity, if I may, Mr. Speaker, for redemption from the colossal mistake of appointing unilingual officers to such important positions in our country and to much opposition. I am still trying to find a good and solid reason to oppose a measure that simply harmonizes the Canada Labour Code with existing measures in the Charter of the French Language of Quebec. We are not asking to make major changes to our society. These are measures that have existed since the 1970s. They are already in place.

The NDP thinks that it is normal for the 200,000 people working in federally regulated companies to have the same rights as their colleagues who work in companies or institutions under the umbrella of the Charter of the French Language. It is not very complicated.

I want to come back to the use of the French language and the issue of anglophone minorities. Part of my family is anglophone and I believe that the fact that they experienced the implementation of the Charter of the French Language puts me in a good position to say that it does not infringe on our rights in any way whatsoever; rather, it completes and strengthens francophone rights. Those are two very different things. Anglophones are not being prevented from speaking English. The charter simply protects the fundamental right of francophones to work in French and to receive communications and their collective agreement in French. In labour law, the language of expression, the language that allows us to work and take our place at our work, is essential. It is our identity. It is our way of expressing ourselves. We cannot do without it. I am still waiting to hear arguments to the contrary. The answer is easy. Everyone should support this bill.

I want to commend the hon. member for Trois-Rivières on his work. I know that we in the NDP are taking concrete actions and I am very proud of that.

●(1410)

Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-315, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (French language).

This bill amends the Canada Labour Code to add requirements regarding the use of French in federally regulated private businesses operating in Quebec. More specifically, the bill requires employers to treat French as the language of work in federally regulated private businesses in Quebec.

The bill gives employees the right to carry on their activities in French, to draw up communications in French, to have their collective agreements and schedules prepared in French, and to have all arbitrations translated into English or French, as the case may be, at the parties' request.

This bill does not prohibit the use of a language other than French, but no other language may take precedence over French.

It authorizes the Governor in Council to exempt, by regulation, federal works, undertakings or businesses from the operations of the provisions of the bill.

I would now like to take a moment to look at the existing language laws already in effect in Quebec.

As my colleagues before me have already explained, there are currently two distinct language regimes in Quebec, and these cover various groups of businesses and workers. The Official Languages Act applies to all federal institutions, including Parliament, federal departments, organizations and crown corporations, as well as former crown corporations and all ports and airports.

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice will have eight minutes to finish his speech the next time the bill is before the House.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

●(1415)

[English]

The House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:15 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

MR. JOE COMARTIN

MS. JUDY FOOTE

HON. ROB MERRIFIELD

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 Diversi- fication) | 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 |

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

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Alexandre Boulerice
Brad ButtBlaine Calkins
John CarmichaelDean Del Mastro
Earl DreeshenPierre-Luc Dusseault
Colin Mayes

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Rodney Weston
David Wilks
John Williamson
Stephen Woodworth
Terence Young
Wai Young
Bob Zimmer

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

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Alex Atamanenko
Randy Hoback
Pierre Lemieux

Ben Lobb
LaVar Payne

Francine Raynault
Jean Rousseau

Brian Storseth
Bob Zimmer

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Terence Young
Wai Young

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Andrew Cash
Parm Gill

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Terence Young

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Merv Tweed
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Maurice Vellacott
Mike Wallace
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Jeff Watson
John Weston
Rodney Weston
David Wilks
John Williamson
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Wai Young
Bob Zimmer

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Paulina Ayala
Rick Dykstra
Roxanne James

Matthew Kellway
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