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Friday, February 16, 2007

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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 16, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*English*]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed from February 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act, be read the third time and passed.

Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are at third reading of this important bill now and I would like to begin by recounting how we have come to this place.

The recommendations for amendments to the Canada Elections Act emanate from the report of the Chief Electoral Officer following the January 2006 election. That is normal, of course, as he reports on the activities of elections and points out any failings or any improvements that may be made in the election process.

He produced that report and of course we went on to consider it in committee. The committee report went to the government and this bill is the answer, which falls very much in line with both the Chief Electoral Officer's report and the report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to the government. This will bring into force, for the most part, the recommended amendments from the Chief Electoral Officer.

The notion of the integrity of our elections is absolutely critical to our democracy, just as it is anywhere else in the world. It is interesting that Canadians are asked to monitor and help establish electoral commissions and the rules and procedures for elections in many newly democratizing countries.

In just the last few years, in the Ukraine there was major Canada Corps participation. Canadian teams of electoral monitors and advisers have been involved in the Palestinian authority and in Afghanistan. There was a team of Canadian officials in Bangladesh preparing for the election that should have taken place last month but has been delayed because of disruptions in that country.

The point is that we are seen as a country that has a sound electoral system. We must, as our first responsibility to our democratic condition, ensure that this integrity continues and is improved wherever it can be. The amendments to this act mainly deal with the identification of the voter.

I had the privilege of going with a Canadian team in 1990 to Nicaragua to monitor an extremely contentious election. Members might recall that it was a time when the Nicaraguans were in the middle of the civil war with the Contra rebels. It was a very dangerous time, yet the Sandinista government was submitting itself to free and fair elections, which is the standard we use.

I recall being up in the Honduran-Nicaraguan mountains in the northwest of the country checking out small voting stations, one a broken down old schoolhouse in the mountains, where there were literally hundreds of people lined up in the very hot sun. Many had walked for many hours to be able to exercise their right to vote.

There was one very poignant moment. One woman had walked for two hours, lined up for two hours, got to the front of the line, and did not have proper identification. She was heading back, another four hours both ways, to her village to get her voter card. That was the importance she placed on going through that electoral process. It also reflected the seriousness with which the Nicaraguan electoral commission, under the direction, guidance or advice of Canadian officials, was taking the integrity of the process.

When we have an international standard that we are often asked to advise on and monitor, the question is this: is an election free and fair? Of course free means the right of all adult citizens to vote in an election, but fair means that it has integrity, that there are no opportunities to stuff ballot boxes or for people to disguise their identities and vote improperly. That integrity is absolutely critical if we are going to ask our citizens to come forward and put their trust in the electoral and democratic system. Therefore, free and fair is an immensely important point.

• (1010)

We know that in the U.S. presidential elections in 2000 confusion was caused in Florida when voting machines were found not to be operating properly. There were irregularities. That cast a pall over the election, which I think many Americans to this day have not recovered from in terms of the feeling of unfairness that the vote may well have gone the other way had there not been those irregularities.

Government Orders

Let us look at the process under Bill C-31. It is not perfect. It probably never will be, but it is a reasonable advance in ensuring the integrity of that vote. For instance, there are improvements for access for the disabled. There are more convenient locations for the advance polls.

The access of candidates and officials to gated communities is clarified. The candidates' access to malls, privately owned public spaces, has been clarified. This is immensely important for any of us who have been candidates. Increasingly we are not going to meet people by knocking on doors but by going to malls, so this is important.

Also, there is an increased effort with the outreach provisions to get electoral officials to people unable to get to the polls.

I think these are immensely important improvements in that we must make sure our citizens have adequate access, but we must be vigilant against any irregularities.

What we have done in the committee, both in receiving the Chief Electoral Officer's report and considering it ourselves and in considering the government's response in Bill C-31, is to turn our attention to whether we were putting barriers in the way for people. They may be in remote communities, in aboriginal villages or in the inner cities. They may be living in shelters or they may be homeless. I think that all members of the committee from all parties were very seriously attending to the question. How can we ensure to the greatest extent possible, without risking the integrity of the system, that these people have access to vote? I think this was probably the toughest situation that all of us had to face.

We charged the Chief Electoral Officer to do a number of things. One was to ensure that areas of low enumeration and low participation were identified and targeted with extra resources to attempt to ensure access to identification and the voting process.

In regard to remote aboriginal villages, we heard evidence of people having difficulty providing adequate identification, so we also charged the Chief Electoral Officer to, first of all, recognize the aboriginal status card, which has a picture on it. It does not always have the address, but that card would be one of the recognized pieces of identification, as well as a letter from the band manager if the address was not on it, confirming that person's residence in that reserve area or wherever the person might live.

Those are reasonable attempts to deal with this tension between freedom and security: security in the system and freedom to vote. It is immensely important that we not drop our bar of the integrity of the system below that which we expect, advise on and monitor in other countries during their electoral processes.

We have an extremely important role. We have heard evidence from representatives of student groups and from people who work in the downtown east side of Vancouver, for instance, where the homeless or people in shelters have difficulty getting the adequate identification to secure their vote. The way we deal with the balance between integrity and freedom is not by lowering the bar so low that it could be open to abuse and therefore to lowering our citizens' belief in the integrity of the system. If they do not believe in it, they are not going to use it, and voting rates are going to continue to plummet.

● (1015)

We are concerned. I think we should express our concerns not by dropping our standards, but rather by redoubling our efforts through our electoral commission and the Chief Electoral Officer to get to those areas, to get to those people where there is evidence of low participation.

More broadly, as we talk about the Elections Act in this country we must attend to the issue of electoral reform, and we are in some parts of the country, in some provinces. We simply cannot continue to have dropping participation rates and fractured minority governments that do not properly represent the majority of the people in this country.

We must have some reform that will not do away with our constituency-based, first past the post system, but that at least will apply some adequate level of participation and proportionality so that the number of seats in the House represents in some better proportion than it does now the percentage of the vote achieved.

We have had some good experience with that, both in this country and abroad. In 2004, in the throne speech of the former Liberal government, with the encouragement of the NDP, I must say, we put forth the objective of studying electoral reform. A special committee of the House was to look into this. It was one of the processes that was cut short by the unnecessary election, if I may say so, of January 2006.

However, there we are and here we are, and what are we going to do about it? I would suggest that we charge the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with this as the appropriate venue and place for this to be considered very carefully.

The government, through the Prime Minister, announced two or three weeks ago that in fact there was going to be a communication, a consultation, with Canadians over issues of electoral reform, Senate reform, decorum in this House, which is a very important issue, and public engagement. That is a bit curious, because for most of those topics, except for electoral reform, although that was started and stopped, the government has already put bills forward. It seems to me to be a bit backward to start a consultation process after bills on parliamentary reform have already been presented to the House.

Be that as it may, let us look at the quality of what was suggested. A \$900,000 tender is being put out to a polling firm and an as yet unknown think tank to hold, across the country, a few consultations that are being called deliberative. Something can be called deliberative without it being anything close to deliberative if there is not the proper information brought forward, if there is not the time taken to advise people and have them well informed on the issues, the options and the different models, and then have a true conversation and a set of recommendations.

Government Orders

This is happening now in the province of Ontario with its citizens' assembly, which is very much patterned after the citizens' assembly process in British Columbia and which before the last B.C. election identified an alternative form of electoral process. That assembly process was deliberative. It went for about a year and a half. It was a widely representative group of about 178 people.

In fact, at the same time as the last election, the referendum was held on whether we would stay with the first past the post system or move to this new electoral forum recommended by the citizens' assembly, a single transferable vote system that is quite complicated. Of the people voting in that election, 58% voted in favour of that change from our current system. The threshold was set at 60%, which is very high, but when we think that there was 58% represented, that is a very, very significant desire for change, certainly by a majority of the people.

We are watching that. It will come forward again for a vote in a referendum at the next B.C. provincial election in three years, so we will see where that goes. We also will see where Ontario goes.

• (1020)

Federally, quite apart from having polling companies and think tanks do some kind of quick, superficial testing of the atmosphere across the country, we want to look at it in an extremely in-depth way with a lot of consultation. Let me advise the House that in fact that process to a great extent has already happened.

The Law Commission of Canada in 2004 published a massive study. The Law Commission legislation charges that independent public commission to look into whether the laws of Canada properly conform to the social reality and the needs of the people. The Law Commission probably carried out one of the most in-depth research jobs, first of all, on voting systems in other democratic countries compared to Canada, and also looked at the different models that were going forward. It recommended on balance that we add an element of proportionality, not to do away with our current system but to add an element of proportionality to it. I commend this report to all members of the House. It is on the Law Commission of Canada website.

I commend all members of Parliament to do it quickly because as they may recall, the government, in its fall economic update, announced that it would basically eliminate the budget for the Law Commission of Canada, so it may lose its website as of April 1. Canadians may have less of an opportunity to see that fine work, that reasoning, that research, and the consultation which the commission is charged by its statute to undergo. It is extremely thoughtful and that is the way we should go forward.

There is nothing wrong with polling. There is nothing wrong with some deliberative discussions across the country with a think tank, but the place where these issues should be decided and studied, and where the consultation with Canadians should take place is through the House and the members of the House and, in particular, either a special committee or the procedure and House affairs committee of the House because that is our responsibility.

Second, we should be looking to the statutorily independent expert Law Commission of Canada for the fine work it has done and build on it, rather than simply ignore it.

Those are my remarks. I am speaking in favour of the bill at third reading, but I must conclude by reinforcing the observation of the committee that there are pockets of citizens in this country who do not have easy access. They face barriers in being able to exercise their right to vote and those include often aboriginal communities, but remote communities and people, often homeless, in inner cities.

We must redouble our efforts, through our electoral commission and Chief Electoral Office to ensure that those areas are targeted and the right to vote is brought to those people in an as accessible and effective way as possible.

Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, I certainly appreciate the comments by my colleague from Vancouver Quadra, a member of the official opposition who, like myself, sits on the procedure and House affairs committee where this bill ultimately came from. As he said, we have had a lot of discussion there and certainly the whole area that he branched off into, the whole area of future electoral reform, and ultimately that is our intent.

In fact, we presented a motion recently, which was defeated, but the member for Vancouver Quadra was the only opposition member who supported our motion to have the procedure and House affairs committee look more in-depth at additional reforms that we could consider over and above Bill C-31, and some of the companion legislation that we have presently over in the Senate.

The only part of his remarks that I would take some particular exception to is that the election of 2006 was unnecessary. I think Canadians certainly did not share that opinion because they dramatically changed the makeup of this place and opted to replace his party with the new Conservative government.

However, be that as it may, he did actually touch upon, both at the beginning of his remarks and at the end of his remarks, a primary concern that has been expressed both at procedure and House affairs and in this House.

When we started down this process that ultimately led to Bill C-31, certainly my thoughts at procedure and House affairs were that we had unanimity among all four parties. We wanted to ensure the integrity of our electoral system, both for the advantages that present here in Canada, but also to uphold the image of Canada as a bastion of democracy worldwide.

He pointed to his own experiences in Nicaragua. Many members from all parties have participated as observers in electoral processes worldwide, monitoring elections in some of the world's poorest countries. I certainly applaud the efforts of the member and others who have done that, but it does point to the need to ensure the highest possible standards for Canada's democracy, for how we go through elections here.

Government Orders

I am very disappointed in the fearmongering of the New Democratic Party subsequent to our decision to move ahead with legislation like Bill C-31. Somehow it is trying to communicate to Canadians that there are going to be thousands of Canadian citizens who are going to be disenfranchised by this legislation. I do not hold that point of view and I do not think the member does either.

As he quite correctly said, there are a number of steps that can be made, not the least of which would be targeted door-to-door enumeration in those areas to ensure that people are on the list and to ensure the list is as accurate as possible.

My question is the one that I hold near and dear. I do believe that there are some responsibilities that should be placed on citizens, that it is not entirely the responsibility of government to ensure that they are on a voters list, and that it is not entirely the responsibility of the government or Elections Canada to ensure that they have the opportunity to vote.

Yes, we have a collective responsibility, but I believe the citizens themselves have a responsibility to ensure that they can be properly identified as residing in a particular riding and thus they are eligible to vote in a particular part of the country, and that indeed they are Canadian citizens.

I think that comes home as we travel around the world. The hon. member referred to the great extents to which other citizens of other countries will go to ensure they have the opportunity to vote. Yet somehow we seem to reverse the onus here in Canada and think it is the responsibility of Elections Canada or the government, or members of Parliament from all parties, to ensure that every single Canadian actually somehow gets out to vote. There are responsibilities on the part of citizens themselves.

I would just ask for the member to comment, specifically if he feels comfortable with the assurances that we have had from the Chief Electoral Officer and from Elections Canada that it is certainly not our intent, nor the intent of members present, to see people disenfranchised and not have the opportunity to vote if they are actually qualified to vote.

● (1025)

Hon. Stephen Owen: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his observations and insights into the electoral process. I agree that he has put his finger right on the key point.

After the presidential elections in the United States in 2000, I remember a joke going around that the Russians would send monitors to the next presidential election to ensure it was fair, which is the reversal of roles of course.

There is a grain of truth there. If we are going to hold ourselves out as a democratic example, particularly through our electoral process, and be advisors and monitors in other countries that are experiencing often for the first time the democratic right to vote, which in my experience and in my observations in a newly democratized country is taken up with enthusiasm and high turnout rates, we should be a little ashamed that our own citizens do not participate in the same way in our electoral process.

That is the balance. If we cannot show that we have integrity, then our participation will be even less. It is one thing to have people vote for all of us in this place and then think we are not listening to them, but it is another thing entirely if they think we arrived here in some clouded way.

We must not allow that to happen at the same time as we are doing everything we can to ensure that the existing barriers, whether they are physical, intellectual, illness, or remoteness, are overcome by targeted enumeration.

● (1030)

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in contrast to what the government whip said, the New Democratic Party does have serious concerns with the bill around the area of voter registration.

As a result of the way the bill is structured, thousands of people in Canada will be disenfranchised. These are the poorest people in our society. They are women who may be in shelters for battered women. They are homeless who may be in a shelter due to poverty. They are people who are ill or disabled. Yes, we have a real concern about these people, the most vulnerable people in our society, being disenfranchised, and it is a legitimate concern.

Another big area of concern is the whole issue of putting a voter's date of birth on the voters list. This is an invitation to identity theft, which we know is a growing problem in Canada. Getting that kind of information would make most direct marketers and those involved in direct sales absolutely ecstatic because they could then target individuals.

In terms of the addition of the date of birth of voters being put on the voters list, which does get into the hands of the public, how does the member for Vancouver—Quadra feel about that? How does he feel about his party supporting the Bloc amendment and the government also supporting that?

We are very concerned about it in terms of voter identity theft. What I believe is at the heart of this is the ability for other political parties to target people by their demographics, by their age, and use it for fundraising and so on. We are concerned about that. I would like to hear my colleague's response to that.

Hon. Stephen Owen: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the NDP has raised a very good point. I guess if it were easy it would not be as enjoyable, but we have to try and come to some coherent compromises in so many issues that we deal with in the House. We are going to be dealing with it again on security legislation and whether the investigative hearing and preventive arrest provisions still should be part of our system. It is that balance between freedom and security and it is contextual. We have to find it.

In this case there is no doubt that a person's date of birth can be an important indicator of that person's identity. The very thing that causes concern to my colleague from the NDP is the very thing that also makes it of use in terms of identifying someone. Someone may have the same name as someone else, but their ages may be very different. It does have an identifying value to it. Yet we do not want to infringe on people's privacy. Those are some of the tough trade-offs we have to make.

Government Orders

In the circumstances, on balance, I would rather it not have to be done, but I do accept that there is an identification value to it which should and can be respected. It is open to the parties, yes. It is not just open to the electoral officials because, of course, a mainstay of the integrity of our electoral system is our ability to have scrutineers from each party there to observe the process as one of the safeguards for it.

I would rather it would not have to be done, but I accept on balance that there is a value to it. On balance I would say that adds marginally and quite importantly to the integrity of the voter system.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act, especially since I have run in eight elections. These elections touched me personally, because I was a candidate. I have to say that I have seen just about everything since I first ran for election in 1982. At that time, attempts at electoral fraud had already declined, but not disappeared completely, and they are still a problem today.

We must therefore protect the integrity of the electoral system and make sure that all the information on our lists of electors is accurate. We also have to make sure that everyone who is entitled to vote does vote and that everyone who is not entitled to vote does not.

But something strange is happening, and it underscores how important it is that only those who have the right to vote actually do so. Curiously, election results in the various ridings are becoming closer and closer. It is therefore especially valuable to have an accurate list and a sound system, because that can make all the difference in the end. Ultimately, when the differences are added up, a minority government could become a majority government. We must therefore make sure our electoral system is above reproach.

Obviously, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of this bill. The political parties worked together extremely well in committee. For once, the government apparently listened to the opposition parties, in contrast to what is happening on many other issues, such as law and order, the Kyoto protocol and even the gun registry. It has to be said that the party in power does not listen very well.

In this case, there was good cooperation and, as a result, the bill will reduce the opportunity for fraud or error, improve the accuracy of the register of electors, facilitate voting and improve communications between election officials, candidates, parties and the electorate.

Following the general election in June 2004, the Chief Electoral Officer released a report entitled "Completing the Cycle of Electoral Reforms". It was tabled here in the House, but we did not have time to examine or approve the report before the election was called on November 29, 2005. It was presented, however, after the January 2006 election, in June. The committee then looked closely at this bill, analyzed it and made recommendations. We are now ready to move forward and we hope to see this piece of legislation enacted in time for the next election.

Given the timeframes that must be respected, the election will not be held too early this year, which means we can implement all the points presented in this bill.

Should we force an election anyway, considering the values placed on certain points that the opposition parties do not accept? Or should we wait for this bill to become law and come into force, to ensure that the next election is held under the provisions of the new legislation?

In any case, this bill clearly contains significant improvements. The Bloc is particularly proud to have made a number of gains with respect to this bill, such as the date of birth, the unique identification number, as well as the so-called "bingo cards" on election day, which serve to identify those individuals who have gone to vote and therefore encourage people to get out to vote. Getting people out to vote is an important part of it.

• (1040)

Lately, voter turnout has been declining with every election. In municipal, provincial, Quebec and federal elections, we have been seeing a downward trend in voter participation.

Some political parties have access to good lists of electors to ensure follow-up and encourage voters to cast their ballot. These tools are also critical on voting day to track voting and support better turnout. This is democracy in action, playing by the rules. I would like to review the proposed rules that will reduce the opportunity for fraud or error.

Voters must present government-issued identification. The best example of this is a driver's licence with the holder's photograph, signature, and other information that appears on the list of electors, such as an address.

We can be certain that the address is correct because if a person moves, he or she must inform the government so that his or her new address appears on the licence. This piece of identification is proof that the voter is legitimate.

Some people may not have photo identification. In such cases, they must provide two other pieces of acceptable identification. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for determining what constitutes acceptable identification.

There may also be some people who do not have two pieces of identification. Earlier, someone mentioned homeless people. Most of them are Canadian citizens, so they do have the right to vote. We must make it possible for them to vote. A person who has no identification can still vote if someone else can vouch for them in an affidavit. If that happens, that person can vote.

That said, the act provides that an elector who has been vouched for at an election may not vouch for another elector at that election. That could set off a major chain of events and could lead to electoral fraud if one of the individuals involved had dishonest intentions.

Government Orders

In addition to ensuring that people can be correctly identified, we must ensure the accuracy of the list of electors to verify that these people are eligible to vote. That is why clause 4 of the act states that:

The Register of Electors must also contain, for each elector, a unique, randomly generated identifier that is assigned by the Chief Electoral Officer.

There are a number of advantages to assigning unique permanent identification numbers.

Duplications do occur. We must be able to spot them and ensure that the eligible individuals are registered. Those who should not be registered should be deleted from the register of electors.

The identifying information required by the Act includes the date of birth, mailing address, civic address, as well as sex. Often, individuals may provide all this information in a particular order that may not necessarily be used in other circumstances. Linking lists may sometimes generate errors.

• (1045)

The use of a unique identifier would eliminate a fair share of potential errors.

In terms of the register of electors, when we complete our income tax returns, there is a small box to be checked if we want the information to be forwarded to the Chief Electoral Officer so that it is available. It is a fairly reliable data base because the taxpayer has contributed the information. It does happen that an individual who is not a Canadian citizen—and thus does not have the right to vote—prepares a tax return and checks off this small box. Their name is added to the register of electors. Thus, it was also suggested that a declaration of citizenship be included on the annual tax return as well. This would solve several problems and ensure that only the personal information of voters eligible to vote is used to update the register.

Tax returns are also filed for deceased persons. Unfortunately there are a fair number every year. We could also use the information included in the return filed for the deceased individual to ensure that their names are removed from the voters list.

For federal elections, the Quebec electoral list is used in Quebec, because of the completeness and accuracy of the information, which is updated regularly. The list also contains the new voters who have just turned 18, who are added regularly.

Once the eligible voters have been identified, and the ineligible ones eliminated, the voting process must be facilitated, to ensure that the highest possible number of people can easily access the polling station. For example, persons with reduced mobility who report to a polling station that is impossible to access can ask for a transfer. This transfer can now take place almost immediately and that individual can go to vote at another location.

In any case, we must ensure that returning officers in the various ridings do not overlook accessibility issues at the polling stations, which must be as large and fully equipped as possible, even though transfers are a possibility. After all, it is the responsibility of the returning officer to ensure that all sites can handle situations involving reduced accessibility.

Another purpose of the bill is to improve communications between electoral officials, candidates, parties and the electors. There are various aspects that enhance communication and facilitate access to the lists of electors. As I was saying earlier, the purpose of this is to “get out the vote” as much as possible and as honestly as possible. The bill also provides for additional operational improvements that will make the system increasingly effective and ensure its integrity and accuracy.

• (1050)

The Bloc Québécois is very proud of other aspects that are not included in Bill C-31. I am talking about the appointment by the Chief Electoral Officer of returning officers. History and experience show the truly different situations that have come up at times and that have been quite odd, not to say crooked. From now on, people will no longer necessarily be selected based on their political stripe, but will be appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer. Thus, those who seem best qualified will be appointed to the position.

Furthermore, there will of course be fixed date elections. Unfortunately, this will not be the case the next time around; I am sure the next election will not be held in October 2009, since the current government is a minority government. Nonetheless, we will now be prepared for it, especially with the tools available in Bill C-31. Future elections will be held with as much integrity and accuracy as possible.

In closing, seconded by the hon. member for Drummond, I move:

That this question be now put.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will comment on two aspects of the speech by my colleague from the Bloc.

First, I am a little taken aback with the enthusiasm shown by the Liberal Party and the Bloc for the bill. It seems the government has introduced the bill based on the premise that it is necessary to change the part of the Election Acts dealing with voter ID because of widespread fraud.

I went to the website of Elections Canada. In the last federal election one person was charged and prosecuted for having voted incorrectly. The person was not yet a citizen and should not have cast a ballot. In the election in 2004, there was not one incident. In the election prior to that there were three.

First, if we are entering into these fairly draconian measures, which we argue will have the effect of disenfranchising many Canadians who will be unable to produce the extra photo ID contemplated by this, and if we are doing away with the idea of a statutory declaration as being acceptable for identification, why are we taking such heavy-handed measures when there really has not been a pattern of voter fraud? That is the first point I would raise to my colleague from the Bloc.

The second is the date of birth going on the permanent voters list is an appalling recipe for identity theft. We might as well be helping those who would steal identities. All one needs to get a fake credit card is name, address, phone number and date of birth. It is like having a PIN number.

During an election campaign, hundreds of volunteers go in and out of our offices. We cannot stop them from having access to that voters list. I agree it is important for Elections Canada to have dates of birth, but to have dates of birth, that personal, private information, floating around is absolutely dangerous.

My colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre, said that relying on the government to protect one's privacy is like asking a peeping Tom to install one's window blinds. This is the risk that we are running.

I sit on the privacy committee. We are currently in the process of looking at the PIPEDA legislation, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, dealing with just these very issues of people having a right to privacy, which is just as important as many of the other competing rights and privileges.

It gets to be a charter issue. Section 3 of the charter guarantees the right to vote in the elections of members of Parliament or provincial legislatures. We believe the barriers put in place by these new stringent identification rules are a barrier to the point that thousands of people will be disenfranchised and will be denied their charter right.

We just heard a constitutional expert, someone who teaches constitutional law at university, the member for Vancouver Quadra, say that he approves of this legislation. How can he and the member justify what will clearly infringe upon one's right to vote and access to vote from a constitutional and charter point of view?

• (1055)

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cardin: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, I have been through eight elections. During my first election, I must admit that I was a little naive and I did not believe that fraud existed. If I had looked at the Chief Electoral Officer's reports and they indicated there had been one or two cases, then I could have said I was right. But since 1982, in the last eight elections, in which I have taken part, I have seen for myself that, unfortunately, a lot of people have tried to abuse the system.

What matters is that the people who have the right to vote can vote and those who do not have the right to vote cannot. With more specific pieces of identification, we will ensure that people have the right to vote. After that, we want to ensure that the people who do not have the right to vote, do not vote. There is no point in thinking that fraud does not exist, because it does.

The hon. member from the NDP who asked this question has probably been in the House of Commons longer than I have. He said earlier that he obtained and read information indicating that there is practically no fraud. Fraud statistics are based on the number of charges that have been laid. Therein lies the problem.

When the deputy returning officer was not able to ask for identification and someone claimed to be Joe Blow, it was difficult to

know whether that person was telling the truth or not. Sometimes, the deputy returning officer or the clerk knew this was not true because Joe Blow was their neighbour. However, not much could be done about it.

I believe that Bill C-31 will prevent people who do not have the right to vote from voting and will allow those who do have that right to go ahead and vote. As the Conservative Party representative was saying, those who have the right to vote have a small responsibility to ensure they are on the list. Protecting the integrity and accuracy of an electoral list and the integrity of an electoral system to defend democracy is a shared responsibility.

Quebec has been using the date of birth for a long time. As far as I know, the problems related to the date of birth appearing on the electoral lists were few and far between, even fewer than the cases of fraud the hon. member from the NDP was talking about.

• (1100)

The Speaker: When the House resumes consideration of the motion, there will be three minutes remaining for questions and comments for the hon. member for Sherbrooke.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

WARKWORTH MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, March 10 and 11 are special days in my community of Warkworth, Ontario. On this special weekend, thousands of people will be enjoying the sights, sounds and smells of the Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival.

Each year the community marks the coming of spring with a fun-filled family weekend of events to enjoy both in the village of Warkworth and the Sandy Flats Sugar Bush.

Sugar bush highlights include horse-drawn sleigh rides, free taffy on the snow, log sawing contests, snowshoe and plank races, nature trail walks, clog and old-time square dancing, music and much, much more.

Of course, a trip to the sugar bush would not be complete without the taste of fresh, hot off the grill pancakes and sausages smothered in local award winning maple syrup expertly cooked by the Warkworth Community Service Club.

I send a special thanks to all the volunteers who make this weekend a yearly success. I urge all to come and enjoy a fun-filled, old-time country weekend in the beautiful hills of Northumberland—Quinte West.

* * *

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to share with the House that on February 1, it was announced that Sheila Watt-Cloutier, an Inuk environmental activist, was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with the former vice-president, Al Gore, by two Norwegian members of parliament.

Statements by Members

Sheila Watt-Cloutier has worked tirelessly on the international stage to bring to the attention of other nations and leaders, on behalf of the Inuit, the vital importance of informing people of climate change and the impact it has on the Canadian north and the people who live there.

It is imperative that the Conservative government stop ignoring the north and the impacts climate change is having, not only on our environment but on the people and their way of life.

I ask this House to join with me in congratulating Sheila Watt-Cloutier on this nomination and wish her all the best.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DIANA PARADA

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week, *La Presse* and Radio-Canada named Diana Parada, a 34-year-old woman from Colombia, their person of the week.

Ms. Parada arrived in Quebec nine years ago and was charmed by Quebecers' involvement in their society and their solidarity. Her attitude and her desire to succeed helped her overcome the challenges of learning a new language and adapting to a new culture.

Her long road to success began when she and another mother made Colombian-style baby carriers. Encouraged by positive reactions from other interested parents, she founded Maman Kangourou Inc. In 2004, just six months later, she received three Quebec entrepreneurship competition prizes, including first prize in the trades category.

My Bloc Québécois colleagues and I would like to congratulate Ms. Parada. As a role model for Quebec women, she has proven that determination and successful integration can lead to great things.

* * *

[*English*]

FRASER HEALTH

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Fraser Health Authority is the fastest growing health authority in British Columbia and yet Royal Columbian Hospital, B.C.'s first hospital, has only 1.6 acute care beds per thousand when the Canadian average is two beds per thousand people.

In addition, 50 beds at Eagle Ridge remain unopened.

Fraser Health is in crisis. Hospital executives are resigning in frustration.

The Conservatives promised to reduce patient wait times and yet now the health minister has admitted they will not keep that promise.

My constituent, Patricia Furdek, told me, "Our federal government needs to make a commitment to our national health care system, fix the inequities and ensure that there are national standards. After all, what's more precious than one's health?"

David Pollard wrote, "I implore you to fight on behalf of all residents of Coquitlam against two tier medical care".

I do implore the government to take its commitment to health care seriously and ensure that Canadians receive the care they need, when they need it, where they live.

* * *

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our government, I would like to offer my warmest greetings to all Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean Canadians as they welcome the Year of the Pig.

The Lunar New Year has become an important part of the Canadian cultural landscape, with celebrations taking place in homes and communities all across the country.

[*Translation*]

Simply put, the country we know and love today would not exist without the contribution of Canadians of Asian origin.

[*English*]

Chinese Canadians helped build the railway to the Pacific and now, more than a century later, Canada is building its Asia-Pacific Gateway to continue building our economic relationship to the rising economic powers of Asia.

Righting the wrong of the Chinese head tax was one of this government's great accomplishments.

As Chinese Canadians celebrate the Year of the Pig, I want to say *Gung Hei Fat Choi*.

In my community of Coquitlam, one of Canada's most vibrant Korean Canadian communities can be found. I wish to tell all my constituents and all Korean Canadians *An young ha sae yo*.

I also wish to tell all Vietnamese Canadian communities found across Canada, on behalf of our government, *Chuc mung nam moi*.

Mr. Speaker, happy Lunar New Year. May the new year bring health, happiness and success for all.

* * *

● (1105)

CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP ACT

Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 2007 marks the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Citizenship Act and the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Today's special celebration of Canadian citizenship at the Supreme Court of Canada would have been greatly enhanced had the Conservative government kept its word and enacted a new Citizenship Act that was compliant with the charter.

The 1947 and 1977 Citizenship Acts contain many discriminatory sections that are in contravention of the charter. These outdated sections discriminate against religious marriages, deny many people born out of wedlock their citizenship rights, treat wives and children as chattels and deny the birthrights of children born to Canadian soldiers who fought for our freedoms in the second world war.

Had the previous Liberal government not been defeated, Canada would have a new Citizenship Act that embodied, in word and spirit, our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I call upon the Conservative government to keep its promise and table a new Citizenship Act that ends discriminatory practices and to use as its guide the unanimous 12th report of the citizenship and immigration committee from the last Parliament entitled, "Updating Canada's Citizenship Laws: It's Time".

* * *

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the forest industry makes a vital contribution to the Canadian economy but it is facing significant challenges to its competitiveness.

That is why the Government of Canada has developed the \$127.5 million forest industry long term competitiveness initiative that will help create the conditions necessary for Canada's industry to compete globally.

This funding will go toward promoting innovation, expanding market opportunities, developing a national forest pest strategy and addressing skills and adjustment issues in the sector.

This builds on the recent efforts of the Government of Canada to support the sector, including \$200 million to combat the mountain pine beetle infestation in British Columbia and the new softwood lumber agreement, which put an end to the long-standing and costly trade dispute between Canada and the United States.

The forest industry's long term competitiveness initiative is another example of the government's commitment to Canada's forest industry—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Gatineau.

* * *

[Translation]

MICHEL PRÉVOST

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois and I would like to congratulate Michel Prévost on being re-elected chair of the Outaouais historical society.

Mr. Prévost is leader in the field of heritage conservation. He encourages Outaouais decision makers to keep our past alive by protecting heritage buildings and sites. He has worked to protect Charron House, the Notre Dame cemetery caretaker's house and Moore farm, and to beautify Brewery Creek and Jacques Cartier Street.

Mr. Prévost is also a well-known lecturer in built and religious heritage, and bears witness to the lives of famous people who left their mark on the Outaouais, such as Jos. Montferrand.

Congratulations, Michel Prévost, and long live the Outaouais historical society.

Statements by Members

HEALTH

Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, Bloc Québécois ideology has trumped common sense. To the Bloc Québécois, its cause takes priority over the health of Quebecers.

To show that it is willing to go to ideological extremes, the Bloc Québécois voted against motion M-235 calling on the Minister of Health to continue working with Statistics Canada and the provincial and territorial cancer registries.

Such cooperation on this type of cancer is extremely important and could help everyone involved save lives.

Recently the president of Coalition Priorité Cancer, Pierre Audet-Lapointe, said that it is not true that Quebec can ignore what is being done in the rest of Canada. According to the coalition, this battle is too important to get bogged down in a jurisdictional dispute.

In addition, because that would go against its ideological fixation, the Bloc wants the provinces to go without Quebec's expertise and wants Quebec not to exercise its influence in the Canadian federation.

Once again, the Bloc has chosen its cause over health, and—

● (1110)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River.

* * *

[English]

COMRIF PROGRAM

Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the COMRIF program was introduced in 2004 to improve and renew public infrastructure in communities with populations of less than 250,000.

In January, the Conservative government announced the recipients of the final scheduled application process.

In reviewing the announcement for the entire province of Ontario, funding totals show that the Conservative government is using the fund to disproportionately favour Conservative held ridings.

Of the total \$46 million funding delivered in 2007, \$40 million has been awarded to Conservative held ridings. In 2006, of \$117 million in total funding, no less than \$100 million was allocated to Conservative ridings.

This kind of blatant partisanship is immoral. Small communities across the province are in desperate need of infrastructure renewal. Clean water and safe roads must be available for all ridings, not just those that supported the minority government in the last election.

* * *

JUSTICE LEGISLATION

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, political parties are judged on whether they can walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

Statements by Members

In the last election, the Conservative, Liberal and NDP platforms all called for stiffer mandatory sentences for gun related crimes.

Acting on our commitments, the government has introduced safer community bills that will restrict the use of conditional sentences, better manage dangerous offenders, crack down on alcohol and drug impaired driving, protect youth against sexual predators, and Bill C-10, which would impose mandatory minimum penalties for serious gun crimes.

The government realizes that it takes cooperation in a minority Parliament and we have offered fair changes to answer the opposition on our gun crime bill. The Liberals, in their arrogance, have demanded we either pass their old, weaker crime bill or they will gut ours.

The Liberals will not meet us halfway and are putting their interests ahead of Canadians. When Bill C-10 comes back to this House gutted of protective measures, Canadians will know who the guilty party is.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Sunday is Chinese New Year and I wish all hon. members a happy New Year of the Pig.

Unfortunately, for many hard-working immigrant families this weekend will be one spent alone, without their families or friends from back home. Visitor visas are increasingly hard to come by. The decision-making process is arbitrary with no chance for appeal. Wait times to bring fathers and mothers to Canada are long.

After so many years of promises to reform our immigration system, the Liberal and Conservative governments of the last decade have failed. This failure is especially evident when the daughter of a dying man in my riding cannot visit him from China. He sadly passed away without ever having seen his daughter. She could not even come here to the funeral.

Where is the fairness?

This Chinese New Year, let us speed up family reunification. Let us put in place a fair and humane system for visitors. Let us approve the NDP's once in a lifetime bill so more families can be brought together. Let us create an appeal process so there is real accountability in our immigration system.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week I was privileged to attend, along with other MPs, the G-8 + 5 Legislators Forum in Washington, D.C., where the world's governments affirmed that climate change remains at the forefront of global consciousness.

German chancellor, Angela Merkel, made a keynote address to the session outlining the EU's priorities on climate change. Key business leaders, like Sir Richard Branson, also attended and added their influential voices to the discussion. The presence of banking and business leaders served to underscore that major stakeholders in

every political and private field now understand the urgency of this issue of global warming and climate change.

As China, India and other developing countries continue to expand their economies and emissions, we in this country must serve as a model to the world, a model for sustainable development.

Canada can be a leader and it is time for all parties to cut the hot air. It is time for Canada to take leadership and act.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the significant impact the Bloc Québécois has had on the decisions made by the government of the Prime Minister. We can say that, without the Bloc's input on issues affecting Quebec, those issues would not have been handled in the same way.

We have won recognition for Quebec as a nation because we believe that Quebec is not just a province, but a nation of the world.

In the same way, remaining true to what we are, the Bloc Québécois has criticized the fiscal imbalance and demanded a solution that we are still waiting for. It was the Bloc Québécois that repeatedly called on the federal government to pay Quebec so that Quebec could implement its green plan.

On the issue of supply management, it was the Bloc Québécois that pressured the government to live up to its responsibilities to an industry whose very existence was threatened. The Bloc Québécois can be proud of its record.

* * *

● (1115)

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Right Hon. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago, Prime Minister Mackenzie King declared for the first time, "I speak as a citizen of Canada", to the participants in Canada's first citizenship ceremony.

[*English*]

The spark that led to the creation of the Canadian Citizenship Act was created in 1945 when a young member of Parliament visited the Canadian War Cemetery in Dieppe and noted that the names on the crosses were French, they were English and they were also from the farthest approaches of the world. He noted that these young men and women could no longer be called only British subjects, that the Canadian Citizenship Act had to be brought into being.

That MP, the minister who later created the act, was my father.

Canada is known to the world as a beacon of hope, respect and decency. As generations of Canadians have built our country, Canadian citizenship has become the mortar of our nation and the emblem of our achievement.

* * *

SENATE TENURE LEGISLATION

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had reason to hope, albeit a very modest hope, that the Leader of the Opposition had finally come to his democratic senses. Canadian Press reported that after meeting with Liberal senators, the Liberal leader has now agreed to support Bill S-4 for Senate term limits in principle.

Two hundred and sixty-two days and counting and no movement in the unaccountable, unelected Liberal dominated Senate and the only thing we get from the Liberal leader is that he now agrees in principle with the same position he already asserted, except instead of six to ten years he now wants term limits of 12 to 15 years.

Despite the fact he told his senators directly to support the bill in principle, apparently his words held little priority in their minds because we saw no change in tactic yesterday.

What is it going to take for the Leader of the Opposition to be respected in the Senate? What will it take to end the Liberal filibuster of a 66 word bill?

Canadians want leadership. They want term limits on senators and they want a Senate that is accountable.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week the Prime Minister admitted that his government was changing the judicial appointment process to find judges willing to advance his party's criminal justice agenda.

The issue here is not who is tough on crime, but who is prepared to take appropriate measures on crime while respecting the independence of the judiciary.

If the Prime Minister is so certain that his government needs to meddle with the judicial system, can he tell the House what court decisions he would reverse?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our position on this matter is very clear. We want an independent judiciary based on merit and quality.

In terms of the process of appointing those judges, we do think that lawyers are not the only people who have a say in the system. We believe that police officers often participate in the judicial system and police officers understand how the judicial system works and perhaps some of its failings. We think they have something constructive to offer and it is consistent with our view that we want to make our streets and communities safer for all Canadians. We

Oral Questions

think police officers on the judicial advisory committees will make a big difference in ensuring that result.

[Translation]

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister has doubted the wisdom of charter jurisprudence for a long time. His suspicions about Canadian judges are also longstanding.

If this Prime Minister is intent on imposing an ultimate test for potential judges, can he tell this House which rights granted to Canadians by our courts should be revoked?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for example, we have Bill C-10 which is proposing minimum sentences for crimes committed with firearms. The Liberal Party is opposed to this bill. This is one way that our party, our government, wishes to fight crime.

● (1120)

[English]

I invite the deputy leader of the opposition to tell his colleagues that if they do want to show that they care about getting tough on crime and they do want to make our streets and communities safer, they can support that bill for mandatory minimum penalties for gun crimes.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has refused to answer the question. He knows full well that this side of the House has given the government cooperation on a number of important criminal justice bills.

Let me address another issue. There is a backlog of judicial vacancies and we know that the government has dragged its feet until it can change the way judges are appointed. If the government were serious about crime, it would fill the vacancies on the bench right now.

Will the government return the appointment process to the way it was and move swiftly to appoint judges meeting the appropriate standard of merit and not ideology?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that we want to go back to the old way of appointing judges under the Liberal Party. That meant judicial advisory councils stacked to the hilt with Liberal appointees, like the president of the Liberal Party of Manitoba and former candidates from all across this country.

No, we do not want to see former Liberal Party hacks making the appointments. We want to see police officers involved in looking over those decisions together with other respected members of the community, including those from the legal community.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has shown his disdain for judges long before now.

Oral Questions

In 2004 to CBC television the Prime Minister said, "I have been somewhat of a critic of the courts from time to time. If I am Prime Minister, people will be relieved to know a little bit more about appointments that I would make".

Why is the Prime Minister using the courts to push his social Conservative agenda against the beliefs of the vast majority of Canadians?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I could continue my further response to the deputy leader of the Liberal Party, we have actually made 51 judicial appointments so far this year. That is a fair number to clear up the backlog.

If he thinks it is an extreme ideological agenda, perhaps he could explain. One of those appointments is Julie Thorburn, former fundraiser for the campaign of the deputy leader when he was seeking to become leader of the Liberal Party. I suppose he thinks she is not qualified, or perhaps that is the sole exception, someone who fits the Liberal test for appointment to the bench: membership in the Liberal Party.

[Translation]

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this non-answer shows that this government is trying to divide Canadians.

Canada has never needed to question judges' ideology because our citizens know that the independence of our judicial system has never been called into question, except by this new government.

Perhaps the minister will have an answer. Will the minister present a specific list in this House of the judges with whom he does not agree and the decisions he does not like?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think that, on the issue of crime, Canadians are united. They want safer communities. Clearly, our program is trying to achieve that objective.

[English]

In terms of making our streets and communities safer, we make no apologies for putting police officers on the judicial advisory committees. Members of the Liberal Party of Canada may think that is bad. They may think police officers know nothing about the legal system. They may think they know nothing about crime. We think that police officers are perhaps the best judges of what needs to be done to make our streets and communities safer.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government's strategy has been clear since 2003, when the President of the Treasury Board moved a motion in the House, calling upon the government to bring in measures to protect and reassert the will of Parliament against certain court decisions.

Will the government admit that its strategy is nothing new, since its objective was already clear in 2003? Once in power, it wanted to appoint judges who share the same ideology.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr.

Speaker, as I have already said, our party's agenda, and that of this government, is to make communities safer.

[English]

We want to make our streets and communities safer. We want to get tough on gun crime. We want to get tough on dangerous offenders. We want to get tough on sexual offenders. This is not any kind of secret. This is what Canadians want. This is what Quebeckers want. This is what this government wants.

• (1125)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is like listening to a broken record. We are sick of hearing the same responses.

In his speech on this motion, the former justice minister already denounced judicial activism regarding the redefinition of marriage.

Are we to understand that the recent changes to the composition of the selection committees are intended not only to reward their cronies, but also to ensure that future decisions will correspond to his ideology?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has its agenda. I invite the Bloc Québécois to join our government by supporting Bill C-10, for example. This bill proposes minimum sentences for criminals who commit an offence with a firearm.

[English]

I would invite the member of the Bloc Québécois to join with us and with Quebeckers and other Canadians in ensuring that that bill, which the Bloc Québécois together with the Liberals have effectively gutted at committee, gets the meaningful penalties restored in it when it comes back to the House.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a speech he made in 2003, the President of the Treasury Board denounced the secret process of appointing Supreme Court and appeal court judges. He called for a review of the process and said he wanted more Canadians with different backgrounds to get involved.

Will the President of the Treasury Board acknowledge that when he said he wanted more Canadians with different backgrounds to choose judges, he really wanted people who think just like him to have complete control over the judicial appointment process?

[English]

Mr. Rob Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are united in wanting safer streets and safer communities. This government has made a very clear commitment, as did other opposition parties make a very clear commitment in the last election campaign, to get tough on crime.

Why is it when it comes time to actually put these measures in place, only one party is acting? We are acting. We urge opposition members to join with us in making our streets safer for all Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Justice did not beat around the bush when he said in the same speech that the courts were doing what they pleased and that that had to stop. He added that Parliament had the duty to bring legislation in line with Canadians' opinions and values.

Yet is it not true that this government's real agenda is not to impose Canadians' values on the judiciary, as it claims, but rather to impose old, right-wing Alliance and Reform values?

[English]

Mr. Rob Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we announced last year that we would be adding police officers to the judicial advisory committees, which provide advice to the Minister of Justice on judicial appointments.

I can understand why the Liberals are upset that they are no longer making judicial appointments, but I would ask all opposition members to explain to their constituents why police officers are less worthy than lawyers to help make these decisions.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is the two year anniversary of the coming into force of the Kyoto protocol and the government should be living up to its obligations. However, the NDP has learned that not only is the government an environmental delinquent, it does not live up to its financial obligations.

When we look at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, it turns out that Canada owes \$525,000 under that convention. It is not acceptable that these bills are not being paid.

Why is the government not paying its dues on the environment and why does it not stop being a deadbeat when it comes to the UN and the fees we owe them?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking action on the environment after 13 years in which very little happened. We know there are others who would like to see Canada spend money, for example, on greenhouse gas hot air credits by giving billions to Russia.

We believe in acting in Canada. We have done that through the ecoenergy program and the ecotrust proposal. These are putting billions of dollars into the hands of Canadians who are seeking to make their environment cleaner. We are putting billions in the hands of Canadian provinces to have a program to make our environment cleaner. The government is taking action.

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): That certainly sounds like a deadbeat response, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

That is not all. In addition to these arrears, the government owes nearly \$400,000 for the Kyoto protocol. That makes a total of nearly

\$1 million in dues that this government owes for the environment. These figures come from the UN.

Why is this government not paying its dues on the environment to the UN? Why?

● (1130)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is true that the previous government, the Liberal government, promised to spend a lot of money on the environment, but in actual fact, it did almost nothing.

[English]

The Liberals did virtually no spending. They did virtually no actual action to improve the environment. We are finally getting around to making those changes that were never made. We were committed to commitments internationally, which the last government never took any steps to do. In fact, under the previous Liberal government, Canada went to 35% above its Kyoto commitments. Obviously, we have a big hole dig out of.

* * *

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has no plan for the manufacturing sector and now it is attacking the tourism industry. Six thousand people could lose their jobs this year because of the government's plan to cancel the visitor rebate program.

Why does the government want Canada to be the only OECD country with a national consumption tax that does not offer a visitor rebate program?

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is misrepresenting the situation. The fact is the visitor rebate program was only taken up by 3% of visitors, and the member knows this very well. This program was not working and it was not giving value for money. Therefore, the government is changing the program.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister should listen to the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. It says that this cut will cost thousands of jobs. In fact, the Hotel Association of Canada has conducted analysis to indicate that this decision will cost the government millions of dollars of lost tax revenue due to the reduction in tourism numbers. Due to the HST, Atlantic Canada will be hit the hardest.

Will the government perhaps consider a private operator for the program or reverse the decision to cancel the visitor rebate program and save thousands of jobs in the Canadian tourism industry?

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, maybe the member should listen to his own premier, the Premier of Nova Scotia, who said:

Oral Questions

I don't think that visitors make their decision based on that rebate...They come to Nova Scotia for the scenery, the people, the experience of what Nova Scotia's all about.

* * *

[Translation]

TEXTILE AND CLOTHING INDUSTRY

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the manufacturing sectors most harshly affected by job losses due to globalization is the clothing and textile sector. The previous Liberal government had implemented measures to help this industry become more competitive, with the CANtex program for example. Far from helping this industry, the Conservative government has cut its funding. Last fall, \$25 million was cut from this program.

Why is this government trying to destroy this industry? Why does it not have a plan?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about job losses in any manufacturing sector in our country. We have begun the long trek back to get the economy rolling again, with tax cuts and job creation programs about which the Liberals forgot.

All the Liberals want to talk about is Kyoto. They do not even want to mention Bill C-257, which would exonerate the programs that we are trying to put in place.

[Translation]

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this answer is not acceptable. The Liberal government helped the industries that were having difficulties, such as the clothing and textile industry. The Conservative government seems to be under remote control by our overseas competitors and is making sure all our jobs are exported. We created a program of duty remissions on inputs to help the textile industry cut its costs.

Why did the Conservative government eliminate this program and re-establish the duties, thereby increasing costs?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are into the silly season before the budget. The Liberals like to talk about programs that they tried to put in place, which were not that effective to begin with.

I advise him to wait for the budget to come out. We are within a month or six weeks of that happening. I am sure everybody in job creation across the country will be well pleased.

* * *

• (1135)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Public Safety gave us an update on a Canada Border Services Agency list of CIA transport flights that landed in Canadian territory.

Will the minister table the list in the House so we can all know what is on it?

[English]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I think there was some discussion about an EU report. This has not changed in Canada. We have had those lists of planes that have landed here. We have no information that any of the individuals who the opposite side is talking about were ever in Canada.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we are asking for the list of what was talked about yesterday with respect to the flights. Either the minister did not understand or he does not want to produce the list.

The Minister of Public Safety reported on the planes that landed, but he did not say anything about the transport planes that overflowed Canadian territory.

Can the minister guarantee that no CIA planes transported prisoners through Canada's air space? Can he swear to that?

[English]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the CBSA and Transport Canada have looked into planes allegedly linked to the CIA. The officials have informed the minister that there is no information at this time which would confirm any allegations from the member opposite.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to forecasts by Agriculture Canada, net farm income will total \$784 million in 2007, one of the lowest results, if not the lowest, ever. By comparison, the annual average in the 1990s was about \$3 billion.

Does the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food intend to quickly establish an income support program appropriate for the farm reality and, naturally, the Quebec reality?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food was clear. We are currently working on improving programs to adapt to what is happening. Market conditions change and we want to adapt.

We are taking action. Recently, important initiatives were announced in Quebec and we are continuing our work. We are working on behalf of our farmers.

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it would be a good idea for the parliamentary secretary to also meet with Quebec farmers, because it seems that he lives on Mars.

Quebec received only 6.8% of the total envelope disbursed by Agriculture Canada for the three main income support programs in 2006. There is a problem. Quebec agriculture actually represents 20% of Canada's agricultural sector. The math is simple.

How can the minister disregard what is happening to Quebec agriculture to such an extent?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague can throw out all kinds of statistics. One thing is clear: a decision was made last week in support of supply management. We were accused of being against supply management. Measures have been taken that the Bloc will never be able to take.

Furthermore, we are working on providing a fair income for everyone. Officials agree on this and we are headed in the right direction. My colleague knows quite well that he will never be able to do anything in this matter.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that he would respect the will of Parliament regarding the plan to meet our Kyoto commitments, but in the next breath he called it meaningless.

Will the Prime Minister commit to ensuring quick passage of the bill he said that he would respect?

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, imagine that, a Liberal asking a question on the environment. The Prime Minister made it very clear that if and when Bill C-288 becomes law he would respect that.

The real question Canadians are asking is, why did the Liberals not act on Kyoto when it was ratified, why 13 years of doing nothing? The other question Canadians are asking is, why, right after that vote, did the former prime minister go to the Rideau Club and leave his big V-8 limousine idling for over two hours?

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is more of passing interest to me that the member opposite could make the statement that we had no plan, when it was our plan that party was presenting internationally.

The initiatives the Conservative government has announced are underfunded and they are re-gifted programs that the government itself cancelled. What is worse, there is no money for them, for the EnerGuide refit, for the renewables, for Quebec and other provinces.

How soon will Canadians see the government's actual detailed plan to battle climate change? What funds is the government committing?

• (1140)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to sharing what funds we are providing because we are creating real action on the climate change issue.

This is what the commissioner of the environment said:

Oral Questions

When it comes to protecting the environment, bold announcements are made and then often forgotten as soon as the confetti hits the ground...The federal government seems to have trouble crossing the finish line.

Nothing seems to change with that party.

We are providing \$350 million for the ecotrust, working with the provinces and territories; \$220 million for ecoenergy technology.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment claims that he has not misconstrued the words of former U.S. vice-president Al Gore on the urgency of climate change action. About a week ago, the minister insinuated that Mr. Gore supported the minority Conservative government. In fact, the former vice-president has called on the government to reverse itself, to do the right thing, and follow the Kyoto protocol.

Since the minister now clearly wants to be on the same team as Al Gore, will he accept the challenge, embrace Kyoto and stop his fearmongering?

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a week ago that member asked me to table the quote. I will be glad to read the quote again. Mr. Gore said:

My friends in Canada tell me that across party lines and in all regions there is very strong support for Canada, once again providing leadership in the world, fighting above its weight class and showing moral authority to the rest of the world...

The Liberals did not get it done. They created an environmental mess. We are getting it done.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary just confirmed our point.

I have a second question for the government House leader.

Earlier in question period, the government House leader said that police made the best judges. No one doubts the law enforcement expertise of Canadian police officers, but there is a reason why investigative and adjudicative functions are separate in our country.

If it is true that policing and judging should be comingled, is the government House leader calling for an end to the notion of an independent Canadian judiciary?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know that the opposition House leader was listening to what I said.

Oral Questions

I said that police officers are pretty good at judging what needs to be done to combat crime in our country. I think they know something about the problems of combatting crime in our country and they know something about dealing with the judicial system in our country. Every day police officers are in our courts providing evidence, bringing criminals before the courts for prosecution, for adjudication. As a result, I think they have a lot of experience in what is necessary and what is good in the courts.

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NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a recent report highlights the Liberals soft on crime approach while they were in government. Over the last six years the National Parole Board has awarded more than 100,000 pardons, including numerous pardons to violent and sexual offenders.

What is the government's reaction to this? Will the Minister of Public Safety be taking action to protect Canadians?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians would be surprised to learn there is a system in place that grants first degree murderers and sexual offenders pardons. Canadians elected a new government to replace the Liberal Party's soft on crime approach to justice.

The Prime Minister and the public safety minister have expressed concerns and asked for a review of the pardons process. Our government will review and strengthen the criteria of how pardons are granted to violent and sexual offenders.

* * *

SENIORS

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thousands and thousands of immigrant seniors are forced to live in isolation with barely the means to support themselves. The situation is dire for far too many. They must choose between medication and rent payments, and despite the recommendations of the Immigrant Seniors Advocacy Network, there is still a cruel 10 years residency requirement for old age security.

Will the minister finally provide fairness for seniors and will he implement the excellent and humane recommendations from the network?

• (1145)

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are addressing that in Bill C-36. The position we are taking will work very well for the seniors the hon. member is speaking about. This particular provision will ensure that we do not compromise our immigration policy.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that was not much of an answer. The government is turning its back on Canadian seniors.

The Immigrant Seniors Advocacy Network represents thousands of Canadians. It is telling the government that the restrictions on sponsoring elderly relatives are too tight, that they cannot access old

age security, and that without assistance for public transport, seniors are isolated and lonely.

Will the minister listen to the voice of experience and the wisdom that comes with age, and will the government meet directly with our immigrant seniors?

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I encourage the member to help us pass Bill C-36.

The wonderful thing about old age security is that there is a residency provision. We do not discriminate. People can be non-Canadians or Canadians. Old age security is offered universally to anybody who has residency in Canada. I encourage the member to please help us pass Bill C-36 as quickly as possible, so that some of her fears can be alleviated.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing should be more sacred to a finance minister than the credit rating of the government and associated entities.

How then does the finance minister explain the recent credit downgrade of the Canadian Wheat Board by Standard & Poor's? What steps will the minister take to reverse that downgrade?

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a whole set of circumstances surrounding the Wheat Board right now, as the House knows. The government is holding a plebiscite with barley producers to see whether the mandate at the Wheat Board should be changed. We know that this is a strong entity on behalf of Canadian agriculture producers. We are committed to ensuring that it remains strong.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is not even a mention of the credit downgrade, but the Conservatives are no strangers to credit downgrades. The Government of Canada had a triple A credit rating from 1951 until it was downgraded under the Mulroney government in 1992 for a huge deficit. It took 10 years of Liberal fixing to bring that back up to triple A.

Is the downgrade of the Canadian Wheat Board a warning signal for more Conservative fiscal management and credit downgrades to come?

Oral Questions

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the alarmist efforts of my friend opposite, the Canadian Wheat Board is in fact in a strong position. It will continue to be in a strong position, particularly within a strong agriculture community with some real choice in its marketing options.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is, the government's attacks to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board are not only hurting the board's credit rating and destroying farmers' ability to compete profitably on the international stage, and not only is the government's incompetence driving importers to question Canada's reliability, but its ideologically driven attack is now hurting the nation's credibility.

Standard & Poor's names the government 11 times as being responsible for the credit downgrade. Why is the Prime Minister allowing his personal vendetta to undermine Canada's economic credibility?

[Translation]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government's commitment is clear and that is to respect the will of the farmers. We have had requests and we support farmers marketing barley if they want to. A plebiscite is under way with a democratic process and clear questions. Our government will take action accordingly.

[English]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): The government, Mr. Speaker, has no respect for farmers or for democratic institutions. Not only is the government undermining producer marketing power, not only do farmers continue to wait for the immediate cash it promised last spring, it is failing to assist producers in the southwest part of Saskatchewan who have experienced two years of severe drought. The previous government assisted drought affected producers under the cover crop protection program.

Does the government not believe in fairness? Does it not care about producers? Why will the minister not meet the disaster needs of drought affected producers in southwest Saskatchewan?

• (1150)

[Translation]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear: an unprecedented amount of money will be paid to the farmers. I can assure you that 2006 will be a record year, if we take the BSE crisis out of the equation.

[English]

Let us be clear. Our government is listening to farmers and taking action.

* * *

[Translation]

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Industry said that private investments are up. However, that is clearly not the case in the manufacturing sector. In 2006, investments in that sector in Quebec dropped, while in the rest of Canada, they rose by a mind-boggling one tenth of 1%. The

minister seems to be unaware that over the past four years, Quebec's manufacturing industry has lost 100,000 jobs.

Will the minister drop his ideological approach and propose a real strategy for industry?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of programs in play: provincial overlap into federal and federal overlap into provincial. We are working to streamline a lot of that.

Small business in this country of course is the backbone of the economy and that small engine runs on tax cuts. We are working hard to get a level playing field, to get those tax cuts back in play, and to get the regulatory burden down on a lot of these businesses. We all look forward to that bright new future under our government.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance think that cutting taxes for manufacturing companies is enough when they have reported zero pre-tax income in the last two quarters? If they do not make a profit, they do not pay taxes. Is that the kind of measure that will help them?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I should mention to my Bloc Québécois colleagues that Economic Development Canada participated in 785 manufacturing sector projects between 2004 and 2006, creating 937 jobs and now, 1,862 jobs.

One thing I can say for sure is that my colleague, the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec has brought in measures for regions that are having a hard time remaining economically vibrant. There are programs designed to address that, and things are going well. Requests are coming in and the projects are moving along at a good pace. That is a real strategy. That is not just talk; it is action.

* * *

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Inuit of Nunavut are suing the government for \$1 billion because it is failing to address the real life needs of the Inuit. It has been many months, 11 to be exact since I last counted, since Thomas Berger issued his final Nunavut report calling for major investments in education. There has been no action from the government.

Why do Nunavut residents have to resort to a lawsuit to get action from the government?

Oral Questions

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, NTI did launch a lawsuit against the Government of Canada in December of last year, but our government has moved forward by appointing a negotiator to deal with the issue that the Berger report has raised.

We will continue to be very mindful of the issues that face Nunavut. Of course, when we look back to last year's budget, we in fact invested \$300 million in housing needs for the north in Nunavut, and we are very proud of that fact.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Liberals who liked to talk a lot without delivering results, the Conservative government is taking action to ensure that first nations have the tools they need to control their future, to break free from the Indian Act, and promote strong economies and healthy communities more effectively.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs share with this House another concrete step that has been taken today regarding self-governance for the Anishinabek Nation?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to announce in the House that this morning the Minister of Indian Affairs and the Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief John Beaucage signed a government agreement in principle in North Bay, Ontario which establishes a framework for the Anishinabek Nation to assume greater control over its own institutions of government.

This agreement in principle provides a practical approach for supporting first nations to strengthen their internal governments, and solidify the political and financial accountability of first nation governments to their citizens. Stronger aboriginal government institutions help attract investment and partnerships that will promote economic development and improve social conditions in their community.

• (1155)

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week the minister told first nations that they had to take personal responsibility for the number of children in foster care, but the INAC website says: "Placement rates on reserve reflect a lack of available prevention services to mitigate family crisis".

It goes on to say that paying to move children out of the parental home while not paying for prevention services is increasing costs to taxpayers. So, which is it? Blame the parents, or blame the system?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the previous year there was an investment of nearly half a billion dollars in this area. Clearly, it is an important issue to us as first nations children on reserve need the support of the parental systems that are in place.

At the same time, the government needs to be mindful of the way to assist families in situations where unfortunately those parental

systems are not in place. We will be continuing to effect our improvements on first nations reserves and we look forward to assisting them in the future.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us turn our attention north for a moment. A decision on the Inuit lawsuit against the U.S. for the effects of climate change will come down on March 1. The government has turned its back on a deep water port in the north, fails to even mention the Inuit when talking about Arctic sovereignty, and does not support a bilingual education system in Nunavut.

How will the government help working families in the north with climate change and the inadequate education resources?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indian Affairs have on many occasions stated their interest in supporting the north. The Minister of National Defence has also done so on numerous occasions.

We are very interested in making sure that Canada's sovereignty is maintained throughout the north and that is why we have invested heavily in and throughout the north. When we look back, earlier last year, we made a \$300 million investment in northern housing. We feel that this is a starting point to assist the Nunavut people toward improving their housing conditions.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been over a year since the Prime Minister was chasing widows of second world war veterans with a promise to immediately deliver VIP benefits to all. It has also been a year since he vowed to "stand up for full compensation for persons exposed to defoliant spraying from 1956 to 1984". Some 150,000 veterans now feel that they have been stood up.

Why has the Prime Minister become a fugitive from his own promise and deserted Canada's veterans?

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the statement she has made is very far from the truth. In fact, we have been working diligently during the last year to improve everything that we promised we would improve.

The member, who sits on the committee as well, will know that we are about to get into the health care review which is part and parcel of what we promised we would do for our veterans in this country.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only moments after voting to support the Kyoto accord Wednesday night, Mr. Dithers, the former defeated Liberal prime minister, had his limo idling for two hours while he dined at the Rideau Club. Does this not smack of hypocrisy taken to a new level?

In contrast, our government is taking clear and decisive action on the environment. Just this week we announced various ecotransport initiatives for clean transportation.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities please tell the House how these initiatives will benefit Canadians?

Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is right. Real results on the environment and for the health of Canadians are this government's priority, with \$10 million to cut urban passenger transportation emissions announced this week, \$36 million to encourage consumers to buy fuel efficient vehicles, and \$61 million to reduce emissions from freight transportation.

We are getting real results. The Bloc can never get results. The Liberals did not deliver results. As for the results from the NDP, we just do not want them.

We want real results for Canadians' health and environment and we are going to get them.

* * *

• (1200)

[Translation]

CHILD POVERTY

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a UNICEF report ranks Canada 12th among the OECD countries with regard to the quality of children's lives.

This is unacceptable, given Canada's resources, as demonstrated by the \$13 billion surplus. The government claims to be helping families by lowering taxes. Poor families do not pay taxes, however.

Consequently, what is the government waiting for to transfer the funds needed to improve our children's lives to Quebec and the provinces, which have the expertise?

[English]

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are very concerned about child poverty. That is why we have addressed child poverty through some of the measures we have taken, most importantly the universal child care benefit. Every child under the age of six receives \$100 per month, which equals \$1,200 a year. We did that in the first half of our mandate and that includes every child under six in the member's riding. It does not matter which wage bracket they are in, and we are working for the poor.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the Northwest Territories brought down its budget. In his speech, the NWT finance minister put the government on notice that we want progress and ownership of our natural resources through devolution. Like so many northerners, the NWT's finance minister said he is growing impatient with the lack of real progress on an issue so vital to the future of our territory.

Routine Proceedings

The Prime Minister has personally promised quick action on these issues, but just like it was with the Liberals, there is no progress. All we have seen is the appointment of a former Mulroney cabinet minister, who says we have to start all over again.

This is unacceptable. When are northerners finally going to see some action?

Mr. Rod Bruinoog (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Indian Affairs has been in discussions with Premier Handley on this important file, and of course we have appointed a negotiator to come to an agreement in principle, as we see devolution in the Northwest Territories as essential not only to Canada but to the future of the NWT.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the international conference on cluster bombs will be held in Oslo next week. Canada is attending, but with little enthusiasm. Past Liberal governments have shown real leadership since the Ottawa convention, which reflected traditional Canadian values.

I realize that foreign affairs is foreign to the government, but will the government go to Oslo with concrete proposals and show real leadership or just be a Hollywood backdrop?

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, Canada has a proud history of taking the lead on these important issues. We will in fact participate in the Norwegian meeting aimed at preventing the use and transfer of those cluster munitions, which have a significant humanitarian and development impact on civilians.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 17 petitions.

Points of Order

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 34th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of House committees.

If the House gives its consent, I move that the 34th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs concerning the membership of committees of the House presented to the House this day now be concurred in.

• (1205)

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer have the unanimous consent of the House to introduce the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present.

The first petition is on behalf of many citizens from Duncan, who are requesting that the Government of Canada become part of the solution by renewing Canada's responsible commitment to the Kyoto treaty.

Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by people from across many parts of Canada. They are requesting that the government legislate programs consistent with meteorological reality and act immediately to reduce the climate change crisis by diminishing fossil fuel dependencies while sponsoring initiatives and incentives to promote less harmful technologies.

GENETIC USE RESTRICTION TECHNOLOGIES

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the final petition asks the government to legislate a permanent national ban on terminator technologies to ensure that these are never planted, field tested, patented or commercialized in Canada.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting petitions from people all across Canada who are requesting that the government continue its work to combat the trafficking of persons worldwide and here in Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for

Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-293—DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 13, 2006, you included Bill C-293 in a list of private members' items with possible royal recommendation issues. Following interventions in the House, on September 19, 2006, you ruled that the bill, as it was introduced, requires a royal recommendation.

You found that the creation of an advisory committee and new reporting requirements for ministers:

—require the authorization of spending for a new and distinct purpose.

As such, clause 6 and clauses 7 to 10 cause the bill as a whole in its current form to require a royal recommendation.

On February 1, the bill was reported from committee with numerous amendments.

Without commenting on the merits of this bill, I would appreciate your consideration of whether this bill still requires a royal recommendation under Standing Order 79, for two reasons.

First, while the committee deleted clauses 6 to 8, the bill as amended continues to include clause 9, and the provisions that had been in clause 10 have been substantially incorporated into clause 9. Given that your previous ruling concluded that clauses 9 and 10 required a royal recommendation, I would welcome your ruling on whether the bill still requires a royal recommendation.

A second aspect of the bill that may require a royal recommendation is that the bill would establish new conditions and criteria respecting the provision of official development assistance beyond those in the initial bill.

The committee amended clause 3 of the bill to provide for a definition of “official development assistance”, which includes that it be “concessional in character”, that it “conveys a grant element of at least 25%”, and that it “meets the requirements set out in section 4” of the bill.

Clause 4 of the bill places restrictions on the provision of official development assistance. Clause 4 was amended in committee to change the wording in subclause 4(2), obliging the minister to “consult with governments, international agencies and Canadian civil society organizations” before spending official development assistance. Clause 4 was also amended to provide a new subclause 4 (3), which places a new condition on the calculation of official development assistance.

Authority for official development assistance is currently provided in subsection 10(3) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Act, which provides the Minister of Foreign Affairs with authority to develop and carry out programs in relation to the minister's powers, including for the provision of assistance to developing countries.

You did not consider clauses 3 and 4 in your initial ruling on Bill C-293 on September 19, 2006. However, there have been new developments since that time.

In your ruling on Bill C-303 on November 6, 2006, you found that adding new conditions and criteria to an otherwise authorized expenditure requires a royal recommendation and that the clauses of Bill C-303:

—which relate to the making of transfer payments according to the specified criteria and conditions, require a royal recommendation.

This principle should apply to Bill C-293 as well, which would impose new conditions on government spending.

Other precedents make clear that adding new conditions to an otherwise authorized expenditure require a royal recommendation. For example, on April 23, 1990, Speaker Fraser ruled that a royal recommendation was appropriate because the bill in question would:

—change the conditions and qualifications that were attached to the original legislation recommended by the Governor General.

This is exactly what clauses 3 and 4 of Bill C-293 would do, by imposing new conditions on development assistance.

Therefore, due to the committee's amendments and in light of your ruling on Bill C-303, the government believes that Bill C-293 continues to require a royal recommendation.

I would respectfully welcome your ruling on this matter.

•(1210)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his usual vigilance and diligence in preparing for points of order on these situations. I will certainly review his comments and review the bill as amended by the committee, and I will get back to the House with due dispatch.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

The Speaker: Before the House proceeded to statements by members, the hon. member for Sherbrooke had the floor for questions and comments. There are three minutes remaining in the period for questions and comments, but as no member is rising, we will resume debate with the hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to address Bill C-31,

Government Orders

An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act.

I would like to commend my colleague from Ottawa Centre for the wonderful job he has done in dealing with the bill and for pointing out some of the concerns that the New Democratic Party has with respect to the bill.

Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about their own privacy. They are concerned that their names may now end up on a no fly list or banks may refuse to remit money to them because of their country of origin. They are also concerned about cyber criminals hacking into their credit card and debit card information.

Identity theft is an increasing concern. Organized crime is involved in identity theft. Police services across the country are warning us about identity theft. They are urging us to take great precautions around our own privacy information so that we do not become victims of identity theft.

Ordinary Canadians also feel a sense of vulnerability because of a lack of protection by the government of their private information. It is really shocking that the House of Commons is now being presented with a bill that would make the privacy of average citizens even more vulnerable to theft.

The intent of the bill is to crack down on potential voter fraud, a goal that all Canadians can support. The New Democratic Party wants to ensure there are no opportunities for voter fraud. While this is an admirable goal, the bill misses the point. It really puts forward a set of problematic remedies.

Voters will be shocked to learn that in the next federal election their dates of birth will be printed on the voters list. Why is that? Presumably the best interpretation is that returning officers will be able to use this information to verify if the voters are indeed who they say they are. The bill would require all voters to provide government issued photo identification in addition to a special identifier that would be given to each voter. We really question the necessity of birth date information being on the voters list.

If that provision is not bad enough, the Bloc put forward an amendment at committee which was passed with the support of the Liberals. The amendment would allow birth date information to be shared with all political parties. Why would that be? Political parties do not need to know the birth dates of their neighbours. My colleague the member for Ottawa Centre opposed this amendment at committee for obvious privacy reasons.

When political parties are dealing with voters lists, that information is shared with scrutineers who work for each political party. There would be no protection against the information getting into public hands and perhaps even into the hands of criminals involved in identity theft.

Government Orders

The real reason for political parties to have this information has nothing to do with voter verification. The Liberals who supported the Bloc amendment and the Conservatives who are now supporting it at third reading simply want as much information as they can possibly get so they can target demographic groups during election campaigns. I am convinced they will also use this information for fundraising purposes. This is the kind of information that people in direct sales or marketing would be delighted to get their hands on.

• (1215)

It is appalling that those three political parties would be pushing for political parties to have that kind of personal data on people. If they really cared about potential voter fraud, they would not devise a system that is in effect an identity theft kit for would-be criminals, now sponsored by the government putting out that information.

If they were really serious about amending the Canada Elections Act to help prevent voter fraud, instead of exposing people's private information they would have taken into account the measures that my colleague from Ottawa Centre has put forward. Those measures include making sure that all voter cards are sent in envelopes addressed to the voters. In that way, if the person no longer resides at the address, the card would be returned to Elections Canada and not left at the address for someone else to pick up and use in some kind of fraudulent manner.

They would also have universal enumeration, the way we used to do it in Canada, so that an accurate voters list would be in place and not open to fraud. They would allow people who are not on the voters list to swear a statutory declaration on election day at the polling station so that the polling station employees could verify the identity of the voter. This has been done in the past and it has worked well. I do not understand why it has been taken out of Bill C-31.

The people who are most vulnerable to lose their opportunity to vote, to be disenfranchised, are the most vulnerable people in our society. They are women who may be in a shelter for battered women who do not have a fixed address to register at, or they may be homeless people who are also residing in a shelter, or people who have moved. It will be the disabled, the people who are ill who will lose their opportunity to vote. That is a very serious thing.

This may result in the bill going to the courts because of these issues and also because of the privacy issues.

I am sure that all Canadians will be distraught when they find out about the changes that are put forward in this bill and how they will actually impact vulnerable people on voting day, and also the issue of privacy.

I urge the government to consider changes to this bill that will make it a bill that all Canadians can support and so that Canadians do not have to worry about the privacy issues.

• (1220)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for a very concise and poignant overview of this bill and the concerns that we on this side have. Clearly, the NDP is the only party that has raised concerns.

This is about privacy and about the access to franchise. As we speak, there are concerns about the accuracy of census data. We know the problems that exist presently with the databases, be it with the banking sector or Elections Canada. Now we are going to add even more data to it.

We heard from the Chief Electoral Officer before he retired that in his estimation there was not a real problem. He said at committee that it made sense to have the voter cards put into envelopes so that people who might think of using the cards for voter fraud would not be able to, and that, yes, enumeration is a good idea. It really begs the question as to why we need this bill.

In my colleague's experience in the many elections in which she has participated, who is it who is most vulnerable in terms of the ability to vote? Is it people who are at fixed addresses, or people who move around and are in transition? I would like to hear of her experience in her constituency as someone who has participated in many elections.

Ms. Dawn Black: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Ottawa Centre is right. I have participated in a number of elections over the years. I have participated not only as a candidate but as a campaign manager for other candidates. I have a fair amount of experience in Canada's elections.

Clearly, the people who would be most vulnerable to losing their vote if the provisions of Bill C-31 are not amended are those who are most vulnerable in our society. It will be the people who are disabled, the people who are sick, the people who live in poverty. It will be women who are in shelters for battered women. It will be the homeless. They are the people who will be disenfranchised under this legislation unless changes are made to it.

I urge the government to make those changes to ensure that all in society have a fair opportunity to cast their ballots.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-31, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act. The summary of the bill states:

This enactment amends the *Canada Elections Act* to improve the integrity of the electoral process by reducing the opportunity for electoral fraud or error. It requires that electors, before voting, provide one piece of government-issued photo identification showing their name and address or two pieces of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer showing their name and address, or take an oath and be vouched for by another elector.

It also amends the *Canada Elections Act* to, among other things, make operational changes to improve the accuracy of the National Register of Electors, facilitate voting and enhance communications with the electorate.

It amends the *Public Service Employment Act* to permit the Public Service Commission to make regulations to extend the maximum term of employment of casual workers.

We support the changes to the Canada Elections Act that protect against the likelihood of voter fraud and misrepresentation. All of us who have been involved in vying for a position as an elected representative would like to ensure that those citizens who vote are able to vote honestly. All citizens want to ensure that their vote counts and also that the voting process is not subject to fraud.

Government Orders

Many countries of the world do not have that luxury. Many countries in fact do not have an electoral process like ours. I have said it before and I will say it again that it speaks to the excellence of the team at Elections Canada that Elections Canada is world renowned. Elections Canada not only ensures that in Canada we are able to have elections that are free, fair and above board but it also exports that level of expertise abroad. I do not think that most Canadians are aware that the team at Elections Canada is able to do this. Elections Canada does it because being able to have free and fair elections is a hallmark of a country's being able to acquire stability.

For example, this has happened in the former Yugoslavia, in the Congo and in a number of other countries in Africa. In particular, when South Africa moved out of the dark days of apartheid and into the rainbow nation it is today, it was able to do that in some small part with the help of Canada, Canadians and Elections Canada. It was a very proud moment for those of us who have had dealings with the country of South Africa that we were able to see the country metamorphose out of the dark days of apartheid into a new era where people are treated equally.

During the time of the election in the early 1990s there was great fear within the country of South Africa and elsewhere that the country would implode in a bloodbath, but it did not happen for many reasons. One small reason it did not happen is that Elections Canada was involved in the elections that were taking place. Why was Elections Canada asked to participate? Because the men and women who serve in that area are people of excellence and are above reproach. They are public servants who do an unbelievable job for all of us here and abroad.

It is quite tragic that the head of Elections Canada, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, a person who served the public for more than 16 years in that post, if my memory serves me correctly, has left that post. We do not know why he left, but I will say that losing a superb public servant like him is a loss to Elections Canada, a loss to Canada and a loss to the international community. Thankfully, within days of Mr. Kingsley's leaving that post, he found another job in Washington, one that enables him to use his expertise and his skills to deal with elections all over the world. This is another fine example of a Canadian who is able to use his or her expertise in the service of many.

• (1225)

Unfortunately, we have lost other superb public servants since the government came on board. Mr. Peter Harder, the deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, comes to mind. He is leaving his post. If memory serves me correctly, he has served in the public service for some 29 years. He served as deputy minister of various departments. He acquitted himself with excellence and served many different governments, both Conservative and Liberal. He did this in the best interest of the country and the departments in which he worked. It is a huge loss. The reasons, I am sure, are personal, but it is unfortunate that we are seeing this egress of individuals from our public service.

Unfortunately, the power has shifted quite significantly to the Prime Minister's Office in a way that we have not seen, certainly not in my memory, and I have been here 13 years. Even those who have served longer cannot remember a situation where so much power

was centred in the hands of the few in the PMO, people who, with the exception of the Prime Minister, are unelected and unaccountable to the public.

It is a divide among not only the Prime Minister, his office, his caucus and his cabinet, but between bureaucrats and public servants who serve all governments with honour, regardless of political stripe. By not listening to the public servants in our bureaucracy, the Prime Minister is treading on very thin ice. He is also ignoring a great deal of expertise within the bureaucracy that could serve him well.

I happen to be involved in foreign affairs. It is deeply disappointing to see the way in which the Department of Foreign Affairs has been excluded from the creation of foreign policy within our country. This is an unwise move. There are a lot of very smart people in foreign affairs with a great deal of experience. Foreign affairs is not something that a person could simply pick up in a matter of months. It is a deficit of the government and we see many examples of it.

For example, in Afghanistan the government is quite appropriately supporting our troops, as we all do, and supporting the military aspect as well. However, the Prime Minister is ignoring the political solutions to Afghanistan, which are required to resolve the challenge there. If we are to deal with the insurgency within Afghanistan in the future, it has to be done through political solution, for example, by dealing with the opium crop.

Why has the Prime Minister not called Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair and asked them to stop the poppy crop eradication program? By not doing that and allowing that process to continue, it is putting the lives of our troops at grave risk. Farmers have said that if we eradicate the poppies on their farms, they cannot feed their families or themselves. As a result of that, they are going to join the Taliban, taking up arms against the group that is destroying their poppy crops. While our troops are not involved, Afghan people do not differentiate between groups in their country. In other words, they will not differentiate between Americans, Brits, Canadians, Dutch and others.

It is a very grave situation taking place right now. I implore the Prime Minister to call President Bush and Prime Minister Blair and ask them to stop the poppy eradication because it is putting the lives of their troops and our troops at greater risk.

It would be smart to listen to the public service and divert the opium crop into the development of pharmaceutical grade narcotics. One of the great challenges within developing countries is the absence of much needed essential medications, including narcotics. Imagine a people needing surgery or other medical help, such as repairing a broken arm. They would go through that without pain relief. It is inconceivable in our country, but the fact remains there is an 80% deficit of narcotics in developing countries.

Government Orders

● (1230)

Why do we not think about taking that opium crop, diverting it into the production of pharmaceutical grade narcotics, because opium is a substrate, then taking that material and producing medications that can then be sold and distributed to developing countries? This would be sensible and it would benefit farmers and Afghanistan by having a value added industry that is legal and safe. It would also undercut the financial underpinnings that are propping up the Taliban.

The second question is this. Why does the government not listen to our public service on the issue of the insurgency? We cannot win an insurgency, particularly one that has its bases outside of the country. In this case the Taliban's bases are in Pakistan. Therefore, there is no hope whatsoever of defeating an insurgency through military means when the people we are fighting flee across the border and disappear from Afghanistan.

The only solution to that is to deal with it politically. One solution could be the development of a regional working group on Afghanistan, which would involve the countries of Indian, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and others. They are all playing a game within that country while our troops are there. Unless all those countries are involved, we will never be able to resolve the internal and complex dynamic within the country.

I know the government recently, and I think wisely, put more money into the Afghan national police. However, why do we not ask our NATO partners to also do the same. They have been reticent and have not come up to the plate to support our troops, but one thing they can do is put money and resources to train the Afghan national police.

When our troops go in and take out the Taliban, there has to be a constabulary force that comes in behind them, which is able to provide security, but that is not there. The Afghan national police are seen to be as much of a problem on the ground as the Taliban. The country needs an effective Afghan national police force, and that is not happening. Police officers are paid \$70 a month, they have two weeks of training and they are ill-equipped. What do they do? They become part of the problem and they engage in thuggish behaviour.

How do we stop that? We have to put in the resources. I implore the Minister of Foreign Affairs to say to his counterparts in NATO that this is something that would be palatable to the domestic constituencies within the countries that make up NATO for them to contribute finances, resources and personnel to address this issue.

Third, in dealing with the internal dynamic within Afghanistan, the government continues to talk about the Taliban today, as if it was the same Taliban as in 2001. It is not. The Taliban of 2007 is amalgam of different groups. We need to draw some of those groups away from the Taliban and allow them to become a part of the decision making process in the future of their country.

The government needs to call on Mr. Karzai to call a loya jirga, which would bring in those disaffected groups together, those that excluded from the Bonn agreement, bring them back to the table and include them in the future of their country. By doing so, we will have a situation where these groups will move from the Taliban and

become a part of the future of Afghanistan. This would weaken the Taliban quite effectively.

Lastly, this ties into the opium situation. We have to follow the money with respect to opium. There are people in Mr. Karzai's government who are roundly seen as being very corrupt. While we are giving the government a lot of money, it is not trickling down to the people who need it the most, those on the ground. We need to spend an awful lot more resources to provide for the basic needs of the people to allow them to help themselves. By following the money, some of that is going to be tracked to Mr. Karzai's government, and those people have to be prosecuted.

Mr. Karzai is in a place where he has a bayonet in his chest and a bayonet in his back. He cannot do this by himself. He is going to need the partners, of which we are one, to assist him in ensuring that his government can have the transparency and accountability and that moneys that go into Mr. Karzai's government are put toward the basics such as primary health care, primary education, water security, food security, corruption and governance.

Also important is how we measure this. One particular parameter is maternal mortality, which is something we need to look at carefully. The maternal mortality statistics are astronomical. In fact, I believe they are the worst in the world. The chance of a woman dying in pregnancy in Afghanistan is 300 times greater than in Canada.

● (1235)

If we want to find out how social programs in a country are working, particularly in the area of the health of the people, we look at this. If the maternal mortality figures are down, it means health care personnel, medications, diagnostics and a rudimentary surgical system that is clean and effective are available. We then we know it will affect all the other parameters, such as infant mortality. We know we will be able to affect the lives of men and women. It also means there is adequate nutrition and clean water.

If we want to measure the effectiveness of how we have done in Afghanistan, the maternal mortality statistics within that country is very a sensitive indicators. Right now that indicator is the worst in the world. The indicator has to shake Canadians up. We have do a better job. It means devoting those resources not into single silo issues such as particular disease silos, but to developing an integrated health care system. This applies not only for Afghanistan, but for other countries as well.

One of the mistakes we make is we pour money into malaria, or AIDS or a number of other diseases such as tuberculosis. While this is important, a smarter way to do this would be to work on building integrated health care systems to ensure that we have the health care personnel, the diagnostics, the medications, clean water, the nutrition, the personnel and also the surgical sites and clinics, which are clean and effective and reasonably well equipped.

Government Orders

If we silo the medications and our health care initiatives internationally, we will not have the long term effect that we need to establish an integrated health care system for developing countries. This is exceptionally important. One of our flaws is we do not deal with the health care system as an integrated system. We do not produce a long term, stable health care system that can function on its own for a prolonged period of time.

It is a challenge. I ask the minister responsible for CIDA to contact her excellent public servants in CIDA and to work with them so that Canada is a leader, with other partners, in doing this. It is important for Canada to work in Afghanistan and in other areas.

On Darfur, which is being utterly excluded by the government, I plea to the ministers responsible to act now. The Prime Minister said "never again". The Prime Minister said that he would not allow genocide and gross human rights abuses to occur on his watch. They are occurring now.

The atrocities of genocide and human rights abuses are not only occurring in Darfur, but in Chad and the Central African Republic. If any member has seen the movie *Blood Diamond*, there are some horrific scenes in it. While it is only Hollywood, it gives us some indication of the type of terror that people endure such as gang rapes, their limbs are chopped off and there is torture in ways that we cannot imagine. That is happening right now and it is happening on our watch.

God help us if five years down the line someone writes a book *Shake Hands with the Devil*, part two, about our failure to deal with the genocide in Darfur, Chad and the Central African Republic.

This is entirely preventable. Why on earth do we not call on other countries and work with them to send in the troops, which are required right now, to support the African Union to save the lives on the ground? We must do it now. If we fail to do this, we are simply condoning genocide. Innocent people are dying, being tortured and raped unnecessarily.

The crisis can be dealt with. Khartoum will block our efforts. This is the longest serving genocidal regime in the world. The issue before us is do we listen to Khartoum, which does not want this to end, or do we act even if this regime does not like it? I submit that we should act, get the troops on the ground, get them in now and save lives.

• (1240)

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we in Canada know how important it is to ensure that our democratic process has some protection. One of the things Canada can be proud of is the fact that we are often called in to other countries to observe elections. We saw that in the Ukraine a couple of years back, as well as in El Salvador. One of my pet projects is to ensure that more women have an opportunity to vote and that the voting system, both here in Canada and internationally, is such that women are encouraged to vote.

After the Rwanda genocide, Rwanda changed its constitution so that 50% of the parliamentary system had to include women. We are a far cry from that in Canada, of course, where we have about 20%.

I wonder if the member could comment on how women in Afghanistan are being encouraged, not only to participate in the electoral system in terms of voting, but how women are being represented in the Afghani parliament. We know that many of the women in Afghanistan have struggled over many years to have their voices heard. I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Vancouver Island has asked some very interesting questions.

Thankfully, there is a greater representation of women in the Afghanistan parliament. In fact, last week we had the honour of being at a meeting of the United Nations Associations of Canada where a female Afghan parliamentarian addressed us quite eloquently, as did the Afghanistan ambassador to Canada's wife, Mrs. Samad who is a very eloquent individual. I hope that one day she is able to go back to her home and take a position of authority because she is a very bright individual and very well spoken.

Changes have happened. Changes have moved forward. If the member is asking about quotas, I personally am not in favour of quotas. I would ask her, as a woman, how she would feel if she were actually moved to a position by virtue of her gender as opposed to the substantial skills that she possesses as an individual.

If we were to have quotas, would that not demean any individual who falls within those quotas, be it women or people of colour? I am not in favour of quotas. If 70% or 80% of women were elected to Parliament because of merit, then that would be wonderful. So be it.

I firmly believe that we should be in a situation where merit trumps everything else and people are advanced as a result of merit. I think it would be offensive to people if they were to move ahead by virtue of the colour of their skin, their gender or any other subcategory that one would care to mention.

• (1245)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a committee member, one of the concerns that I had about the bill was on the issue of access to voting and potential barriers that the bill would create for people who, because of life circumstances, would not be able to exercise their franchise.

I brought this point forward to the committee by way of the testimony from witnesses. I moved amendments and brought the amendments forward to report stage so that people who, for reasons of circumstance, would not have the photo ID or the access to two pieces of identification, as would be recognized by Elections Canada.

To be very clear about it, the bill does say that people would be allowed to vote if they had someone there to vouch for them. The problem is that the person vouching would need to be on the voter's list in that particular poll.

Having heard testimony from aboriginal people and from people who advocate on behalf of the homeless and students, we know this will be problematic. We know that people in homeless shelters are often not there for very long. We also know that the people who are advocates working on their behalf often do not reside in the same riding, let alone the same poll, and therefore will not be on the voter list.

Government Orders

We have a predicament here. We have a bill, that seemingly and sadly will be passed, that will put barriers in front of Canadians and potentially disenfranchise people.

We could take this one step further. Duff Conacher from Democracy Watch said that we could have a Florida on our hands. He simply stated that if people were to challenge their right to vote and the results were close in any particular riding, and we have a minority Parliament, we could be setting up a situation similar to the one recently in the United States where it was not the people of the United States who decided who the president was, it was the supreme court. Certainly no one wants to go down that route.

I am not suggesting that will happen. I am simply pointing out some of the barriers and asking why, in goodness' name, would we go down that route when there are other solutions for potential voter fraud.

I just want to mention that the Chief Electoral Officer, whom we lauded so well, mentioned at committee that the problem that was being suggested by committee members was not a problem, and I agree. We need to look at whether this is a real problem. An analogy would be ripping off our roof because we might have a draft in the basement window. However, if we have the Chief Electoral Officer saying that and we have problems around access to voting, and we have, as Duff Conacher said, a potential where we will have an outcome that will be challenged and therefore putting our whole system in peril, what are we to do?

I would just like his comments on that notion that this could actually put more barriers in front of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from the NDP poses a very good question.

[*English*]

The member poses an intriguing question on how to give a voice to the voiceless. I do not have an answer for him on the population that he is talking about but I would submit that if we can send probes to the furthest regions of the solar system, then surely we should be able to overcome this.

One way to give a voice to the people, although not to the population he is talking about, is through electronic voting. Surely there must be a way to overcome perceived obstacles that exist today in terms of electronic voting. Why do we not enable people to vote electronically in a way that is open, transparent and free from any kind of gerrymandering?

I believe that is a course of action we can take. It will not necessarily tap into the population to which my hon. colleague is referring but I am sure he has other solutions to address the challenge of those people who are in homeless shelters, who do move around and who are of no fixed address and enable them to exercise their democratic right to vote.

However, I believe that e-voting would enable more Canadians to vote and would significantly give an upsurge to the 38% of Canadians who do not tend to vote from one election to the other. I believe e-voting would strengthen our democracy by enabling more

people to exercise that democratic right to choose the leaders of their country.

• (1250)

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with some sadness that I am getting up to speak to Bill C-31, a piece of legislation that would amend the Canada Elections Act.

I highly value our democratic system, as I am sure all parliamentarians do. What we really need to be doing in our democracy is encouraging people to vote. It is important that we look for ways to ensure the integrity of our system so that our voting system is not breached. We also need to look for ways to encourage voter turnout.

I have a couple of issues that I want to specifically address today.

The rationale behind this legislation has been around alleged voter fraud. The Chief Electoral Officer has said that there have been very few incidents. It almost feels like we are using a sledgehammer to kill a gnat. I would argue that what we really need to do with this particular piece of legislation is look for the places where there have been breaches and develop fixes for those breaches. Instead, what we are potentially doing is disenfranchising voters.

Over the last number of elections we have seen a decrease in voter turnout. In the last election, voter turnout was somewhere in the low 60% range. That should be a true warning bell for each and every one of us here because one party could form a majority with 30% of the vote. If we do the math on that, a party with 35% of 60% could form a majority. This should be a major concern for us.

The bill that is before the House has failed to look for ways to encourage voter turnout. Instead, what I fear is that some of the things in it may actually discourage people.

There are a number of individuals who, for many good reasons, lack proper identification. This may be due to poverty, illness, disability, frequent moves or having no stable address because they are homeless. These people may not have an opportunity to exercise their democratic right.

This week my caucus colleague from Timmins—James Bay talked about a letter he received from a senior who does not drive and has never driven. She does not have government issued ID in the form of a driver's licence. She was very concerned about whether her ability to vote would be impinged upon.

In addition, one of the things that we look to is a lack of intrusion in our lives by governments. I want to quote from some work that my colleague from Ottawa Centre has done. He has done some very good work in raising concerns about this legislation. He said, "Ordinary Canadians feel a sense of vulnerability because of a lack of protection over their identity by governments and institutions".

Government Orders

It may come as a surprise to many that Parliament is about to pass Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act, a bill that would make the average citizen's privacy even more vulnerable. The intent of the bill is to crack down on potential voter fraud. While this is an admirable goal, the bill misses the point and provides ill-measured remedies. Voters will be shocked to learn that in the next federal election every citizen's birthdate will be on the voter's list. Why? Presumably, it is so returning officers can use this information to verify if the voters are indeed who they say they are.

The bill would require all voters to provide government issued photo identification, in addition to a special identifier that would be given to each voter. If that is not enough of a peek into Canadians' privacy, an amendment was passed to share birthdate information with political parties.

An hon. member: Why?

Ms. Jean Crowder: The member asked why, and that is a good question. Why would political parties need access to a voter's date of birth?

• (1255)

The member for Ottawa Centre felt that providing birthdate information was a contravention of privacy. The member for Ottawa Centre wrote a letter to Jennifer Stoddart, the Privacy Commissioner, expressing the concerns of the NDP around this.

In part, there is some feeling that providing voter ID to political parties is actually more about politics than protecting the integrity of our electoral system. There has certainly been some suggestion that this will allow political parties to target voters for campaigning and fundraising. Surely the integrity of our electoral system should not be used for such crass political purposes.

The New Democrats have been very concerned about making sure that the integrity of the system is protected. The member for Ottawa Centre put some concrete amendments forward in order to ensure that integrity.

With me today, I have three that he raised. He talked about making sure that all voter cards are sent in envelopes addressed to the voter, so that if the person no longer resides at the address, the card would actually be returned to Elections Canada and not just left lying around for an occupant of the residence to pick up.

In addition, he has requested that there be a universal enumeration system so there is an accurate voters list. Any political party who has had to deal with the current voters list knows that the voters list is inaccurate. There are duplicates. People who have passed away years before are still on the voters list despite all the efforts of their families and loved ones to have them removed from the list. I would argue that universal enumeration would help us address some of those concerns. It would provide a much more accurate list at the polling stations, one that people could rely on with some degree of comfort.

As well, and this is a really important point, the member for Ottawa Centre has suggested that people who are not on the voters list should have the ability to be sworn in with a statutory declaration, with a voter at the polling station verifying who they are.

There is some provision in the current legislation to allow a person to vouch for another individual, but the person can only do it once. I would argue that in some cases such as homeless shelters, for example, some of the workers in those shelters have known some of the residents who come in nightly to stay out of the cold for quite some time and could vouch for a number of people.

In regard to some neighbourhoods, such as the Vancouver east side, I know that the member for Vancouver East has spoken about the fact that there is a system set up for statutory declarations so that people who often do not have government ID of any sort do have the right to exercise their vote. In a society in which we are talking about how we want an equal society, we must make sure that all members of our society have access to the right and privilege of voting.

One of the concerns that has been raised in the House is around first nations and their ability to access their right to vote. Although I agree that the status card is one of the tools that is recognized as government ID, what concerns me is that there is a new status card being developed. There is not a date at this point in time about when that new status card will be available. A release by the Assembly of First Nations talked about this in the context of land crossings, but said:

The "roll-out" of the new secure status card—still in the design and approval process—will occur later this year.

That means later in 2007. The release stated:

It is anticipated that the new secure status card would be available for use in time for the implementation of the requirement for trans-border documents for land crossings as of January 1, 2008.

The question at this point in time is this. If we should end up in a federal election in the next couple of months, and I know that many members in the House hope it will not be so, the question is, will the old status cards be accepted while the new ones are being developed? That is an important question that needs to be answered for first nations people.

• (1300)

It is unfortunate in terms of amending the Canada Elections Act that we also did not look at this as an opportunity for broader electoral reform. Many Canadians over a number of years have expressed concerns around, for example, the lack of representation of women in the House.

The member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca talked about having some discomfort with quota systems. A couple of years ago at the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union had some presentations on countries where there has been some success around increasing women's participation in the electoral process. What they found was that the remedy was complicated. Unfortunately, we do not have time in the House today to talk about what would be a good system around improving women's participation in the electoral process.

Government Orders

The presenters at the Inter-Parliamentary Union suggested that one actually needed a broad cross-section of remedies, including quotas. They found that in countries where quotas were put in place, legislated in conjunction with education and some financial supports, these countries did a far better job of increasing women's participation in the electoral process. I would agree with the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca that numbers in and of themselves are not sufficient.

In the early 1990s, Sweden was quite dismayed at the dropping rate of participation of women in parliament, so the Social Democratic Party instituted a policy of its own party. Although it does not translate well into English, its slogan was, "Every other one is a lady". The party ran a campaign committed to electing more women. Fifty per cent of the ridings were held by women. As a result, that initiative by the Social Democratic Party shamed the other parties into running more women candidates.

We could certainly use that in the House, given the fact that only 20% of the House is made up of women. Although the New Democratic Party has close to 50%, with 41% of our caucus women, other parties have not done nearly as well.

I think it is very important to ensure balanced representation in the House.

To go back to the topic of Sweden, it managed to increase women's participation to approximately 43%. A couple of years ago, a survey done of the members of the House discovered that although women were participating in greater numbers, there were still many systemic barriers to women's full participation.

Parliamentarians were shocked. With 43% of women participating, they thought everything was going to be fixed. What they discovered was that there was still sexism and there were still inappropriate remarks, and women were still not getting some of the higher profile assignments. The Swedish parliament has struck a committee to address some of those concerns. I look forward to the report that will come out to see what measures they have put in place to ensure that their House has true equality and moves beyond just the numbers.

There is another area with this particular piece of legislation amending the Canada Elections Act where we have missed an opportunity to look again at some other broader electoral reform.

A couple of years back, the former member for Ottawa Centre, Ed Broadbent, put together a paper called "Cleaning up Politics: Demanding Changes in Ethics and Accountability". I am not going to focus on the whole seven point plan, although I would welcome the opportunity to do that.

There were two key pieces in this plan. One was democratic accountability for MPs and the other was electoral reform.

I would suggest that there is a growing cynicism in this country around the fact that one can be elected for one party and a mere two weeks later end up representing another party without one's constituents having any say whatsoever.

Ed Broadbent, the former member for Ottawa Centre, talked about this, saying:

Democratic accountability should mean no MP can ignore his/her voters and wheel and deal for personal gain: MPs should not be permitted to ignore their voters' wishes, change parties, cross the floor, and become a member of another party without first resigning their seats and running in a by-election.

● (1305)

Wherever we can, we must put an end to backroom opportunism in politics. In particular, we must ensure that MPs who are voted in as members of one political party no longer have the right to ignore those parties and those voters who put them there in the first place. MPs should not be permitted to ignore their voters' wishes by changing parties, crossing the floor, and becoming a member of the cabinet without first resigning their seat and running in a by-election. We must combat cynicism by making better rules. Public trust cannot be written off for personal gain.

I know that this House has great respect for the former member for Ottawa Centre. Because he has served in the House for a number of years, he certainly has seen the winds of change and I am sure that he can only speak from a place of great disappointment at the floor crossing that has happened over this last couple of years.

In addition, the former member for Ottawa Centre, Ed Broadbent, was also a big proponent of electoral reform and talked about the fact that we have missed the opportunity to institute meaningful electoral reform. He talked about a couple of things. Again I will quote from the paper that he helped to author. He said:

A major source of needed democratic reform is our outmoded first-past-the-post electoral system. There is a serious imbalance in the House of Commons in gender, ethnic, ideological and regional voting preferences. Our present system does not reflect Canadians voters' intentions. Fairness means we need a mixed electoral system that combines individual constituency-based MPs with proportional representation. Most other commonwealth countries have already moved in this direction.

A major source of needed democratic reform is our outmoded, first-past-the-post electoral system. In Canada every vote should matter. Ninety per cent of the world's democracies, including Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Ireland and Wales have abandoned or significantly modified the pre-democratic British system that still prevails in Ottawa. As the Canadian Law Commission recommended and five provinces seem to agree, fairness means we need a mixed electoral system that combines individual constituency-based MPs with proportional representation. The global evidence is clear: only such a system would positively redress the existing imbalance in the House of Commons in gender, ethnic, ideological and regional voting preferences.

The Pepin-Robarts Commission pointed out a quarter of a century ago, our present system does a great disservice to Canadian unity because regional representation in the House of Commons—in the caucuses and in the cabinet—does not reflect Canadian voters' intentions.

I am going to go back in history a little bit here and continue to read for members what he stated:

Recently a Standing Committee of the House of Commons voted unanimously on a motion presented by Ed Broadbent that called for a concurrent, two-track process to begin by October 1, 2005, with a joint session mid-way through the process in November. According to the Committee's proposal, the citizen consultation process would have concluded its work, and publicly released its report by January 30, 2006. This report would then have been taken into account by the Special Committee in the development of its final report and recommendations on Canada's democratic and electoral systems. It would table its recommendations in the House on or by February 28, 2006.

Regrettably, on September 20th, [2005], the Minister responsible...announced that the consultation process on electoral reform would not begin as promised this year. This cynicism effectively means that there will be no decision on electoral reform before the next election.

We can see that there was in fact no decision on electoral reform, so I would urge all members of the House to support the motion that the member for Vancouver Island North will be bringing forward, calling on the House to examine a system of electoral reform, proportional representation, that would have us make sure that every vote in Canada counts.

Government Orders

It is an important matter. I hope all members will support the motion from the member for Vancouver Island North and defeat Bill C-31.

• (1310)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a wide ranging speech and a number of issues I would like to ask questions about. However, I will focus on one thing which is the final note that the hon. member was addressing and that is the subject of the consultation that was supposed to take place as a result of the 43rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It was to have set up a consultation process across the country on a number of issues including electoral reform, but not exclusively electoral reform, and a number of issues relating to the operation of the House of Commons and Canadian democracy including the roles of MPs of parties.

It did include the issue of participation by women and aboriginal people. That was a particularly important component. In fact, sitting on that committee I insisted that participation rates of aboriginals and youth be included because they are two groups that participate both in voting terms and representational terms in smaller numbers than their percentage of the population warrant.

That being said, I think she might have some historical facts wrong. I want to make sure that she and everyone understands this. She is quite right that in June the committee on which I sat reported unanimously on this and called for the report to take place. The then minister did indeed announce in September that nothing had happened, the deadline that had been applied by the committee had passed and the committee could not go forward.

However, what she did not mention is that earlier this year a citizens' consultation process set up in the same manner that had been advocated by Ed Broadbent before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs was set up to deal with these very same issues. That process is now under way.

The consultation process is travelling across the country and is due to report back to the House by the end of May. So all of that being said, it gives some context. It points out that there is goodwill from the new government with respect to this report in which a number of us, including myself in this government, had concurred in.

I want to draw the member's attention to a problem that exists with Motion No. 262. It refers to the setting up of a consultation process when in fact one already exists and therefore, in a sense, the motion which I know was put forward in goodwill last year is now out of step and this is a bit of a problem. I am not sure how we could approve that motion without effectively causing two parallel citizen consultation processes.

Given the fact that New Democrats have been complaining about the cost of the consultation process, I do not know how to square that circle, having two of them in parallel not costing more and not contradicting each other and so on. I invite her to comment as to whether or not Motion No. 262 has not been superseded by events that have taken place since that time as a result of the goodwill of the current government with regard to the citizen consultation process.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, I am from British Columbia where there was a citizens' assembly process that was actually driven by the people. The premier announced the citizens' assembly which had two members from each of the ridings in British Columbia balanced off by some additional representation to ensure that gender and first nations were recognized in that process. That citizens' assembly did an incredible amount of work in terms of examining the various systems, looking at what was working, what was not, and hearing from scholars who were very well aware of the electoral system.

I would argue that the current process that is under way does not reflect that kind of citizen engagement. The proposal put forward by Ed Broadbent about a two-track system, where we would have meaningful citizens' engagement paralleled by a parliamentary process with the two of them coming together, would ensure that voices were heard from coast to coast to coast. We know that this is a diverse country. We are a very proud country in the fact that we have so many different voices that come from different perspectives.

I would suggest that a process that is controlled out of the PMO rather than driven by citizen engagement is absolutely the wrong way to go. It displays a fundamental lack of understanding around consultation. When we talk about consultation I come back to the fact that, for example, first nations people have been calling for a definition of an adequate consultation process. We just see it spilling out in so many different ways referring to electoral systems and first nations. When will we actually have a better understanding and more meaningful input into a meaningful consultation process?

• (1315)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that while it is the government's point of view that it is going to the people and consulting, it is interesting to note that the Conservatives did this after Christmas when they were looking for replacements because their five priorities, according to them, had been completed. The government was searching for new ideas.

The government was circumventing what it knew was a proposal the NDP was putting forward to the House of Commons. My colleague has mentioned that and we will be debating it in the House.

With respect to my colleague from the Ottawa Valley, I beg to differ in terms of the integrity of the process. The Conservatives will have the process controlled, as my colleague said, by the PMO. They did this seemingly out of nowhere. It was not debated in the House. It certainly had been debated in committee. The previous government had failed to do it. We want the process to be owned by Parliament and not announced by a minister right after Christmas to denote that the government is actually doing something on this issue.

My party begs to differ on the integrity of the intent of where the government is going with consultation. We will deal with that for sure next week. There will be a debate on that point.

Government Orders

I would like to ask my colleague about the whole process of having first nations vote. Are there barriers in the bill to first nations? Have we heard from first nations at committee what an election will mean for the people in her region? If so, will it be a barrier that changes the legislation? What does the member think the outcome will be in terms of voter participation for aboriginal people? What kind of action does she think will be taken by aboriginal people themselves or people who advocate for them in terms of a legal process or procedure?

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, often what our electoral system does is it fails to recognize the geography of our country. In my riding there is a first nations community on an island called Kuper Island. In the last election, during the advance poll, the electors from Kuper Island were expected to travel by ferry from Kuper Island to Vancouver Island, drive 45 minutes north, get on another ferry and go to Gabriola Island for the advance poll. That clearly demonstrates a lack of understand about the geographical challenges in some of our ridings.

In addition, I know much work has been done around including polling stations on many first nations reserves to ensure that people have access to polls. More work needs to be done in that particular area.

I think it is also important to include in that some background information and voter education. That applies across the country. I think voter education is a really important piece of what we need to do more of.

I mentioned earlier the question around the status cards. The concern is that we still have not had any clarification about whether, with this new bill, the old status cards will still be accepted if we have an election before the new status cards come out. Again, I do not know if there has been adequate consultation.

This question comes up consistently about how first nations people have been consulted in terms of their right to vote, their access to voting, and the identification that is required for voting. Those are all really important considerations. If the consultation process continues the way it has in the past, I would argue that it has been insufficient.

• (1320)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering about my time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): At 1:30 p.m. I will tell the member that his time is up.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by restructuring my arguments in the right sort of way.

I want to begin by dealing with the very last comment the hon. member for Vancouver Island North made regarding aboriginal people and concerns about the identification they would be able to use at the polls. This issue came up in committee and I felt it was dealt with very effectively. It was in a spirit of multi-partisan cooperation that we dealt with this.

The committee amended the bill as it is before the House. It was actually a Liberal proposal submitted to committee. I spoke to it and we adopted the proposal dealing with identification.

Under the provisions of Bill C-31, we need to have either one piece of identification with our photograph, name and address in order to vote, or we need two pieces of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer. I am reading from the bill, “each of which establish the elector’s name and at least one of which establishes the elector’s address”.

This was an amendment I had proposed going from two pieces of ID with an address and name to just one with an address. It ensures that a number of commonly used pieces of identification that do not have the address but that have a very high degree of certainty such as passports, bus passes, student cards, and items that are out there in great number and not likely to be fraudulently produced because the issuing authorities have very strong incentives for reasons of their own to prevent people from coming up with fraudulent bus passes, for example.

This allows a wider range of people to vote, particularly those with a lower income and who do not have drivers licenses or students who move frequently and therefore unlikely to have identification with their address.

The amendment that had been moved by one of the Liberal members on committee says:

—a document issued by the Government of Canada that certifies that a person is registered as an Indian under the Indian Act constitutes an authorized piece of identification.

This would be one of those two pieces of identification required to be produced at the polls.

A special effort was made to ensure that aboriginal people who have some particular difficulties, given the fact that many of them live on reserve and do not have some of the ID other people would often have such as passports, bus passes, student cards, or driver’s licences, would still be able to have an ID and go to the polls to vote.

I have a great deal that I would like to talk about, but I am going to have difficulty doing it in the allowed time. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 26.(1), I move:

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of considering Bill C-31.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Will all those members who object to the motion please rise in their place.

And fewer than 15 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Fewer than 15 members having risen, the motion is adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1325)

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to ask about how much time I had initially now that we are continuing on as if I had the full amount. Was it 10 minutes or is it 20?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Since you have moved a motion, that ends your speech.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, regarding Bill C-31 which I will speak to eventually, I did not have the luxury of hearing my colleague speak because of his self-inflicted censorship. He knows that the committee heard witness statements from people who represent the homeless, aboriginal people and students. They were very concerned with what was being put forward in this bill, that a voter would have to find a person to vouch for the voter if the voter was not able to present photo identification or two pieces of identification that was recognized as legitimate by the government. In the present system a person can vouch for a voter by identifying who the voter is and that would be fine. As the member knows, the bill restricts it and only one person on the voters list in that particular riding and poll is able to do that.

The member knows from the testimony that witnesses were asked specifically about what effect this would have on the homeless who move around quite frequently and do not have proper identification. I asked if people would lose their ability to vote in the circumstances as presented. In other words, a homeless person who has to have someone vouch for him or her would not have that benefit because the person vouching for the homeless person may be an advocate who might be on the voters list but does not live in the riding in question. There would be a barrier to homeless people being able to vote.

The member was in committee and heard the testimony of those who advocate for the homeless, aboriginal people and students. Does the member not understand that the witnesses highlighted this barrier and said we should not do that? If the member believes them and not me, then why is he supporting this bill and why is he not supporting the amendments I put forward for a statutory declaration? In other words, do we not trust Canadians? Are we so big brother and paternalistic in this place that we decide what is good for them? I am curious as to what the member thinks about that.

• (1330)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington will have the pleasure to respond to this question at 2:30 p.m. when we return to government orders. I am sure the hon. member for Ottawa Centre will wait with anxiety for the reply.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from December 6, 2006 consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (lottery schemes), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill S-211. Although Bill S-211's objectives may be well meaning and the bill addresses the important issue of gambling, its effect is problematic.

In its wisdom Parliament determined in 1969 that the federal, provincial and territorial governments would each have permission under the Criminal Code to conduct a lottery scheme. In 1985 Parliament chose to eliminate the permission that had existed for a lottery scheme that is conducted by the federal government, leaving provincial and territorial governments running governmental lottery schemes exclusively.

Since 1969 provinces and territories have been free to decide for themselves what kinds of lottery schemes they would offer within their jurisdictions. This decision is one that they can freely take within the range set by Parliament under the Criminal Code. This range is presently very broad and includes not only lottery tickets but even slot machines or computerized lottery schemes. Provinces and territories have chosen to use their Criminal Code permission for lottery schemes in different ways.

For example, Ontario and British Columbia place provincial government slot machines, which pay out by cash at racetracks and casinos, but do not place any video lottery terminals, VLTs, which pay out by a ticket that is then redeemed for cash in bars. Yukon places slot machines at the casino in Dawson City. However, none of the territories places VLTs in bars. Quebec, the Atlantic provinces and prairie provinces all place provincial government VLTs in bars. Quebec, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba also place slot machines at casinos or racetracks or both.

We see there is a great variety in the provincial and territorial decisions about the extent of machine gambling that will be offered. Each province or territory, I hasten to add, is responsible to its provincial or territorial voters. In fact, Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick have held province-wide referenda or municipal referenda on whether to place VLTs in bars. They have respected any decisions for the removal of VLTs from bars, thus reinforcing their rightful jurisdiction to legislate in this area based on the wants and needs of their citizens. Furthermore, some provinces have decided to cap or even reduce the number of their VLTs and slot machines.

It seems to me it is heavy-handed to suggest, as Bill S-211 does, that the federal Parliament should now step in and remove the ability of provinces and territories to make these decisions for themselves.

I also find it very striking that Bill S-211 limits itself to eliminating the possibility of placing provincial or territorial government VLTs in bars, but it does not eliminate them from casinos and racetracks. If the logic really is to reduce problem gambling, one certainly must wonder why provincial and territorial government VLTs and slot machines would remain permissible at all.

It seems illogical to me to think that problem gambling would be reduced by simply shifting the provincial government VLT machines into a mini-casino, in a strip mall or in a shop within the same locality where the VLTs now sit within a bar.

In effect, what Bill S-211 would bring about would be a redistribution of the rental fee now paid by provinces to bar owners over to some other landlord or even to the provincial government if it decides to be its own landlord for VLT gaming.

Private Members' Business

Bill S-211 sounds very much like an incursion into provincial areas of authority, and I would call it an intrusion, without having a real connection to the reduction of problem gambling. This alone could be enough to negatively affect federal, provincial and territorial relationships.

There is, however, the additional element of the federal, provincial and territorial agreements on gaming that would be thrown over by Bill S-211. They call for the preservation of the position achieved by the provinces through the agreements and stipulate that any alteration is to be made by unanimous agreement.

• (1335)

Although Bill S-211's objectives may be well meaning, its effect would be to completely ignore important provisions of the existing gaming agreement. It would also set a drop-dead time period for negotiating prior to proclamation into force. Its delayed proclamation date also sets parameters for negotiating any new agreement.

In reality, Bill S-211 would unilaterally kill the veto that provinces and territories now hold under the negotiated gaming agreement. Although the federal government is not putting forward this bill that breaks the deal, it would nonetheless be left to deal with its fallout in terms of federal, provincial and territorial relations. Such a state of affairs is highly undesirable.

All hon. members must clearly understand the impact that Bill S-211 would have on the trust relationships built between the federal, provincial and territorial governments on this issue. Bill S-211 would lead to the erosion of an important intergovernmental agreement without necessarily lowering the rate of problem gambling in Canada.

For these reasons, I cannot support this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in this debate on Bill S-211, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (lottery schemes), introduced in the Senate by Senator Lapointe, to regulate the use of video lottery terminals. With this measure, Senator Lapointe, whom I very much admire, is trying to help compulsive gamblers. The Bloc Québécois is also concerned about this social problem.

Senator Lapointe's efforts are laudable and praiseworthy. I am sure I speak for all of my hon. colleagues when I say that, at some time or another, we have all been in certain public or private establishments where these machines are present, and seen or come across individuals, individuals of all ages, who are victims of compulsive gambling. Perhaps someone you know has such a problem. I have met some such individuals in my riding. Their situation is sometimes tragic, and I could not help but be moved.

Whether obsessed with bingo, horse racing, video poker or video lotteries, compulsive gamblers gamble for various reasons. Often it is for an emotional release, escape from their problems or the expression of a need. In many cases, they hope to win a large sum of money, which would earn them the admiration and respect of others, and would boost their self-confidence.

However, after losing their entire wager, they feel the need to try to get back the money they lost, which pushes them into a spiral of

debt. According to a study conducted by the Université Laval, 83% of compulsive gamblers incur debt. The debt for a third of the men was between \$75,000 and \$100,000 compared to \$15,000 on average for women.

I believe that video lottery terminals play a significant role in this addiction phenomenon. A relatively high number of people are addicted to these machines largely because of their programming. A study published in the scientific journal *Neuron* shows that they exploit certain weaknesses in the cognitive process the same way subliminal advertising does. I must point out that in Quebec, efforts have been made to limit the impact of video lotteries. I will discuss this further a little later.

Accordingly, the purpose of Bill S-211 is to limit the social problems related to the use of video lottery terminals. It is a noble objective to improve the lot of these individuals, an objective that is certainly shared by my peers in this House. That is why I am in favour of the bill in principle. However, I believe it is important to take into account the impact of Bill S-211, because underlying its apparent simplicity are consequences that should be carefully considered.

Bill S-211 suggests a way to curb the problem of compulsive gamblers by limiting access to video lottery terminals. To that end, it proposes three things: reducing the number of establishments operating video lottery terminals by limiting them to designated locations such as race-courses, casinos or betting theatres; amending the Criminal Code to make it an offence for any establishment outside the specified locations to operate this type of machine; and third, allowing three years after this bill comes into force for the various governments to develop a strategy to ensure an effective transition.

No one is against virtue and that is why I support the initiatives to reduce, if not eliminate, human suffering. That is the goal of Senator Lapointe's bill, but I think it is important to take into consideration some of these aspects that will undeniably have an impact in the short term. I am talking about future negotiations between the federal and provincial levels of government that will be held after Bill S-211 is passed. It is also important that the initiatives taken so far by the provinces, namely Quebec, be respected.

Accordingly, Bill S-211 certainly deserves to be thoroughly examined in committee. I hope that my colleagues will lend an attentive ear to my concerns about this bill.

I spoke about respecting provincial jurisdictions. Provincial control over lotteries came about as a result of a long battle between the two levels of government. The most important event in that struggle is the agreement reached in 1985 whereby the federal government transferred its power to the provinces and territories, on condition that they did not grant operating licences to third parties. Since then, the provinces and territories have managed their lotteries as they see fit.

I would like to mention what Quebec has done in the area of video lottery terminals to combat gambling addiction and minimize the social costs associated with gambling.

Before the Société des loteries vidéo du Québec was created in 1994, it was estimated that Quebec had between 30,000 and 40,000 illegal video lottery terminals. There was little or no regulation of these terminals, which were available to all segments of the population and often controlled by organized crime.

● (1340)

With the creation of this subsidiary of Loto-Québec, the number of VLTs was reduced to 14,000, which were located in 3,260 licensed establishments in 2005. I would like to point out that the number of terminals and establishments has been decreasing steadily since 1997.

In addition, Quebec has adopted a series of social measures to combat pathological gambling, including prevention programs, technical limits on terminals, strict rules to limit encouragement to gamble and direct assistance for compulsive gamblers.

Loto-Québec has gone even farther, with plans to reconfigure its network to reduce the current number of video lottery terminals by at least 31% between 2004 and 2007. This would eliminate 1,000 bars, restaurants and taverns from the current number of licensed establishments, especially in the poorest areas of Quebec.

However, if it is adopted as is, Bill S-211, by amending the Criminal Code, would open the door to the federal government in what today is a provincial and territorial jurisdiction. That could affect the balance that was achieved with the 1985 agreement with the provinces. Of course, the three-year period for coming into force would ease the transition, but might it not affect Quebec's current strategy against compulsive gambling? Would it not trigger another lengthy legal dispute between the two levels of government? I would like hon. members to look at this in more detail in order to develop measures to complement the Government of Quebec's initiatives.

Relations with Ottawa and respect for provincial jurisdictions are not the only things worrying me. Senator Lapointe wants to improve the lot of compulsive gamblers and, at the same time, the quality of life of society in general.

With regard to the situation in Quebec before 1994, I have the following question: if Quebec is responsible for appropriately operating these video lottery terminals, is it not participating in the fight against organized crime by depriving it of a guaranteed source of revenue? If we concentrate terminals in specific locations, will we not again be making way for the financing of organized criminal groups? My colleagues agree with me that these groups do not have a conscience when it comes to compulsive gambling. Furthermore, they do not have the resources the provinces do to curb this phenomenon. I hope to meet social groups that can answer these questions at the committee hearings.

We shall have to see how Ottawa will make up the revenue that the provinces lose by drastically cutting the number of video lottery terminals. We must also consider minimizing the financial losses of small establishments that own these machines. I believe that we are opening the door to lengthy negotiations that should be part of a federal-provincial agreement. If we do not succeed, we run the risk of having organized crime take hold of small operators.

As I mentioned, I care very much about the well-being of my constituents. I therefore wonder about the impact of Bill S-211 on

Private Members' Business

compulsive gamblers. Reducing the number of machines will likely diminish the appeal for gamblers. However, if we criminalize illegal operators, will we not make it more difficult for gamblers to admit their gambling problem? I think a preventive approach, although it may not solve the entire problem, remains the best approach here, rather than tougher legislation.

I will close by saying that, in spite of the concerns I outlined here today, I remain sympathetic to Bill S-211. For this reason, like my party, I hope it passes second reading, so we can further study the impact I mentioned and hear witnesses on the issue. We will therefore vote in favour of this bill at second reading, and we plan to propose constructive amendments in order to strike a balance between the collective well-being and respect for provincial jurisdictions, especially for Quebec.

Compulsive gambling is indeed a serious problem that has significant repercussions on the friends and families of gamblers, and on the entire community. Bill S-211 shows an understanding of this problem, but does not prohibit video lottery terminals. Indeed, I feel this activity could benefit from greater regulation, since its repercussions are clearly significant and stir our conscience.

● (1345)

[English]

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will talk a bit about S-211 that would amend the Criminal Code in relation to gaming offences to allow the narrow exemption which allows provincial governments to lawfully conduct and manage lottery schemes, involving video lottery terminals and slot machines. It would limit the locations at which such machines could be installed in casinos, race courses and betting theatres.

This is one of those situations where we try, as best we can, to respect, in a sense, territorial and provincial jurisdictions. In 1969 Parliament authorized the provincial and territorial governments to operate lottery schemes as a permitted exception to the gaming offences found in the Criminal Code. Under a 1979 gaming agreement with the provinces and territories, the federal government agreed not to operate lottery schemes.

Under a 1985 gaming agreement, the federal government agreed to place a bill before Parliament that eliminated permission for the federal government to operate lottery schemes and pool betting operations. Parliament passed that bill in 1985. The 1985 legislation also clarified that provinces and territories could operate a lottery scheme conducted on or through a computer video device or slot machine, but they could not license others to do so.

Furthermore, Ontario, British Columbia and the three territories do not place any government video lottery terminals, VLTs in other words, a form of slot machines, in bars. However, all the jurisdictions, commencing with the Atlantic provinces in the 1990s, placed territorial government VLTs at locations, including bars, for which the provinces pay a rental fee.

Private Members' Business

New Brunswick's decision to place VLTs in bars was, some years later, narrowly supported by a province-wide referendum. In Alberta and Manitoba, municipal referenda were held under provincial legislation and led to the removal of provincial government VLTs from bars in the few municipalities that voted in support of their removal. As well, a number of provinces, including Quebec, which is the province with the most VLTs, have chosen to place a cap on the total number of VLTs placed in bars across the province.

I see this generally as a situation whereby really we should respect those local jurisdictions with regard to how they do these things. Many things seem to indicate we have a responsible use of these provisions by the provinces and territories, and in that capacity, it is self-evident.

I will like touch on some aspects of things involving gaming and video lottery terminals. At this point, I am going to be extemporaneous with regard to this.

With regard to Bill S-211 and the Criminal Code, I would like to touch on some other things that are impacted by the Criminal Code. I have been in the House for close to 10 years. Many a time I have heard other parties in the House talk about how they care about the criminal justice system and how they would like to get tough on crime.

This is in reference to the Criminal Code and the fact that we are dealing with amending the Criminal Code, so I am broadening the debate.

I have heard many people over time in the House say that they want to see the government get tough on justice. The government has brought forward a number of changes to the Criminal Code, and yet it is facing a lot of opposition on those things.

It is not so much because the public is opposed to getting tough on crime, I think they are in favour of that. Some of those provisions, I am sure, like ending early parole or having mandatory minimum sentences and those types of things, are supported by a vast majority of people, probably in the order of 80%.

We are supposed to represent our constituents in the House, being democratic representatives, so it breaks my heart when I hear people say one thing when they go back home and campaign in their ridings.

• (1350)

In my last election campaign, we had a scenario where every one of the other parties in that race talked about how they wanted to get tough on crime and how they wanted to make changes to the Criminal Code and yet we have a scenario whereby in this place and through the committees and, even worse, in the Senate, people are trying to block all of these good things that we are trying to do to toughen up criminal justice in this country.

I think it saddens all of us to see that type of thing, speaking from the heart on this.

In my riding, I have had constituents who have had the ugly hand of crime touch their lives and they desperately would like to see many of these changes. I know many police officers who have given me their support and told me about the frustrations they have with

the criminal justice system. These people are on the front lines for us against criminal elements, whether they be foreign or domestic in nature, and they are very frustrated by politicians who will tell them during election campaigns that they support changes to the Criminal Code, but then, when push comes to shove, and it is in this place, they do something other than that.

We have a situation in this place, daily during question period, where my opponents across the way will ask questions about judicial appointments. They will be very upset about the idea that my government wants to see police officers, who are intrinsically involved in the enforcement of our laws against criminal elements, play an important role in the selection of judges. These are the people, in a sense, who charge the criminals and then it is the courts that follow up with the execution of the sentence. However, we have people across the way in opposition who do not like the idea that police officers should somehow be involved with the judicial selection process.

I think that is a slight to police officers and actually goes against the will of the majority of Canadians on these types of things.

Furthermore, I recognize that there are many good and noble lawyers out there who do capable work on behalf of Canadians in defending interests and protecting people from maybe the ultra vires aspects of various laws we pass around this place, but the idea that only lawyers somehow can be served by this system, the idea that victims or the police officers who try to serve the public in all these various functions cannot be allowed to be a part of the judicial process or decision of who can be a capable judge, is beyond the pale.

We are not in this place just to serve as lawyers. The justice of Canada incorporates looking into the rights of the victims, those people who have not yet suffered a crime but want to feel safe walking down the street, people like my grandmother, for example, people who enforce the laws in this country, our police officers, our peace officers, our police in various functions, whether they be courts or otherwise.

More needs to be done. We have about a half dozen bills affecting the Criminal Code. This is but one more thing we are trying to address with regard to the Criminal Code. It is very frustrating when, during the last election campaign, we were seeking a mandate from the people and almost every party in this place talked about how they were supportive of many of the Criminal Code changes that we wanted to bring forward.

However, although they were willing to say that during the election campaign, I doubted it. Maybe I am becoming a cynical participant in the political process in the sense that I expected that when we returned to this place, they would not be as wholeheartedly in favour of various Criminal Code reforms as they said they were during the election campaign, and maybe the reason I am a cynic on those issues is because I was proven right.

●(1355)

We see them frustrating those things with their angle in their debate here in the House of Commons. We have also seen them frustrating those things in committees where those bills are sent for amendment, editing, proof-reading and overlooking. It is more egregious than anything. We see frustration for a lot of what we want to do in our mandate that we sought democratically from the people in the unelected body of the Senate where the Liberals still have majority control.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate, informing this House that the Senate has passed a public bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired.

[Translation]

Bill S-3, An Act to amend the National Defence Act, the Criminal Code, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the Criminal Records Act.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (lottery schemes) be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to take the floor to talk about Bill S-211, introduced by the Honourable Senator Jean Lapointe. I would like to take a few seconds to salute him for all his accomplishments and for his dedication to making this bill a reality.

The bill that we are debating this afternoon is of crucial importance for the well-being of Canadians. The purpose of Senator Lapointe's bill is to permit access to video lottery terminals at race-courses—where people can bet on horse races—betting theatres and casinos.

The main reason for this bill is to ensure that young people and the elderly, the two groups most vulnerable to this scourge, do not have easy access to these terminals. Making gambling less accessible will prevent these people from falling into the VLT trap. Mr. Speaker, this bill must be adopted as quickly as possible to put an end to distress and to give hope to those afflicted by the illness of compulsive gambling.

Already I hear the voices raised against this bill saying that once again the federal government is interfering in an area of provincial jurisdiction. And it is true that this area has, in a sense, been on lease to the provinces since the agreement of 1985. Under the provisions of that agreement, the provinces take the federal government's place in the area of gambling, but they must return approximately \$50 million to the government for the use of this legislative space.

Private Members' Business

This is not the first bill to attempt to amend the Criminal Code regarding video lottery terminals. In 2004, a bill called S-6, also introduced by the honourable Senator Jean Lapointe, was debated. It looked in particular at the federal government's limits in this area. At the time the Senate committee noted that "the lottery scheme provisions in section 207 express the current federal government policy. Provincial and territorial governments are free to make decisions regarding the kinds of lottery or gaming schemes that they may conduct or license within the limits set by the Criminal Code".

Moreover, as Senator Joyal mentioned in committee proceedings studying the Bill, and I quote:

If the federal Parliament wanted to ban all kinds of gambling, it could do so through the Criminal Code ... If the federal Parliament decided to limit some kinds of gambling to some kinds of circumstances and some kinds of location, it could do so, too.

The federal government has the power to legislate in the Criminal Code to permit the use of these video lottery terminals only in the places mentioned. It is much more a question of public interest than a constitutional issue. We are talking about the health of our fellow citizens.

There is a certain urban myth about the revenues that video lottery terminals bring in for the provincial governments. Each year, the provinces rake in record false profits with their video lottery terminals. In fact, numerous studies by university researchers across Canada, provincial governments, private institutions and social workers show that the social costs associated with video lottery terminals are three to five times greater than the revenues they produce for the provincial governments.

In the current situation, the federal government derives almost no benefit from gambling. It is thus in a better position than the provincial governments to defend the interests and well-being of Canadians grappling with gambling problems.

All we want to do here is provide a healthier environment for Canadians by removing the terminals from bars and restaurants and concentrating them in betting theatres, race-courses and casinos.

According to some of the evidence given to the Senate committee, video lottery terminals are often installed in bars in poorer neighbourhoods.

●(1400)

Their presence thus leads people who might never have been exposed to gambling to play them because of their accessibility.

According to a study published in the *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, most compulsive gamblers are dependent on video lotteries, which they play daily or several times a week, because they can remain close to home and use the terminals available in local bars. These video lottery terminals have many more negative aspects than is commonly thought. It is clear that if we look at the revenues that the federal government receives from the money the provinces give back—we are talking about some \$50 million here—it is markedly less than the social costs of gambling.

The reason is simple: people play more because the product is available.

Government Orders

Studies tend to demonstrate that people with a gambling problem prefer electronic forms of gambling to other types of games of chance.

In its 1999-2000 report, *Jeu: aide et référence du Jeu pathologique du Québec*, a telephone information and help line, reported that among the most frequently mentioned types of gambling, video lottery terminals were mentioned by 83% of callers in distress. It is important to note here that pathological gambling is compulsive, so there are serious social and financial repercussions for individuals, families and society in general.

Thus, pathological gambling can lead to indebtedness, divorce, bankruptcy, crime and, unfortunately, even to suicide. In all these situations, it is the family that will suffer. It should also be noted that pathological gambling has the highest suicide rate among all dependencies. Since the Coroner of Quebec began compiling statistics, 109 suicides have been directly related to gambling, including at least 49 in the past three years.

One of the groups that Bill S-211 wants to protect is young people. That is because researchers say they are more concerned about what will happen to adolescents than to adults. It is easy to understand; today's children represent the first generation to grow up in a world where gambling is not perceived as a danger, where in fact churches, service industries and governments approve of gambling as a way to raise funds. Games of chance are legal, they are accepted and today's children have never experienced a time when games of chance were not part of society. Moreover, they are considered the Nintendo generation; so, for them, electronic games are part of their surroundings and their lifestyle.

In support of these arguments, some surveys show us that there is general public support. In Quebec, 68% are in favour of such a bill, with only 10% opposing it. Nationally, 71% favour regulations that would relocate video lottery terminals to casinos and race-courses alone. Eliminating video lotteries, outside of casinos, race-courses and betting theatres across the country, would improve the quality of life of our fellow Canadians, particularly of our young people and elderly.

The government has the duty to act to protect our fellow citizens against any threat. Now is the time to take concrete action and to show the Canadian public that these video lottery terminals are harmful and dangerous to their health.

That is why we must legislate in this matter as quickly as possible and why you, hon. members, must support this bill.

• (1405)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 21 immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): When we last considered this bill, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre was waiting with bated breath for a reply from the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington who has the floor.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Gladstone said that if he was asked to give a speech on a week's notice he could do a 10 minute speech; if he was given a day's notice it would take him an hour.

I have had lots of time to prepare my answer to this question, so I can be brief. The member asked me specifically about problems relating to homeless people and their ability to vote under the new law. I think he is right to have concerns about it.

That is why at committee I proposed an amendment to the bill which was accepted by the committee and is now in the context of the law. It will ensure greater access to voting and to being on the voters list for people who are potentially unable themselves to put themselves on the voters list.

This is of course of great importance not only to homeless people but also to people who may be off at work when the enumerators come by to record who is living at a new address, perhaps in a new subdivision where no one lived a year before.

We have amended subsection 101(1) of the act. That subsection deals with who can be placed on the list by a revising agent coming to the door. Subsection 101(1) as amended will read as follows:

The returning officer or assistant returning officer may add the name of any elector to the preliminary list of electors if—

Government Orders

And this is the part we have added:

—the elector, or another elector who lives at the same residence as the elector, at their residence and in the presence of the revising agents completes the prescribed registration form and takes the prescribed oath.

That means individuals can get onto the list without having to have ID themselves or even being present, as long as another person residing at the same residence is there at the residence when the revising agents come by.

I should mention in this context that this was something the Chief Electoral Officer actually asked for in order to ensure that we had cast it as widely as possible. I think it was a very positive change. I am sure now that we have refreshed his memory, that the hon. member will recall that important change which will enfranchise so many Canadians in a way that does not exist at present.

• (1410)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his attempt at trying to answer the question. I guess I will have to restate it for him. My question was not about that particular amendment, which does nothing, zero, zilch, rien, nada for homeless people.

I was referring to the fact that there are people who have been helping the homeless with statutory declarations and other methods. The member was at committee. He knows this is not about having enumerators going to a certain place and getting homeless people on the list. This is about homeless people presenting themselves at a polling station and there is no one there on the voters list who can vouch for them. The people advocating for the homeless said this would be a barrier.

We are basically ignoring what the witnesses said at committee. We are basically saying that we know better, that Big Brother is in charge. We are not listening to people who are actually citizens and those who are advocates. I am just curious as to my colleague's take on this.

The member said he put the amendment forward. We all put the amendment forward in the spirit of cooperation. It was not challenged. I put the idea forward as well.

Does my colleague not agree that a barrier is still there for homeless people and aboriginal people? Only one person on the voters list will be able to vouch for another person. People advocating for the homeless are often not in the same riding. We have in fact set up barriers. That is what we heard from people advocating on behalf of the homeless.

This is going to land up in court and we are going to spend millions of dollars, and the thing will be thrown out anyway. In essence we are saying that Big Brother knows best. I am just curious as to why he thinks the bill with these barriers will help people exercise their franchise.

• (1415)

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, we could dispute the prominence of this particular amendment. It came out of questions I asked to the Chief Electoral Officer. I asked him specifically to point these things out. We all agreed on it and that is the main thing. I will deal with homeless people in a second.

The member raised the point about aboriginal people and I did deal with their ability to vote. In response to an earlier question, I pointed out that Liberal members proposed, and we all accepted, an amendment which would ensure that a wider variety of identification could be used for aboriginal people in order to ensure they are able to identify themselves while still ensuring the proper security is in place and people know their franchise is secure.

The questions dealing with people presenting themselves on election day is one that is best dealt with by a non-legislative means. The Chief Electoral Officer could put extra effort into ensuring that greater enumeration is done in these areas and more resources be devoted to the areas that have a high turnover in population. That would be true both during the period of enumeration during the election and I would think on election day itself. That would have a profound impact. That is an administrative nature and was raised in committee. A number of members asked the Chief Electoral Officer and he indicated his good will.

When the new candidate for Chief Electoral Officer is before committee next week I think we will have the opportunity to ask him what he would do to ensure that maximum coverage takes place and as many Canadians are fully enfranchised on the list, and the voting process is made as smooth as possible.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill C-31. I would like to bring the perspective of the good people of Winnipeg Centre into this debate and I will try to accurately portray the views that I am getting from the area that I represent.

Let me say at the outset that we believe this new election law will be bad for voters and bad for the voters in the riding that I represent in a disproportionate way perhaps because it is, and I say this with no sense of pride, the poorest riding in Canada.

Low income people will be disproportionately disadvantaged by the provisions of this law, mark my words. I will make this point today, but I think we will be hearing a lot more about it in subsequent charter challenges. I say that without any hesitation or fear of contradiction. This will be challenged as a Charter of Rights and Freedoms issue.

Let me remind members of Parliament here today that section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms says:

Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.

This is a fundamental basic right and freedom that we established in this country. Persons wiser than I have said that the highest duty bestowed on anyone is that of a citizen in a democracy, and key and integral to that is the right and duty to participate fully in that democracy. That means exercising one's franchise to vote.

My colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre, in his remarks in the House of Commons dealing with Bill C-31, quoted Alfred E. Smith, a former governor of New York, a famous populist and champion of child labour issues, et cetera. His famous quote was, "All the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy". There is no such thing as too much democracy.

Government Orders

Some of us are concerned that perhaps democracy was just a moment in history and in time. There are those of us who believe democracy is the highest achievement of civilization, but it is constantly at risk and under threat. If we are not vigilant and absolutely determined that we will embrace, enhance, protect, develop, promote, and strengthen democracy with everything we do, then it starts to slide. It cannot remain static. It is either improving or deteriorating. I argue without exaggeration that I believe the moves taken within Bill C-31 are detrimental and deleterious to the state of democracy in this country.

Speakers before me have made the point that requiring voter ID, the stringent new rules contemplated by Bill C-31, will have the predictable consequence and effect of less people voting. I would argue that if there is any one single problem with our election system today, poor voter turnout is the biggest problem we have. It is the failure to participate.

Roughly 60% of registered voters went to the polls in the last federal election. That is bad enough. But only about 50% of all eligible voters cast a ballot in the last federal election. If we treasure and value democracy above all else, we should find those figures very troubling.

The new changes contemplated by Bill C-31 will result in fewer people voting and ironically, or perhaps not ironically, and cruelly, the very people who need representation the most will be the most affected by these new rules. They will be disenfranchised and will not be exercising their right to vote.

I heard my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver East, make some very passionate remarks in the House. I think I can safely argue that no one that I know in the House of Commons or anywhere else in this country makes a greater effort to encourage low income people to exercise their right to vote than the member for Vancouver East. Registration tables were set up in the Vancouver lower east side, some of the most devastated neighbourhoods and postal codes in the country. There was an effort to reach out and encourage people who were otherwise marginalized to participate and vote.

• (1420)

The member sounded the alarm that this bill will have a disastrous effect on the work that she does and will result in fewer people voting.

That is only one part of the bill that we are critical of today, the idea of the much more stringent rules about voter ID. That in itself would be enough to say that the NDP would not support this bill, but there is a second element to it that I find equally troubling.

I am our party's critic for ethics, privacy and access to information and serve as the vice-chair of the committee of the same name. From a privacy point of view in this era of identity theft and increased heightened concerns about the protection of the privacy of one's personal information, how could the government even consider putting the date of birth on the permanent voters list? It boggles the mind. It runs so contrary to everything we are doing, hearing and studying at the privacy committee. It is almost as if the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing in the government. It is sounding the alarm at committee that Canadians have never been so vulnerable to having their personal identity and privacy compro-

mised and used in ways that the information was never intended to be used.

One's date of birth could be considered as one's individual pin number. That is the identifier. When we phone some place to get information about our accounts, the person at the other end will check by saying, "What is your date of birth so I can confirm you are who you say you are". That is the identifier we use. It is the identifier crooks use too. If they have someone's name, address, phone number and date of birth, it is a recipe for identity theft. They have themselves a credit card under that person's name probably without much difficulty.

We cannot keep that information secure if it is put on a permanent voters list. I think I had 350 volunteers working on my election campaign. During an election campaign we cannot control everyone who does some volunteer phoning or some door knocking. It is not unusual to tear off a sheet of the voters list and tell someone, "Contact these 50 people and ask them to vote for our party". This stuff will be circulated widely. It will not be controlled.

Our PIPEDA legislation mandates that anyone holding personal information must go through stringent security and privacy measures. Then on the other hand, again it is the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing, the government in a cavalier way will spread all over the countryside one's name, address, phone number and date of birth on one convenient database. It is a recipe for disaster in terms of breaching one's privacy and allowing identity theft to take place. It is appalling.

In committee we are currently studying PIPEDA. Ironically, in this chamber the government is giving away the personal privacy protection of ordinary Canadians and in another room in the same building the privacy committee is seized of the issue of PIPEDA trying to enforce ever more stringent rules on the private sector so it will not divulge that information to anyone for our protection. Within the same building under the same roof we have these two competing dynamics going on: one striving to protect Canadians' privacy; the other cavalierly tossing it around the country. This ain't no beach party. This is not funny. It is not a joke.

I cannot believe we are even having this debate. I cannot believe the Liberals and the Bloc are in favour of this. We know where the idea came from, this date of birth business. Bloc members and PQ members in Quebec like to send birthday cards to voters. That is just crazy. If we are going to compromise the privacy and the personal information of every Canadian just so MPs can send birthday cards to try to endear themselves to their voters, we are really being flippant with the interests of Canadians. We are not putting the best interest of Canadians first and foremost, if that is the rationale. I do not know how they got away with it.

I do not know what the vote was like at the committee but I assume only one party voted against this idea at the committee. I think it was the NDP. I may be corrected; perhaps in the questions and comments period someone might want to correct me.

Government Orders

●(1425)

Then we heard from the Liberal Party. A university professor who teaches constitutional law, the member of Parliament for Vancouver Quadra, made a very good speech full of good facts and figures of all the things to be careful about. He raised the caution of the voter ID situation. He raised the caution about the date of birth. Then his party is going to vote in favour of it. I do not understand it. I do not accept that more thorough and comprehensive enumeration will protect the interests of either one of those issues.

I will say there is important work that needs to be done in the Canada Elections Act. I wish we were having a serious debate about cleaning up some of the atrocities that I have witnessed in election campaigns.

One of the favourite tricks of the Liberal Party of Canada is to clear out senior citizens homes, especially in Chinatown in the area I represent, and then at the polling station, as each individual senior gets off the bus, the seniors are handed a piece of paper with the name of the Liberal candidate and a big X beside it. That is illegal. The Liberals think illegal is a sick bird. They do not really have any concept of right and wrong. I have maintained this before. However, if investigations were to take place on the Canada Elections Act, I would love to see that addressed, because where I come from it is illegal.

As far as actual voter fraud goes, we were kind of led to believe that this act is necessary because of the preponderance of voter fraud. In fact, all we can go by is the actual experience. In the 2006 election campaign, one person was charged and convicted of voter fraud. It was a person who voted even though he was not yet a Canadian citizen. He voted for all three parties or something and got 30 days' community service. In the previous election in 2004, there were no cases; not a single person was charged or convicted of voter fraud. In the 2000 election, there were three individuals convicted of voter fraud.

Where is the experience? Where is the empirical evidence that voter fraud is so rampant that we have to take these heavy-handed measures and risk disenfranchising many—I will not say thousands and I will not say millions—possibly disenfranchising a lot of low income people who do not have the economic stability to provide the right kind of ID?

Where do we get off jeopardizing the personal privacy rights of every voter in the country by putting their DOB on the voters list based on that kind of flimsy evidence? If we could have pointed to a thousand cases, I still would have argued that would not warrant the heavy-handed measures of Bill C-31, but the Conservatives can only point to four cases in the last three federal elections.

We know there is funny business going on, but it is not voter fraud. It is not the permanent voters list. It is not people misrepresenting themselves.

The Conservative members have said that it is going on like crazy, that it is going on all over the place, but we just never catch the people. That is not good enough. That kind of reasoning is not justification for changing the legislation. We need hard facts, and the hard facts are that there were four cases in the last three elections out of 24 million votes cast. Mercy. Statistically insignificant would be

the way scientists would phrase that percentage. I cannot even figure out how many decimal points of 1% that would be.

I do not agree with Bill C-31. I fundamentally disagree with it.

The one thing I wanted the government to do was clean up the loans issue, if we are to deal with elections at all. Somehow the government left a loophole we could drive a Brinks truck through, or maybe a Mazda, in terms of loans as opposed to donations.

In Bill C-2, the federal accountability act, we severely limited the amount of money that individuals can donate to an election campaign, and we completely banned any union and corporate donations, which was the right thing to do. Get big money out of politics. Nobody should be able to buy an election in this country. However, we left a big loophole where we can lend a candidate any amount of money or we can lend ourselves any amount of money and never pay it back. How is that different from big money buying influence in Canadian politics? Frankly it is a bit of a no-brainer, because if the loan is not paid back, Elections Canada deems it to be a donation in 18 months.

●(1430)

What they did in one famous case on the Liberal side is that 24 hours before that 18 months was up, they took out another loan and paid off the first loan with the second loan, so now another 18 months would go by. Who is ever going to police whether those guys ever pay off their leadership loans in conjunction with the rules? I believe it will be lost in the sands of time and we will have been made fools of, because we will have knowingly and willingly watched those people violate the spirit and the letter of the election financing laws.

If we were going to address any shortcoming or inconsistency in our Canada Elections Act, election financing should have been addressed, especially if we are going into a federal election. Every well-off MP, or any MP that has a big financial backer or corporate sponsor now knows that Elections Canada is completely feckless, completely unable to police, to stop or to do anything about these massive loans.

When is a loan not a loan? If one never pays it back, it is a donation, right? That is the only conclusion I can come to. There are guys lending themselves a quarter of a million dollars. No one person is allowed to donate a quarter of a million dollars to any election campaign, even their own, but they are allowed to lend it to themselves. I cannot do that. Ordinary Canadians cannot do that. The whole idea was to level the playing field so that nobody had a disproportionate competitive advantage because of who they knew or what corporate backer they had or if their daddy was rich. That was the whole idea. Well, that is out the window now. It is making a mockery of the election financing laws.

Government Orders

Our time in the House of Commons would have been better spent trying to get that fixed before the next federal election campaign, because it is going to snowball now. Every Tom, Dick and Harry who has no conscience is going to take advantage of that loophole. Those of us who have morals and ethics I would hope might have a contributing factor in stopping people from doing that, but others who have a paucity of ethics and morality will take advantage of that loophole, and it is perfectly legal, apparently. Elections Canada cannot do anything about it.

The new requirements for voter ID will add further barriers to voting for marginalized people, for low income people, and will seriously undermine the right to vote. I think we are going to see a charter challenge.

I want to acknowledge the work that my colleague from Ottawa Centre has done on both of these issues, the voter ID issue and the amendments that he sought to put in place on Bill C-31, which we debated last week. The amendments made it to the floor of the House of Commons and then they were summarily dispatched to the trash heap of history, but it was a noble effort and he tried his best, given the limited cards he was dealt to do the honourable thing and the right thing with this.

I want to acknowledge my colleague from Western Arctic too, who has been a champion on this issue, because in the northern regions and in first nations communities, the idea of addresses and photo ID is a big problem. There are no street addresses on a lot of first nations reserves and people do not have photo IDs.

I know that this is a matter that my colleague from Ottawa Centre has brought to the Privacy Commissioner. I hope the Privacy Commissioner sees things the way we do. I hope that we can look forward to a favourable ruling from the Privacy Commissioner that will say that the government is wrong, that it is putting the right to privacy and the personal information of Canadians at risk when it has a permanent voters list with names, addresses, dates of birth and phone numbers on it. It is just folly.

• (1435)

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Western Arctic, I will preface my remarks for my colleague by saying yes, in Western Arctic this issue has been debated in the newspapers, and it has been debated in our legislative assembly. People know this is an issue that drives to the heart of the sense Canadians have of their own place in their country and their own identity.

As for the idea that now we are going to drag out a photo ID licensed by the government in order for us to vote, in a small community, where everybody in the community knows each other, people do not carry identification with them on many occasions. In my own home community, I do not carry identification around with me. I do not find it necessary. I do not find it useful. I leave it at home where it is safe. When I do need it, I can get it.

There will be a lot of people right across this country in large cities and in small places who will not have their ID when they go in to vote at the voters' booth. This will disenfranchise them. They will be turned off voting. We are going to create more of a problem.

The real problem we have with voting in this country is that we do not get everybody out to vote. Forty per cent of voters do not show up to vote. That is a much greater and a much more serious problem than the four people who were charged with fraud in three elections. We have a staggering problem if 40% of our electorate does not go out to vote.

In my riding, it is probably closer to 50%. I do not want to put impediments to voting in their way. I want them to vote because by voting they join the democratic process and they validate what we in the House of Commons are doing.

I would like to ask my honourable colleague a question. In his riding, does everyone have voter ID and does everyone carry voter ID on election day? When they finish work, head to the voters' booth and find they do not have ID, are they going to be satisfied with going home across the city and coming back to vote?

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Western Arctic for his passionate commitment to this issue and for his very relevant comments on how this affects the people in his riding of Western Arctic.

His question specifically to me was about what the effect would be in an inner city riding like Winnipeg Centre. I know that the voter ID issue is a huge problem, because I have seen the lineups, even under the current rules. People come to the voting station and have to stand in a separate line for an hour, and sometimes an hour and a half, to get registered.

Now the test will be even higher. It used to be that one could bring an envelope, a hydro bill or some printed material with one's ID on it, as well as a driver's licence, for instance. Once people have made the commitment to come and vote and stand in line for that long, if they were turned away and told to go home to get something else or something they did not have at all, that would be it, they would never come back. It is tough enough to get low income people convinced that it is relevant to vote.

If I may, I will suggest some things we could do that would have been relevant. If we made sure the voters' cards were sent in envelopes instead of just in the mail, I think that would add an element of security. This is one of the things that my colleague from Ottawa Centre proposed. I have been in apartment buildings where I have seen the cards loose around a bank of mailboxes.

There is also universal enumeration. There is no substitute for door to door enumeration. The permanent voters list is a flawed document. An army used to be dispatched, sometimes of retired people, sometimes of people from the local legion, to knock on every door to clean up that voters list before an election. That practice should never have been stopped, in my view, especially in transient areas with high turnover, such as the inner cities we represent.

Also, my colleague from Ottawa Centre made the point for allowing people who are not on the voters list the ability to swear in with a statutory declaration, with the voters having to swear in at the polling station verifying who they are. This is reasonable. This has been used in the past. We do not believe it was subject to wanton abuse, as was implied by the Conservative Party members I have heard speaking. We think this is a reasonable consideration.

Government Orders

If the goal is to have more people voting, we should be putting in place measures that will facilitate it. If one is satisfied with the status quo or even can live with fewer people voting, then Bill C-31 is the answer.

It seems to me that we are coming at this the wrong way. The biggest problem we have, like my colleague from Western Arctic says, is the poor voter turnout, not this notion that there is widespread electoral fraud, because there is no evidence to back that up.

• (1440)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg Centre has given us a precise and poignant response to this bill and the problems therein.

To be clear about this, he made mention of what happened in committee about the birthdate information. The birthdate information in the bill was originally put in to be used for voter verification, notwithstanding that we would also have a number assigned to every voter. Birthdate information would be included for purposes of verification for Elections Canada. It was the Bloc that moved an amendment to have this information shared with political parties. That was supported by the Liberals.

To be clear on this, at the time, the Conservatives in committee voted against that amendment. Then, when I brought this forward at report stage to have that amendment taken out, they fell silent, so this so-called champion of privacy and libertarian ideals is gone from the Conservative Party and has been replaced with big brother.

I just wanted to be clear about this. The Conservatives did not support the big brother amendment of the Bloc that was supported by our friends in the Liberal Party; I guess they can raise money now because they have been cut off from their corporate welfare so they have to figure out how to actually widen their donor base. So now they will do what they have always done and rely on something else instead of going out and rolling up their sleeves and getting to work. They will rely on the database provided by the Bloc.

However, now the Conservatives are supporting that, so we have a government-sanctioned identity theft kit out there, and for what? It is for the political parties. Every time I ask why the political parties need this, they never answer the question, not the Conservatives, not the Liberals and definitely not the Bloc, but they do mention that they would like to get the birthday cards out soon, I understand.

That was to set the record straight. The Conservatives, in committee, were against sharing birthdate information. Now they are in favour of it. I think that is important to note.

• (1445)

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Ottawa Centre raises another very valuable point. Again I thank him for the dedication he has shown in trying to bring an element of reason to this debate.

There is one other thing that we should be addressing today in terms of election law: the rules that allow people to launder money through their children's bank accounts in order to circumvent the donation limits of the Elections Act. That would be time well spent if we could have some of that cleaned up before we go into the next election campaign, because it made most Canadians feel a little bit ill

when they saw eleven year olds donating \$5,400 each to a leadership race in the last Liberal leadership campaign.

However, when we tried to change that law in Bill C-2, the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Bloc voted against the NDP's efforts to try to make it illegal to shake down kids for their lunch money to run an election campaign. I thought that was appalling. I thought that this would have been an opportunity, because once the Elections Act is opened, every clause can be reviewed, but we have seen fit to allow another election to go by where the donation limits can be circumvented by laundering money through our children, grandmother, neighbour and God knows who.

I think these loans are criminal, but legal, which may be a contradiction. They are certainly criminal to anyone with the sensibilities of most Canadians. As for this idea that we can launder money by funnelling it through our children's bank accounts to circumvent the rules, it should be illegal.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been interesting to listen to the debate on Bill C-31 today. This is a bill that we have described as insufficient. It has not dealt with the real issue of what the failure of electoral system is. It does not deal with electoral reform. We soon will bring that forward for the House. One of my colleagues has a motion on which we will be voting and it will get to the heart of the problem in our system, which is the fact that we do not have a fair voting system.

Alas, though, we do have Bill C-31 in front of us. I think it is important to go back to the origin of the bill, which was a committee report that was cherry-picked by the government. The government decided it would use the opportunity to respond to a committee report by putting forward an agenda that it thought would make it look good in the eyes of the public. We have seen this piecemeal approach to democratic reform from the government before. Those members take a morsel here and a morsel there and try to make it sound like dinner, but it is not. It is just crumbs.

The government has done this before. Recently we heard that the government was going to deal with Senate reform by way of having elections in the provinces. The Prime Minister would bless it and it somehow would be real reform. That is piecemeal. It is pretending to be doing something.

Mr. Broadbent, my predecessor, had an ethics package that included the idea of fixed election dates. The government put that idea forward. No arguments there, but the government has not dealt with the other piece of Mr. Broadbent's ethics package, the fundamental changes he proposed to make our system fairer so that a citizen's vote would actually mean something.

Government Orders

Here we have Bill C-31. I guess the government thought that with this bill it would look credible because it was going to solve the problem of the opportunity for voter fraud. It is very important to state that: the opportunity for voter fraud. Because, as my colleague from Winnipeg Centre quite rightly pointed out, “there is no there there”, as the quote goes, when we talk about voter fraud. It is the opportunity. If we could deal with that, then I guess we could be dealing with many other issues. Climate change is not the opportunity but is what in front of us and the government has finally come on board and recognized it, a little late perhaps, but there it is.

This idea that we are dealing with the opportunity for voter fraud is what the government is responding to with Bill C-31. The government quickly put a bill together and made it look as if it was going to solve the voter fraud problem that was so ubiquitous. Then it would be seen as credible, as cleaning up the system.

I dare say the Conservatives did not do their homework. When the Chief Electoral Officer responded to the whole idea of voter fraud, he was very clear. He said there was rampant integrity in the system and in citizens. He said there was no problem. We heard evidence that there have been four cases over three years.

The government has decided that it knows best. I call this bill the big brother bill. Why? Because it says that the government is going to tell citizens what is best for them. It claims to know better than ordinary citizens. It claims to know better than the witnesses who came forward. The witnesses said the bill would not be good for citizens, but the bill says that is okay because the government knows better.

Witnesses told us that the bill would not increase voter participation. It would put barriers in front of people. As has been mentioned by my colleagues, it is probably a recipe for further disenchantment with the voter system. It will mean that fewer people will actually participate in voting. If that was the intent of the bill and the government, they have succeeded, because that in fact is what will happen.

We have identified clauses 18 and 21 of the bill as major concerns. I put amendments forward. These clauses are really going to disenfranchise people and open up the privacy of everyday citizens to people who will be able to exploit it.

● (1450)

I considered that if this were an opportunity for the government to address the problem of voter fraud, instead opposing the bill, I would bring forward ideas and amendments in committee. As has already been mentioned, one of the concerns is the voter card. Why are these voter cards left in hallways in apartment buildings. Anyone can pick them up and use them for whatever purpose, including voter fraud?

A simple piece of technology called an envelope can be employed. In fact, I brought this idea forward in committee. I suggested this to the Chief Electoral Officer who said that it was a good idea, that it was something his department was looking at. Yet when it was put forward as an amendment, the government said that it was out of the scope of the bill.

The government has failed to accept a simple solution, a common sense idea of putting voter cards in envelopes addressed to the voter.

If the voter has moved, it will be returned to sender. It happens all the time with other pieces of mail. Why not do this with something as important as a voter card? Hopefully the government will find a way to bring that idea forward.

Everyone in this place knows the problems with the centralized voters list. We know why we went to that list, which was to save money.

The most important aspect of our democracy is the right to vote, to participate. It seems passing strange that we would not see the wisdom of investing and supporting universal enumeration, that we would not go door to door, as was mentioned by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre. We could employ people, for instance seniors or people at the Legion and others, who had the time and could use some extra income to go door to door. They know their neighbourhoods.

People who are members of civic and community associations could help out. As a kid, I recall the knock on the door. An enumerator would confirm who was on the voters list and ensure that the names were written down. These lists were more accurate than the centralized voters lists we now have on computer. That idea was put forward, but, alas, the government again said that it knew better, big brother, that it would not invest in it. Instead, it would do targeted enumeration.

The problem with targeted enumeration is that it is hit and miss, more often miss than hit. What we end up with is a scattered approach across the country. Voters lists in some areas are accurate and up to date, such as bedroom communities where there is a low turnover rate.

What happens in the areas where there is high turnover? There is massive turnover in my riding of Ottawa Centre. It is always a problem. A very simple solution to that would be to go door to door. That idea has not been embraced by the government. When it was proposed as an amendment to the bill, it was not accepted.

If members were to ask people in Tim Hortons or on Main Street what makes sense to them, to continue with a centralized computerized voters list that does not work or have door to door enumeration that would clean up the list, they would probably say that it would make sense to go door to door, employ people who need extra income and have an accurate voters list. It is the most important tool we have to allow people to vote. Their names are on the voters list.

If we were to go through the history of our country, people would be shouting from their graves and asking what we were doing. They fought for the right to vote and we are undermining that.

Those are two ideas. The first is to put the voter's card in an envelope, address it to the voter and if the person has moved on, the card is be returned to sender, prompting a cleanup of the list. The second is door to door enumeration. It makes sense and is a worthy investment.

Government Orders

•(1455)

Look at the money that is spent in government, yet it will not consider investing in enumeration. My constituents shake their heads and ask me what we are doing in this place, if we cannot even come up with something as fundamental as funding for enumeration. The voter's list is the bedrock, the foundation of our democracy. That suggestion has been rejected by the government.

The one that troubles me the most, and I have spoke about it in this place many times, is the idea that Canadians' privacy will be at risk because of the bill. As I mentioned before, the have the following in the bill. We have a requirement for photo ID to be presented when people vote. If they do not have photo ID, they are to present two pieces of ID that have been sanctioned by the government. If they are unable to produce that, someone has to vouch for them and that person has to be on the voter's list. That is the sequencing.

Each voter now, according to this bill, will be given an identification number, I guess analogous to an ID number such as a SIN. That is fine, we did not argue with that. In fact, we did not argue with having photo ID or the other two pieces of ID. We argued about what happened when people did not have that.

However, the piece that puzzles me to this day is the fact that the government saw fit to add birthdate information on the voter's list. I fought that in committee. I did not think it was necessary because we would have photo ID and a voter identifier. Because of this terrible problem of opportunity for voter fraud, which as we have already mentioned that there have been four cases in three elections, we will now have the birthdate information of Canadians on the voter's lists. This is absurd.

Not only will Elections Canada have information, every political party will have this.

An hon. member: The Rhino Party?

Mr. Paul Dewar: We are hearing variations of who will have this information. I can get to that in a minute. Maybe there is something we do not know about the government's entrepreneurial ideas. Why will they have this information? Because the Bloc Québécois put forward an amendment that would allow birthdate information to be shared with all political parties.

The Liberals supported it in committee. The Conservatives at the time were pretty level-headed about it and they voted against the amendment. However, the amendment went forward and was brought forward to the House.

The sad thing is, and to this day I cannot figure it out, the people who we would normally associate with civil liberties and the idea of wanting to ensure that the privacy of one's identity would be safe, the Conservative Party, decided it would support the Bloc amendment as did the Liberals supported the amendment. Something does not pass the smell test. Now we have the Conservative Party and the Liberals supporting the Bloc amendment to have birthdate information given to all political parties.

Let us go over some of the political parties with which this will be shared. It will be shared with all parties represented here, the Green Party, the Marijuana Party, the Rhinoceros Party, the Communist

Party, the Marxist-Leninist Party, the Christian Heritage Party, the whole gamut. I cannot fathom why the government would want all these people, including the New Democratic Party, to have the birthdate information of Canadians. It puzzles me.

My friend from Winnipeg Centre has an analogy that would be fitting. We have government-sanctioned identity theft kits here. What we are saying is, "Here you go".

An hon. member: I thought they were tough on crime.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes, they are tough on crime, but they are going to hand over the facilities for crime. They are going to give them the kit for their use.

We have just seen some incredible breaches of privacy with credit cards and bank cards. Concerns have been raised about privacy of information being one of the key issues.

•(1500)

As my friend from Winnipeg Centre said, one committee is trying to figure out how to protect citizens' privacy and then the House presents a bill that will hand over a person's identity to whomever.

Every single political party now will have that information and will be able to use it for whatever purpose. I have heard members on the other side say that no, people will not use it for nefarious reasons. How would they know that? All of us know that electoral lists are used by political parties and the information gets out to many people. Lists are handed over to people so they can canvass. That information is shared with many different groups.

The key thing is that today, members in the House are saying, not only through the amendment, but through the sanctioning of this bill, that they support the undermining of the privacy of Canadians' personal information. That is what is being done here.

I brought forward amendments to take out the Bloc amendment that would allow the sharing of birthdate information with all political parties. No one, including the Conservatives, voted with my party. They thought it was fine for the birthdate to stay.

Let us be clear about what we are doing with the bill. We are taking away the opportunity for some people to vote. We are handing over the private information of Canadians to Elections Canada and to political parties.

Why are we doing this? It was mentioned at the beginning of this debate that this was apparently a problem because of the opportunity for voter fraud. It was not based on evidence of thousands of cases of voter fraud, but only the potential that there could be voter fraud.

I think that when most Canadians find out that barriers have been put in the way of their access to their franchise they will be very upset. They will want to know why members did not stand up and speak against this provision. They will find out that the government, the Liberals and the Bloc got together and said it was fine, that there was no problem and that they were looking out for the better interests of Canadians.

Government Orders

Canadians will ask why their birthdate information is included. In my constituency this is an issue for many seniors. Seniors do not appreciate having their birthdate information broadcast to all the employees of Elections Canada, let alone all the political parties.

Many people I know, particularly seniors, are very proud of who they are, but they are also very private people. They will not appreciate that their birthdate information will be known by organizers and people in the back rooms. They will be targeted by fundraisers. Organizations salivate over this type of information.

That is what probably happened in the Conservative Party. Originally in committee the Conservatives were against this amendment. I think what happened is that this went to headquarters and a light bulb went on and the organizers were salivating about the potential for targeting their message to voters.

There is also the wider potential for fundraising. We know that members of the Liberal Party have been cut off from their sugar daddy. They do not have access to funds like they used to. They are flailing around. It was a no-brainer for them. The Liberals said that they would support the Bloc amendment because they would now have an opportunity to raise funds from people and niche their message based on people's age.

That is what all of this is about. This is about political parties deciding that they can use this information for their own purposes. When I asked the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Bloc as to why political parties needed the birthdate information of electors, they dodged the question. They have not answered the question. They refer to the need for verification. There is verification. An identity number is assigned to each voter. There is the presentation of photo ID. This is similar to the old Soviet Union where people had to present their papers as they travelled around.

An hon. member: Next we will have retina scans.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes, we will have retina scans, but we should not suggest that because they will probably adopt it. We must decide whether or not the privacy and liberties of Canadians are important.

• (1505)

As we have this creeping big brother kind of approach coming into people's lives, we need to stop and take a look at why we are doing this and what the purpose is.

The last comment I will make is that Canadians—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Ottawa Centre for the commitment he has shown in taking this struggle on and in the face of formidable adversity and even hostility on that committee.

I am surprised at the reaction this seems to have stirred in some people. It is probably because the member has implied that they are a bunch of fascists. I noticed from the tone that we could almost hear the jackboots slapping together as they approached.

I thought this kind of big brother intrusion into one's privacy was the kind of thing the Conservatives actually bristled about. I thought their reputation was to get government out of our lives, that less

government was better and less intrusion into our privacy. Not wanting to share our information used to be, I thought, one of the hallmarks of the Conservative ideology. However, now that they have the grasp of power, it seems that trampling all over an individual's rights to privacy and so on is no longer offensive to their sensibilities.

I would like my colleague's views on how he came to the opinion that this will probably result in a charter challenge under section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As well, he made reference to the socio-economic implications in considerations of this. I would be interested to know if he agrees with me on this point. It seems that the big players in politics today have assessed that since the bottom 20% socio-economic quintile do not vote, we should not waste any attention on them. The top 20 percentile all vote but we know how they will vote. Everything else seems to be geared toward that middleman, that 60% which is at play. That is the prize.

Therefore, measures like this completely disregard the bottom 20 percentile who do not vote anyway and, therefore, who needs them, why waste our energy on them and when they vote they probably do not vote Conservative.

Does the member think there was a selfish consideration of, "To hell with the bottom 20% because they probably will not vote anyway and, if they do, they will not vote for us at any rate so who cares if they are marginalized and disenfranchised one step further"?

• (1510)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre is onto something here.

First, I will speak to the charter challenge. This was not something we made up and theorized about. This was brought forward while the bill was in committee. People said that if this becomes a barrier to people voting, then, as my colleague from Winnipeg Centre said, it will be challenged because access to the right to vote is absolutely fundamental in the charter.

People who work on behalf of the rights of those who are disenfranchised, civil libertarians, have said that this will be something that will need to be challenged. When we put barriers to exercise franchise, then it is the responsibility of any citizen who can to challenge this. Notwithstanding the gutting of the court challenges program, people will do it in any event.

It is a real challenge in terms of where this is going. We will end up spending millions of dollars in court for something that need not happen. As I mentioned, an envelope would have sufficed, as well as universal enumeration.

Government Orders

On the socio-economic question that my colleague from Winnipeg Centre asked, I think of Stanley Knowles who used to represent a riding in Winnipeg and what he would think of this bill. Stanley Knowles was a champion of the disenfranchised. He prided himself on ensuring that those who did not have a voice were heard. I think Mr. Knowles would see this bill as an attempt to thwart the voice of the disenfranchised.

How can we see it any other way when we are taking away the ability of those who are the most vulnerable to vote? That is very clear in this bill. The bill puts up more barriers to people who do not have access to the kind of identification that we would have in our wallets because of the advantage that we have, which primarily has to do with socio-economics.

I think my colleague from Winnipeg Centre is on to something here. Why? Is this done with intent? Is this done to take out certain people from the democracy that we all cherish so much? I would hate to see that happen and hopefully one day people will see the error of their ways and change it.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while listening to the debate today I have become even more concerned than I was before about the whole issue of private information on voter lists being circulated willy-nilly to all kinds of people across the political spectrum.

The opportunity for this information to fall into the hands of people who are involved in organized crime strikes me as a serious concern. We know that identity theft is a growing crime. We know that computer theft and stealing out of people's bank accounts through their debit cards is an increasing concern by police departments across the country.

I want to ask my friend from Ottawa Centre, who has done so much work on this bill, whether those concerns were raised at the committee and, if they were, what the reaction was of the government, the Liberal Party and the Bloc.

We have a government that says it wants to crack down on crime but it seems that with this bill it is actually putting out a new avenue for people who are involved in identity theft to use in order to profit from identity theft and organized crime.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I did not have a chance during my speech to quote John Perry Barlow who said, "Relying on the government to protect your privacy is like asking a peeping Tom to install your window blinds".

That is true. Relying on the government to protect our privacy is like a peeping Tom installing our window blinds. We have government sanctioned window blinds.

I would say to the member that it was brought up in committee to deaf ears. I have actually written to the Privacy Commissioner and hopefully we will be hearing from her soon on that very issue.

• (1515)

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member for Ottawa Centre is well aware that one of my issues is the representation of women in the House. I would argue that there was a missed opportunity on this piece of legislation to deal with the underrepresentation. I wonder if the member could specifically speak to that.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned earlier by my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, we had the opportunity here to deal with real democratic reform and that was an opportunity missed.

I should add that on the concern about women participating, if we look at those who are most vulnerable and falling into poverty, sadly, it is disproportionately represented by women. What we have here are not only concerns about socio-economic, we can do a gender analysis and we see that we are putting up barriers for women.

One can only imagine what all those women who fought for the vote are thinking. If those statues here on the Hill could come to life, one can only imagine what they would have to say about this bill. They would be very angry. They would be asking us what we are doing. They would tell us to look at the bill and then they would say "shame on us".

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to again speak to the bill because I, along with my caucus, truly feel that this bill is bad for Canada, bad for the electoral system and is not what we need right now.

We have heard many arguments in reference to that this afternoon. I truly hope Canadians are listening.

Before I came into the House I met with some businessmen from Alberta. I told them that I had to come back into the House to speak to this bill. They asked me why I was doing that in the House of Commons and for what purpose. I told them that I did not have an answer. However, as I sit and think about the clauses in the bill, I can find some answers.

More and more, those parties want to turn politics into a retail business and, by having birthdates, it can be done. Using modern computer systems, we can target voters and give them selected information that will appeal to their age group, the kind of people one fully expects to see in there. By that token, we can be less than honest with voters about our intentions when we govern by selecting the kinds of policies that we present to them.

There is anonymity in the voting system and among the voters. Politicians need to tell them everything. When politicians get elected, they know they have not told the voters what they should know. This is a glorious opportunity for political parties to be selective with the voters in the information given. That is not part of the political system in which I want to participate. I want people to have full information about political parties, not some kind of Sears public relations platform that parties produce for different age groups.

This is probably where the voter age information is going and where it will be used by clever minds in political parties that do not have the integrity of the voter in mind first.

Government Orders

We have heard the numbers for voter fraud: 4 cases among 24 million voters. Let us talk about the candidate fraud that we have seen. How many candidates have misrepresented themselves when they said they were Liberals or Conservatives during the past three elections and then changed their mind? Out of the 308 ridings, we are talking about a far larger percentage than the voter fraud we have in this country. Canadians are tired of that.

What did we in the House do? Did we do something to stop the practice of candidate fraud? No. Two of the political parties turned down our bill to deal with candidates who do not stick to what they say after they are elected. Candidate fraud is, by far, the larger number in our electoral process.

What do we have here? We have a bill that tries to determine voters' identities. In many cases, a photo ID will be required. What percentage of Canadians have a driver's licence? Was that evidence presented to us? No evidence was given on the percentage of Canadians who have identification available to them at a moment's notice.

We do not understand the impact of this legislation on Canadians. We do not understand it and yet those three political parties are supporting it. This is shoddy work in the House of Commons. If one does not understand what is going to happen from the work one is doing, then one is not doing one's work properly. Since the evidence about the availability of identification to Canadians was not raised in committee, then we have not done our work. This bill should be sent back and re-examined in light of that kind of evidence.

• (1520)

We have a flawed bill. We have a bill that was amended with a clause that even Conservatives found unacceptable when they first heard it. Their gut sense told them it was wrong. They changed their minds for purely political reasons.

Now we have a bill in front of us that the three parties are willing to support and yet they are not even here to hear the arguments because they do not want to hear the arguments. That is a shame. That speaks to the problems we have in our system. I am not going to go—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The member is being called to order. He has sufficient experience to know that we do not mention the presence or the absence of other members in the House. I would expect that other members would pay this member the same courtesy.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. In my enthusiasm, I am afraid I overstepped my bounds.

I will conclude by saying that I hope Canadians understand that this debate is important and that this debate sets the tone for how we conduct ourselves in this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Call in the members.

Pursuant to Standing Order 45 the division stands deferred until Monday, February 19 at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

• (1525)

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to confirm that when you went through all the yeas and all the nays, were you really certain that it was the nays that had it?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Frankly, the nays were louder than the yeas.

Hon. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent to defer this vote until the end of government orders on Tuesday, February 20 instead of Monday, February 19.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 3:26 p.m. this House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 3:26 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

MR. JAMES MOORE

MR. JOE PRESTON

HON. KAREN REDMAN

HON. LUCIENNE ROBILLARD

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Ablonczy, Diane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Alghabra, Omar	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	Lib.
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	CPC
Allison, Hon. Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	Québec	BQ
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Arthur, André	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Québec	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	Québec	BQ
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	NDP
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	Québec	BQ
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon	Yukon	Lib.
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of the Environment	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Barbot, Vivian	Papineau	Québec	BQ
Barnes, Hon. Sue	London West	Ontario	Lib.
Batters, Dave	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West	Ontario	Lib.
Bélangier, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bell, Catherine	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	NDP
Bell, Don	North Vancouver	British Columbia	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Industry	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Ontario	Lib.
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Québec	BQ
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill, The Deputy Speaker	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	BQ
Blaney, Steven	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Ontario	Lib.
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	BQ
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooog, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	Québec	BQ
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Pontiac	Québec	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Québec	BQ
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	BQ
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Chan, Hon. Raymond	Richmond	British Columbia	Lib.
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health 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
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet— Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	BQ
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Hon. Roy	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Demers, Nicole	Laval	Québec	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	BQ
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes— Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	Lib.
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	British Columbia	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	BQ
Dykstra, Rick	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	CPC
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Québec	BQ
Fast, Ed	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Charleswood—St. James— Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	BQ
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Québec	BQ
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing— Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	Québec	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Québec	BQ
Godfrey, Hon. John	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la- Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Graham, Hon. Bill	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Gravel, Raymond	Repentigny	Québec	BQ
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	Lib.
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	BQ
Guergis, Hon. Helena, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport)	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix— Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	BQ
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Harvey, Luc	Louis-Hébert	Québec	CPC
Hawn, Laurie	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	St. John's South—Mount Pearl Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	South Surrey—White Rock— Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Kamloops—Thompson— Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	Lib.
Hubbard, Hon. Charles	Miramichi	New Brunswick	Lib.
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	CPC
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce— Lachine	Québec	Lib.
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill	Ontario	Lib.
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge— Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Nunavut	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Keeper, Tina	Churchill	Manitoba	Lib.
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity)	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Khan, Wajid	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kotto, Maka	Saint-Lambert	Québec	BQ
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau— Mirabel	Québec	BQ
Lake, Mike	Edmonton—Mill Woods— Beaumont	Alberta	CPC
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	Québec	BQ
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	BQ
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	BQ
Lemieux, Pierre	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	CPC
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	Québec	BQ
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	BQ
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
Lussier, Marcel	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	BQ
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	Lib.
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	BQ
Maloney, John	Welland	Ontario	Lib.
Manning, Fabian	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Ontario	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	Lib.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Right Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	Lib.
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	NDP
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Ontario	Lib.
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Ontario	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	Québec	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	BQ
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and Minister of International Cooperation	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Merasty, Gary	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.
Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick	CPC
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	Québec	BQ
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of National Defence	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	BQ
Owen, Hon. Stephen	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Québec	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	Québec	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Secretary of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	Québec	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	Lib.
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Québec	BQ
Peterson, Hon. Jim	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Petit, Daniel	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	CPC
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	Québec	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	CPC
Priddy, Penny	Surrey North	British Columbia	NDP
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	Lib.
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Ontario	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	Lib.
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
ShIPLEY, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Simard, Hon. Raymond	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Skelton, Hon. Carol, Minister of National Revenue	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	BQ
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	BQ
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin— KapusKasing	Ontario	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	Lib.
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette— Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	BQ
Thibault, Hon. Robert	West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Ontario	Lib.
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	York—Simcoe.....	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.....	Saskatchewan	CPC
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent.....	Québec	CPC
Vincent, Robert.....	Shefford	Québec	BQ
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest.....	Ontario	Lib.
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River.....	Alberta	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	NDP
Watson, Jeff	Essex.....	Ontario	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon.....	Richmond Hill	Ontario	Lib.
Williams, John.....	Edmonton—St. Albert.....	Alberta	CPC
Wilson, Blair	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country....	British Columbia	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre.....	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.....	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Zed, Paul.....	Saint John	New Brunswick.....	Lib.
VACANCY	Outremont	Québec	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Diane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CPC
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	CPC
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity) ...	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Mike	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and Minister of International Cooperation	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	CPC
Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Medicine Hat	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
Williams, John	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Abbott, Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Bell, Catherine	Vancouver Island North	NDP
Bell, Don	North Vancouver	Lib.
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Chan, Hon. Raymond	Richmond	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East.....	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Vancouver Kingsway	CPC
Fast, Ed.....	Abbotsford.....	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Grewal, Nina.....	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard.....	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip	Prince George—Peace River.....	CPC
Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.....	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission..	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	Lib.
Mayes, Colin.....	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Owen, Hon. Stephen	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Priddy, Penny	Surrey North	NDP
Savoie, Denise	Victoria	NDP
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas.....	NDP
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.....	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	CPC
Wilson, Blair.....	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.....	Lib.
MANITOBA (14)		
Bezan, James.....	Selkirk—Interlake.....	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill, The Deputy Speaker	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health.....	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia....	CPC
Keeper, Tina	Churchill.....	Lib.
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.....	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita.....	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Simard, Hon. Raymond	Saint Boniface.....	Lib.
Smith, Joy.....	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher.....	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris.....	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche.....	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Hubbard, Hon. Charles.....	Miramichi.....	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic.....	Beauséjour.....	Lib.
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Fundy Royal	CPC
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy	Fredericton	Lib.
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest.....	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	Lib.
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Byrne, Hon. Gerry.....	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East.....	CPC
Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.....	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	CPC
Manning, Fabian.....	Avalon	CPC
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott.....	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor.....	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis.....	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Hon. Scott.....	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark.....	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald.....	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Central Nova	CPC
McDonough, Alexa.....	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West.....	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore.....	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert.....	West Nova	Lib.
NUNAVUT (1)		
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut.....	Lib.
ONTARIO (106)		
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alghabra, Omar.....	Mississauga—Erindale.....	Lib.
Allison, Hon. Dean.....	Niagara West—Glanbrook.....	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of the Environment	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Barnes, Hon. Sue	London West	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West	Lib.
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Oshawa	CPC
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda	Guelph	Lib.
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Lib.
Cullen, Hon. Roy	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Lib.
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick	St. Catharines	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Godfrey, Hon. John	Don Valley West	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	CPC
Graham, Hon. Bill	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Lib.
Guergis, Hon. Helena, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport)	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Lib.
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Khan, Wajid	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Lemieux, Pierre	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Lib.
Maloney, John	Welland	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane	Sudbury	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathyssen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Lib.
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Lib.
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 National Defence	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women	Durham	CPC
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	Lib.
Peterson, Hon. Jim	Willowdale	Lib.
Poillievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Lib.
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Lib.
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	CPC
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stronach, Hon. Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Lib.
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Lib.
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Turner, Hon. Garth	Halton	Lib.
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform.....	York—Simcoe.....	CPC
Volpe, Hon. Joseph.....	Eglinton—Lawrence.....	Lib.
Wallace, Mike.....	Burlington.....	CPC
Wappel, Tom.....	Scarborough Southwest.....	Lib.
Watson, Jeff.....	Essex.....	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon.....	Richmond Hill.....	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys.....	Etobicoke Centre.....	Lib.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Easter, Hon. Wayne.....	Malpeque.....	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence.....	Cardigan.....	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe.....	Egmont.....	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn.....	Charlottetown.....	Lib.

QUÉBEC (74)

André, Guy.....	Berthier—Maskinongé.....	BQ
Arthur, André.....	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.....	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard.....	Manicouagan.....	BQ
Bachand, Claude.....	Saint-Jean.....	BQ
Barbot, Vivian.....	Papineau.....	BQ
Bellavance, André.....	Richmond—Arthabaska.....	BQ
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Industry.....	Beauce.....	CPC
Bigras, Bernard.....	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.....	BQ
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec.....	Jonquière—Alma.....	CPC
Blais, Raynald.....	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.....	BQ
Blaney, Steven.....	Lévis—Bellechasse.....	CPC
Bonsant, France.....	Compton—Stanstead.....	BQ
Bouchard, Robert.....	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.....	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages.....	Beauport—Limoilou.....	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane.....	Terrebonne—Blainville.....	BQ
Brunelle, Paule.....	Trois-Rivières.....	BQ
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities....	Pontiac.....	CPC
Cardin, Serge.....	Sherbrooke.....	BQ
Carrier, Robert.....	Alfred-Pellan.....	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis.....	Bourassa.....	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin.....	Mount Royal.....	Lib.
Crête, Paul.....	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska— Rivière-du-Loup.....	BQ
DeBellefeuille, Claude.....	Beauharnois—Salaberry.....	BQ
Demers, Nicole.....	Laval.....	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne.....	Laurentides—Labelle.....	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition.....	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.....	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles.....	Laurier—Sainte-Marie.....	BQ
Faille, Meili.....	Vaudreuil—Soulanges.....	BQ
Folco, Raymonde.....	Laval—Les Îles.....	Lib.
Freeman, Carole.....	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant.....	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane.....	Québec.....	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	BQ
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Gravel, Raymond	Repentigny	BQ
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	BQ
Harvey, Luc	Louis-Hébert	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Kotto, Maka	Saint-Lambert	BQ
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	BQ
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	BQ
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	BQ
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	BQ
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Lussier, Marcel	Brossard—La Prairie	BQ
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	BQ
Martin, Right Hon. Paul	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	BQ
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	BQ
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Secretary of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Petit, Daniel	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	CPC
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	BQ
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	BQ
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	BQ
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages	Louis-Saint-Laurent	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	BQ
VACANCY	Outremont	

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Batters, Dave.....	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Lib.
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Merasty, Gary	Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River	Lib.
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism).....	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Skelton, Hon. Carol, Minister of National Revenue	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon	Lib.

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Carole Lavallée
Glen PearsonJim Peterson
Scott ReidBruce Stanton
Dave Van KesterenRobert Vincent
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Diane Bourgeois

Gord Brown
Ed Fast

Hedy Fry
Tina Keeper

Francis Scarpaleggia
Chris Warkentin

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Hon. Greg Thompson	Minister of Veterans Affairs
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Hon. Chuck Strahl	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Hon. Gary Lunn	Minister of Natural Resources
Hon. Peter MacKay	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Hon. Loyola Hearn	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Hon. Stockwell Day	Minister of Public Safety
Hon. Carol Skelton	Minister of National Revenue
Hon. Vic Toews	President of the Treasury Board
Hon. Rona Ambrose	President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification
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Hon. Gordon O'Connor	Minister of National Defence
Hon. Bev Oda	Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women
Hon. Jim Prentice	Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
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Hon. Maxime Bernier	Minister of Industry
Hon. Lawrence Cannon	Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Hon. Tony Clement	Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario
Hon. Jim Flaherty	Minister of Finance
Hon. Josée Verner	Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages
Hon. Michael Fortier	Minister of Public Works and Government Services
Hon. Peter Van Loan	Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform
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Hon. Jason Kenney	Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity)
Hon. Gerry Ritz	Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)
Hon. Helena Guergis	Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport)
Hon. Christian Paradis	Secretary of State (Agriculture)

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Mr. Rob Moore	to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
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Mrs. Lynne Yelich	to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development
Mr. David Anderson	to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
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Mr. Deepak Obhrai	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Randy Kamp	to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Mr. Dave MacKenzie	to the Minister of Public Safety
Mr. Pierre Poilievre	to the President of the Treasury Board
Mr. Ed Komarnicki	to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
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Mr. Jim Abbott	to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Mr. Rod Bruinooge	to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Mr. Mark Warawa	to the Minister of the Environment
Mr. Colin Carrie	to the Minister of Industry
Mr. Brian Jean	to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Mr. Steven Fletcher	to the Minister of Health
Ms. Diane Ablonczy	to the Minister of Finance
Mr. James Moore	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics
Mr. Tom Lukiwski	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform

CONTENTS

Friday, February 16, 2007

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada Elections Act

Bill C-31. Third reading	6917
Mr. Owen (Vancouver Quadra)	6917
Mr. Hill	6919
Ms. Black	6920
Mr. Cardin	6921
Motion	6922
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	6922

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival

Mr. Norlock	6923
-------------------	------

Nobel Peace Prize

Ms. Karetak-Lindell	6923
---------------------------	------

Diana Parada

Ms. Demers	6924
------------------	------

Fraser Health

Ms. Black	6924
-----------------	------

Chinese New Year

Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	6924
--	------

Canadian Citizenship Act

Mr. Telegdi	6924
-------------------	------

Forest Industry

Mr. Mayes	6925
-----------------	------

Michel Prévost

Mr. Nadeau	6925
------------------	------

Health

Mr. Petit	6925
-----------------	------

COMRIF Program

Mr. Boshcoff	6925
--------------------	------

Justice Legislation

Mr. Dykstra	6925
-------------------	------

Citizenship and Immigration

Ms. Chow	6926
----------------	------

Climate Change

Mr. Tonks	6926
-----------------	------

Bloc Québécois

Mr. Gaudet	6926
------------------	------

Citizenship Act

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	6926
----------------------------------	------

Senate Tenure Legislation

Mr. Sweet	6927
-----------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Judicial Appointments

Mr. Ignatieff	6927
Mr. Van Loan	6927
Mr. Ignatieff	6927
Mr. Van Loan	6927
Mr. Ignatieff	6927
Mr. Van Loan	6927
Mr. Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	6927
Mr. Van Loan	6928
Mr. Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	6928
Mr. Van Loan	6928
Ms. Guay	6928
Mr. Van Loan	6928
Ms. Guay	6928
Mr. Van Loan	6928
Mrs. Freeman	6928
Mr. Moore (Fundy Royal)	6928
Mrs. Freeman	6929
Mr. Moore (Fundy Royal)	6929

The Environment

Mr. Layton	6929
Mr. Van Loan	6929
Mr. Layton	6929
Mr. Van Loan	6929

Tourism Industry

Mr. Brison	6929
Ms. Ablonczy	6929
Mr. Brison	6929
Ms. Ablonczy	6929

Textile and Clothing Industry

Mr. Pacetti	6930
Mr. Ritz	6930
Mr. Pacetti	6930
Mr. Ritz	6930

Public Safety

Mrs. Barbot	6930
Mr. MacKenzie	6930
Mrs. Barbot	6930
Mr. MacKenzie	6930

Agriculture and Agri-food

Mr. Bellavance	6930
Mr. Paradis	6930
Mr. Bellavance	6930
Mr. Paradis	6931

The Environment

Mrs. Redman	6931
Mr. Warawa	6931
Mrs. Redman	6931
Mr. Warawa	6931

Mr. Goodale	6931
Mr. Warawa	6931
Justice	
Mr. Goodale	6931
Mr. Van Loan	6931
National Parole Board	
Mr. Kramp	6932
Mr. MacKenzie	6932
Seniors	
Ms. Chow	6932
Mrs. Yelich	6932
Ms. Chow	6932
Mrs. Yelich	6932
Canadian Wheat Board	
Mr. McCallum (Markham—Unionville)	6932
Ms. Ablonczy	6932
Mr. McCallum (Markham—Unionville)	6932
Ms. Ablonczy	6933
Mr. Easter	6933
Mr. Paradis	6933
Mr. Easter	6933
Mr. Paradis	6933
Manufacturing Sector	
Ms. Picard	6933
Mr. Ritz	6933
Ms. Picard	6933
Mr. Paradis	6933
Aboriginal Affairs	
Ms. Karetak-Lindell	6933
Mr. Bruinooge	6934
Mr. Stanton	6934
Mr. Bruinooge	6934
Ms. Crowder	6934
Mr. Bruinooge	6934
Ms. Crowder	6934
Mr. Bruinooge	6934
Veterans Affairs	
Ms. Guarnieri	6934
Mrs. Hinton	6934
The Environment	
Mr. Allison	6934
Mr. Jean	6935
Child Poverty	
Ms. Bonsant	6935
Mrs. Yelich	6935
Natural Resources	
Mr. Bevington	6935
Mr. Bruinooge	6935
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Wilfert	6935
Ms. Guergis	6935

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lukiwski	6935
Committees of the House	
Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Proulx	6936
Motion for concurrence	6936
(Motion agreed to)	6936
Petitions	
The Environment	
Ms. Crowder	6936
Genetic Use Restriction Technologies	
Ms. Crowder	6936
Human Trafficking	
Mrs. Smith	6936
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lukiwski	6936
Points of Order	
Bill C-293—Development Assistance Accountability Act	
Mr. Lukiwski	6936

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada Elections Act	
Bill C-31. Third reading	6937
Ms. Black	6937
Mr. Dewar	6938
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	6938
Ms. Crowder	6941
Mr. Dewar	6941
Ms. Crowder	6942
Mr. Reid	6945
Mr. Dewar	6945
Mr. Reid	6946
Motion	6946
(Motion agreed to)	6946
Mr. Dewar	6947

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Criminal Code	
Bill S-211. Second reading	6947
Mrs. Smith	6947
Mrs. Freeman	6948
Mr. Anders	6949
Message from the Senate	
The Acting Speaker (Mr. Galipeau)	6951
Criminal Code	
Bill S-211. Second reading	6951
Mr. Pacetti	6951
Division on motion deferred	6952

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada Elections Act	
Bill C-31. Third reading	6952

Mr. Reid	6952
Mr. Dewar	6953
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	6953
Mr. Bevington	6956
Mr. Dewar	6957
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	6960
Mr. Dewar	6960

Ms. Black	6961
Ms. Crowder	6961
Mr. Bevington	6961
Division on Motion Deferred	6962
Division on Motion Deferred	6962

APPENDIX

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