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Friday, February 17, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 17, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1005)
[English]

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 51(1), and the order made Thursday, February 16, 2012, the following motion is now deemed to have been proposed:

That, this House take note of the Standing Orders and procedure of the House and its Committees; that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be instructed to study the Standing Orders and procedures of the House and its Committees, including the proceedings on the debate pursuant to Standing Order 51; and that the Committee report its finding to the House no later than May 18, 2012.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are looking today at the Standing Orders, which are the formal and structured rules that guide us here.

In Commonwealth countries, formal institutions are structured around three great precedent-based systems of law. The first system is the common law. The second system is our constitutional conventions, which are the unwritten rules that guide the unwritten institutions of our Constitution such as the rule of cabinet government. The third system is parliamentary practices, which guide us here, in the other place and in the provincial legislatures.

In each of these three systems there is an arbitrator who has the authority to make rulings as to which precedent ought to apply, in the event there is a dispute as to what the rules might actually be.

In the case of the common law, the arbitrator is the courts, which is to say judges who are selected based upon their wisdom and experience, as well as juries selected randomly or by lottery as a way of trying to create the best possible cross-section of reasonably minded persons.

In the case of constitutional conventions, the arbitrator or adjudicator is the Queen. Because we are across the ocean, in her absence, it would fall to the Governor General or the Lieutenant Governor, as the case may be. Final say as to what the conventions might be is decided by the voters themselves at the next election, should there be any great question as to whether or not a government has acted constitutionally in the sense of the unwritten constitution.

In the case of Parliament, the adjudicator is the Speaker.

In each of these three systems there is a series of key decisions or key rulings which focus on previous precedents and draw them together.

In the case of the courts, we refer to these as leading decisions or leading rulings that attempt to summarize these precedents and detect patterns that have a morally binding authority and that reflect the great weight of where the institution as a whole would like to go. We refer to these as leading or landmark cases.

In the case of the House of Commons, these would be key decisions of the various Speakers. Certain decisions that are cited more frequently are seen as more effectively jelling those that came before them.

In the case of our constitutional conventions, I have to confess that it is less easy to pick out these leading or key cases.

In each case, our common institutional history with the rest of the Commonwealth and with the provinces allows the precedence of other jurisdictions to be persuasive, although not necessarily binding. That is true with the common law. Our courts will refer to cases decided elsewhere. That is certainly true with our constitutional conventions. We think it entirely appropriate. We thought it entirely appropriate a couple of years ago when we were dealing with the question of prorogation to look at how other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth dealt with prorogation. It is true as well with respect to the House of Commons that we look to precedents from other chambers.

We also look to writers to summarize these precedents for us. These would have been known in medieval times as “glossators”, people who gathered to get their glossaries of the great precedents. In the common law we would have great names in the past such as Glanville, Bracton and, in the 18th century, Sir William Blackstone. There are modern commentators who have written volumes that continue to be used and are referred to under the name of their author, such as Craies, Maxwell and Bennion.

In the case of our constitutional conventions, the great writers are people like Albert Venn Dicey, in the 19th century, Walter Bagehot or, if we are looking at the United States, people like Tocqueville and Lord Bryce.

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● (1010)

In the case of our parliamentary institutions we look to texts compiled by Erskine May, looking at the British Parliament and their practices. In Canada, the leading text is a volume that was known as Marleau and Montpetit, after its two authors. It is now referred to as O'Brien and Bosc, after the most recent editors of that volume.

Each of these three great systems of rules brought together the rules as they exist based upon the precedents. In each of these three great systems, it is possible to encode or formalize the rules, rather than simply turning to precedent.

In the case of our laws, acts of Parliament can encode what formerly had been dealt with by means of the common law. In the case of the unwritten constitution, it is possible to formalize the unwritten conventions and turn them into written constitutional rules. We have not done that for many rules in Canada, but we have done it for some. In Britain they are still dealt with on an entirely unwritten basis.

We have gone a great deal less far of course than the Americans, or to pick an example that is closer to home, than the Irish when they converted from being a monarchy and a member of the Commonwealth, to being a republic, so this can be done. We can also, in case of the Constitution, make formal amendments, as I said.

In the case of the House, we can change our Standing Orders and adopt Standing Orders. When we do so we are codifying that which was dealt with by precedent in the past. In so doing, we tend to do one of two things. This is perhaps why we are turning now directly to the Standing Orders themselves.

In the case of each of those practices and precedents that has existed, it seems to me that, on the one hand, we might want to conclude that the practice, the precedent, is one which is sufficiently crystallized that it is time now to enact a formal rule. A formal rule would capture our best practices, which we will then have to apply when we find that we are not at our best.

Anybody who has been around here for a few years knows that we are not always at our best. We are not always as solicitous of the opinions of the minority point of view. We are not always open to full discussion. We are not always as decorous as we could be. These rules could be entrenched so as to freeze in the best practices which have crystallized.

Or on the other hand, we might look at practices that perhaps do not reflect the direction we ought to be taking. They might reflect a natural progression, but not the progression that is optimal. We can effectively adopt a Standing Order that overrules a past practice if there is a better direction to take, toward which we were not being led by our precedents.

In the common law this phenomenon was dealt with in the 19th century in Britain. Legislators and legal theorists came to the conclusion that the common law, in some cases, had simply led to what they regarded as a dead end from the point of view of public utility. Simply, that no further advancement would occur in the direction that was in the best interests of society. That can apply here as well.

However, there is a third possibility. There are many areas where it is best not to adopt a formal rule that locks us in at this time. It is better to allow the precedents to continue to develop and improve. This allows us to collectively exercise our wisdom through the kinds of interventions that all members make when they are advising the Chair as to how the Speaker ought to rule. That gradual accumulation will continue to improve the rules of the House.

As a concluding remark, I want to observe that we sometimes tend to wax nostalgic in this place about the great days of our parliamentary past, now lost. I want to suggest that it is a myth.

We think back to the great days of Macdonald debating Edward Blake, or Churchill versus Lady Astor, or Gladstone versus Disraeli. The truth is that these were often times as ill-tempered as the present, sometimes more so. The long-term trend, as our standing rules grow, as the body of precedence on which they are based grows, is that actually we are producing a set of rules that govern us in a better way than Gladstone, Disraeli or any of the others I have mentioned were governed by their rules.

The truth is that we are moving forward. This is a positive exercise and the rules that we leave to our successors will, I think, be better than those that were left to us.

● (1015)

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's comments. We both sit on the procedure and House affairs committee so I know he cares passionately about the Standing Orders, as we all do.

I wonder if the member could tell me how he feels about the Standing Orders relating to time allocation in particular, as well as committee proceedings in camera, which are two of the issues that are of most concern to members on this side of the House.

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, with regard to the in camera rules, I suppose the obvious thing to mention is that our rules for going in camera and coming out of in camera to a public session are based upon the rules that were developed for this chamber. These rules have fallen into disuse in this chamber.

In theory, at any point a member can ask that all strangers be cleared from the gallery. This would have the effect of causing this chamber to go in camera. That has not been done for a very long time here or in any of the provincial legislatures. It is really something that is now an artifact of the past.

However, the rules in committee are derived from this. The process is simply that one member in committee moves a motion to go in camera, there is no debate, members vote on the motion and then the committee session goes in camera. The same is true to return to a public meeting. The trouble is that this can lead to proceedings taking place where we are all bound by a requirement not to reveal what happened at the in camera meeting. Of course, there can be things done in camera that, if done in public, would not find favour with the public. I do not think we would want to create a situation where that could happen too easily.

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I can give specific examples of this but I think we all get the idea that some kind of change might be appropriate. I must admit that I have thought about this but I cannot figure out what the change ought to be. I would like to look at what others have done to see if there are good practices out there.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in listening to my colleague from across the aisle, it is clear that he is quite passionate about the subject of the Standing Orders, which I think puts him in an exclusive club here in the House of Commons. I know from working with him in committee that he is very knowledgeable about these things and he did give us a good historical review of it.

I was hoping, however, that he would be a little more specific about what his party intends to do in the next little while in terms of suggesting changes to the Standing Orders. I was also wondering, like my colleague from the NDP, whether he could shine a little more light on what the Conservative Party feels might be worth looking at in terms of changes to the current Standing Orders.

● (1020)

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, I know all the parties have been working within their own caucuses to develop some ideas on this. I will mention one thing that I think is quite important. I will admit that my party has not been thinking of this in our discussions, but it is something that I have been hoping to add to the discussions. I think this is as good a place as any to throw it out.

The definition of parliamentary privilege is one that has been dealt with almost entirely conventionally, that is to say by means of precedence as opposed to any kind of change to the Standing Orders. However, I noticed that a change occurred between Marleau and Montpetit and O'Brien and Bosc.

If we consult Marleau and Montpetit on parliamentary privilege, they list off three effective privileges. I remember raising an issue of privilege with the Speaker some years ago and he referred to the three underlying privileges. However, O'Brien and Bosc consider there to be four such privileges. In reviewing these privileges, and coming to a clear agreement among ourselves as to whether we are working on the basis of three or four, would be profitable. That is one thing that I personally would like to see discussed.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this special debate provided for in the rules of the House to address our concerns with respect to the procedures and Standing Orders that govern our business here in the House of Commons.

I will begin by pointing out that the rule which allows a debate such as this to happen has been around since 1982. Yet, in all of those 30 years, members of Parliament have only felt it necessary to engage in this debate twice before, once in 1998 and once in 2005. That is very telling.

What it says to me is that, on the whole, our rules of procedure have served the institution of Parliament well. When applied as intended, they have preserved the important balance of giving the government the authority, funds and resources necessary to govern the country while, at the same time, ensuring that the opposition parties can fulfill their roles as watchdog and proponents of alternatives to the government of the day. In the balance hangs the

principle of representation through which the views of Canadians are brought to bear on the important issues of the day.

Clearly, the fact that members feel it necessary to review the rules of procedure now implies that something has changed, that the way the rules are currently being applied no longer serves the public well. I would go so far as to suggest that we are experiencing a democratic deficit in the House that must be exposed and addressed.

I concede that normally tuning in to debates about rules of procedure would be akin to watching paint dry for most Canadians but this time it is more than insider baseball. It is about ensuring that the voices of Canadians are heard and listened to in the single most important democratic institution in this country. It is about ensuring that Canadians can hold their government to account. It is about ensuring that the Canadian public does not become vulnerable to a parliamentary dictatorship.

It is for all of those reasons that even the media have begun to pay attention to the procedural games played by the government. In particular, it has focused on the rules that currently allow the government to cut off debate on subjects of its choosing and rules that allow the government to escape accountability by avoiding transparency and holding critical debates in closed door meetings.

I will get right to the heart of those issues.

Currently, our Standing Orders provide that the rules governing committee procedures are the same as govern the House. The only exceptions are the rules governing the election of the Speaker, seconding of motions, limiting the number of times of speaking and the length of speeches. The Compendium of Procedure elaborates by pointing out that:

On occasion, a committee may decide to hold an in camera meeting to deal with administrative matters, to consider a draft report or to receive a background briefing. Committees also meet in camera to deal with subject matters requiring confidentiality, such as national security.

Both in Standing Order 116 and in the compendium, it is therefore clear that in camera meetings are to be the exception, not the rule.

However, under the current Conservative government, some government members have moved that the entire proceedings of particular committees be conducted behind closed doors, shutting out both the public and the media from deliberations on what, in the end, are questions of public policy. How absurd is that? When the issue is raised with the Speaker, he or she consistently falls back on the principle that committees are the masters of their own proceedings.

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While technically correct, we must give the Speaker the tools to uphold the independence of committees while insisting that they cannot subvert the democratic principles of transparency and accountability that underpin the Westminster model of Parliament. To do otherwise is to turn the Speaker into a parliamentary eunuch at best, or more likely a government patsy, particularly during majority governments. In either case, the Speaker will be hamstrung in fulfilling his or her role as the principal officer of the House of Commons, the guardian of its privileges and the protector of the rights of all members. Clearly, that must change. We should be examining how to allow the Speaker to overturn anti-democratic behaviour at committee while respecting the principle of committee autonomy.

Similarly, the Speaker must be able to play a more active role in maintaining the balance between the right of the government to pass its legislative agenda and the right of the opposition to examine and debate proposals in the House of Commons.

Among the most undemocratic measures contained in the current Standing Orders is Standing Order 56.1. If the government has been denied unanimous consent for a routine motion, this Standing Order gives the government the right to put the same question again during routine proceedings without debate or amendment, and deems the motion to have carried unless 25 members stand in their places to oppose it. While I am sure that wording seemed benign to its original drafters, there appear to be very few procedural limits on what constitutes a routine motion.

● (1025)

As a result, governments now regularly use the Standing Order to curtail debate on bills and to accelerate the legislative process. Clearly, that was not the intent of the rule. In fact, former Speaker Milliken virtually begged the House to place limitations on the types of motions that would be considered routine and specifically suggested that no motion which furthers legislation can be considered routine. I would refer members of the House to Speaker Milliken's rulings of June 5, 2007, October 3, 2006, May 13, 2005 and September 18, 2001.

This may be a good time to look at how useful Standing Order 26.1 is as well, since it has the same regressive, negative option billing process where a motion is deemed passed unless 15 members of Parliament rise to oppose it. It is a procedural loophole that dates back a century. The government should not be able to use that anachronism to force a vote in the House.

It is not like the government needs any additional mechanisms to accelerate the parliamentary process. On the contrary, my NDP colleagues and I strongly believe that even the existing powers to time allocate debate must be reviewed and curtailed. It goes without saying that the time spent on a bill is a major source of conflict between governing and opposition parties. After all, time is the currency of parliamentary proceedings.

In 1987, Speaker Fraser was clear when he stated:

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.

Although he put it slightly differently, the Prime Minister said the same thing on election night last year. He said, "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".

That is a far cry from what the Conservatives have been saying in the House ever since. Now they are saying over and over again that they received a majority mandate from Canadians and that all further consultation can therefore cease. They consulted during the campaign, after all. The arrogance of such statements is astounding and it has led to a gross overuse of tools to shut down debate in this House, whether it be through time allocation or formal closure motions. Those tools were initially designed to give the government the power to overcome deliberate filibusters by opposition parties where the public would ultimately judge which party's actions it supported in the subsequent election.

However, there are occasions now where there is widespread and objective concern that a government is resorting to time allocation too precipitously, and that there is genuine public interest in a full debate in the House. For such situations, it is important that the Standing Orders vest in the Speaker the right to rule a government motion for time allocation out of order or inadmissible.

It is right and proper for the Speaker to have the authority to stand in the way of a government that is prepared to use time allocation to stifle debate without any evidence of obstruction. Giving the Speaker such an authority, even if it were not used regularly, would create the healthy habit of circumspection before the government resorted to time allocation. Perhaps then we could move away from the practice of the now routine use of time allocation which really makes a mockery of the procedures of this House.

Just since the last election, the government has used time allocation 15 times. In one instance, notice of time allocation was given before debate had even started on the bill. When they were in opposition, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages and others decried such tactics and they have been quoted extensively on that in this House.

However, for me, the person who summed it best was the Minister of Finance when he reacted to a time allocation motion brought forward during his time at Queen's Park. He said:

This shows...the legislative incompetence on the other side of the House. They've been unable to manage their bills here, so they...have to time-allocate....

I could not agree more. Overreliance on time allocation is the sign of an incompetent government but such incompetence is no excuse for running roughshod over the institution of Parliament.

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I look forward to discussing these issues further in committee so we can restore transparency and accountability to the parliamentary process on behalf of all those Canadians who sent us here to speak for them.

•(1030)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's presentation. I look forward to working with her in the upcoming weeks on the procedure and House affairs committee as we get into further discussion and look at the Standing Orders in depth. However, I have to take issue with a few of her comments.

Primarily, she made the comment about Standing Order 56.1. She stated that our government uses it routinely and suggested that was done in an undemocratic manner to curtail the direction of the House. I would point out to the member opposite that Standing Order 56.1 has only been used once in this Parliament and when our government used it, it was to allow the NDP members to go to their own convention. The Liberal Party was denying the right of the NDP members to go to their convention. We have historically all agreed as political parties that when one party wants to go to a convention, we do not sit on the Friday of the party's convention. The Liberals opposed this. We had to use Standing Order 56.1 to allow the NDP members to go to their convention and yet she complained about it.

Furthermore, I would point out that Standing Order 56.1 could be blocked at any time by only 25 members standing in the House to object to it. If the member is suggesting that her party cannot bring 25 members into the chamber to go to work every day, then there is a problem, not on this side of the House but on that side of the House.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Madam Speaker, clearly we do not have a problem having 25 members on this side of the House, which is why the government has only been able to use Standing Order 56.1 once.

The other point is that the government has not had to resort to using Standing Order 56.1 very often because it has brought down the hammer and has used time allocation over and over again. For those who are watching, time allocation is a bit of insider baseball, but it shuts down debate on a piece of public legislation. The Conservatives have used it in the House before debate has even begun on a bill.

Canadians have a right to have their voices heard. They have influence into the public policy process through the debates that happen in this chamber through us their representatives. Their voices must be heard in the chamber. Their issues cannot be time allocated, closed off and ignored by the government. That is why this debate is so important to the future of this institution. Frankly, Canadians deserve better than having time allocation invoked before debates have even begun.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the remarks by the member for Hamilton Mountain. I was especially intrigued by what she had to say about committees. That is one of the most troublesome areas with this very secret and closed door government. It is becoming more and more prominent every week. In fact, some are monitoring how many committees are having in camera or secret meetings on a daily basis. It happens all too often.

For the government to go in camera almost consistently when there is an opposition motion being debated in terms of the motion itself is a denial of the democratic privileges of the country. The Conservatives do not even want to hear the discussion. They go in camera, shut down debate and vote against the motion. Increasingly, we are seeing the same restrictions and dissenting reports. I wonder if the member would comment.

•(1035)

Ms. Chris Charlton: Madam Speaker, the member for Malpeque raises a really good point. Obviously, as I said, it is one of the two areas that is of primary concern to those of us on this side of the House. Committees are an opportunity for the public to be heard with respect to legislation. We value that input and want to make sure it is reflected in the bills that get reported back to the House. Yet the Conservatives want all of that to happen behind closed doors.

The Prime Minister is notorious for wanting to silence his backbenchers. I have been trying to figure out why there is such urgency to go in camera and it finally came to me. I think it is because the Prime Minister is fundamentally afraid of what his backbenchers might say. He does not want that to be on record, so he prefers to move everything behind closed doors.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to participate in the discussion about our Standing Orders and to debate the rules regulating our proceedings and committees.

The debates that are held in the House can often get very heated. This statement surely comes as no surprise to my colleagues because when intelligent, hard-working and passionate people debate issues and tackle difficult questions, emotions sometimes run high. I admit that my emotions occasionally run high when I speak, even though I consider myself emotionally a controlled person, but this is to be expected. However, we are not here today to discuss the substance of the issues that we debate, but rather the way in which they are discussed, debated, examined and ultimately decided upon.

[*Translation*]

Yes, this debate provides an excellent opportunity for members to share their ideas and proposals on how to modernize and improve House procedures, but I have to wonder about this government's willingness to accept any suggestions in that regard. I hope they will.

Even though we may sit on opposite sides of the House, I think it is safe to say that we are all in the same boat. We must work together, and yes, even though we might disagree on how to carry out our work, we should all agree on one thing: every member has the right to be heard and to take part in the process. I hope this debate will allow us to come up with some constructive ideas that will help members do their job to the best of their abilities.

[*English*]

I say this because I feel as though the reasons for this debate are twofold. One would be to streamline or improve the rules, so to speak. The other would be to give due respect to the spirit of the rules.

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Several areas need to be considered and come to mind, from the broadest subjects, such as the operations of standing committees and the conduct of question period, right down to the weekly, dare I say, colourful Thursday statement. I ask myself sometimes, as I am sure many Canadians do, why this place often seems to grind to a complete halt. Is it because of the rules, or is it brought about by an abuse of the rules? I do not mean to sound cynical, but the hyper-partisan nature of this place in recent years makes me wonder sometimes what really needs to be changed.

In today's debate we will hear a lot of talk about committee proceedings, specifically in camera meetings. Why is that? Because the Conservative Party has begun to stifle any kind of debate in committee by using its majority to shut down every proposal put forward by the opposition. I find it very regrettable that the Conservatives have decided to go this route because it undermines our democratic institution as a whole.

We in the Liberal Party have taken it upon ourselves to propose some possible wording that describes a specific list of exceptional circumstances when in camera meetings are appropriate, thus enabling committees to maximize public access to their activities rather than excluding citizens and the media unnecessarily.

I will describe what we proposed earlier this week. We believe that as a principle all meetings of standing, special, or legislative committees should be held in public and after public notice, with only a few very specific exceptions. Examples would be situations where we are discussing specific things such as wages, salaries and other employee benefits; contract negotiations, labour relations and other personnel matters; information that cannot be disclosed publicly without demonstrably putting national security at risk; an item of business that cannot be discussed in public without disclosing information supplied in confidence, such as legal advice supplied in confidence; and/or consideration of any draft report of the committee. We hope that this will be viewed as a constructive start. We think that we do need to maximize the openness of our committees and we are putting forward the first specific suggestions on this subject.

That I have to stand here today to make suggestions on how to advocate for greater democracy is somewhat ironic. Here is the same party, the Conservative Party, that cried foul every time time allocation was used when it was in opposition, and is setting new records as soon as it got enough seats to steamroll its legislative agenda through the House. To remind members, the last time we in the Liberal Party had a majority, from 2000 to 2004, in those four years with over 150 bills there were 10 calls for time allocation. The Conservative government has been in power for eight or nine months and has already passed that limit with 16 calls for time allocation on about 20 bills.

It is the same party that wasted so much time in the House, for example during the Nisga'a debate, that we actually had to tighten up the rules on what was acceptable in terms of proposing amendments. It is the only party to be found in contempt of the House of Commons in the history of Canada.

● (1040)

[*Translation*]

I could go on for some time about the symptomatic problems of the House. If someone were to ask me what other changes I would like to see and what changes I think Canadians would like to see, I would say that, for one thing, we should examine the way question period operates.

The problem with question period is not one-dimensional, but rather it is full of nuances when taken as a whole. There are questions of procedure, such as rotation and the length of questions and answers. There is also the question of decorum, including exclamations and shouting, which often cut short members' time, and parliamentary language, which often becomes the source of further debate.

It is true that we do not have an official list of terms that are deemed unparliamentary, but quite frankly, I am not convinced that we need such a list, because I think all hon. members in this House should refrain from using provocative language and resorting to personal attacks, the most recent examples of which include shameful comparisons to Hitler, pedophiles and terrorists.

[*English*]

My colleague from Mount Royal spoke quite eloquently in this place last week on a point of order regarding this matter. As he outlined in his speech, Speaker Milliken paraphrased Speaker Fraser's ruling of December 11, 1991 that offensive remarks can linger and "have a suffocating effect on the fair exchange of ideas and points of view. Anything said in this place receives wide and instant dissemination and leaves a lasting impression. Offending words may be withdrawn, denied, explained away, or apologized for, but the impression created is not always as easily erased".

When an incident such as this does take place, it is a source of embarrassment as it denigrates the dignity of us all as members of Parliament and of the House as a whole, but I digress.

Let me get back to the point concerning question period. Something else which I know is not in the Speaker's purview or a matter for Standing Orders but which we could also talk about is the substance of the answers in question period. As I just stated, I know that the substance of a minister's answer is not something on which the Speaker can rule. The Speaker cannot make a minister answer a question. However, there is something I would like to see and that is ministerial accountability. To be more specific, when a minister is asked a question, I would like the minister responsible to answer the question.

Also, the idea of having Wednesday's question period directed uniquely at the Prime Minister, as is the practice in the U.K., is an interesting proposal, which in my opinion merits further consideration.

In preparing for my intervention today I looked at the past two instances where we have had a debate such as this in the House. I would like to conclude by quoting the Hon. Jay Hill, a former colleague who knew the dynamics of this place and held the positions of whip and House leader during his tenure. In a speech on April 11, 2005, he said:

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I would argue that the concentration of power in the Office of the Prime Minister, which is at the root of much of our democratic deficit, has grown not lessened under this Prime Minister's watch.

The multitudes of government powers that ultimately rest with the Prime Minister are staggering.

I am afraid he was right. However, in the past six years I could not agree with him more that things have not changed. Anything we can do to ensure greater democracy within the House and in the many parliamentary committee rooms will be welcomed, whether it be by resorting as little as possible to secret in camera sessions in committees, restricting the excessive use of time allocation when debating government bills, insisting that ministers answer questions directed at them—

• (1045)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member may add some more comments in response to questions and comments. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask my hon. colleague a couple of questions about some of the comments he made particularly when it comes to question period.

I agree it is appropriate that the procedure and House affairs committee review the current system in question period. I want to focus on one of the comments he made, and that is with respect to unparliamentary language and heckling. I would make two points.

One, a member of his own party very recently used extremely unparliamentary language when he called a minister of the Crown a piece of excrement, yet the member focused on comments made by others. He never seems to admit that his own party is just as guilty as anyone else.

Two, with respect to heckling, what I found most troubling is that the very member who is complaining about heckling was quoted in the *Hill Times* not too many months ago, after Jack Layton had stated that we would like to bring more civility and decorum to the House, as saying, "We will not abide by that. We will not be bound by that. We will not be silenced."

In fact, as everyone in this place knows, if there is one party that is most responsible for heckling in this House and for disruptive behaviour in this House, it is the Liberal Party itself. This is the height of hypocrisy.

Mr. Marc Garneau: Madam Speaker, I admit that I am mortal and I occasionally will say certain things, but I would also say that the Liberal Party is alive and well and we do not intend to stay silent when we hear some of the absolutely despicable nonsense that comes from across the way.

However, the member has a good point. We all have to watch our tongues on occasion. We are all prey to our emotions in the House. However, to suggest that we should not be able to voice some of our indignation on occasion in a polite and respectful manner, of course, is to run against human nature.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, to me this debate is crucial, but to some it might seem technical. I will try not to engage in partisan politics because I think we all have something to gain from this, or to lose if we do not make the right decisions about procedure.

I think that the public, who for weeks and months now have been calling for a change to the way politics is done at all levels of government, probably did not expect to see what has been going on for the past few months.

I would like to ask my colleague whether he thinks that failing to correct our current positions would make the public more cynical about politicians, which would make voter turnout in this political system, one of the best in the world, even more difficult from election to election.

• (1050)

Mr. Marc Garneau: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. He is right. Clearly, there is already a great deal of cynicism in this country with regard to the behaviour of parliamentarians in this House. We must change our behaviour and we can do so in two ways. We can play with the rules. That is the discussion we are having today. It is a valid exercise to try to improve the rules so that they might indirectly help us to achieve mutual respect. Sometimes we can do this with the help of the rules.

However, the best way to improve our collective behaviour in this House is for each one of us to do some soul-searching and resolve to behave in a more respectful way in this great House of Commons, in this great democratic Parliament.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for their attendance here today. I was quite surprised when I saw as many people in this place. My hon. colleague, the chief opposition whip, stated that some people may look at the Standing Orders as akin to watching paint dry. A lot of people find the Standing Orders as an extremely boring and extremely dry subject, but I do not think they should be

The Standing Orders are the very guidelines that govern us in Parliament. If we want to know what happens in question period, there are Standing Orders that tell us that. If we want to know what the decorum of speakers should be, there are Standing Orders that tell us that. If we want to know how we deal with financial transactions, there are Standing Orders that illustrate that.

Standing Orders have been around since Confederation and are really the rule book that tells all parliamentarians how to perform, what to expect and how Parliament itself should work. While that may seem somewhat boring to many, I know at least two people in Canada, former colleagues of mine from the Liberal side, Paul Szabo and Derek Lee, who will probably be watching the debate today. If those gentlemen are watching this today, I hope they are doing well in their afterlife from politics.

An hon. member: I am getting a Twitter feed right now.

Statements by Members

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: One of my Liberal colleagues says he is getting a Twitter feed right now from one of the two individuals I just mentioned.

All kidding aside, these were two very experienced parliamentarians who were very knowledgeable about Standing Orders and chose to share their expertise at every opportunity in the House. I am glad to hear that they are watching this debate.

This is the fourth time we have had the opportunity to debate Standing Orders in this place. In 1982 a special committee on Standing Orders and procedures recommended that in each Parliament in the first session following an election there should be a debate on Standing Orders. In the past there were many suspensions of this debate, sometimes because of an early election, or prorogation or because there had been debates on Standing Orders in other forums.

To stand here today and debate the Standing Orders and to talk about some of the proposed changes that we would like to see is a healthy thing for democracy. It allows all backbenchers as well as frontbenchers to express their views on how we govern ourselves and the rules that we adopt.

I should also point out that many of the Standing Orders that we follow today have been around literally for decades, in some cases for 100 years. There are many Standing Orders that just need to be modernized, that is some of the ones our party will be advocating and some of them will be suggestions that we will bring forward to committee.

I will give the House a few illustrations of what I mean to try and give a sense of the rest of the members in this place of the type of modernization that we think is necessary.

Standing Order 16(4) says “When the House adjourns, members shall keep their seats until the Speaker has left the Chair”. That has not been observed for generations, so why have it at all? We suggest we may want to look at deleting that phrase.

There are also references in the Standing Orders to something called “dinner hour”. In previous Parliaments many years ago, Parliament sat during the afternoon and evening and there was a specified dinner hour. That does not happen anymore, but we still have the reference in the Standing Order. We feel modernizations, deletions of terms like that, which are somewhat archaic, are necessary to ensure we have Standing Orders that actually fit the time.

I want to focus most of my remarks on a couple of issues raised by my friends in opposition, primarily on time allocation. A lot of members in this place, and a lot of members of the general public, confuse the term time allocation with closure. They are completely different elements of the democratic process that we follow in Parliament.

With respect to time allocation, what I hear from members opposite is that our government has used time allocation indiscriminately, that we have used it to try and advance our agenda without consideration to debate or to members comments opposite. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

My colleague and my friend, the chief opposition whip, said that time allocation should only be used in cases where the opposition tends to filibuster a bill. That is exactly what has been happening. We have seen time and time again with pieces of legislation that our government has introduced the opposition quite clearly and openly demonstrate to Parliament and to Canadians that it has no interest in simply debating the bill. It simply wants to delay the passage of the bill and if it had the opportunity, it would, with apologies to Quentin Tarantino, kill the bill. That is not democratic. That is simply an opposition trying to run roughshod over Parliament.

•(1055)

We have a democracy in the country that elects governments. We have been fortunate. We have been graced to have been given a majority government by the people of our country. Therefore, we feel very compelled to advance our legislative agenda as quickly as we can after adequate debate. However, the opposition does not believe in normal or adequate debate. It wants to delay, delay, delay and obstruct, obstruct, obstruct.

I will provide just two examples of many which prove my point.

The first example is Bill S-5, a financial institutions bill. This bill, quite frankly, is almost pro forma. The bill comes before Parliament once every five years. Its intent is to merely ratify the rules and regulations of financial institutions in Canada. In the past number of Parliaments that have dealt with Bill S-5, debate has primarily lasted one day. Usually one speaker from each party makes comments, the bill is referred to committee, in which members look at the legislation to ensure that all of the elements of the legislation in the bill are unchanged, and it is passed. Without doing so, the regulations that govern our financial institutions would basically be gone.

This bill is non-controversial and it is one that should be passed quickly. However, when we asked our friends in the opposition, primarily the official opposition, the NDP, they demonstrated absolutely no willingness to accommodate the quick passage of it out of this place and into committee so we could ensure our financial institutions would have the ability to perform as they always have. That is obstruction.

The Deputy Speaker: I am afraid I must interrupt the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. He will have three minutes to complete his comments after question period, followed by a five minute period for questions and comments.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to thank members of this House for their strong support of Bill C-300, an act respecting a federal framework for suicide prevention.

Statements by Members

Bill C-300 enjoyed the unanimous support of my own Conservative Party, the NDP official opposition, the Liberal Party and the hon. members for Saanich—Gulf Islands and Edmonton East. I thank each and every one of them.

One week ago the House debated this bill. In that short week there have likely been 350 hospitalizations due to suicidal behaviours, 1,500 visits to emergency rooms, 7,000 attempts at suicide and, unfortunately, 70 of those likely ending in death.

Before the vote, Tana Nash of the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council expressed her hope that Parliament would continue this vital conversation.

On behalf of Tana and the many others working on the front line to save lives, I extend my heartfelt thanks to this House for supporting Bill C-300.

* * *

• (1100)

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Madam Speaker, yesterday the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who is the NDP housing critic, introduced a bill to establish a national housing strategy. This bill will counter the Conservative government's inaction by creating an affordable housing program that works.

On behalf of the people of Laval, I would like to take this opportunity to ask the Conservative government to support this bill. In Laval, as in most Canadian municipalities, access to affordable housing is a huge problem. Although 30% of families are renters, rental units have accounted for only 10% of construction in the past 15 years. Once again, we are feeling the effects of the government's failure to implement a long-term strategy. Families in Laval are paying the price.

* * *

[English]

FAMILIES

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to salute families in my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore. People across our community recognize that the family is the foundation of our society.

Families provide the nurturing environment for raising our children and looking after our elders. The deep bonds of family strengthen our community and make it safe, prosperous and beautiful.

On this coming Family Day weekend, Etobicoke—Lakeshore families will enjoy the skating trail in Colonel Sam Smith Park or take a stroll along the banks of the Humber River or Mimico Creek. They will enjoy the sights and sounds of our vibrant communities, from Alderwood to the Kingsway, from Islington Village to Humber Bay, from Sunnylea to Long Branch.

Families are at the centre of Canadian culture and values. That is why our government has implemented measures like the universal child care benefit, income splitting and children's arts and sports tax

credits. We have also introduced tax credits for transit and text books. Measures like this help to strengthen families across this great country.

We are here for Canada and we are here for Canadian families.

* * *

[Translation]

GARY “THE KID” CARTER

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last night, Montreal lost one of its great sons: Gary “The Kid” Carter died. Of course, my first thoughts are for his wife Sandy and their children. We would like to offer them our sincere condolences.

Gary Carter was one of my idols when I was young. In the winter, we were all little Guy Lafleurs, but in the summer, I was a catcher and I was Gary “The Kid” Carter. Gary was the real deal: he was a fighter who was full of charisma and extremely generous. He gave his heart and soul to his sport, his family and his community. He was a winner. He always made you feel important. He touched us all and was a source of inspiration for us all.

[English]

Gary Carter was a true gamer, a magnificent athlete with great values, always there when needed, a great ambassador for baseball, for sport, for Montreal.

[Translation]

I hope the City of Montreal pays tribute to him. In closing, I would like to quote “The Kid” himself:

[English]

“Thank You from the bottom of heart and for the many wonderful years that you gave me here. You will always be a part of me, you will always be family and you will always be #1 in my heart. Thank you—merci beaucoup—God bless you”.

[Translation]

Rest in peace, Kid.

* * *

[English]

CONCEPTION BAY SOUTH

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, there is a great deal of respect in Canada today for our veterans, past and present, and for those who serve in the Canadian Forces. One community stands out.

The town of Conception Bay South in my riding has erected an impressive monument of honour recognizing the commitment and sacrifice of those who served in war and peacekeeping, and also our first responders in the fire and police services. To see the droves of citizens in attendance for services on Remembrance Day in November and on Memorial Day, July 1, is to realize that this extraordinary tribute reflects the feelings of the whole community.

Statements by Members

The town of Conception Bay South has gone one step further and formalized its community's commitment to improving the quality of life of veterans and their families by being the first place in Canada to sign a veteran and family community covenant.

On Monday, February 27, the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs is visiting Newfoundland and Labrador. The members of the committee will see the monument of honour and visit with community leaders to discuss their unique way of providing needed assistance and support to veterans and their families.

* * *

● (1105)

PENTICTON VEES

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Madam Speaker, in 1955 a small-town hockey club from my riding represented Canada at the World Hockey Championships. In the gold-medal final, the Penticton Vees defeated the Russians five to zero and returned home as champions.

Fifty-seven years later, yet again something as magical is happening within my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla. If the Penticton Vees win tonight's game against the Vernon Vipers, it will be their 33rd consecutive victory. Already the Vees have broken a 22-year-old BCHL record for the most consecutive wins.

However, what is really exciting is the leadership of this organization. From the governor through to coach Fred Harbinson they have built a culture of courage, character and commitment that is not just winning hockey games but is also a formula for success that builds great players who are model citizens off the ice. Three of these future leaders have been drafted by the NHL and a further 15 committed to the NCAA.

What is more important is that these young men visit local schools and share these values with students, which helps us to build better communities. Go Vees, go.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Madam Speaker, the no development party has sent a leadership contestant to attack jobs and economic growth. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley must have been looking to upstage his colleagues from Nickle Belt, Edmonton—Strathcona and Halifax, as well as fellow leadership contestant Brian Topp.

The NDP travels abroad, undermining Canada and emphasizing its anti-trade, anti-development and anti-jobs policies. Here at home, it attacks our energy sector, lobbying to shut down the oil sands and with that, the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who earn a living in them.

NDP members also oppose the nuclear part of the energy sector, a sector that is important to my riding of New Brunswick Southwest. They even say that gas prices for moms and dads who drive their kids to soccer and hockey are artificially low. What industries they do not directly want to shut down, they hope to tax out of existence.

I hope the people of Skeena—Bulkley Valley listen very carefully to their member of Parliament and the NDP's anti-trade, anti-development, anti-jobs and anti-growth message.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Madam Speaker, today, I would like to present a petition to the House on behalf of the people of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé who gathered signatures from 800 concerned residents. These people are concerned about the plan to abolish the employment insurance transitional measures and pilot projects as of April 2012. Fishers and forestry workers are still having a hard time.

Many people in the Gaspé have difficulty accumulating enough hours of work to even qualify for employment insurance benefits. Those who do qualify have to wait for up to six weeks without any income. We are calling on the government to maintain the transitional measures for at least two more years. The Gaspé cannot afford another exodus of workers with so many promising projects on the horizon.

The petition that I am tabling today shows that the people of the Gaspé are concerned that they will not be able to continue to live with dignity in their community for very long. The Conservative government is making a mistake by cutting employment insurance rather than eliminating subsidies for oil companies—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River.

* * *

[*English*]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Madam Speaker, the statistics show us that the west is the fastest-growing part of Canada. Yet that does not seem to be the case in the riding of the NDP leadership candidate from Skeena—Bulkley Valley. During his years in office, the population there has been on the decline, most notably in Kitimat, terminus of the northern gateway pipeline, the same pipeline that the member is attacking today in the panel hearings.

The no development party is against the hundreds of thousands of Canadians employed throughout our energy sector. Our Conservative government understands the importance of diversifying trade to create jobs and economic growth, both in B.C. and all across Canada. Despite the NDP's best efforts, our government is at work promoting jobs and economic growth, both in my home in northern B.C. and from coast to coast to coast.

While the NDP continues to oppose these important trade initiatives, our government will continue to make the investments necessary to grow our trade and to position Canada and B.C.'s economy to succeed well into the markets of the future.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

HOMOPHOBIA IN SCHOOL

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want my colleagues to know how extremely proud I am of the young people in my riding who are involved in the fight against bullying and prejudice. Students and staff at École Saint-Jean in the Des Phares school board received an honorary mention for their participation in the competition put on by the Simple Plan Foundation in collaboration with GRIS-Québec, which works on demystifying homosexuality and bisexuality in school.

The theme of this third annual competition was “What is your plan to fight homophobia in school?” Students from École Saint-Jean made and signed a banner, promising not to make homophobic comments in their school. A number of them also joined their school counsellor, Cindy Leblanc, in the GRIS-Québec march against homophobia.

Congratulations to all the students—especially to Alexandre Arseneault for launching the project—and to all the staff, who work every day to fight not only homophobia, but also any prejudice against difference. This type of initiative is refreshing news that gives renewed hope to people who, like me, truly believe in making the world a better place. Together, we can do it.

* * *

● (1110)

[English]

LIBYA

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Madam Speaker, today marks the first anniversary of the pro-democracy uprising in Libya. One year ago, a rumble of protest began in the streets of Benghazi that would eventually grow into a populist roar in every corner of the country. In just one year, the Libyan people have realized a dramatic transformation in their country and, although there is much work to be done, Libyans have begun laying the foundation to build a more inclusive, open and democratic society.

The courage and sacrifice of the Libyan people is helping them secure for themselves a better and brighter future for all citizens as they turn a page on a brutal, repressive dictator who ruled Libya and tormented the people for more than 40 years. Elections expected in June will provide a historic opportunity to continue that work.

Our government is proud to have played the lead role in the UN-sanctioned NATO mission that helped protect civilians during the liberation of Libya. Libya has a partner in Canada as it continues to make strides to provide great opportunities for its people.

* * *

FLORENCE GREEN

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I want to honour the memory of Mrs. Florence Green. Mrs. Green died this past September. She was 110 years old and the last remaining veteran of the First World War. To say that she lived a full life would be an understatement, for she bore witness to much in life,

not the least of which was the First World War, in which she served as a member of the Women's Royal Air Force.

As with the end of an era, it causes one to stop and reflect. At times like this in my own life, I have wondered what it must have been like to have served in those great wars. It really is beyond understanding, though.

War is an awful thing. We need not glory in it or lust for it. But today, not unlike other solemn occasions when Canadians commemorate veterans, we honour and thank the millions throughout Canada and the Commonwealth who answered and continue to answer the call in defence of freedom and liberty.

Madam Speaker and members of the House of Commons, all of us here have a duty to ensure that the sacrifice of Canadians and veterans—

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NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Madam Speaker, two days ago the NDP MPs from Thunder Bay stood up to their downtown, big union executive bosses' marching orders and voted against the ineffective long gun registry. One of them even said:

I am counting the days, hours, minutes and seconds until we get a new leader... Hopefully a good one.

Given the NDP's track record, we all understand why this MP feels that a new leader may not change anything at all.

However, the NDP MP for Western Arctic, and even the former leadership candidate from northern Quebec, chose not to show up for the vote on Wednesday, perhaps in order to avoid retaliation. It proves that the NDP punishes the MPs who speak up for their northern and rural constituents.

This is yet another worrying example that the disunited NDP's reckless and irresponsible policies are a danger to rural and northern Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

GARY CARTER

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Madam Speaker, baseball fans were saddened to hear the news of the death of Gary Carter, one of the greatest baseball players to have played in Canada. He captured the imagination of Montrealers more than any other Expos player. For 12 seasons, the catcher charmed Quebecers with his enthusiasm, sincerity and exuberance.

[English]

The “Kid” was the light of the Expos. He always made time for the fans and his passion for the game was contagious. Gary Carter was the Expos, he was baseball, he was Montreal.

Oral Questions

●(1115)

[Translation]

Gary was the heart and soul of our beloved team. When Gary Carter was behind home plate, it was a fun game. When Gary Carter was at bat, it was a fun game. Yesterday, Gary Carter went up to the plate for the last time. Number eight, Gary Carter, is up to bat. He hits it far into left field. It is deep.

It is out of the park. Farewell, Gary.

* * *

*[English]***NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Madam Speaker, the NDP are at it again. The media is reporting today that the NDP has led a vicious Twitter attack against the public security minister, using taxpayer-funded office resources. It has used taxpayer money for a partisan misinformation attack against the security minister.

I would be surprised by this, but it is just the latest in a series of NDP dirty tricks. The NDP Party attempted to launder party donations last summer. It punished its MPs who wanted to vote with their constituents to end the ineffective and wasteful long gun registry. It bullied and intimidated its MP who abandoned the party recently. It has blocked progress on every bill this government has brought forward.

However, using taxpayer-funded offices for a Twitter attack campaign against our security minister is the low of all lows. Where are the leadership candidates on this issue?

ORAL QUESTIONS*[Translation]***GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Madam Speaker, yesterday we learned that the Treasury Board has imposed a gag order on all departments regarding public service cuts. Who gave this order? The same minister who plans to cut up to \$8 billion, which will mean the loss of many services. This is also the same minister who tried to hide a \$50 million slush fund. So much for transparency.

Canadians have a right to know: is the government muzzling the departments because it is afraid of how Canadian families will react?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government is undertaking an exercise to ensure we can find savings to help ensure we can keep Canada on a strong economic path. We are looking at opportunities where we can do things better for taxpayers. Obviously it is very difficult to report on the results of that exercise when it has not been completed.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Madam Speaker, that is the minister who hid documents from the Auditor General about the G8 legacy fund. This is now the same minister

whose department has issued an unprecedented gag order to hide information from Canadians.

Will the Conservatives list the planned cuts for every government department and agency in the upcoming report on plans and priorities, or will they try to cover up like they did with the G8? Why are they so afraid of telling Canadians what they are up to?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, this government will continue to be transparent and it will seek authority from Parliament on a range of budget issues.

What we are doing, though, is reviewing every expenditure within government to ensure we can find savings and ensure we can balance the budget to keep Canada strong.

Obviously, when that exercise is complete, the Minister of Finance will stand in this place and present the financial plan for the following year. It will be subject to the estimates process and to the full financial scrutiny that has always been the case with this government.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Madam Speaker, the minister did not answer, but we know on this side of the House what the Conservatives are afraid of.

The Conservatives are afraid of the fact that Canadians are increasingly concerned about the government's choices. We see it in the public reaction on the F-35 fiasco, the attacks on seniors' pensions, the unprecedented attempt to intrude on Canadians' personal information.

Now the government is trying to hide its cuts to services Canadian families need. Shame on it.

Will the government issue a new directive that ensures spending reports will be fully transparent? Will it stop the cover-up on spending cuts that hurt Canadian families?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a little rich for a New Democratic Party member of Parliament to stand in this place and talk about attacks and about personal information.

Today we have learned that the NDP official opposition has been caught in a nasty, dirty Internet trick. Not only has it stooped to the lowest of the lows, but it has been running this nasty Internet dirty trick campaign with taxpayer money.

Today I call on the NDP to stand, to take responsibility for these dirty tricks, to apologize and to identify which one over there is responsible for these sleazy attacks.

* * *

●(1120)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know why the minister does not want to answer questions about cuts, but the reality is Statistics Canada today announced that inflation rose at an annual rate of 2.5%, higher than expected.

Oral Questions

Canadians need a break in the next budget, but all they are seeing are cuts to old age security and to the services on which they rely.

Why are the Conservatives cutting help to average Canadians when what they really need is a break?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Madam Speaker, what Canadians need is a break from the incessant NDP talking down our Canadian economy, talking down the fact that since the end of the recession, Canada has a net new growth of jobs of over 610,000. That is an incredible record. That is the best job growth in the entire G7.

However, what does the NDP do? It talks it down every time it can. It first votes against anything to help Canadians get back to work and then it talks it down.

* * *

GASOLINE PRICES

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, we voted against the Conservative budget because it did not get the job done.

Let me be clear. Building more prisons is not going to put food on the table or help pay the bills. Here is just one example. Gas prices are 6.8%, driving up inflation and making it even harder for families to make ends meet.

When are the Conservatives going to take action on gas prices? Why will they not pass my Bill C-336 so drivers will not be hosed at the pumps?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Madam Speaker, to clarify the point, the government did get the job done for over 610,000 Canadians. For the NDP to say what it voted against did not help Canadians, I find that sort of a statement incredible, as do the 610,000 Canadians who are working today who were not working in July 2009.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers has concerns in regard to Bill C-31, as does our party. It said, "The designated 'safe' country list, and the Minister's unilateral power to list countries, dangerously politicizes the refugee system".

Will the minister agree to an amendment, similar to that contained in the bill from the last Parliament which passed the House unanimously, that would require the minister to make recommendations for countries to be listed from an advisory committee?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada has one of the most fair and generous immigration systems in the world. Canadians have absolutely no tolerance for those who would abuse our generosity and would take unfair advantage of our country.

Let us look at the facts. Why did the United States have only 47 claims in 2009-10 from Europe, while Canada had 4,700 claims in the same period?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us be fair. At the end of the day, the government is

choosing which country is going to be a safe country. The minister is going to make that decision. If people come from one of those safe countries, then that means there is no appeal. In fact, to attempt an appeal, it has to go through a federal court. If it goes through a federal court, they would be deported before it even goes to court or to trial.

How is that fair for refugees coming to Canada who are being told they have to go back to their country of origin before—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was this government that established the appeal process for refugees to be able to appeal. It was the Liberal Party which had no such process when it was in government.

We have one of the most fair, most open refugee policies in the world, but we will ensure the taxpayer is protected and people do not abuse our generosity.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my question is for the government's chief spymaster who is so intent on snooping into Canadians' private emails and the laptops of the nation. However, Conservatives are not stopping at emails. The minister's bill would allow government agents to enter on an Internet service provider when they wanted, without a warrant and demand to see absolutely everything and even to copy it all.

Why does the government see every Canadian as an enemy of the state and why has the minister given Conservative agents absolute power to pry?

• (1125)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is absolutely no intent to do anything. I completely reject the premise of the question of the member opposite.

Today we are very concerned that taxpayer dollars have been misused by the New Democratic Party on a dirty, sleazy trick campaign. Members do not have the courage or the guts to come to this place and to take responsibility for this disgraceful misuse of taxpayer dollars.

Does NDP now stand for the no decency party?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Madam Speaker, since introducing Bill C-30, the Conservatives have backpedalled when faced with a wave of criticism from the public and the NDP. There is no provision to protect Canadians from invasion of privacy. Contrary to what the minister of public insecurity would have us believe, he wants to allow access to Internet users' personal information without a warrant.

Oral Questions

Why does the minister want to treat Internet users like criminals?
[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, the New Democratic Party member of Parliament stands in her place today, of all days, and talks about privacy. I call on the member to stand in her place, take responsibility for her party, identify who is responsible for these dirty, sleazy Internet tricks and explain to Canadian taxpayers why their hard-earned tax dollars go to support such dirty, sleazy tricks.

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety's public life is troubling enough; there is no need to add his private life to the mix.

In addition to concerns about snooping in the personal information of Internet users without a warrant, the plot has now thickened with the announcement by Internet service providers that they are increasing the cost of services.

Will the cost of having Internet service providers act as spies be shouldered by consumers? How much will it cost Internet users to have the government spy on them?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is only one party that is attempting to snoop into the personal and private lives of members of Parliament and Canadians and that is the New Democratic Party.

I encourage the member to accept responsibility for the sleazy, dirty tricks campaign, stand in her place and apologize, identify and take responsibility for who is responsible for this reckless, disgraceful behaviour.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is the public activities of the Minister of Public Safety that we are concerned about. Not only would his online snooping bill intrude on Canadians' privacy, it would also intrude on their wallets. The bill would force Internet service providers to spend millions to build extensive systems to spy on their own customers. As we know, it is consumers who will be forced to pick up the tab.

Why is the Conservative government making Canadians pay for the privilege of being snooped on?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague from St. John's East to be a decent and honourable person. He talked about snooping and violating the privacy of Canadians. This morning we learned that the New Democratic Party is involved in a dirty, sleazy Internet game. We call on the NDP and I call on the hon. member to stand in his place, accept responsibility and identify who is responsible for this disgraceful misuse of taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, if the minister has any evidence he should table it, instead of these baseless attacks.

One thing is very clear, but it is not what the minister is saying because he has no evidence or has not come forward with it. The minister has bungled this bill from the start. Waves of Canadians have expressed their opposition and indignation. Even Conservative backbenchers call it too intrusive. The ISPs are warning of higher

costs. Privacy commissioners, columnists and ordinary Canadians are appalled.

This is 2012, not 1984 with Big Brother. Why will the minister not give it up and admit that he has made a mistake? Will he scrap this bill and go back to the drawing board?

• (1130)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are talking about dirty, sleazy Internet tricks. If the New Democratic Party has nothing to hide, would it grant unanimous consent for the Speaker to look at this issue and report back today on what the evidence is of the NDP's dirty tricks, or does it have something to hide?

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canadians would like to see a little more professionalism in the management of the F-35 program. Six of the nine partner countries in the F-35 program have now reduced or postponed their orders. Two other countries are examining the available options before making a final decision. The Conservatives are stubbornly repeating their media lines while our allies are in the process of developing a plan B.

Why does this government insist on being the odd man out and why will it not consider alternative options?

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Madam Speaker, once again, a member of the opposition is speaking out against the Canadian Forces and saying that she does not want to replace the CF-18s, on the very anniversary of an extremely successful operation in Libya. This aircraft has served our military well for 35 years. It is approaching the end of its operational life, and we are working with our allies to find a replacement within a firmly established budget.

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Madam Speaker, this government should stop hiding behind its rhetoric and actually answer the questions. If the government truly respects our armed forces and wants to give them the equipment they need, it must start by admitting that the planned budget is not enough to cover 65 F-35s. It will cover 65 planes or some F-35s. The government must make a choice and stop improvising.

If the Conservatives do not have a plan B, can they tell our armed forces how many planes they will get, how much they will cost and when they will be ready?

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have been very clear in this regard. We understand full well that the opposition does not want our pilots and our soldiers to have the right equipment to carry out the missions they are given. Whether it was under a Liberal government or this Conservative one, we have been working here for a long time—for a decade—to replace the CF-18s. We are participating in this program with a dozen allies and a firmly established budget. We will continue to ensure that our Canadian Forces have the equipment they need to do their work.

*Oral Questions**[English]***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Madam Speaker, we hear yarn after yarn from that side of the House, so I will try my own here now.

Once upon a time there was an immigration minister who agreed to an all party consensus on how to make refugee appeals fairer and faster but now he is going against his word.

Could the minister guarantee that any country in the world is completely safe from persecution? Of course he cannot. No one can. Gay and lesbian refugees can be especially vulnerable, even in countries otherwise considered safe. Every refugee deserves a fair hearing.

Why did the minister break his promise?

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister did no such thing. In fact, this party and the previous government, in partnership with the opposition, put together a foundation to build upon a refugee system called Bill C-11. This week we introduced a new bill that would build even further on the strengths of what is a great refugee system, one of the best in the world, but it needs to be improved.

It has been pointed out time and time again that our system is being taken advantage of. There have been \$170 million in bogus refugee claims from the EU alone. Enough is enough. We need to move forward.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government is clearly divorced from reality. Hidden in its omnibus refugee bill are new powers for the minister. We all want to crack down on the travesty of human smuggling but we should be punishing the criminals, not the victims.

With such vague criteria in the government's bill, the minister could make up different classes of refugees to suit his or her political whims. Legitimate refugees flee to Canada to find a safe haven, not to have their fate rest on the whims of a minister.

How can Canadians trust a minister who has already betrayed his own word?

• (1135)

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Madam Speaker, the answer can be found in the very point that the member made. Legitimate refugees have the opportunity to come to this country, begin a new life, bring up their family and become Canadians in the best country in the world in which to settle. However, when we have countries where individuals are making bogus refugee claims, up to the point where 95% of the claims are bogus, that is not a system that works. Those are the people taking advantage of Canadians.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Madam Speaker, does the government realize that it is turning its back on victims of persecution in countries that are not on the minister's good list? That is appalling. Refugees fleeing persecution deserve a fair and balanced hearing, without exception, no matter

what country they are from. Some 20 months ago, we had reached a consensus that would have improved the system while respecting human rights.

Why has the government reversed its decision once again and given itself the arbitrary power to decide who is a refugee and who is not?

[English]

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would be happy to stand up and defend where we are going with respect to the bill because it would move this country forward in terms of refugee reform. I will lay out some of the facts in terms of what the truth is.

In 2011, Canada received more refugee claims from the European Union than from Africa or Asia. In fact, last year alone, 23% of all of our refugee claims, over 5,800, were made by nationals from the European Union. That is up 14% from the previous year. It costs \$170 million to pursue those claims.

What we need to be doing is helping real refugees settle in this country.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our air force will need a minimum of 65 planes to replace the CF-18, and I say a minimum because that does not even account for attrition. We know that over the next 30 years there will definitely be some attrition.

We are faced with a stark choice. If we get 65 airplanes we will blow past our \$9 billion budget by a wide margin or we will shortchange our air force.

What will it be from the government? Will it continue to mismanage this project or will our air force be shortchanged?

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think I missed a one year after the beginning of great changes that have come to Libya, in part thanks to the efforts of the Canadian Forces.

The member opposite will agree that we must replace the CF-18 with an aircraft that will fulfill the missions that we ask of our air force. That is why the member's party, when it was in government, as well as our party, committed to work with up to 10 allies to develop an aircraft that will fulfill those missions capably for Canadians.

We have talked about the budget. We have established a budget for this item and we are sticking to that budget. We are confident that the Canadian Forces will have the tools it needs to do the job as a result.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government is taking Canadians for fools. We all know that purchasing 65 aircraft for \$9 billion is impossible. I would therefore like to ask three very simple questions, which we have been asking from the outset.

Oral Questions

How many planes are we going to buy? How much is each plane going to cost? And when will we have them? These are simple questions.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is impossible to know if the Liberal Party wants to replace the CF-18s or not. It wanted to 10 years ago, but based on today's statements, it no longer wants to do so.

We have a plan. We are working with nearly 10 allies and we will ensure that the Royal Canadian Air Force has the equipment it needs to carry out its missions. We have faith in the future in that regard.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after six years, the government's sorry record on the environment stands alone.

At the World Economic Forum, the Prime Minister said, "Canada's investments in science and technology had produced poor results". What a cheap shot at our hard-working scientists.

Now international scientists are slamming our government for turning its back on science and international agreements.

Why is the government muzzling Canadian scientists and destroying the reputation of Canada for environmental leadership?

• (1140)

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, that is very rich coming from a party whose former leader said that his party did not get the job done on climate change.

We are so proud of our team of scientists at Environment Canada and the work that they do. In fact, last year I believe they conducted over 1,000 interviews with the media. We continue to support the work they are doing at Environment Canada. We are proud of our international leadership in this area.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know the Department of Veterans Affairs says no a lot to its veterans.

I would like the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs to stand in her place and look in the camera at 90-year-old Bedford veteran, Ted Shiner. All Mr. Shiner is asking from the Government of Canada is for a little help with housekeeping and with his feet.

The government can find \$50 million to sprinkle like pixie dust through the riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka but it cannot find enough shekels in the pot to help a 90-year-old veteran with housekeeping so he can stay in his own home with a little more dignity.

The government is fully aware of this file. There is no privacy to be concerned about as Mr. Shiner has given his permission to talk about it.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to stand in this place and tell Mr. Shiner why he was denied VIP service.

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, while I cannot comment on a specific case, I can assure the member that veterans and their families are a priority for our government.

The veterans independence program provides disabled veterans with housekeeping assistance so they can remain in their homes longer.

Perhaps the member opposite might want to commence voting in favour of some of our government measures on behalf of veterans. For instance, the member opposite might be ashamed of himself for voting against ex gratia payments for agent orange. He might be ashamed of himself for not voting in favour of doubling the number of post-traumatic stress disorder clinics for our veterans. He might—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, with respect to the veterans independence program, the Prime Minister promised in 2005 that immediately upon forming government, every widow and widower of a World War II and Korean war veteran would get VIP, but less than 10% of that promise was fulfilled. That is why we vote against these budgets that do not meet the mandate and do not get the job done.

Harold Leduc is an honoured veteran and a member of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. His medical and psychiatric information was scattered throughout the department in an illegal manner. My question for the government is, if it has happened within the Veterans Review and Appeal Board that medical information—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, our government believes that any violation of our veterans' privacy is completely unacceptable. That is why over a year ago we took action to introduce a 10-point privacy action plan that ensures there are strict disciplinary measures if anyone breaks the law, and increases monitoring and access controls.

We are committed to ensuring the continued success of the privacy action plan. We will make sure that the veterans' privacy remains a priority for the government.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Minister of the Environment took part in another photo op in the U.S. and made a modest announcement to draw attention away from the Conservatives' inaction. In the last budget, the Conservatives pledged \$35 million to make up for cuts to university research into weather and climate. That money never materialized.

Why do the Conservatives lack ambition and why are they not keeping their financial commitments?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the last budget we committed almost \$870 million to Canada's clean air agenda, including \$252 million to support regulatory activities to address climate change sustainable development technology, but my colleague opposite voted against it.

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary's answer does not hide the fact that yesterday's announcement with the U.S. was just another sideshow. Even Secretary of State Clinton admits this effort is not an answer to the climate crisis, that it is meant to complement, not supplant, the other actions we must be taking.

Instead of action, the government has killed the eco-energy program, pulled us out of Kyoto, and lobbied for its oil and gas buddies. When will the minister take science seriously and take real action on climate change?

● (1145)

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, what the no development party has done is voted against the eco-energy retrofit program. It has voted against any sort of measure that makes sense to support our energy sector from a sustainable development perspective, and it lobbies against Canadian jobs.

We have a sector by sector robust regulatory program for greenhouse gas emissions. We also support the over 500,000 people who work in our energy sector. That is something my colleague opposite cannot say.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I understand that the NDP has sent the leadership candidate from Skeena—Bulkley Valley to the northern gateway hearings today. I am disappointed by its anti-trade, anti-jobs agenda. The no development party is bad for jobs and economic growth.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment please tell the House what the government's position is on diversifying trade and Canada's role as a stable, secure and reliable energy source for the world?

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his understanding of the importance of the over 500,000 jobs in this country and what that means for social

programs, what that means for having Canada as a world leader in the global economy.

Our government is committed to the sustainable development of our resource sector and ensuring that we have a robust environmental protection plan in a time of economic growth. Our government is committed to making the investments necessary to grow trade in the Asia-Pacific countries. We will, unlike our colleagues opposite, stand up for our energy sector.

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FOOD SAFETY

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Madam Speaker, this past Wednesday, the agriculture committee learned that only 2% of food imported into Canada is actually inspected. Yet 100% of the products that we produce and send abroad are inspected. Canadians expected, in fact believed, that all imported food was inspected. The agriculture committee now knows that is not true.

What is the government going to do to ensure that imported food is inspected so that Canadian consumers will feel safe when they feed their families?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member should know that the CFIA enforces the same rigorous food safety standards on imported food as it does for domestic food.

I can give him some examples of what we have done to improve our import system. He should know this if he is on the agriculture committee.

Our recent budget includes an additional \$100 million over five years to enhance food safety. We have delivered \$223 million to the food safety action plan. To improve controls on imported food, we eliminated the 72 hour notification of inspections of meat imports. We have established an import surveillance team to perform 480 border blitzes.

Madam Speaker, I could go on, but I know my time is running out.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary should know that actually there are no CFIA inspectors at the border. CBSA is responsible to do that and it does not know how to do it. The \$100 million was actually for exported food, not imported food.

The reality is we are not testing the products. In fact, we do not require that potable water be used on washed vegetables that are imported into this country.

We need to restore consumers' confidence in the system. Will the government commit today to ensuring that the CFIA budget is not cut in the next budget round?

Oral Questions

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Madam Speaker, something the NDP does not know how to do is to apologize. The member opposite should stand up and represent his caucus and apologize for the sleazy online campaign that they have been conducting.

In terms of food safety, I have quotes on that. I even have a quote from the member for Malpeque, who said, "I personally believe our food is safe in Canada".

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Madam Speaker, we learned today that rising inflation and higher gas prices are pinching family pocketbooks even further.

In Toronto a dismal job market means families just cannot keep up. The city has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Those who do find work get stuck with low wage, part-time jobs that just do not support families. Yet all the government has to offer them is a failed jobs plan.

When will the government finally wake up and help Toronto families?

• (1150)

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Madam Speaker, if the NDP members spent more time worrying about Canadian jobs than they do on the Internet with their sleazy tricks, they would actually know that 90% of those 610,000 net new jobs are full time, many of which are in the community to which he is referring. Those jobs are all across this country. Those people are happy that our government has put in place policies that create jobs.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government has not created jobs in Toronto, and the numbers back that up.

People in my riding know and live it every single day. Higher prices and fewer good jobs mean more struggles for Toronto families, but the government is too busy being a cheerleader for Rob Ford to notice.

Why will the government not finally be a cheerleader for Toronto families? Why will it not introduce a jobs plan to get families back to work, create good jobs and secure the economic recovery?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Madam Speaker, I am certain that I have never been accused of being a cheerleader.

However, I am actually a cheerleader for the Canadian economy, because it is something to be very proud of. It is the envy of the world right now. The reason is we have put forward two consecutive budgets that are focused on jobs and growing the economy, two budgets which the opposition voted against. Then those members have the audacity to stand up and ask where the job plan is. It is the same plan they voted against.

PENSIONS

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the office of the Chief Actuary projects that the federal elderly benefits cost in proportion to the GDP, which is currently 2.2%, will reach a peak of 3.1% of the GDP in 2030 and will decline afterward. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's projections are similar.

Does the Minister of Finance agree with these numbers? Will the federal elderly benefits reach a maximum of about 3.2% in the next two decades before declining?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is entitled to his opinion, whatever it may be on a given day, but we will deal with the facts.

We know that as the population ages and fewer people are left in the workplace to pay into OAS, it will become unsustainable. That is why we have to take action now so that today's seniors have their OAS benefits and future generations get them as well. That is our responsibility, one which we take very seriously.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague is beating around the bush. I asked a very specific question. If she cannot answer, then the finance department representative should answer. If he does not wish to believe the Parliamentary Budget Officer, then he should answer the Chief Actuary of Canada.

Is his office wrong in stating that the cost of seniors' benefits will rise by 1% over more than 20 years and then decline afterwards? Is this figure correct? Yes or no? And if it is not, what figures does the finance department have? That is a specific question requiring a direct answer. The hon. member should stop beating around the bush.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Madam Speaker, the gentleman the member referred to is entitled to his opinion. We have the facts. We will take action to protect the old age security program not just for today's retirees, but also for future generations. It is very important to recognize that old age security will take a larger and larger bite out of the budget. It is very important to recognize that.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Madam Speaker, this week, thousands of people in the Magdalen Islands were without power and heat for several days because of an ice storm. The resources needed to rebuild the network were rushed in by boat. This incident once again shows the need to extend the runway at the Magdalen Islands airport, something residents have been demanding for 25 years.

Oral Questions

Will the minister take responsibility and ensure the safety of the people of the Magdalen Islands by giving them a runway that can easily accommodate air ambulances and cargo planes?

• (1155)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Madam Speaker, the airport's main runway adequately meets the current needs of airport users. For example, the main runway is currently able to accommodate fully loaded aircraft and heavy transports such as the C-130 Hercules. In passing, no official request to extend the runway has been received from the airlines serving the airport.

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Madam Speaker, the people of the Magdalen Islands, the Premier of Quebec and many others are calling for a runway that is up to standard.

The fact that very large aircraft cannot land at the airport puts the safety of Magdalen Islands residents at risk, but that is not the only issue. The Magdalen Islands have become a destination of choice for tens of thousands of tourists a year. Extending the runway would therefore also be beneficial from an economic standpoint.

If the safety of residents is not a convincing enough argument for the government, will it consider the economic development argument?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is saying that the main runway is unable to accommodate large aircraft, when I just finished telling him that the main runway is in fact capable of accommodating the C-130 Hercules, which I believe is a fairly heavy aircraft.

It is also important to note that we have already made investments throughout the country to improve our air transportation industry, but this member and his party voted against them.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, with one in five Canadian jobs linked to trade, deepening Canada's trade relationships around the world is key to protecting and strengthening the financial security of hard-working Canadians. No other government in Canada's history has been more committed to helping create jobs for Canadians by expanding access to foreign markets than this government.

Will the Parliamentary Secretary to the hard-working Minister of International Trade give the House an update on just one of the key prosperity creating initiatives that make up our government's broad and ambitious job creating pro-trade plan?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Richmond Hill for his hard work in support of our government's pro-trade plan.

Our government understands deeper trade and investment ties will benefit Canadians, creating more jobs, opportunities and economic growth. The Canada–Panama economic growth and prosperity act would eliminate the vast majority of tariffs between Canada and Panama, directly benefiting Canadian exporters and creating jobs for Canadian workers.

Our government is standing with businesses, workers and families and this agreement is further proof of our commitment. I would ask at this time for the support of the—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Charlottetown.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I worked on this question last night on my computer, so I am a little concerned that the Minister of Public Safety may have tipped off the parliamentary secretary.

Last November I called on the government to come to the aid of Canadian municipalities, like Charlottetown, who need help with their municipal waste water infrastructure.

Yesterday the Government of Prince Edward Island and the City of Charlottetown announced their financial commitment to clean up the harbour. The federal government has said nothing of substance except that it might come to the table in 2014. Why the delay?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Madam Speaker, the reality is that in addition to rendering the gas tax fund permanent, we have made record infrastructure investments throughout the entire period of the economic action plan.

Municipalities were invited to set their priorities, provinces to back them, and then our government matched them with record funds in order to make major capital improvements right across the country. These municipalities and provinces had to make their decisions on what they wanted funded, and we came through.

They can continue to make decisions of that nature, because of the record transfers we are making every single year to both the provinces and the municipalities.

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[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Éleine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government is hiding a report that shows that privatizing the language training of public servants is irresponsible. Those expenditures are five times higher than they were five years ago, precisely because this government has been turning to the private sector.

Points of Order

Closing the Canada School of Public Service will put 190 employees out of work and, once again, Canadian taxpayers will pay the price. Turning to the private sector when public services cost less is not my idea of sound economic management.

Why does the government want to kill jobs and privatize a public service that was working well?

• (1200)

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Madam Speaker, our government remains committed to Canada's official languages.

Language training will continue to be provided to those who need it. The private sector, universities and colleges have the ability and the expertise to provide training to the public service at a lower cost to taxpayers. That is the same advice but at lower cost, exactly as Canadians expect.

We continue to search for savings right across government.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Madam Speaker, the reports coming out of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are a cause for concern.

Since their last election last November, they have been trampling on the rights of their citizens. As we all know, the right to free assembly and the right to freedom of speech are basic democratic tenets in any stable democracy.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs please update this House on the happenings in the DRC in terms of democratic reform and respect for democratic principles and the rights of its citizens?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for this very important question.

We are deeply concerned about reports that the Congolese authorities have stopped peaceful public demonstrations planned by a number of churches to protest irregularities in last November's election. We call on the Congolese authorities to heed the advice of national and international election observers to improve the electoral process in that country. All parties must work together to ensure that the security situation does not further deteriorate.

We encourage all parties there to resolve their differences through peaceful means to strengthen the democratic values that are absolutely essential for a peaceful and prosperous society.

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[*Translation*]

ASBESTOS INDUSTRY

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Madam Speaker, years of research into asbestos has been manipulated. European businessmen who had investments in asbestos-derived products have received 16-year prison sentences. IARC has concluded with certainty that chrysotile

fibre is carcinogenic. The asbestos industry has become a social outcast. This industry is going to fold.

Will the Minister of Industry understand that an exit plan is needed for the crisis in his region? Will he prove that Peter White, who worked for Brian Mulroney, was right when he said that the four Conservative ministers do not have any influence or visibility in this—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

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): Madam Speaker, for more than 30 years, Canada has been promoting the safe and controlled use of chrysotile nationally and internationally, and recent scientific journals report that chrysotile can be used safely in a controlled environment.

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PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, since the government is asking us today to address the rules of the House and the committees, I would like to remind the House that the Bloc Québécois no longer sits on the committees and was recently excluded from an issue under review by the Board of Internal Economy. This shows a blatant lack of consideration and respect for the parliamentarians from the Bloc Québécois and 25% of the voters in Quebec.

Does the Chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs think that, in the name of democracy, the Bloc Québécois members, a parliamentary group, should be allowed to sit on committees, as is the case in the National Assembly of Quebec?

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that the item has been before the Board of Internal Economy, but, of course, because members of the House do not know what that is, we would not know the answer to this question until such time as it is referred to the procedure and House affairs committee.

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POINTS OF ORDER**ORAL QUESTIONS**

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order that arises out of question period.

Earlier today during question period, the Minister of Foreign Affairs made unfounded accusations insinuating that the New Democratic Party was responsible for a campaign to expose the details of the private life of the Minister of Public Safety. As we have said over the last number of days, we are not interested in any details of his private life. His public statements are troubling enough.

The House of Commons Information Services has confirmed that the IP addresses in question are public and could belong to any user from any political party or any member of the House administration and the parliamentary precinct. I understand that the Speaker's Office is now looking into the matter.

I would call on the minister to table in this House any evidence he may have to back up his unfounded claims. If he does not have such evidence, I would like him to immediately apologize and withdraw his statements unconditionally.

• (1205)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Madam Speaker, the matter in question is indeed very troubling. It is troubling to all Canadians and certainly all members of Parliament. We are of course aware of media reports that indicate that the Internet address or the IP number that was used to post these deeply intrusive, regretful and I think very distasteful postings, quite frankly, were traced to a House of Commons address. That is a matter of great concern. Then there was the further suggestion that the same address had been utilized to strengthen Wikipedia postings in favour of the NDP, including the NDP leader's own description in Wikipedia.

From this, the inference of course has been drawn of whether or not this came from the New Democratic Party. Certainly, there is a *prima facie* suggestion of that. For that reason, I understand that the minister in question who has been affected by this is writing to the Speaker and to the House administration asking that the matter be looked into.

This is a very grave matter. Certainly, from all the media reports, the suggestions are that it is from the NDP. I am surprised at the NDP member's response today to say, "It is not us", when all of the evidence is otherwise. I should hope that they would step forward and take responsibility, but I look forward to having the House administration and the Speaker look into this very serious matter.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have had the member for Hamilton Mountain raise this issue. We have the Speaker of course looking into it to determine and investigate who is behind this. Of course, as the member for Hamilton Mountain just mentioned, this could be any political party, any staffer. We do not know.

Given that the Minister of Foreign Affairs accused the NDP and also in his heckling accused a Liberal member wildly, without any basis, it is very clear that unless he has some evidence to present in the House of Commons, as the member for Hamilton Mountain just requested, backing up the wild claims he was making about the NDP and in his heckling of the Liberals, he should stand in the House now and immediately apologize and withdraw those statements unconditionally.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to assure members that the Speaker is indeed looking into this very serious matter. Unless there is something additional to add on the specifics of the comments made this morning, perhaps we should move on.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs on the same point of order.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, let me be very clear: I made no such allegations against the Liberal Party of Canada.

Routine Proceedings

The Deputy Speaker: On another point of order, the hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Madam Speaker, I am not sure how it happened, but during question period I was cut off on a question.

I wonder if you would seek the unanimous consent of the House so that I can finish my question. It was a really good one.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: I do not think there is unanimous consent.

[*Translation*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Madam Speaker, during members' statements, the member for Peace River mentioned the absence of a member during a vote. I believe this is against the rules of the House. Therefore, I ask that he apologize, especially because he speculated about the reason for the member's absence.

It is even more insulting to think that a member would be absent for political reasons. Consequently, I am asking the member for Peace River to apologize, not only because he breached the Standing Orders, but also because he made assumptions about the member's political ideas. All members have the right to their own political ideas, to articulate these ideas themselves, and to form their own ideas.

• (1210)

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Madam Speaker, with all due respect for the new member, he should probably have another look at the Standing Orders. With regard to the absence of a member during a vote, that is public information. The list of members who voted is available. In addition, we can see how each member voted and which members did not vote.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank both hon. members for their interventions. However, according to the Standing Orders, we do not mention the presence or absence of a member. The Journals simply indicate who voted yes and who voted no; of course, it is also possible to abstain.

I would therefore ask the hon. member for Peace River to apologize.

[*English*]

As the member is not present, the request by the Speaker stands.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

*Routine Proceedings***CIVIL MARRIAGE OF NON-RESIDENTS ACT**

Hon. John Baird (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-32, An Act to amend the Civil Marriage Act.

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two reports.

I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill C-313, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (non-corrective cosmetic contact lenses). The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendment. I am very pleased with the hard work that has been done on the committee.

I also have the honour to also present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill C-278, an act respecting a day to increase public awareness about epilepsy. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendment.

* * *

●(1215)

PETITIONS

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a number of petitions signed by over 500 people from the Waterloo region, northern Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia.

The petitioners call upon the government to recognize the challenges posed by suicide by adopting legislation that would recognize suicide as a public health issue, provide guidelines for suicide prevention, promote collaboration and knowledge exchange regarding suicide, promote evidence-based solutions to prevent suicide and its aftermath and to define best practices for the prevention of suicide.

GASOLINE PRICES

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, petitions keep pouring in from my riding of Hamilton Mountain calling upon the government to take action on the price of gasoline.

Just yesterday, Statistics Canada again reported that rising gasoline prices were the biggest trigger last month that helped propel the country's annual inflation rate up to 2.5%. The petitioners know they are getting hosed at the pumps but, unfortunately, as it stands now, they can only complain to each other because there is no official avenue through which they can seek redress.

The petitioners are calling for the speedy passage of my bill, Bill C-336, which would establish an oil and gas ombudsman. The ombudsman would be charged with providing strong and effective

consumer protection to ensure that no big business can swindle, cheat or rip off hard-working Canadians.

The petitioners demand a meaningful vehicle for having their complaints taken seriously with effective mechanisms for investigation and remediation to help consumers fight the squeeze.

I know the rules of the House do not allow me to endorse a petition but I do want to conclude by thanking everyone who has signed this petition and who is actively engaged in working toward the passage of my bill.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I bring forward a petition signed by many Canadians in regard to the government's decision on November 4, 2011, to put a freeze on the sponsoring of parents and grandparents.

The petitioners believe that parents and grandparents play a vital role in terms of the family unit and they call upon the government to lift the freeze so that Canadians and others will be able to sponsor their parents to be reunited as a family unit, or to at least allow them the opportunity to sponsor.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I have the pleasure of presenting a petition on behalf of residents from coast to coast from Halifax, Dartmouth, Cole Harbour, Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Coquitlam, all in support of my cellphone freedom act and for taking an important step to providing more consumer choice and to promoting competition in the domestic wireless market.

The petitioners ask parliamentarians to support Bill C-343 so that Canadian consumers are no longer chained by anti-competitive network locks on their cellular phones, locks which prevent them from switching carriers, from getting full value when they sell their phones or from using local SIM cards when travelling abroad.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have over 600 petitions from people all across Canada who call on the government to develop and implement a comprehensive national action plan to combat human trafficking. I know that is something that is on the government agenda, so I am very pleased about that.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, my second set of petitions are from 664 people who request Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to decriminalize the selling of sexual services, criminalize the purchasing of sexual services and provide support to those who desire to leave prostitution.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, finally, I have a petition signed by about 100 people who call upon the government to ensure that the Holodomor in Canada's first national internment operations are permanently and prominently displayed in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in its own gallery.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present four petitions.

The first petition is with regard to issues relating to the climate crisis. It was nice to hear the voice again of the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North. He was the sponsor of a bill to which this petition refers, which was a bill in the last session of Parliament, Bill C-311.

The petitioners, primarily from Ontario, are asking Parliament to again take up the challenge of reaching the targets for emissions reductions that were in the previous legislation, reducing to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

• (1220)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my second petition deals with fossil fuels and comes from members of the public, primarily in British Columbia, who are looking for the government to change its approach to the Enbridge project, the pipeline and risky tanker scheme, to step back from its active promotion of this project and to allow the environmental reviews and the National Energy Board hearings to proceed fairly and without prejudice from the government.

YOUTH INCARCERATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my third petition is from constituents of my riding, primarily from the Islands of Pender, Galiano and Sidney, to re-address the issues of youth incarceration, to do away with mandatory minimum sentences and to have a sensible policy to ensure that we are not jailing young people, which is essentially sending them to crime school.

SHARK FINNING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my final petition is from people throughout the Vancouver area calling upon the Government of Canada and the House to act to ban the trade, possession and importation of shark fins. We know this dreadful practice is related to the loss of a substantial number of sharks, threatening the species with extinction.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Orders of the Day***ORDERS OF THE DAY**

[English]

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary has three minutes remaining for his comments.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Madam Speaker, just before statements by members, I was talking about time allocation and refuting the allegations of the opposition that we were using them indiscriminately. In fact, what is happening is that the opposition NDP is purposely trying to delay debate to force our government into using time allocation so it can then make the claim, unfounded of course but make the claim nonetheless, that we are undemocratic in trying to stifle debate. In other words, it is simply trying to run up the score. We all know its strategy but we absolutely reject it.

I want to turn my attention in my last few moments to other matters that will seize the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs when it comes to the examination of Standing Orders. The member for Westmount—Ville-Marie had already stated that he would like to see an examination of question period and how we currently adopt the policy and the Standing Order regarding question period. That is a fair comment. It is something we should examine because it was in the last Parliament that we had a private member's bill that made many useful suggestions and many, frankly, that engaged a lot of parliamentarians on some fundamental changes that he felt would improve question period. I look forward to that study.

I also want to point out to members of this place that I have been approached by many of our members who also have suggested that we look at trying to alter or change the Standing Orders that would make it more family friendly, in other words, something that would accommodate members who have small children, male or female, and have to care for a family member. That is a very useful suggestion for examination. I look forward to that discussion as well. It may involve looking at the times we have question period allocated in the Standing Orders.

I am simply saying that since the Standing Orders are the rules that govern the House, the guidelines that inform all members how to perform their duties in the House, it is a critically important duty for those of us on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to take this task of the examination of the Standing Orders extremely seriously. I know the Standing Orders have existed for many years, in some cases hundreds of years, without change. I understand the sensitivity among those who suggest we tread very carefully when suggesting any changes to the Standing Orders. I understand their sensitivities and I implore all members of the procedure and House affairs committee to work with me on making changes that will modernize and improve the functioning of this place and for the betterment of all parliamentarians.

Orders of the Day

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, my Conservative colleague is accusing us of wilfully, as he said, delaying passage of a bill. Unless he has a crystal ball, how can he know this even before debate gets underway, because a time allocation motion is sometimes presented before the debate starts?

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Madam Speaker, I am not making any accusations; I am just pointing out the obvious. I have given one example of Bill S-5, which was unduly delayed by the NDP opposition. I have many more, but I will just give one because I know we have a limited amount of time here, and that is Bill C-11, the copyright modernization act.

We brought the bill in the same form that it was presented in the last Parliament, which had the bill before committee. When we reintroduced it in this Parliament, after 75 speeches, the NDP opposition still refused to send it to committee. Those members still said that they had more people wanting to speak to it. The ironic thing is they said, at the same time, that they thought the bill needed amendments. Well the committee is the place to make amendments, yet they refused to send it. They forced us into time allocation so then they could turn around and say that the government was being anti-democratic.

The strategy of the NDP is clear. We understand that. I think all Canadians understand it by now as well.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would be interested in hearing the parliamentary secretary's views with respect to in camera meetings at committee.

I am the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, one of the committees that most often conducts its business in camera. In fact, 31% of its meetings so far in this Parliament have been in camera. It is one thing to put a meeting in camera as a result of a formal vote. It is another to have the chairman circulate an agenda in advance of the meeting, without consultation with the committee co-chairs, which declares that a portion of the meeting will be in camera and then repeatedly rejects a request for a formal motion for it to be put in camera. Essentially, the committee goes in camera by edict.

The member for Westmount—Ville-Marie has given some very constructive suggestions with respect to when in camera meetings of committees are appropriate. I would be most interested in hearing from the parliamentary secretary on this topic.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Madam Speaker, it is quite clear. Traditions of Parliament for over 100 years have dictated that committees are the masters of their own agenda and business. It is simply unacceptable, in my view, for Parliament, whether it be the Speaker or any other force within Parliament, to dictate to any committee how it should conduct its business. That is a fundamental part of our democratic process. Committees must determine how they wish to conduct their own business. That is the way it has always been, and for good reason, and it should remain the same.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have made quite a study of the Standing Orders since I

became elected and it is useful for all members to become familiar with the fact that we do not need to change the rules in relation to question period to create a civil conversation. We merely need to respect the rules we have, which require no interruption of members when they are on their feet and no statements that are offensive to any member.

Will the hon. member join with me in a practice that I call zero tolerance for heckling? He may have noticed my practice on this point, that I not only do not heckle, I will not continue to speak when I am heckled.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Madam Speaker, what I do agree with is the fact that there needs to be increased decorum and civility in the House. Mr. Layton, when he was still with us, made a point when this Parliament first opened shortly after the election to suggest that the New Democratic Party would improve the civility and decorum of the House by not heckling. We agreed with that. Unfortunately, there was one party in the House that did not agree with that, and still does not, and that is the Liberal Party.

I would suggest for my hon. colleague, who sits very near the Liberals, that perhaps she could encourage them to improve the civility and perhaps she could improve the overall decorum of the House by having them refrain from heckling. If they did, I am sure both the official opposition and the government would gladly comply.

● (1230)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about amending the Standing Orders. This is a golden opportunity to look at how we do the business of democracy in the House. Hopefully we can lower barriers and broaden participation and really use this opportunity to open the doors for Canadians just a bit wider.

In terms of amending the Standing Orders, I would first like to call attention to Standing Order 36 concerning petitions. Plummeting voter turnout and plunging levels of social capital means governments have to do all they can to improve participation in politics. One way for the public to provide input with respect to the business of Parliament is through petitions.

On this side of the House, we have called for large-scale reforms, such as electoral reform and abolishing the Senate. We also feel smaller changes made to business such as the Standing Orders could make a big difference in the lives of Canadians and how they interact with Parliament.

Today I proudly stood with three members of the Quebec caucus and announced an initiative to change the petitioning process, and I would like to outline that to the House.

Petitioning has a long parliamentary process. We really need to bring the petitioning practice in the House in to the 21st century. The current process is cumbersome and presents little payoff for constituents. Canadians wishing to present petitions use paper copies to gather signatures and present them to parliamentarians. Once 25 signatures have been gathered, the government must reply in 45 days.

Orders of the Day

The proposition we announced today is really two-fold. First, Canadians should have the ability to sign a petition electronically. This would not only improve access, but it would also allow us to more accurately gauge who has signed a petition. This is already being practised in the province of Quebec and in the U.K. parliament. We suggest that process be brought here.

More important, to bring us right in to the 21st century, we suggest that if a petition contains 50,000 signatures, the issue raised by the petitioners should be discussed in the House for one hour. This would be somewhat like private members' bills. It would allow debate in the House for an hour. This would give some strength to backbenchers, while taking a bit of power away from the partisan politics that seem to grip the House at times. It would also give citizens more of a say in their own governance.

My colleagues and I are working to secure cross-party support on this issue. We hope that the e-petition initiative becomes law.

In addition, I would like to call the House's attention to the excellent work we have also done concerning petitions in the House. Canadians living outside of Canada should be allowed access to petitions. Currently, petitions are limited by residency. An individual has to live in the country to sign a petition. We would like the committee to look at how Canadians living outside Canada could access petitions. E-petitions would perhaps facilitate this a little more.

I would like to move to another issue that we would like attended to concerning the Standing Orders. Standing Order 35(2) states "Upon presentation of a report accompanied by supplementary or dissenting opinions" the presenter also has a chance to explain the supplementary or dissenting opinion. We think this part of the Standing Orders could be revised to allow a representative of a party to make a statement for each dissenting opinion. At present, only a member of the official opposition can present on behalf of all of the dissenting opinion submissions. This works well for us now but this should be looked at again.

We also have another problem with this section. If the official opposition somehow supports the government, the third and fourth parties are left with no voice. We believe that if the third or fourth party objects and submits a dissenting opinion, there should be a mechanism in place that would allow those parties to have a chance to express a dissenting or supplementary opinion.

• (1235)

I also draw the House's attention to Standing Order 4(8)(a) which deals with the election of the Speaker of the House of Commons by secret ballot. There is a technical glitch where in the event of a tie two names are dropped off the list. For example, if a race included three candidates, and the first place candidate secured 40% of the vote, while the second and third candidates received 30% of the votes, the bottom two candidates would be eliminated from the race. Then the Speaker would be elected with 40% of the vote. We think this could perhaps be amended to prevent this kind of odd situation occurring where a Speaker is selected with just 40% of the vote.

I will move now to Standing Order 67.1(1)(a), which states:

When a motion has been proposed pursuant to Standing Order 57 or 78(3), there shall be a period of not more than thirty minutes during which time Members may put brief questions to the Minister responsible for the item...

We suggest that perhaps this 30 minutes question or comment period should be about the government's decision to use time allocation and closure on the bill at that stage and less about the merits of the bill itself. By allowing the minister to talk about the bill itself, we get distracted from the issue of closure. Amending the Standing Order to force the House leader to be the one answering the questions could, again, help us work through this issue.

I will now move to Standing Order 32(2), which states:

A Minister of the Crown, or a Parliamentary Secretary acting on behalf of a Minister, may, in his or her place in the House, state that he or she proposes to lay upon the Table of the House, any report or other paper dealing with a matter coming within the administrative responsibilities of the government, and, thereupon, the same shall be deemed for all purposes to have been laid before the House.

There has been a push in recent years to allow large documents to be tabled electronically and not in paper format. One example for this is the 2010-11 reports on plans or priorities, the blue books for each government department or agency. Those were not printed. They were available in electronic format only. We might want to look at this issue and see if it is actually working. We may want to see if, for example, all House business should be printed on paper, weighing for example the cost of printing and the effects on the environment.

Finally, I would draw attention to Standing Order 153. It states:

—shall make available to each Member...a list of the reports or other periodical statements...placing under the name of each officer or corporation a list of reports or returns required to be made...

Perhaps we should modernize the Standing Orders to be practical. It could be written, for example, as "The Law Clerk of the House shall make available to each member, in printed and electronic form". Again, this is a chance to modernize how we present documents in the House, to weigh and to consider whether paper and electronic form, or perhaps both, are the way to move forward in making this information known to members and the public.

The priority for me in this list is to really consider the notion of opening petitions to the public and to allow the public better access to the House by guaranteeing a one hour debate for any electronic petition that receives over 50,000 signatures.

• (1240)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague made a number of points, some of which I found very interesting, and I look forward to the discussion on these items at the procedure and House affairs committee. I have a couple of comments in response to some of his direct suggestions.

Orders of the Day

While the e-petition idea is interesting, I would point out that this could also be abused very easily. In this day and age it would not be very difficult to get 50,000 signatures on any petition, whether it be partisan or something that is extremely relevant to Canadians. I note with interest that the NDP may have up to 100,000 members signed prior to its upcoming leadership convention. I say that because it would then be very easy to have all members sign up and any time the NDP wanted to create a petition for debate, it could get 50,000 signatures online very easily. The result would be that the hour of debate would use up valuable House time. I think we have to consider that very carefully.

I do find it interesting, and frankly on first blush I tend to agree with the member's comments on the Speaker elections. If it happened that there were only three candidates left on the ballot, two were tied and they both had to drop off, with the remaining candidate receiving less than 50% of the votes of the House, that would be a bit of a problem. I think we should examine that very carefully.

I appreciate the comments and suggestions. Hopefully, there will be many more of them from all parties that are forwarded to the procedure and House affairs committee for examination. I look forward to a very interesting series of discussions. I am quite sure that from time to time we will agree and from time to time we will agree to disagree. Nonetheless, I do believe that the Standing Orders as we now have them should be modernized.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Madam Speaker, when my wife Jeanette Ashe, who is a political scientist, first brought the e-petitions notion to my attention, we started to do quite a lot of research on it. First and foremost, we went to the United Kingdom to look at this. It had a very long study, about five years, on e-petitions. The very concerns the member has brought up were raised. In fact, under a Conservative government, the U.K. decided to go forward with this notion and has found it to be very successful. It has found secure ways for the e-petitioning system. What it found was that it actually allows more accuracy in identifying signatures. In fact, to date, in the year this has been operating, it has only had about 11 petitions that have actually come forward.

In concern for the hour being taken away from House business, we propose that hour be added to what the House currently does so as not to disrupt proceedings.

Since we have started to talk about this motion this week, we have had considerable support from the public, all in electronic form so far.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the rules that we do need to revisit is the one on time allocation. I understand the government's argument, but I do not agree with it. What I do believe is that we need to establish something that guarantees a minimum number of hours for debate before a government is allowed to bring in time allocation. There are some pieces of legislation brought forward, such as the wheat board legislation, the back to work legislation, and other pieces of legislation, on which I believe members of the House should at least be afforded the opportunity to speak. The only way we can do that is to ensure there are a minimum number of hours for debate.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Madam Speaker, I am a bit disturbed that we have hit a record in terms of closure in the House and that the

government is limiting debate. I do not think that we have abused our privileges on this side of the House, but I think the government has made commitments to the public to rush through a number of pieces of legislation in the first 100 days. I think that is what is causing that type of action.

I agree with the member that sometimes the customs affect the rules and the rules affect the customs. If this practice is going to continue, perhaps we should look at some guarantees in terms of the length of debate. This is where Canadians get to hear the tos and fro about specific legislation, and it is an important part of the parliamentary process to protect.

● (1245)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to discuss the Standing Orders. We have already heard many good suggestions today that warrant further discussion at the procedure and House affairs committee.

I will bring forward a couple of new suggestions in my presentation, suggestions which I also plan to raise as we serve on that committee. The suggestions which I will bring forward have one simple goal, and that is to make this House run more efficiently.

Before I do that, I want to take note that preparing for this debate only affirmed for me the importance of having this discussion and actually trying to simplify the Standing Orders, because a read through the Standing Orders is very painful and difficult.

Therefore, it is appropriate for me to preface my comments with some thanks. First, your office, Madam Speaker, and the office of the Clerk play an invaluable role to the functioning of this Parliament. Hon. members can only make sense of some of the complicated rules and the maze of procedures with the help of the clerks and analysts, and that does not just apply to this House, but for me as a member of Parliament serving on a committee, I cannot say enough about how much I appreciate, and we appreciate, the work of the clerks who serve there, the work of the analysts and much of the research that is done to help us do an effective job as parliamentarians. My thanks to each of them for that.

I also want to offer thanks to those Canadians who are watching this debate today, if there are three or four, and who might read *Hansard*.

While the Standing Orders are complicated, they do set the rules of the game for this House and they are vitally important. For that reason, I also want to thank journalists who are following the proceedings of the House who face the challenge of making sense of all of these procedures for their audiences.

To begin with, there are many small alterations to the rules that could make a big difference to the efficient operation of this House and the convenience of its members. Often it is a simple matter of how the order of certain proceedings are presented in the Standing Orders or our order of operations, if you will.

Orders of the Day

For example, prior to 2001, the order of business for routine proceedings was arranged in such a way that the rubric "Statements by Ministers" came before the rubric, "Introduction of Government Bills". If the government wanted to make a ministerial statement on a bill that it had just introduced and wanted to do so in the House, it would have to wait until the next day, since it was against the rules to divulge the contents of a bill before it was introduced in the House of Commons.

In 2001, the Special Committee on the Modernization and Improvement of the Procedures of the House of Commons looked into this. The committee's suggestion was to re-order routine proceedings to allow for the introduction of government bills prior to statements by ministers, a sensible little change that opened up a positive opportunity to members of this House.

We now have a similar situation with respect to the process for bills based on ways and means motions. Before taxation legislation can be read a first time, a notice of ways and means motion must first be tabled in the House by a minister of the Crown. The minister, usually on the same day the motion is tabled, makes a request to the Speaker that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion on a subsequent day. Waiting the next day to vote on something that was just tabled makes perfect sense. That day allows members an opportunity to review legislation before they are called to vote on it.

After a ways and means motion is adopted, it stands as an order of the House to bring in a bill or bills based on the provisions of that motion. It is at this stage where I believe we can improve the efficiency of the procedure relating to the introduction of taxation legislation.

Our current difficulty is that on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, introduction of government bills comes before government orders. Ways and means motions can only be moved during government orders, so if we vote on a ways and means motion on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, we cannot introduce the bill based on that ways and means motion until the following sitting day. Depending on where we are on the calendar, the delay could be days, weeks, or even months, and I believe this delay serves no benefit.

While the ways and means motion contains the tax measures in the bill, there are other components associated with the proposal that may be contained in the legislation. In these cases members do not get the whole picture on the same day the ways and means motion was adopted.

In our current rules, there are two days of the week where we could vote on a ways and means motion and introduce the tax bill on the same day: Mondays and Fridays.

• (1250)

I do not want to speak for all the party whips in the House, but as deputy whip for the government, I can honestly say that voting on Mondays at 10:00 or on Fridays is not ideal. I am not suggesting a privileged process for bills based on a ways and means motion. The 48-hour notice required before a bill can be introduced would continue to apply to all bills. What I do want is the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to examine the

peculiarity of an additional delay to introduce bills based on ways and means motions on some days of the week but not others.

It should be noted that the timing for the introduction of bills that are not based on ways and means motions, whether they be government bills or private members' bills, is the same for each sitting day of the week.

Here we have an opportunity whereby altering the order of business, as was done with ministerial statements and the introduction of government bills in 2001, could increase the efficiency of the House by 60%. As I said in my opening comments, the primary reason to examine the Standing Orders is to improve the efficiency of the House of Commons. In this case, our efficiency and effectiveness would improve by making what is now possible on only two days of the week possible on all five days of the week. In this case, we may not want to move routine proceedings or government orders on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, but we could achieve the same result by simply allowing one proceeding to follow another proceeding, which is not currently allowed under our rules.

My suggestion to the procedure and House affairs committee would be to come up with a proposal that following the adoption of a ways and means motion would allow a bill based thereon to be introduced and made public immediately. If the current rules allow these bills to be introduced on the same day following the adoption of a ways and means motion on Mondays and Fridays, there is no reason not to extend that same convenience and efficiency to Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

That is my first idea.

My next suggestion deals with the continuance of committee memberships. Currently in the Standing Orders the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs is charged with being a striking committee which presents a report to the House outlining the memberships of standing and standing joint committees. When this report is adopted by the House, a notice of meeting is sent so that the business of the committee can begin with the election of a chair.

Standing Order 104(1) stipulates that this is done at the beginning of each session of Parliament, which is entirely reasonable. However, it also requires that the same procedure happen again after each Labour Day. Unlike the situation at the start of a session at this time, after each Labour Day committees already will be in operation. The only result of this requirement is a needless interruption of committee business. It is not clear to me how it helps the committees to fulfill their mandate from the House to have their work interrupted in this way.

The procedure and House affairs committee has the ability to change memberships at any time without being required to do so at a particular point in the calendar. It only makes sense to maintain the current practice at the start of each session, but eliminate the requirement to do it after each Labour Day. This is just one example of some relatively small changes that I believe the procedure and House affairs committee should consider in its deliberations.

I am looking forward to our committee's review as we work to make this House more efficient and modernize our Standing Orders.

Orders of the Day

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his speech. I have a few quick questions for him.

He spoke a great deal about ways and means motions. Recently, there were a few problems with Bill C-317, which was rejected because no ways and means motion had been moved beforehand. The Speaker of the House invoked Standing Order 92.1 to give the hon. member a chance to reintroduce his bill. Since he was at the top of the list of MPs with a private member's bill to introduce, Standing Orders 94(1)(a) et 94(2)(a) prevented him from switching his bill, as usually it takes 48 hours.

I think all these provisions should be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. This creates an imbroglio, and I think it is important for these provisions to be addressed.

I would like to know whether the hon. member for Kitchener Centre agrees with me.

•(1255)

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Madam Speaker, we do have a good working relationship at the procedure and House affairs committee. It is one of the committees of this House that really works in a non-partisan way for the advantage of the House of Commons and for the efficiency of the House. However, it is important that we do study.

One of the NDP members commented that the reason we are doing this review is that things are not working. Any level of government, whether a school board or a municipal or provincial or federal government, has the obligation to review its procedures. If we think these procedures are good for all time, it certainly negates our need to be here.

However, as it relates to the question the member raised, I would point out that she was talking about private members' bills but I was speaking about ways and means motions, which obviously relate to government bills. My position is simply that we should have equal treatment of that system all five days of the week, not have it available for two days only, Mondays and Fridays, but on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays be hobbled by the necessity of leaving that for another potential sitting, which could be one day, two days or a number of weeks later.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have another question for my colleague with regard to Senate bills. Currently, under Standing Order 86.2(2), Senate bills take precedence over other bills. Should this not be changed? We could take a look at the possibilities. For example, we could study two bills in a row for an hour each, as we saw yesterday. Could we not look at various options with regard to Senate bills?

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Madam Speaker, these are the kinds of suggestions that are important to get on the table today and throughout the course of our study at the procedures and House affairs committee. All of us here know that as private members we have the option to introduce one private member's bill per session.

Generally speaking, if a member is in the early party of the draw, he or she will have the opportunity to do that. In addition, we also have the opportunity to sponsor one of the bills coming from the Senate.

I am more than happy to discuss how that procedure is currently mandated, with a view to possibly amending it in a way that would still make it possible for those bills to get here without their necessarily always taking precedence over some of the important legislation that private members in this House have already put on the table.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, informally and formally in committees in the past in Manitoba, I know that provincial legislatures often look to what is happening in Ottawa in the Standing Orders for help in changing some of the rules that they are looking at. What I want to suggest to the member is that when members reflect on the rules in the Standing Orders here in the House of Commons, they should be aware of the fact that many other jurisdictions, not only provincial but also Commonwealth countries overseas, do reflect on the rules we currently have and the ways we change them.

I would ask the member to comment on that. Does he take that into consideration when the committee is making decisions?

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Madam Speaker, it is obvious that we need to see our leadership role, the visionary role the House of Commons plays across our country, as extremely important. That is one of the reasons why some of the initiatives have come forward in the last number of days in the House, as they relate to private members' legislation. It is simply a matter of a leadership role.

However, I am sure my hon. colleague would agree that there are situations where there are no similarities. We just had a question earlier about the Senate and the Senate bills. Obviously, provincial houses do not have that issue to deal with.

This party, on our side, is very committed to modernizing the Standing Orders so they reflect modern reality. We have already indicated that we would welcome input from members on all sides of the House, and we have committed to doing an in-depth study of this at the procedures and House affairs committee. We are not going to hobble consideration of this to just a couple of meetings but are going to give it as much time as we need to get it right. It is important that we get it right because this will help to improve the efficiency of this place.

We have been sent here to get work done on behalf of Canadians, and too often I hear, and I am sure my colleague hears as well, that things seem to move so slowly here. Like the one case I used as an example, if we could improve our efficiency by 60%, that would be fantastic.

•(1300)

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to rise in this debate, as I am particularly concerned about the lack of people interested in politics, especially our youth. I am delighted, therefore, to be able to discuss changes to the Standing Orders which, believe me, will improve this political institution.

Orders of the Day

The first issue for the committee's consideration should be Standing Order 37(1) concerning question period. This period is intended to be an opportunity for members to ask questions of ministers, who then respond, although my colleagues will agree that we have not got many answers to our questions recently. I consider this to be a serious problem. We should find ways of improving the situation. There could be provisions and even protocols with which the Speaker would have to comply to ensure that ministers answer questions asked by the opposition. This is how we can hold the government to account. It is very important that when members ask questions of ministers, they be required to answer them. Another option for consideration would be to set aside a day for the Prime Minister, during which he would be required to answer questions.

The next rule that warrants consideration is Standing Order 45(3) concerning the length of time the bells are sounded to call in the members. In January, members said that they wanted the bells to be sounded on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for 30 minutes rather than 15 minutes, given that members are in committee and it takes them longer to return to the House. This is already something that the House adopts unanimously in January of every year. The change should therefore be written into the Standing Orders, so that it becomes the rule and not the exception.

We would like to ask the committee to review Standing Order 108 (3)(a). It would be very beneficial to formalize the process in which the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs studies and reports to the House on the kinds of debates we are having today. It is important to have these debates, which take place in each parliament, but it would be beneficial if we could implement a system whereby the committee assessed the debates from previous years so that what is debated here is not lost. That could be productive for our political institution and for the committee that reviews these issues.

The next change that we are proposing concerns Standing Order 44.1(1) regarding paired members. According to this Standing Order, members are entitled to be paired with other members who intend to be absent on the same day. In the past, however, the government has paired with the Bloc Québécois, which perhaps voted along similar lines. The Standing Order stipulates that the person with whom the member is paired shall vote in the opposite manner, so that they cancel each other out. It is important to review this practice to ensure that it is indeed being followed, because this has not always been the case in the past. It is important that neutrality is maintained.

On the same issue, but relating to Standing Order 44.1(2), we would also like the committee to consider the possibility of including the time or the individual vote in the register of paired members. According to the Standing Orders, members must be paired for the entire day. We would like the committee to consider the possibility of members being paired for one vote at a time. Alternatively, the provision stipulating that members must be paired for the entire day could be completely scrapped.

• (1305)

Regarding Standing Order 156(2), the opposition realizes that the Speaker often reports administrative changes to bills to the House. However, it is not certain whether the Speaker does this system-

atically. We would therefore like the committee to consider the possibility of implementing a system to ensure that each administrative change made to a bill is reported to the House. Every member would therefore be informed of any changes made to a bill, especially those of an administrative nature.

I would like to raise a final point today. There is one particular Standing Order that is somewhat strange and truly anachronistic in the 21st century. Standing order 158(2) states that "No stranger who has been committed, by Order of the House, to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, shall be released from such custody until he or she has paid a fee of four dollars to the Sergeant-at-Arms."

Members will agree that \$4 is not a huge sum that would make a stranger to the House of Commons think twice before entering. This Standing Order should be modernized. Perhaps there should be a requirement for the payment of an amount of money more appropriate to the 21st century, or perhaps this Standing Order could be scrapped entirely.

In closing, it was a great pleasure for me to be here and to take part in the discussion to improve our Standing Orders here in the House and to restore confidence in our democratic system.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Madam Speaker, I should start by saying that we are in agreement with at least one of the member's suggestions, the final one on the archaic \$4 fine for a stranger in the House who has to be removed. For those who are watching or listening, this refers to a situation where anyone, whether on the floor of the House or in the gallery, has been found to be in misconduct of the House and has to be removed by the Sergeant at Arms. The current Standing Order says that in addition to their being removed from the House, that person would have to pay a fine of \$4. I am not exactly sure when that Standing Order was written, but it clearly was a number of years ago. We also believe that the fine should be increased. Whether the amount should be \$100 or more is up for discussion, but I certainly assure my hon. colleague that we have noted that Standing Order as well.

I want to talk about question period and Standing Order 37(1).

I would point out to the hon. member that my colleague on the government side from Wellington—Halton Hills had a motion last year on possible changes to question period that was being examined by the procedure and house affairs committee. I think we will get into that again, but one of the difficulties I saw in our first examination of that bill was referenced by my hon. colleague, the requirement that ministers always be present to answer questions posed of them. That is not always possible. Sometimes ministers like my hard-working colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, are out of the country representing Canada.

There may be some issues and questions that the members opposite might have when a minister is absent, and so it would be unfortunate if we restricted members to only asking questions of a minister when he or she were present. I believe that would impair the ability of the government to deal with emergency situations. It would also impair the ability of the opposition to ask questions of the government if the minister—

Orders of the Day

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would like to give the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville an opportunity to respond.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The debate really will be productive if we decide to discuss how to reform question period. I am pleased to note that the government members and members from the other parties are prepared to discuss potential improvements to question period. Personally, I understand that ministers are busy and that they cannot always be present, as we all have commitments in our ridings. I think that all of these questions can be considered, and I hope that the committee does so.

• (1310)

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke about question period.

Standing Order 31 refers to statements by members, which immediately precedes question period. However, over recent months and weeks, the statements have become increasingly partisan.

Will my colleague agree to having the committee also consider Standing Order 31, so as to find a way of making statements less partisan, thereby giving members the opportunity to talk about events in their ridings that are of common interest to the House? This would greatly lessen the personal attacks observed recently in this House.

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I agree entirely: the time for statements by members should be reassessed because, lately, we have witnessed personal attacks on members. That is not the intended purpose of these statements; they are supposed to be an opportunity to share with this House the good work done by residents in our ridings.

So I think that is an excellent idea.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Madam Speaker, I have another question regarding take note debates. There were a few of these this fall, including one on Ukraine, for example. As far as Standing Order 53.1 is concerned, we were wondering if it would also be possible for opposition parties, through their parliamentary leaders, for example, to propose a take note debate to the entire House. We think that could be a useful initiative.

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Madam Speaker, I do not have much time to respond, so I will simply say that, once again, I agree entirely. It is an excellent idea and we should revisit this issue.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and talk about Standing Orders. As the chairman of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, it has been said I am a bit of a procedural wonk. It is good to see there are some others of those in the room today.

I have been very much looking forward to this conversation today, but I am really looking forward to the work that will happen at procedure and House affairs as the result of today's debate. Once we are done with today's debate, all parties will bring various proposals to the committee on procedure and House affairs. Although some

may find it uninteresting, that is a discussion and debate that I will find a lot of fun.

Since I chair the committee, I cannot really bring forward proposals while we are at the committee. Therefore, I would like to throw a few ideas out here today while I have the chance. I also want to say I am trying out a new voice today. I will take a vote afterwards as to whether members like it or not.

I would like to throw out a few ideas that will go to the committee or will give the committee some thought.

One thing is looking at Standing Order 106(4) which requires the chair of a committee, upon receiving a signed request from four members, to convene a meeting within five days provided that 48 hours' notice is given. I do not have any problem with a group of committee members, regardless of party affiliation, being able to get together four signatures and call a meeting. What I am concerned about, though, is the strict five day requirement. Let us keep in mind there is no provision for extending this guideline because of weekends or holidays.

This has the potential of creating a very awkward situation around Christmas, Easter and other holidays. For example, if a request were received on the Wednesday before Good Friday, according to the Standing Orders as currently written, the committee would be forced to meet over Easter weekend or at least on Easter Monday. The same problem would occur if the request were received around December 22. The committee could be forced to meet on Christmas or Boxing Day.

I think we should consider a relatively simple change to the Standing Order that would uphold the spirit of Standing Order 106 (4) but make it a little more practical. If we simply made it five business days or five days excluding weekends or holidays, that would give the chair the flexibility to call a meeting on a day that is convenient for members, as many have to fly in from across our great country. It would prevent committee meetings from disrupting our time with our families.

I believe we should also look at the right of a minority on committee to present a dissenting report. One of my colleagues had a bit of a comment on this earlier today. Under the current Standing Orders, if members of the opposition or a minority on the committee want to table a dissenting report to a committee report, they must first get the committee's permission. I think that is something the committee on procedure should look at. Should a party that disagrees with a committee report be automatically allowed to give a dissenting report? Is that something worth considering?

As you know, Mr. Speaker, back when we were in a minority government, the opposition majority on committees used their powers on multiple occasions to block government members from presenting dissenting reports. We may want to look at preventing such occurrences from happening in the future, to anyone.

Orders of the Day

I also want to discuss the topic of private bills. Before I did my research for speaking today, my knowledge of private bills was quite limited. I learned that there is a whole chapter in the Standing Orders devoted to the subject. In preparation for today's debate I looked through the chapter. It is in desperate need of modernization and updating.

For example, Standing Order 130(2) describes in which newspapers a notice needs to be published in order to build a canal or a railway. It goes on to describe the process to operate a telegraph company. There is a lot of desire for that apparently.

To prove that some of the provisions are out of date, let me read Standing Order 133(4) into the record:

No petition praying for the incorporation of a railway company, or of a canal company, or for an extension of the line of any existing or authorized railway or canal, or for the construction of branches thereto, shall be considered by the Examiner, or by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, until there has been filed with the said Examiner a map or plan, showing the proposed location of the works, and each county, township, municipality or district through which the proposed railway or canal, or any branch or extension thereof, is to be constructed.

● (1315)

I have been the chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for a little while now. I have never seen anybody show up with a map to see where we are going to put the next canal. Perhaps it is a bit out of date and we need to look at it.

An hon. member: A telegraph.

Mr. Joe Preston: Or a telegraph company.

I understand there has not been a private bill that has originated in the House in a few decades, which is probably why this section of the Standing Orders has not been updated. We have heard today about some other areas we need to update, whether it is the fine for a stranger in the House or whatever else. There is a need to take a look at modernization.

I am really interested in the upcoming review. There will be a lot of work done at committee. We have always worked fairly well in that committee. I would like to say it is because of the chair, but truly it is not. It is because of the work of all members. I want to mention what some of them said here today.

The member for Hamilton Mountain started us off and was very eloquent and passionate. She might even have been critical, but she did it with passion. She said that time is the currency of Parliament proceedings and the Standing Orders regulate how we use that time. It was a very profound thought and I will be sure to share it with her when she goes a little long at committee. She also mentioned that a debate on the Standing Orders is a lot like watching paint dry. I think it is a little more exciting than that, but having listened to the speech by the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, she may have had it right.

I would like to also thank the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie, who also sits on the committee and is a very active participant. He said we should make sure we look at the complex parts of the questions that are being asked. Sometimes it is more important to ensure that we are not creating unintended consequences by fixing something in the first place. The committee will take great care to do that.

The member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre is always a great speaker in the House. He suggested today that the Standing Orders were like the rule book on how the game is played in the House. I thank him because often he brings us back to the ground in committee by talking in the way that people back home might understand. When we are talking about Standing Orders, it may not be easy.

The member for Kitchener—Conestoga was also very eloquent in his speech today, as he is in committee. I would like to thank some of the other members on the committee, such as the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent who spoke today. We are really happy with her contributions. The member for Windsor—Tecumseh is also a fantastic member on the committee. The member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine has also been a great addition to how we can work together on a committee.

The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, as was mentioned earlier, works a little differently. Members have fun, work hard and get the job done. I am looking forward to the next number of meetings on the Standing Orders to make this place run just a little better.

● (1320)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. I have the good fortune to be a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which he chairs.

I wanted to ask him a question about Standing Order 81(4), which enables the opposition parties to refer consideration of the main estimates to committees of the whole.

Regarding that Standing Order, we were wondering if we could not change the order of questions asked at that time, making it more similar to question period, for instance, rather than following the normal order in a normal debate.

We would like to examine this proposal, and I would like to hear the member's thoughts on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Preston: Madam Speaker, I do have my bible with me. I was hunting though it for the Standing Order that allows members to ask questions of the chairs of committees during question period today. I could not find it. This is something else we will have to look for, but I thank the members who did that today.

To answer her question, when I finished my speech in the House, that was the last time I will give my opinion on any of the things that will come forward in committee. From now on, I will be the chair and make sure the members do the work.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is the chair of what I classify an exciting committee, a committee of which I would love to be a part, but there are some limitations in terms of the number of members who can be on it. He brings up two points in his remarks.

Orders of the Day

One is the minority reports, to which there is great value. I know that on the citizenship and immigration committee, we provide a minority report or an appendix and then we go through an approval process. It would be nice to see something of that nature formalized in the Standing Orders.

The member made reference also to Standing Order 106(4), which requires that in order to have a committee called, there must be a minimum of four members. In essence, what that rule says is that members have to either be from the official opposition or the government.

Does the member see merit in having a consensus between two political parties or two political entities as opposed to limiting it to strictly a number of members in order for a committee to be called?

Mr. Joe Preston: Madam Speaker, the member has been a guest at our committee in the last couple of weeks. I think he is starting to see how it works.

The member mentioned the Standing Order about being able to call committees back. Mine was about when it could happen. However, if all committees work collegially like we do, we would always have a friend from another party that we could get and be able to call that meeting.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in listening to the hon. member speak about his committee, I think I will put in for a trade.

My question relates to a comment that was made earlier in debate. I raised concerns over in camera committee hearings. The response I received was that committees were the masters of their own procedure. There were some very constructive suggestions put forward by the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

My question for the hon. member is this. Will there be a discussion on the merits of these in camera procedures or will they simply be brushed off with, “Committees are the masters of their own procedure”?

• (1325)

Mr. Joe Preston: Madam Speaker, the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie is a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and he has already brought this forward. Everything we discuss at committee has a serious nature to it and it will happen.

There is a mixture of both to that question. Committees are masters of their own destinies and can, through democratic means, do what committees need to do to get their job done. However, today is the day to look at Standing Orders. That one will come forward and we will certainly discuss it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very honoured to be able to speak on this occasion, which will happen only once during this Parliament. Indeed, this is only the third time this has happened in the past 20 years. Although some have said that this can be boring at times, I personally find it very interesting.

As deputy critic for democratic reform, I am very concerned about the public's perception of politicians. In light of the cynicism and

plunging voter turnout, the situation is becoming more and more urgent. The NDP has a few suggestions for changes to the Standing Orders.

One thing that the public sees the most is the privilege set out in Standing Order 31, which allows a member to make a one-minute statement on various subjects. These statements are a very good way to reach our constituents. Members should use this time to talk about an event in their riding or an organization that, in general, deserves the attention of the House. Unfortunately, recently, many of the members have been using the time reserved for these statements to play partisan games. In my opinion, this type of practice should not be encouraged. Personal attacks are absolutely unacceptable, and Standing Order 31 should be amended so that there is more decorum here in the House.

Another interesting thing to consider is Standing Order 53(1), which allows a minister of the crown to initiate a take note debate. I participated in the take note debate on the Ukraine, and I saw that such debates can be very interesting because they allow all the parties to speak about a particular subject. I wondered why the opposition could not also initiate take note debates. The Standing Orders could include a mechanism whereby the House leaders of all the opposition parties could initiate take note debates. Another option would be to have a set number of take note debates per year and divide them up among the parties in accordance with the number of seats they hold in the House of Commons.

I would now like to talk about Standing Order 86(2), which could be clarified or codified, as the committee decides. At present, senators may introduce bills on the same basis as any member of Parliament, but those bills take precedence over the bills introduced by MPs. They then push back the order of precedence for private members' business. I find it difficult to understand how unelected parliamentarians take precedence over the elected representatives in this House.

One solution would be to place Senate bills on a separate list and plan a particular time every week to hold those debates. Another possible approach would be to attach a Senate bill to the final item on the timetable of private members' business and create a double-header evening, as happens when we debate two private members' bills. That is what happened yesterday, when we had two private members' bills to debate, one after the other. Of course, we will leave it to the House Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to examine those solutions in depth.

Another point that deserves the committee's attention is found in paragraphs 94(1)(a) and 94(2)(a). Those two provisions present a problem because they do not allow sufficient lead time for the first member who is to introduce a private member's bill. They do not allow the member to change positions or give notice to the House that they will be unable to be present to introduce their motion or bill.

This situation has caused other problems. Here, I am referring to what happened on October 19, when the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale had his private member's bill, Bill C-317, withdrawn from the order of private members' business because it could not be introduced without a ways and means motion. The Speaker stated that the existing Standing Orders presented a problem when the timetable for private members' business was reshuffled. This then allowed the member to be put back into the order of precedence and amend his bill to enable it to be introduced, citing Standing Order 92(1).

•(1330)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 1:30 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that proceedings on the motion have expired.

[*English*]

Accordingly, pursuant to order made Thursday, February 16, the motion is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

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

The House resumed from November 25, 2011, consideration of the motion that Bill C-315, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (French language), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-315, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (French language), introduced by my hon. colleague from Trois-Rivières.

The bill aims to harmonize the language requirements that apply to federal businesses operating in Quebec with those in force in that province. These businesses, which include banks, shipping companies, port services, communications companies and so on, must guarantee francophone employees the same language rights as are provided by the Charter of the French Language in Quebec.

I strongly support this bill. It is important to state that there are no losers with this bill. It would simply guarantee all workers the same linguistic rights. All workers in Quebec must enjoy the same right to work in their own language.

The bill provides that federal businesses carrying on activities in Quebec will be subject to certain requirements, including the following: 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 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

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French; preparing collective agreements and their schedules in French; and finally, ensuring that arbitration awards made following arbitration of a grievance or dispute regarding the negotiation, renewal or review of a collective agreement shall, at the request of one of the parties, be translated into English or French, as the case may be, at the parties' expense.

Those are very reasonable provisions. In addition to ensuring a better work atmosphere for workers in Quebec, this bill would greatly assist the translation profession.

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.

I have an example. A woman works at a bank. She is a francophone who speaks a bit of English. Her boss is more comfortable using English. What language takes precedence? We would guess English. Under this bill, that woman could receive her communications in French and would no longer have to be uncertain about what the memos in English mean. Does this stop the boss from speaking English? No, not at all, as long as French takes precedence.

The employee will be happier at work now that she finally understands all the memos she receives; the boss will be sure to have better communication with his employees without having to limit the use of his language of preference.

This bill will be beneficial and will help maintain a healthy and convivial work environment for everyone.

The types of businesses that will be affected are governed by the Canada Labour Code: banks, airports, transportation companies that operate between Quebec and one or more other provinces, telecommunications companies and radio stations.

One provision in the bill allows for exemptions. For example, an English-language radio station working for the anglophone community in Quebec and operating in English obviously would be exempt. This business could even ask the Governor in Council to grant some exemptions to reflect this business's reality.

This is more proof 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.

It is important to note that there are no losers with this bill. It will allow Quebec workers to work in their language and have access to all the necessary work material in French.

It is difficult to understand why or how an employee working in a bank in Quebec, for example, does not have the same language rights as his counterpart working in a credit union on the other side of the street, when both are working in Quebec.

My colleague's bill would remedy this situation. I do not understand why my colleagues opposite would vote against this bill, which is so well thought out and so important to us.

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•(1335)

We are talking about respecting workers and their community in Quebec, without taking anything away from the other community. Furthermore, this bill does not apply to federal institutions, but to businesses. Institutions are subject to the Official Languages Act. Thus, it is very important to understand that communities throughout the country have nothing to fear and nothing to lose with Bill C-315.

Their language rights will always be protected by the Official Languages Act. Five years ago, this House adopted a motion recognizing the Quebec nation. Since then, very little real action has been taken to validate that motion. In 2011, this government appointed a unilingual anglophone to the Supreme Court and named a unilingual anglophone auditor general. What message is this government sending to francophones?

French is the language of the Quebec nation, a nation that the House of Commons and the Harper government recognized. Bill C-315, like other NDP bills, is an important contribution to the recognition of Quebec as a nation within Canada. I believe this is important and therefore I will repeat it. Bill C-315, like other NDP bills, is an important contribution to the recognition of Quebec as a nation within Canada.

The time has come to take real action. We have to show francophones in Canada that the federal government will defend their language and defend their rights as francophone workers. This government claims to be the champion of working people and people looking for jobs, at a time when the economy is in precarious shape. Here we have a way of helping those people.

This bill also protects working people. This legislation would prohibit an employer from dismissing or demoting an employee who demanded that a right arising from this legislation be respected. About 200,000 people do not benefit directly from the protections set out in the Charter of the French Language. In Quebec, it should go without saying that French will be used in businesses under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

The riding I represent is Montcalm, and it is over 95% French-speaking. For those people, this is a labour right. When a person goes to work to support her family, to make ends meet or to earn her living, she has the fundamental right to work in her language. That should be an even more concrete reality as a result of the recognition of the Quebec nation. These are language rights and issues that have dragged on for too long already.

To my constituents, the French language represents our Quebec culture, and it is unique. It is reasonable for them to want to protect it and preserve it and for them to want to work in French. I strongly urge all members of this House to vote for this bill, to show the importance of the French language. This bill is an excellent opportunity to send a clear message to francophone working people in Quebec. Let us show that we are concerned about their work environment and their right to work in French.

I congratulate my colleague, the member for Trois-Rivières, for acting on this proposal. This bill is an art in itself, since it is an art to reason clearly and try to protect a language that is recognized as an official language. By voting for this bill, the federal government can finally demonstrate its intention of acting. Let us take action; let us

support this bill, a bill that is extremely well reasoned and, let us say it, extremely well thought out.

•(1340)

Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-315, which seeks to amend the Canada Labour Code in order to put an end to a linguistic inconsistency in Quebec.

The bill, which was introduced by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières, is in line with what various professional organizations and francophone workers in Quebec are saying. Its purpose is to harmonize the language requirements that apply to federal businesses operating in Quebec with those in force in that province.

I would like to voice my unconditional support for this bill and explain why it should be passed by this House.

This bill will bring an end to a pattern that has been observed in federal businesses operating in Quebec, where francophone workers encounter language difficulties in their workplaces. Approximately 200,000 people are unable to take advantage of the provincial language requirements set out in the Charter of the French Language. They are therefore unable to use their mother tongue at work or are able to use it only sparingly. The Conseil du patronat du Québec found that the fact that employees are unable to use French in the workplace is a problem that affects the work environment. Now that it is aware of the problem, this year, the organization plans to hold a campaign to encourage these companies in Quebec to use French more often in their business activities.

It is essential to allow the members of the linguistic majority of a province to express themselves in their mother tongue. In Quebec, French is the predominant language, and francophone employees of federal businesses operating in Quebec have the right to use their mother tongue in the workplace. This bill will strengthen that right. The language rights of the other provinces have already been established, and I think it is important for Quebec to be able to take advantage of this harmonization with provincial language requirements.

I would like to add that this House adopted the following motion on November 27, 2006:

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

Allowing workers in federal businesses to speak French in their Quebec workplaces would help with Quebec's ongoing integration into Canada and would clearly illustrate the principle of asymmetrical federalism that is so dear to the official opposition.

I would like to quote the hon. member who introduced Bill C-315. His words provide a good summary of the spirit of this bill:

...[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.

It has been said that this bill is contradictory. It is not. This is a pragmatic bill that strengthens the language rights of francophone workers—the linguistic majority in Quebec—while preserving the language rights of the province's linguistic minority, through clause 8.2 of the bill.

An exception is set out in clause 8.1 in order to respond to the social and economic reality of these federal businesses. In this case, everyone wins because Bill C-315 in no way infringes on the rights of the anglophone minority in Quebec.

I would like to add that this bill also authorizes employees to use a language other than French, on the condition that it not take precedence over French.

• (1345)

In closing, I would like to quote what the Minister of Labour had to say during question period on February 16, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, French is an integral part of our history, our identity, our daily lives, and it is one of the founding languages of Canada. Our government is committed to promoting and protecting the French language in Canada.

The solution is for the government to support this bill and vote in favour of it.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to support Bill C-315, introduced by my NDP colleague from Trois-Rivières.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Canada Labour Code regarding French as the language of work in Quebec, in federally regulated businesses. I repeat: French as the language of work in Quebec in federally regulated businesses.

Why is it important for me to discuss this issue today? For over 15 years I helped to negotiate collective agreements in an effort to improve the lives of those around me. I came to realize that there is a flagrant omission in the Canada Labour Code, which affects thousands of workers. Although the majority of the population in Quebec speaks French, many francophone workers do not have the same language rights at work as their neighbours. This is incredible in 2012, but true.

Here is a concrete example: Aéroports de Montréal, an interprovincial and international transportation company, is subject to the Canada Labour Code. In 2004, Aéroports de Montréal carried out construction work and security guards were hired for surveillance purposes. In order to get the job, francophone workers had to complete unilingual English documents; there was no French version available. Another prerequisite: the guards had to be able to speak English. Yet, on the construction site, the language of work was French. All activities took place in French.

At around the same time, in 2004, workshops for municipal vehicles were built in Hochelaga. The City of Montreal is—obviously—not an enterprise that is subject to the Canada Labour Code. No francophone workers involved in the project were asked to complete forms in English, nor did they have to know English to work on the construction site where, again, all activities took place in French.

Fortunately for the Aéroports de Montréal security guards, the employees took a stand and contested these pointless practices.

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However, they had to defend their rights themselves because the Canada Labour Code did not offer them this protection.

Why did these two groups of employees working in the same city, at the same time, and in similar situations, not have the same rights? Because labour relations for employees of Aéroports de Montréal, whose activities are federally regulated, are governed by the Canada Labour Code and the Charter of the French Language and its consequential language rights do not apply. Quebec's labour relations laws do not apply to the employees of Aéroports de Montréal, while they do apply to employees of the City of Montréal, and the different codes have different rules. For example, unlike the Quebec code, the Canada Labour Code has no anti-strikebreaker provisions, more commonly known as “anti-scab” provisions. This is a great injustice that needs to be corrected as soon as possible.

Let us come back to the clauses related to language of work. Here is another example, a situation that many people can probably relate to. Madame Pelletier—an imaginary person—works in a chartered bank in Montreal east. Her cousin, Madame Aubé, works at a credit union a block away. Both cousins have the same training, work in similar jobs and work in completely francophone environments, but while Madame Aubé continues to advance her career, Madame Pelletier cannot apply for management jobs because she does not speak English. However, English is rarely spoken at her branch. Nevertheless, her bank requires that executives speak English. That is rather unfair, is it not?

Imagine a team working for a large telecommunications company in Amos, in the Abitibi region, that receives the text of an arbitral award rendered following a grievance that affects the team, but they receive it in a language that the team does not understand, because that language has never been required for their work in a francophone community. What do they do?

Bill C-315 will protect the linguistic rights of Quebec's francophone majority working in enterprises under federal jurisdiction. I already gave some examples of companies under federal jurisdiction—and so have other members: mills, radio and television broadcasters, interprovincial and international transportation companies, including rail, road, marine and air.

• (1350)

This would affect several thousand workers in Quebec. In his statement on Wednesday, the hon. member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice talked about “making Canada a strong...country in which Quebec has an important place”.

And yesterday, the Minister of Labour said:

Our government is committed to promoting and protecting the French language in Canada.

Our government is proud of Canadian bilingualism and our cultural diversity, and we remain fully committed to promoting the French language in Canada and abroad.

If they truly believe in this, here is an opportunity for the Conservatives to prove it and demonstrate that this is not just empty rhetoric. As my NDP colleague from Outremont often says, they need to walk the talk.

Private Members' Business

Recognizing the Quebec nation must not be merely symbolic. We do not need an advisory committee to examine the matter. We already know there are problems. While the intentions may have been good, it was money wasted. Other studies have already shown this. It is now time to act.

Bill C-315 proposes concrete results for Quebeckers without taking away the rights of other workers. It simply supports the rights of the francophone majority in Quebec, in the same way that the rights of the anglophone majority are protected outside Quebec .

Federal institutions, governed by the Official Languages Act, are not affected by this bill, because both official languages are already protected by the act. This is the case, for example, with the Port of Montreal, located partly in my riding, Hochelaga.

Nor would a business that provides services only to anglophone communities be asked to have all its documentation translated into French. That would not help anybody. This bill, however, would greatly improve the working environment for a great many francophone Quebeckers. On average, people spend at least a third of their lives at work—in our case, it is a little more—and an even higher percentage of their working lives. When you are not happy at work, the days seem long, and that obviously has a bearing on life outside work.

Having good working conditions is important to people's mental and physical health and to the quality of their work. Even the Conseil du patronat du Québec is trying to convince businesses in the province that promoting the use of French in the workplace will actually benefit them. Bill C-315 is extremely important, therefore, on several levels: it provides a concrete and realistic solution to an increasingly evident problem; it confers rights upon thousands of workers without taking any rights away from anyone; it helps to create more healthy workplaces; it helps to foster more productive workplaces; it helps to protect and promote the French language; and it reaffirms the place of the Quebec nation in a fair and united Canada.

I therefore congratulate my colleague from Trois-Rivières for having taken up the cause in an effort to close a flagrant loophole in the Canada Labour Code, by proposing a fair and concrete solution.

I would strongly encourage members from all parties and provinces to show their solidarity with francophones in Quebec by supporting this bill.

• (1355)

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today in this House, just like my colleague from Hochelaga, to support Bill C-315 introduced in the House by my colleague from Trois-Rivières.

This bill deserves our attention and support. It was a mistake, or at least an accident of Canadian history that a constitution was created in Canada that divides jurisdictions into federal and provincial. Our Constitution of 1867 listed a number of provincial jurisdictions. The intention was very clear in 1867: labour laws would largely fall under provincial jurisdiction. However, there are provincial industries that are completely governed by the federal level. We have to move forward with regulations in those fields. I am talking about fields of work that might have escaped the attention of our

hon. colleagues of 1867. Obviously, the Internet did not exist in 1867. That is why telecommunications fall under federal jurisdiction today. The Constitution of 1867 states that anything not listed therein will fall under federal jurisdiction. In 1867, the telephone, the Internet and so forth, obviously did not exist.

That is why today we have workers in Quebec employed by Rogers who do not have the same rights as people employed by smaller, provincially regulated companies in Quebec. It is an inequality that we must resolve. Today, with Bill C-315, we can resolve this matter. We can correct this long-standing mistake, which should have been corrected a long time ago. I am surprised that this House has not done anything about these shortcomings before now.

I believe that my colleague from Hochelaga said that it was a shortcoming to have created a situation in which workers in Quebec are not on equal footing. It is completely unacceptable. We cannot allow an employee at a credit union in Quebec to not have the same rights as an employee who works at a National Bank branch. Even the November 23, 2011, edition of *Le Droit* raised the fact that "English is quite present at the Banque Nationale".

Surprisingly, I believe that most Quebeckers may not realize that the people they go to see every day, such as National Bank tellers, do not enjoy the same rights as those who work for provincially regulated companies. That is something we need to address. I believe that the bill before us provides an invaluable opportunity to make changes that have been needed for a long time. We should have addressed this issue a long time ago.

Labour law in Canada is not just about the rights and bills that we debate in the House. Today, we are talking about people's day-to-day lives. People have to feel comfortable in their workplace.

I will repeat the point raised by the member for Hochelaga. She said that labour law in Canada is not the same as labour law in Quebec. Those governed by Quebec's labour legislation enjoy a number of benefits not enjoyed by those governed by Canada's labour code. For example, she spoke about the right, during a strike, to not be replaced by scabs. We have that right in Quebec. This is really something that needs to be fixed, but it is not included in this bill. This bill deals with language. I would like to point out that there are many changes that should be made to Canada's labour law. And that may be one of the most important changes that we should address.

Today, we will discuss language rights. I will point out that there are many people who may not understand today that we are not talking about language rights in Canada.

• (1400)

The Official Languages Act will not be affected by today's bill. All the federally regulated services that are already offered in both official languages will continue to be where needed.

Private Members' Business

In my riding, many anglophones absolutely want to protect their linguistic rights, their culture and their heritage. These anglophone families have been in my riding for hundreds of years, and we are certainly not casting them aside. We will continue to protect their language. It is not a question here of taking away the rights of anglophones in Quebec. It is a question of giving concrete expression to the rights that francophones should have had a long time ago by virtue of the fact that they work in a federally regulated enterprise.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, it is more by constitutional accident that telecommunications companies, for example, are governed by the federal government rather than the provinces. I am convinced that had the telephone and the Internet existed in 1867, they would have been made a provincial responsibility. However, they did not exist at the time. According to the Constitution, anything not already covered automatically falls under federal jurisdiction.

It may have been a mistake at the time, but what is important is to respect the Constitution and everyone's rights in order for all Canadians to be on an equal footing. In one province in particular, it just does not make sense that workers in one company do not have the same rights as workers in another.

I really want to make sure that people understand that Quebec has different responsibilities than the other provinces. The House has recognized it: Quebec is a nation. There are reasons why we said that. It must not be an empty gesture. If the government recognizes that Quebec is a nation, it must be consistent and put forward bills that prove that the House of Commons respects Quebecers and the role they have to play in our federal system. Quebec is responsible for promoting the French language within the province, in North America and throughout the world.

Canada is a bilingual country founded by at least two nations. I would even say that we should go a bit further and include the first nations among the founding peoples, but that is another bill for another day. Today, we must focus on Bill C-315, the purpose of which is to respect the language rights of Quebec workers. It is not right that, in Quebec, people are being refused rights because they are francophone. In Quebec, a province that is made up of a large francophone majority, it is not right for collective agreements to be written in English only. We must address the major shortcomings in the Canada Labour Code. Amendments must be made. We must implement the changes that the hon. member for Trois-Rivières is proposing in this bill.

Today's bill is in agreement with the Conseil du patronat du Québec, the Quebec Employer's Council. Working effectively can only be good for business.

This is not just a matter of language rights or a matter of human rights, it is also a matter of common sense. In Canada, if a company wants to find workers, it is perfectly normal for that company to offer them working conditions that respect their living conditions and make it easier for them to integrate into the company. It is a matter of respect for the individual.

People often see themselves in terms of their work. They want to go to work knowing that their employer respects them. It has been

mentioned a number of times that the rate of depression and even the suicide rate increase when people are unemployed. We want to create workplaces where people feel respected so that they can develop and so that we can have a united Canada that respects the language rights of all Canadians.

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise in support of this great piece of legislation, which is essential. I also want to congratulate the hon. member for Trois-Rivières for proposing it. As previous speakers have mentioned, this bill addresses a deficiency. The fact that no member from the government or from the other parties has risen to support this bill makes me wonder. Why do they not support it? I would appreciate an explanation.

I am going to talk about the purpose of this legislation. I represent the riding of Terrebonne—Blainville in the beautiful province of Quebec. When I travel to other parts of the country and tell people I come from Quebec, the first thing they think about is French.

People who do not live in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada would be surprised to learn that there are places where the working environment is English-speaking. Why? It is because our laws are flawed, and this is what the bill seeks to correct. In short, this legislation is useful because it would apply the province's language requirements to federally regulated businesses. As my colleagues who have spoken before me have pointed out, French may be the primary language of work in a small telecommunications company. However, there could be a business next door like Rogers, which is federally regulated, where employees are forced to speak English.

I totally object to this situation and to the fact that an employee may be told by his employer that he must learn English to work there. This is completely ridiculous. We must stop thinking in those terms and correct the flaws in the legislation.

I have some facts for those who criticize this bill on the ground that it is unnecessary. There are 200,000 workers who are not covered by the Charter of the French Language. We are talking about 200,000 people who go to work and may be forced to speak English, that is, to work in a language that is not their first language. This can create a working environment in which workers are less happy. It is important to point this out.

The Quebec Labour Code does not apply to federally regulated businesses, and this flaw must be corrected. Someone mentioned that the hon. Minister of Industry has set up an advisory committee. Perhaps this will correct the situation, but who will appoint the members of that committee, how much will the consultation process cost, and how long is it going to take? Will a report be produced? Will something come out of that exercise? A committee is just a half-measure to correct the situation. We must move forward and support Bill C-315.

Private Members' Business

I remind hon. members that Quebec was recognized as a nation in the House by all hon. members and by this government. If we believe in the concept of nationhood, it is essential to respect the language rights of Quebec's francophone majority. I want to tell members from Ontario, New Brunswick—actually not New Brunswick, because it is not a good example—and British Columbia, where the anglophone population forms a majority, that this bill will not apply to their provinces. It will only apply to Quebec, where the rights of the linguistic majority are not respected the way they should be. The bill directly addresses this issue.

I have a quote for those who think that this bill is unnecessary. It is taken from an article on the issue of English at National Bank in Quebec: “According to several sources, English has become the primary language of work for a large number of National Bank employees, particularly in the information technology or IT sector.” This is a major problem. When we think “Quebec”, we think “French”, but with such flaws in the legislation, we cannot move forward and correct the situation.

• (1405)

This is all I have to say on the bill. However, I want to congratulate my colleague again for proposing a great piece of legislation. I urge all hon. members to help our members and the workers in Quebec who must learn a language other than their mother tongue in order to work and keep their jobs. I urge all hon. members to rise in support of French.

• (1410)

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, based on my understanding of the procedure, I have five minutes to conclude on such a fundamental bill. I am not going to repeat what was said by my distinguished colleagues, but I thank them for supporting this bill. I also thank all the parliamentarians who spoke during the first hour of debate that we had on Bill C-315. There were a few parliamentarians from the third party and even from the government.

I must admit that I am somewhat uneasy as I conclude in these last five minutes, because I do not really know what to expect, particularly since the government has announced the establishment of a committee to review the issue and determine whether there is a problem with the use of French in Quebec's federally regulated businesses.

If the government has not already seen that there is a problem, that is a problem in and of itself. But even if there were no problem, Bill C-315 recognizes a basic right for workers in Quebec which, again, is the only province where French is the official language. Nowhere else in Canada does a worker feel compelled to defend his language of work. This is because the language of work in the other provinces is respected. There is something unique here, and this is why this bill is also unique in that it recognizes the rights of Quebeckers. Such recognition is a no-brainer, even if there were no problems. But it is already too late: the problems exist, so let us deal with them now.

The New Democratic Party is a great national party which fully and unanimously supports this bill. No one can say that this legislation was concocted by a group of francophones seeking some privileges. Everyone recognizes that this bill provides Quebeckers with a critical element, following the recognition of their province as a nation. For this, I thank all my other colleagues, and I hope the House will at least agree to have the bill reviewed in committee.

If it needs to be improved on—like all bills, and mine is no exception—let us at least allow it to follow its course and be reviewed by a standing committee. At the same time, the minister's committee can do its own work and shed a different light on the issue. We are not opposed to anything, but please let us not shut the door on the rights of Quebeckers that are recognized in this bill. Otherwise, it will be yet another step backward. In this kind of situation, the status quo is not an option. If we do not recognize the problems, and if we do not solve them, we get caught up and we slip backwards.

I hope all francophones and francophiles in this Parliament will give the bill a chance to go further and refer it to committee for clause by clause review. I am using the term “francophiles” in its broadest sense, because one does not have to speak French to be a francophile, but simply have an open mind toward that language.

• (1415)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 29, 2012, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 2:14 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday, February 27, 2012, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:17 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	Ind. Cons.
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 Glengarry	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	Lib.
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, Leader of the Opposition	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	Ind. Cons.
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	Lib.
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, Leader of the Opposition	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—Missinippi—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
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LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of February 17, 2012 — 1st Session, 41st Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

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

Associate Members

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

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

Jean Crowder

Vice-Chairs:Scott Andrews
Patricia DavidsonCharlie Angus
Brad Butt
Blaine CalkinsJohn Carmichael
Dean Del MastroEarl Dreeshen
Pierre-Luc DusseaultColin Mayes
Dany Morin

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Associate Members

Eve Adams
Mark Adler
Dan Albas
Harold Albrecht
Chris Alexander
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Stella Ambler
Rob Anders
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Rob Clarke
Joe ComartinJoe Daniel
Bob Dechert
Rick Dykstra
Wayne Easter
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Randy Kamp
Gerald Keddy
Greg Kerr
Ed Komarnicki
Daryl Kramp
Mike Lake
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Pierre Lemieux
Chungsen Leung
Wladyslaw Lizon
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Costas Menegakis
Rob Merrifield
Larry Miller
Rob Moore
Rick Norlock
Tilly O'Neill Gordon
Deepak Obhrai
Ted Opitz
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Andrew SaxtonGary Schellenberger
Kyle Seeback
Bev Shipley
Devinder Shory
Joy Smith
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Bernard Trotter
Susan Truppe
Merv Tweed
Dave Van Kesteren
Maurice Vellacott
Mike Wallace
Mark Warawa
Chris Warkentin
Jeff Watson
John Weston
Rodney Weston
David Wilks
John Williamson
Stephen Woodworth
Terence Young
Wai Young
Bob Zimmer

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair: Larry Miller

Vice-Chairs: Malcolm Allen
Frank Valeriote

Alex Atamanenko
Randy Hoback
Pierre Lemieux

Ben Lobb
LaVar Payne

Francine Raynault
Jean Rousseau

Brian Storseth
Bob Zimmer

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Devinder Shory
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Robert Sopuck
Kevin Sorenson
Mark Strahl
David Sweet
David Tilson
Lawrence Toet
Brad Trost
Bernard Trottier
Susan Truppe
Merv Tweed
Dave Van Kesteren
Maurice Vellacott
Mike Wallace
Mark Warawa
Chris Warkentin
Jeff Watson
John Weston
Rodney Weston
David Wilks
John Williamson
Stephen Woodworth
Terence Young
Wai Young

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Chair: Rob Moore

Vice-Chairs: Pierre Nantel
Scott Simms

Scott Armstrong
Tyrone Benskin
Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet

Gordon Brown
Paul Calandra

Andrew Cash
Parm Gill

Jim Hillyer
Terence Young

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Costas Menegakis
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Mr. David Anderson	to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board

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