



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 141 • NUMBER 140 • 1st SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 25, 2007

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

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

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 25, 2007

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

SEVENTH ANNUAL NON-VIOLENCE WEEK

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Beauport—Limoilou and in association with my colleague, the hon. member for Jonquière—Alma and Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, I would ask the hon. members of this House to join us in recognizing the seventh annual non-violence week currently under way in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, which is an initiative of the Jonquière youth table.

Event partners include the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean crime victims' assistance centre, the La Baie friendship centre, Alcan Inc., the Saguenay police department, the Jonquière school board and the Chicoutimi health and social services centre.

Sadly, violence continues to be all too present in our communities, through either physical or verbal abuse. No violence is acceptable. That is what non-violence week is all about.

This is why we are asking each member of this House to support our efforts to have this week declared national non-violence week.

* * *

• (1405)

[*English*]

AFRICA MALARIA DAY

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Africa Malaria Day.

Last January I visited rural Kenya and saw firsthand the devastating toll this disease has taken on that country and indeed, all of Africa.

Over one million children alone die of malaria each year. A city the size of Ottawa dies annually. This is an enormous loss of human potential and I urge the government to support the global malaria drug subsidy. It is simple and it is cost effective.

This instrument alone could potentially save 25,000 lives a month by making drugs that work accessible and affordable to the people who need them the most.

Last week the federal government announced a \$20 million commitment to the Red Cross malaria bed net campaign which is a good start but much more needs to be done. By supporting the malaria drug subsidy Canada could become a world leader in finding a cure for this dreadful disease.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC MANUFACTURERS

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every day, men and women all over Quebec get up and go to work, happy to do their part to build the province.

Thanks to quality labour in Saint-Hyacinthe and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, NHL players next season will be wearing new uniforms created using leading-edge materials and technology and made in Quebec. In Germany, skiers now prefer Orage clothing, made by Coalision in Longueuil. In addition, Louis Garneau Sports, which still manufactures half its products in Quebec, conducts all its research and development in our national capital region. I congratulate these craftspeople in the manufacturing sector, who do us proud.

Workers and entrepreneurs in Quebec are known for their expertise. Instead of the Conservatives' laissez-faire approach, which threatens our prosperity, our manufacturers need help along the road to success.

Statements by Members

[English]

INTERNATIONAL AID

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, hundreds of students from the Comox Valley signed a letter calling on the government to address issues of health, education and the rights of women in developing countries by honouring our promise to the world.

Canada committed to increase our foreign aid to .7% of our GDP. Today our contribution lies below .3% of GDP. That is not even half of the promised level of support.

The students at G.P. Vanier Secondary School understand the importance of advancing women's equality in order to improve living conditions in developing countries. In the words of Stephen Lewis, "All roads lead from women to social change, and that includes subduing the [AIDS] pandemic [in Africa]".

The students at G.P. Vanier told me that Canada must share its wealth to be a real leader in the world community, something the Prime Minister and his cabinet do not understand. Any of these students would make a better leader than the current ministers responsible for foreign aid.

* * *

CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks the 10th anniversary of the inception of the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

Over the last 10 years, CFI has invested \$3.7 billion into 5,000 projects at 129 universities, colleges, and research institutions across Canada, providing the state of the art infrastructure and equipment needed to conduct leading edge research and provide world-class training.

CFI is an essential pillar of Canada's science, research and development infrastructure. Investments by the CFI have enabled Canadian researchers to make their mark through discoveries that have improved the quality of the lives of thousands of Canadians, while also contributing to the economic development of our country.

Budget 2007 provides an additional \$510 million to CFI which demonstrates our government's commitment to cutting edge research and innovation, and support for Canada's world-class research community.

I ask all parliamentarians to join me in wishing everyone at the CFI continued success in their efforts to nurture Canada's reputation as a nation of innovation.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today on the grounds of the Manitoba legislature a peaceful and lawful protest is taking place. Led by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, first nations, Métis and others from Manitoba are gathered.

They are there to speak out against two successive federal budgets that ignore aboriginal issues and to speak out against the injustice of abject poverty in their communities.

They gather to protest the government's unwillingness to apologize for the legacy of residential schools. They gather to insist the government acknowledge and respond to the 27,000 children in care. They are there to object to the amount of time it takes to settle land claims.

They gather peacefully to show that intimidation is not collaboration. They come together to show Canadians that the government has failed them.

They ask members of this House and all Canadians to support their efforts to improve the lives of aboriginal Canadians across this country.

* * *

● (1410)

TIBET

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is the 18th birthday of Tibet's Panchen Lama. He is the second most important religious leader for the Tibetan people after His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

He also became the youngest political prisoner in the world when, in 1995 at the age of five, he and his parents were arrested by Chinese authorities. His only crime was being chosen by the Dalai Lama to become a great spiritual leader for the people of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama received honorary Canadian citizenship after a unanimously accepted motion that I presented here in the House June 22, 2006. That motion and subsequent citizenship recognizes, among other things, the Dalai Lama's relentless commitment to non-violent conflict resolution and tireless work for genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within China.

Despite the Dalai Lama's best efforts for reconciliation, the Tibetan people continue to be denied their basic rights. I call on the government of China to deal in good faith with the Tibetan people and the Dalai Lama, and release the Panchen Lama and his family immediately.

* * *

[Translation]

CATHERINE MANGELINCKX-TAHAN

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to a woman in my riding of Drummond, Catherine Mangelinckx-Tahan, who has returned from a humanitarian aid mission.

A talent agent, Ms. Mangelinckx-Tahan has spent the past five weeks volunteering in a maternity clinic in Cambodia. There, she assisted with dozens of births and looked after the babies and mothers while they stayed at the clinic.

Statements by Members

Giving birth in a hospital is a luxury that most women in Cambodia cannot afford. That is why in July 2005 Dr. Keo San opened the first free maternity clinic, where a physician and midwives are available around the clock.

A true humanitarian, Ms. Mangelinckx-Tahan proves that solidarity is still the key to our future. She reminds us that we all have a duty to the less fortunate in society.

I join the people of Drummondville in expressing our appreciation to Ms. Mangelinckx-Tahan.

* * *

[English]

WORLD WAR II VETERANS

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sadly this week, Fort McMurray lost two Canadian heroes from World War II.

The first is Mr. Bill Woodward, who served in Italy and was captured in 1944. Forced to march through Austria to Germany, the six-foot tall Bill weighed just 137 pounds when liberated. Bill was very proud of his Métis heritage and was a very hard worker.

The second is Mr. Roy Hawkins, another hero, who enlisted in 1939 and worked with Canadian and British intelligence overseas. He narrowly escaped from the Dieppe raid and later served in Sicily as a first lieutenant. Roy was a charter member of the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. He was the first fire chief and, indeed, he had the first firefighter unit named after him.

Both Mr. Woodward and Mr. Hawkins will be greatly missed by their families and the community they influenced. Their courage and bravery will always be remembered with gratitude.

I knew both these men and, truly, Fort McMurray in northern Alberta is a better place today because both Roy and Bill chose to make it their home.

* * *

AFRICA MALARIA DAY

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak in the House regarding Africa Malaria Day.

Malaria is a terrible disease that often goes unnoticed in our media, while SARS, HIV and AIDS receive most of the headlines. Every year, however, 300 million to 500 million are infected with malaria and more than one million die from the disease. Even more tragic is the fact that African children under the age of five account for 75% of these deaths.

It is with these statistics in mind that I would like to recognize the work of my colleagues from Newmarket—Aurora and London North Centre with the spread the net organization.

Spread the net is an innovative partnership with UNICEF Canada that has been raising awareness of the malaria pandemic in Africa and raising funds to buy anti-malarial bed nets to protect children in Liberia and Rwanda. The goal is to raise the necessary funds to purchase 500,000 insecticide treated bed nets over the next two years.

As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility not only to represent our constituents' interests in Ottawa but also to promote Canada's values around the world.

* * *

•(1415)

CANADIAN GAS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Gas Association.

Earlier today, the Minister of Natural Resources and the Parliamentary Librarian were presented with a commemorative book for the occasion called *Fuelling Progress: A History of the Canadian Gas Association*.

This book connects the natural gas industry to the everyday life of Canadians. It tells the story of the people, events and developments that impacted not only the industry's evolution but our very way of life. From the gas lamps of the 1830s, to the 1970s era of cooking with gas, to today's focus on clean energy, this book tells all.

As the Minister of Natural Resources said, natural gas is an important part of Canada's energy mix. This book is an excellent research tool which provides a glimpse into Canada's history and the role that natural gas has played in shaping our country.

I congratulate the Canadian Gas Association on its 100 years and for generously providing a complimentary copy of this book to all university and public libraries in Canada.

* * *

SECURITY CERTIFICATES

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Hassan Almrei, never charged, never convicted, is now the only security certificate detainee at the Kingston Immigration Holding Centre. His hunger strike continues.

Last week, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration recommended that alternatives be found should there be only one detainee left at KIHIC due to concerns about solitary confinement and again called for the appointment of the Correctional Investigator to mediate.

The government must find an urgent solution to his hunger strike and ensure that he is not subject to any form of solitary confinement.

Adil Charkaoui, also never charged, never convicted, is subject to a security certificate. The case against him is crumbling. Witnesses have recanted, unreliable evidence obtained by torture was used against him, and other evidence has been destroyed. The government should reopen his case and allow justice to be done.

The security certificate process must be repealed. Alleged terrorism should be dealt with as the serious crime it is under the Criminal Code of Canada.

*Oral Questions***COLLEGE MOTHER HOUSE**

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased, on administrative professionals day, to congratulate a historic Montreal educational institution, College Mother House, on its 100th anniversary.

[*Translation*]

Founded in 1907, the Notre-Dame Secretarial School, later renamed College Mother House, was the first secretarial college in Montreal. Established by the sisters of the Notre-Dame congregation, where education was the primary mission, the college was located for most of its history on the current site of Dawson College.

[*English*]

The college accepts about 35 women annually in the 10 month program. They study business and computer skills plus languages and receive a provincially recognized certificate. The college's mission is the theme of its anniversary: "100 years of women helping women".

I invite all members to join me in wishing College Mother House a happy centennial anniversary and many more anniversaries to come.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC MINING WEEK

Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the mining industry in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and in northern Quebec is enjoying great prosperity. It is an important economic engine of development in our resource region.

Exploration and development projects are on the rise. The mining industry generates many jobs and there will be a significant need for workers in the coming years.

Let us acknowledge the progress made by the industry to improve its environmental results through innovative technologies and ethics. Although the production of mine waste is unavoidable, mining companies are investigating procedures that will help them be profitable and at the same time respect the environment.

That is why, with a theme of "Mines in society, a world of possibilities", members of the mining community will be participating in a number of activities to show what this industry has to offer.

* * *

[*English*]

JACK WIEBE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the "who's who" of Saskatchewan gathered at a memorial service in Swift Current to say a fond farewell to the Hon. Jack Wiebe, a former member of the provincial legislature, a former lieutenant governor and a former senator.

However, amidst all the dignitaries and all the pomp and ceremony, Jack would have liked two things the best: first, the heartfelt eulogy delivered by his nephew, Scott, because Jack was devoted to his family; and second, the hundreds of ordinary local

citizens who came to say "thank you" and "goodbye" to someone like them, who believed in community values and in doing what it takes to enrich community life.

In all his many roles, Jack Wiebe always showed genuine affection for people. He made every individual feel valued and worthy, whether in Buckingham Palace, or these Parliament buildings, or the Saskatchewan legislature, or at home on the farm.

He was one of the "really good guys" in political life, representing the very best of Saskatchewan.

We extend our sincere sympathies to his loving spouse, Ann, and the entire Wiebe family.

* * *

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

THE BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, while desperately trying to justify her party's presence in Ottawa, the Bloc Québécois member for Rivière-du-Nord contended that her party could take credit for settling the fiscal imbalance issue.

If they took a close look at their actual performance, Bloc members would be ashamed to make such comments, because they would notice that they are just windbags. The first time the Bloc asked the old Liberal government in this House to deal with the fiscal imbalance issue was on November 17, 1999. We know what happened. Even now, the Liberal leader still does not recognize the existence of a fiscal imbalance. It is only when the Conservative government took office that this issue was dealt with.

The Bloc is now boasting to have taken seven years, four months and two days to restore fiscal balance. That is a rather poor performance.

In fact, the Conservative government was the only party to take action in this matter. The Bloc talked about fiscal imbalance, while we solved it.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government was told by its own officials that Afghan detainees face a high risk of torture and extrajudicial executions. However, yesterday the Prime Minister told this House that he had no evidence at all to support these allegations.

Why did the Prime Minister hide from Canadians the fact that he had received this damning report?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should know that annual reports on governance, democratic development and human rights have been prepared by our embassy in Afghanistan since 2002. They document general concerns and the various actions that the government and its officials are taking to deal with those concerns.

Oral Questions

We have no evidence of the specific allegations that appeared this week in the *The Globe and Mail* but, obviously, as I have indicated, we take any such allegations seriously. Officials are working with their Afghan counterparts and, I am told, receiving full cooperation in getting facts.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): I have some questions, Mr. Speaker.

Who told foreign affairs officials to release only positive sections of this report? Who told them to black out those sections that warned about these potential abuses? Who told officials to deny the very existence of this report on human rights issues in Afghanistan? Was it the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence or the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wondered how long it would be until we got the conspiracy theories going but here is the reality.

The Leader of the Opposition, who is a former minister of the Crown, knows the process. The process is very simple. When it comes to access to information, these decisions are made by government lawyers. They do not consult politicians or ministers. They act according to the law and their decisions can always be appealed through the Information Commissioner.

I have to note that the previous government received reports since 2002 and some of these problems had no policy on detainees until January 2006.

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has repeatedly told this House that the government had no information about any abuse Afghan detainees might have been subjected to. We now have proof that this was not true.

The Prime Minister no longer has any choice. Will he finally fire his Minister of National Defence?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have just said and have said on many occasions this week, we have heard these allegations. We always take these allegations seriously. That is not the same thing as assuming that every allegation made by the Taliban is true. We are, however, consulting with our partners in Afghanistan and, so far, we have had full cooperation in finding the facts.

• (1425)

[English]

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, there is no proof that these detainees were Taliban and, second, it is impossible to believe the government did not know.

We now have a report by officials warning the Conservative government of torture, abuse and murder in those prisons. After first denying the existence of the report, the document was released with disturbing sentences blacked out.

Who among the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs saw the report and, above all, who ordered the cover-up?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think I have already answered the question on the process. I suppose the deputy leader of the Liberal Party who has not been in government does not understand the access to information process.

As the member knows, this is a general report prepared for the last five years on some of the challenges in Afghanistan and some of the actions taken. I want to quote another section of the report which also said:

—judges and prosecutors are being trained, more defendants are receiving legal representation, courthouses and prisons are being built or refurbished and the capacity of the permanent justice institutions has been enhanced.

We are not under any illusion about the big challenges in Afghanistan but progress is being made.

[Translation]

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has told us repeatedly that the Afghan commission could deal with this issue, but the commission itself admits that it cannot do so. He has told us that the government had no evidence of abuse, but we now know that he had an internal report confirming such abuse. This is a scary tale of incompetence and deceit.

When will the Prime Minister assume his responsibilities and dismiss his disgraced minister?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, military leaders in Afghanistan are constantly in contact with their counterparts and with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. So far, they have not indicated to us that they have encountered these problems. Of course, we made it clear that we are there to help to any extent necessary.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said he did not have any evidence to substantiate the allegations that Afghan prisoners have been tortured. The Minister of National Defence told us a number of times that everything was going very well, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs said he had confidence in the Minister of National Defence.

This morning we learn that a report prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs confirms that executions and torture are commonplace in Afghanistan. The member for Mississauga—Streetsville, special adviser on the Middle East, suggested in a press release that this was part of Afghan culture.

How can the Prime Minister minimize such things and be so irresponsible?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these reports have been prepared annually since 2002. There are many challenges to governance, democracy building and human rights in Afghanistan. This is a general report that also contains the actions taken by the governments in response to these problems. We will continue to work with our departments and agencies to ensure progress.

Oral Questions

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since April 2006, the Bloc Québécois has asked 36 questions about the fate of the Afghan prisoners. Each time we were told falsehoods—the Red Cross, false; the independent human rights commission, false. Now we are being told about senior officials, but this is being minimized: the report is not important. His so called special adviser on the Middle East says this is part of the culture.

Does he realize that the reports from these senior officials are causing Canada to violate the Geneva convention? Does he realize the position the Prime Minister is putting Canada in?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not agree that the purpose of this report is to minimize the challenges in Afghanistan. On the contrary, this report admits that there are many challenges to governance, democracy building and human rights. Furthermore, there is a report on the actions taken by the ministers, the departments and the officers in response to these problems, and these efforts continue.

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Monday the Minister of Foreign Affairs told this House that he was looking into this issue and that the allegations of torture had not been confirmed. Yet, we now know that he had a copy of the report in his possession and that it was senior officials from his own department who informed him of the matter.

How could the minister cover up evidence on Monday concerning the allegations, when we now know that he had received the report from his own senior officials?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that I did not have the report in hand. I have since reviewed the report.

Having said that, of course we take these matters extremely seriously and I communicated that to the ambassador from Afghanistan. We have asked that officials look into these allegations immediately and if in fact this practice is in place that it cease immediately and that they send in officials specifically trained to get to the bottom of this. He has assured me that process is under way.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Foreign Affairs admit here in this House that he and his fellow ministers deliberately hid the existence of that report? Why did he and his fellow ministers, when asked about this matter, fail to inform the House? Will he admit that he and the other ministers knowingly hid the truth, not only from the public, but also here in this House?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is patently false. These reports are received, reviewed and redacted in exactly the same fashion as they have since 2002. The previous government went through the same process.

There are lawyers and officials in all departments who make these decisions independent of the political branch of government.

There were no ministers and certainly the Prime Minister was not involved in any redaction and decisions made as to what information was to be redacted in the reports.

[Translation]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear: the government knew what was happening to detainees who were transferred. The secret documents are not Taliban documents; they are Department of Foreign Affairs documents published in the *Globe and Mail*. They confirm that extrajudicial executions, disappearances, torture and detention without trial are commonplace.

They know about this. Why does the government not stop transferring detainees to situations where they will face torture?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian military personnel do not send prisoners into situations where they will face torture or anything like that. The NDP's allegation is unfounded.

[English]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, brushing off these allegations in such a casual manner by the Prime Minister is simply not acceptable and is not in line with the responsibilities that he has as the leader of this country with respect to the Geneva conventions and other matters.

What he should be doing is firing his incompetent Minister of National Defence. What he should be doing is stopping other ministers or any other officials from blackening out government documents that tell the truth. What he should also be doing is stopping the transfer of prisoners that could be going into torture this very day.

Will he do it or will he deny his responsibilities?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, these are serious allegations and we treat them seriously.

A full level of consultation is going on, both from here and on the ground in Afghanistan, to determine the facts and to determine whether there is any basis for any of these allegations.

At the same time, the leader of the NDP likes to talk about responsibilities but he has no evidence. There is no evidence at all that anyone in the government has the ability to black out reports.

At the same time, he also accuses the Canadian military of somehow violating the Geneva convention. He does not have proof of that and he should take his responsibilities seriously and not make such accusations.

• (1435)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his government knew about the reality of Afghan prisons and they chose to hide the truth from Canadians. It is impossible that he did not know of the foreign affairs report from his own government which states that "extrajudicial executions and torture" are common in Afghanistan.

Did the foreign affairs minister ever read his own department's report or was he wilfully blind? When, if ever, did he tell the defence minister?

Oral Questions

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as has been previously stated by the Prime Minister, these reports have not materially changed since 2002. The same practice is in place.

They are a general report about the situation on the ground with respect to positive and negative situations as they exist. They are used for the purposes of government to adjust their capacity building exercise in Afghanistan with other countries.

These reports are made available. These reports are done for the purposes of giving Canada the capacity to help Afghanistan in that mission to the best of its ability.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not know about it? That is unbelievable.
[*Translation*]

Canadian diplomats are not the only ones who have sounded the alarm about detainees being tortured by Afghan authorities. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, also considers torture to be a violation of human rights. The Prime Minister and his government chose to ignore Ms. Arbour's comments on the subject.

Why did the Minister of National Defence choose to act as though the High Commissioner had not said anything, and why is he, even now, transferring prisoners. Will he resign?

[*English*]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the heart of all these questions is a suggestion that our military will knowingly hand prisoners over to torture. This is an aspersion on the Canadian Forces. Our Canadian Forces operate at the highest level of conduct and I stand by their actions.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, somebody said once that the first casualty when war comes is the truth. It is very difficult for me to stand here on behalf of Canadians and listen to the gibberish that froths from the mouth of the Minister of National Defence.

The minority Conservative government has misled the House and Canadians. Why has the defence minister allowed the situation to worsen? Foreign Affairs originally said the report did not exist. Now we know it does.

Did the Prime Minister's Office order the document erased? When will the Prime Minister erase the Minister of National Defence from his portfolio?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us be perfectly clear. No one has denied that reports exist. There was a general application for all reports.

I just heard something in the House from a former finance minister, who has called the Minister of National Defence a chicken. This is a man who has served his country in uniform for over 30 years.

The only thing that member has led is an army of carpetbaggers and fundraisers.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

[*English*]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that comes from somebody who called a member of this House a dog. I am impressed.

[*Translation*]

Canadians are involved in every aspect of the Afghan government. Through his strategic advisory team, the minister has a direct connection to President Karzai. He is working with the police, the prison system and the justice system. He has a team of Correctional Service of Canada officers, who are experts in human rights, working on the ground. They can tell him everything he wants to know about the situation in Kandahar. He even has his own intelligence service.

Why the cover-up? Why does he want to—

• (1440)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of National Defence.

[*English*]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member previously said, the first casualty in these kinds of games is the truth, and he is the first casualty.

The military's strategic advisory team in Kabul is a team that advises on how to organize government and how to achieve objectives. It does not get involved in the justice system.

The other suspicion or suggestion the member is making is about cover-ups, and a cover-up means that the military is somehow involved in not identifying abuses. I reject this completely.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of National Defence had a damning report from the Department of Foreign Affairs that talked about torture, summary executions and arbitrary detentions, the Minister of National Defence continued to spew rhetoric about trusting completely the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. Now we are told that no one saw this report. The Minister of Foreign Affairs did not see it. The Prime Minister did not see it. The Minister of National Defence did not see it. That is a bit much.

If they did not see it, how could they have censored it?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as has already been stated very clearly, these reports have been done in the same form and fashion. They have been reviewed and redacted in the same way since 2002.

Oral Questions

The interesting point to make with all the chatter coming from the members opposite is that when the Liberals were in government they had no policy on detainees until one month before they left office.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence is not the only one who does not know what is going on and who is attempting to mislead this House. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister himself are misleading this House.

Does the minister still have enough of a conscience to realize that by remaining silent, when he had such a report in his hands, he lost the little credibility he had left? The minister knows what a code of honour is. Will he respect his code of honour and immediately tender his resignation?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these reports clearly state that there are positive and obviously negative areas within the Afghanistan capacity to deal with not only detainees but areas of development and areas of security.

That has been the case since 2002 when this reporting process was put in place. We use those reports, as did the previous government, to determine how we can assist in the building of capacity in Afghanistan. That has not changed.

What will change is that we will be accountable. We will speak directly with Afghan authorities to see that the positive changes that have to take place do in fact occur.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with today's disclosures we have proof that Canada violated the Geneva convention. The Prime Minister must face the facts: this report was not written by the Taliban but by senior officials at Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs.

Does the Prime Minister intend to announce the only possible solution in these circumstances, which is to immediately stop transferring prisoners to the Afghan authorities?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what simplistic thinking to suggest somehow that Canada is in violation of international obligations or the Geneva convention. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We are taking action. We are working directly and collaboratively with Afghan authorities to see that this situation is remedied. We will do so based on actual factual information in our possession, not on allegations made by the Taliban and not on allegations made by the Bloc Québécois.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are limits. In light of this report, Canada is clearly violating the Geneva convention, not only because there is torture but also because there is the risk of torture.

The Prime Minister has two options: either he defends the indefensible by violating the Geneva convention, or he shows responsibility and some humility by admitting that he was wrong and stops right now the transfer of prisoners.

•(1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, the report says no such thing.

I have spoken directly with Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada. I have advised him of our concerns with respect to those sections of the report. I have indicated to him that we expect word back from them as to the facts they have. We indicated quite clearly what we expect, that if any practice such as alleged is taking place, it cease immediately and changes be made to remedy that.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, international law, including the Geneva convention, expressly prohibits the transfer of detainees into situations of torture and inhumane treatment. There is clear evidence of such torture and inhumane treatment. Indeed, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has not only corroborated these allegations but has acknowledged that it cannot monitor, let alone protect, the detainees.

Will the Canadian government abide by its international obligations and cease and desist from these transfers, in the interests also of protecting our own soldiers, of protecting the integrity of our mission and of protecting—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously it is in everyone's interest that the Afghan government comply with its international obligations, with its own law, and with all obligations as they pertain to human rights. That is exactly what the Canadian government and in fact all NATO allies are attempting to do in working with the Afghan government to build the capacity, both in prisons and with respect to their Afghan national army and policing.

That does not happen overnight. That member, more than anyone, should know that the strides and progress that have been made in Afghanistan are extraordinary.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, international law not only prohibits the transfer of detainees to conditions of torture, but requires that the government take all necessary measures to protect detainees already transferred or to have them returned into our protective custody.

Since it is clear that those already transferred have been tortured and since the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has acknowledged that it cannot protect them, will the government secure their protection, or will it continue to be soft on compliance with international law, soft on detainee protection, and soft on protecting the rights of our own Canadian soldiers?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor. A question has been asked and he has the right to respond.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, members of the Canadian military are in constant communication with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and with their other counterparts in Afghanistan to assure themselves that the allegations the hon. member makes are not the case. We do that at other levels, at the level of corrections, and also at the level of foreign affairs.

Any suggestion that the hon. member or other members have that the Canadian military is deliberately violating the Geneva convention is false and without any foundation.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government claims not to have known about the abuse of detainees, dismissing them as Taliban rumours, but foreign affairs knew, Madam Justice Louise Arbour knew, the Afghan government knew, and Corrections Canada, with officials on the ground, knew. Even the Prime Minister's floor-crossing personal adviser to Afghanistan knew.

How is it that the only people claiming ignorance sit on the Conservative frontbench?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the previous government, the hon. member would know that these reports are routinely returned to officials. These reports are used for the basis of determining what progress needs to be made, what areas are lacking, and how to go about building that capacity. These reports are done to gauge the advancements that are made in human rights and to find the shortcomings and then address them.

We have spoken directly with the Afghan government about this situation. We intend to have a full report back to us.

• (1450)

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister has a history of misleading the House.

The government refuses to ensure international law is respected and it is putting Canada's international reputation at risk. When will the government admit that once again it has misled Canadians on the issue of Afghan detainees? When will the Prime Minister fire his incompetent Minister of National Defence?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the mission, this government, like the previous government I would expect, has regularly raised concerns about capacity building and human rights issues. We continue to do that.

Reports such as this are used generally to make policy. The specific allegations here are being examined closely. They will be looked into in Afghanistan. They will be gauged for future consideration. This is an attempt by the government to point out its own shortcomings.

When we examine the fact that those members did not have an agreement in place on the transfer of detainees, they are trying to detract from their own shortcomings.

[*Translation*]

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in its last budget, Canada's new government announced that \$60 million would be made available over the next two years for events celebrating local arts and heritage.

Could the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women tell us what progress she has made with the implementation of this program?

[*English*]

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the program does not yet exist. We announced our intent in the last budget, but it still has to be created. The criteria have not been established. All MPs are invited to provide input. The Conservative caucus received a questionnaire and all members of the opposition parties will receive it in the upcoming days.

The government wants to address the real needs of our communities and we will do it through a fully accountable and transparent process.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government failed the first time, so now it wants to try again with a new plan, but the targets are unacceptable. These targets will result in levels higher than 1990 levels. The lack of leadership is shameful.

Will this government have the courage to submit new targets in a bill and to put those targets to a democratic vote in the House?

[*English*]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are excited about our plan and our initiative. For the first time ever, we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For years we saw inaction from the Liberal Party and now we hear the line "do as I say, not as I do".

Canadians want a real plan. They want a real plan to see a better environment. They want a real plan to see a reduction in greenhouse gases. That is exactly what this government is going to deliver.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions the Liberal Party put us in a deep hole, but the minister got a bigger shovel and keeps on digging. When will he learn to change direction?

While the rest of the world is committed to 20% below 1990 levels, the Conservative government wants to put it 4% above 1990 levels. We know the Liberal leader did not get the job done. Why is the minister admitting that he will not either?

Oral Questions

Will he bring this to a vote in the House of Commons where we can have a debate and democratic action for real effect on climate change?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are making up for 10 long years when harmful greenhouse gases went up and did not go down. We are making up for 10 years when all there was was talk, talk, talk.

Canada will do more in the next 13 years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions than almost any other country in the world. We are proud of that. We have an exciting plan, an exciting initiative to get this country on the right track. We will deliver. We will get the job done.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government got caught trying to place its bogus environmental announcement at par with the federal budget and then the Conservatives set about scrambling to get their story straight once it leaked. At first they threatened parliamentarians saying it was a breach of securities law, then they denied it. First it had no targets, then it had weak ones.

Why did the minister provide three separate, distinct and false explanations of his incompetent behaviour within one hour last night?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: We will have some order. I know the hon. Minister of the Environment enjoys heckling, both giving and taking, but we have to be able to hear his answer. He now has the floor, so we will have some order, please.

• (1455)

Hon. John Baird: Mr. Speaker, I take full responsibility for a misdirected fax. That is regrettable. I want to tell you about something else I do. I take full responsibility for cleaning up our environment. I take full responsibility for reducing greenhouse gases, for cleaning up the air in Canada. I take full responsibility for getting the job done where the party opposite failed Canadians.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a Minister of the Environment who takes responsibility—

Some hon. members: More, more.

The Speaker: Order. We are going to get more, but we have to be able to hear more.

The hon. member for Ottawa South has the floor. We need to be able to hear the question.

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, Canada has a Minister of the Environment who takes responsibility for careless PR leaks, but not for setting responsible environmental policy. The minister blows hot and cold. He is a climate change induced spinning weather vane.

If Kyoto is a socialist flop as the Prime Minister claims, then why did the government vote to uphold the objectives of the Kyoto protocol, including the targets and absolute reductions of greenhouse gases just yesterday?

Will Chicken Little finally end the doublespeak and bring back the plan that addresses air pollution and climate change known as Bill C-30?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Again, Mr. Speaker, from that member it is “do as I say, not as I do”.

We are going to make real commitments to clean up our environment. I did read the *Globe and Mail* and this will provide some wise counsel for the member for Ottawa South. The headline is, “Not so easy to cut those nasty coal emissions, is it, Mr. McGuinty?” The last statement is, “It’s a complex problem. Mr. McGuinty’s sin is that he used to make it seem so simple”, referring of course to the member’s brother, the Ontario premier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this has been a long night for the Minister of the Environment, long enough for him to contradict himself three times about his speech. His spokesperson said that the speech was for Wednesday; then, caught unprepared, he told TVA that the speech was for an announcement on Thursday. Then he put the speech on the Internet with a few words changed here and there so it would sound more credible. This morning, on *Canada AM*, he could not say for sure when the speech would be delivered.

When did he tell the truth: this morning, yesterday evening, or sometime during the night?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how nice for the member that he had so much time to watch television last night. As minister, I accept responsibility for a fax that was not sent correctly. I am also taking responsibility for improving our environment. That is why we have a good plan, a plan for concrete action, a plan that will change the numbers, reduce greenhouse gases and improve air quality. We are taking action, which is something the Liberal government did not do for 10 long years.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, I did hear about his plan—on Teletoon.

The minister does not seem to understand Canada’s obligations under the Kyoto protocol. May I remind him that Kyoto is about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, not about slowing the increase of those emissions. He has to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, Period.

Why is this so hard for him to understand? There are all kinds of ways to reduce emissions, such as, say, sending fewer faxes. What is he going to do to reduce greenhouse gases?

[*English*]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): I have to say to the House, Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with Teletoon as much as the member opposite.

I can say that during the Liberal regime the Liberals did not deliver the goods. Greenhouse gases went up instead of down. Under our regime we have a real plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Maybe the member could explain to the House why on April 15, 2005 the *Globe and Mail* said that his leader acknowledged that the Liberal plan was still unclear when it came to regulations needed to make sure—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. [Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Minister of the Environment said that “when greenhouse gas emissions stop increasing, we can begin to reduce them”. That is a totally irresponsible statement.

Does the minister realize that, without absolute targets, he is allowing polluters to continue to pollute, and he is admitting from the outset that he has given up on meeting the Kyoto targets?

• (1500)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will absolutely reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We will have absolute terms for emissions reductions. We will also have a real plan, a national plan to improve air quality. For 13 long years, with the Bloc Québécois in this House, we never saw any progress regarding the environment, air quality and climate change. This government is now taking action.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during all these years, the government denied the existence of climate change in this House. The minister's attitude is the same as that of his government with Afghanistan. He says one thing, but does the opposite.

Is the reference year to which he referred this morning for calculating the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions 1990, 2006 or 2012? Which year will he use to begin penalizing those, such as Quebec, who made efforts in the past, and rewarding polluters, such as major oil companies?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a great plan that we will release tomorrow. It will be one of the world leading plans. It is a plan where we acknowledge as a country and as a government we will come together to reduce greenhouse gases. We will come together to improve the quality of air in Canada. It is a plan that will regulate industry in a mandatory fashion, something that has never been done in Canada. It is a plan that we will all be able to be tremendously proud of.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's greenhouse gas targets are a recipe for cooking this planet. They leave Canada 10% above our Kyoto commitments eight years after the due date.

If every country modelled its anti-global warming plan on the plan of the minister of hot air over there, world temperatures would rise disastrously by the end of the century.

Why is the government choosing to measure itself against 2006 emission levels when every other Kyoto signatory uses 1990 levels?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians want to see is the government come forward with a strategy to genuinely reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions went up under the Liberals. They were supposed to go down under the Liberals.

Oral Questions

Canada is prepared to accept leadership to do more than any other country over the next 13 years. We are going to have short term targets. We are going to have medium term targets. We are going to come forward with meaningful initiatives on technology, meaningful initiatives on international collaboration, meaningful initiatives to get the job done, where his leader and the Liberal Party failed Canadians.

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Minister of Natural Resources along with the Minister of the Environment announced another step to protect the health and environment of Canadians.

Last year our government announced new regulations and more stringent energy efficiency standards for a whole range of common products. With these new proposed regulations, Canada is a world leader in efficiency standards.

Could the Minister of Natural Resources explain what further action he is taking today to improve energy efficiency in Canada?

Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, please let me enlighten the House with another great initiative by this government.

We are taking steps to regulate efficiency in lighting. These regulations will be in place this year. Within five years we will ban inefficient light bulbs. What does that mean? This is the equivalent of 3,000 or 4,000 megawatts. How much is that? That would be six or seven coal fired electricity generating units, or the equivalent of Nanticoke, the largest polluter in North America.

This is real difference. This is action. This is helping Canadians use less and live better.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since the last election, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has been slashing arts and heritage programs.

However, we recently learned that the minister sent a memo to Conservative members regarding a secret plan to spend \$30 million from the new arts fund. The minister did not set any criteria and used her personal e-mail account.

Does this money belong to Canadians or does it belong to the minister?

Routine Proceedings

•(1505)

[English]

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the program does not yet exist. The criteria have not been set. We are only in the consultation phase. I invite all parties to provide their input in the consultation. In fact, I have already received input from members from other parties in this consultation phase.

However, guess who has already requested funding for a festival in his riding? The member for Windsor West from the NDP.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister has been caught in the headlights of accountability. Her department has been stalling on criteria. She has frozen out our group. She is using her personal e-mail to troll the Conservative backbenches for ideas on how to spend this money that has not yet been identified as in the program.

The question which has to be asked is, are we watching the birth of a brand-spanking new little baby boondoggle?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate the program does not yet exist. The criteria have not been established. We are in a consultation phase. I welcome input from the member. I think that he should be contributing in a positive manner. I welcome input from all members in this House to serve our communities.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2006 alone, greenhouse gas emissions increased dramatically. Canadians expect their government to address the problem of climate change immediately.

Why is this government willing to waste at least five years before beginning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Why does the government refuse to act immediately?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again another Liberal is saying, “do as I say, not as I do”.

I have got a great quote from the *National Post*, and it says:

[The Liberal leader] has conceded that a future Liberal government would be unable to meet its Kyoto commitment of reducing greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels.

The Liberal Party had its chance. The Liberals failed. They did not get the job done. They did not get the job done and we will.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 30, 2006 our government introduced two important pieces of legislation. One was the bill limiting the terms of senators to eight years, which by the way has been stuck in the Senate now for 330 days. Another was the bill to establish a fixed date for

elections, which passed in the House with the support of all the parties.

However, after sitting on the bill for half a year, the unelected, unaccountable, Liberal dominated Senate amended it at the last minute to allow the cancellation of a Canadian general election for events as minor as a municipal referendum on building an arena. Could the Minister for Democratic Reform inform the House of the status of this unacceptable amendment?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for nearly a year the Liberal dominated Senate has obstructed and delayed our agenda to strengthen democracy and accountability in Canada on term limits for senators and now on fixed dates for elections.

Last night the House of Commons literally sent a message to the Senate asking the Liberal senators to respect the now twice expressed will of the House of Commons on the question of how to conduct elections. Democracy is a boring subject for Liberals.

The senators should recognize the legitimacy of the House, a body of democratically elected, accountable representatives, and immediately restore the bill to its original form so that it can become law. It would be the height of arrogance to do otherwise.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1510)

[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 two petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the parliamentary delegation of the Canadian section of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, which attended the meeting of the AFP political committee in Pré-Saint-Didier, Valle d'Aosta, Italy, from February 28 to March 3, 2007.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in relation to Bill C-287, An Act respecting a National Peacekeepers' Day.

The Speaker: The committee report presented by the hon. member requests an extension in the time required to consider a bill. Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a) a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred until Wednesday, May 2, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I will be presenting two reports.

First, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 44th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. In accordance with its order of reference of Tuesday, February 27, the committee has considered vote 15, Chief Electoral Officer under Privy Council, in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, less the amount voted on in interim supply, and reports the same.

Second, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 45th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. In accordance with its orders of reference of Tuesday, February 27, the committee has considered vote 5, House of Commons under Parliament, in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, less the amount voted on in interim supply, and again reports the same.

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Finance on the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

* * *

● (1515)

[English]

PETITIONS

FALUN DAFA

Hon. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to table in the House of Commons a petition from 26 residents of my riding Willowdale. The petitioners ask the government to investigate the allegations of illegal organ harvesting in China, calling for a respect for the human rights of practitioners of Falun Dafa.

LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first is about 13 pages of signatures, largely from people on Vancouver Island. The petitioners note that the export of logs from private lands is regulated by the federal government. They note that during the period of punishing duties, during the softwood lumber dispute, major investment of Pacific Northwest mills led to a massive increase in coastal log exports. There are about a million acres of private forest land on Central Vancouver Island, and nearly 70% of logs from these lands are destined for export.

They call upon the government to work with the province of British Columbia to implement a tariff on the export from Crown land and to impose a tariff on the export of logs from private lands.

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is about 17 pages of signatures from people in Surrey, B.C., Delta, B.C., Regina, Manitoba and Ontario, concerning Bill C-404.

The petitioners call upon the government to recognize that natural health products promote health and wellness. They ask for improved access to natural health products that would allow Canadians to better manage their own health and relieve pressure on the Canadian health care system.

They call upon Parliament to provide Canadians with greater access to natural products by removing the goods and services tax on them and enacting Bill C-404, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act.

[Translation]

WAR OBJECTORS

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 30 years after the immoral war in Vietnam, Canada must make a moral choice to give refuge to people who refuse to be accomplices in the American war in Iraq. I have the honour to table a petition with a thousand signatures of people in my region who are calling on the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to review its policy on war objectors and allow them to obtain refugee status in Canada.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions, both dealing with the same subject matter. The petitions are primarily signed by people from Vancouver Island.

The petitioners request the Government of Canada to institute programs that reduce the climate change crisis by diminishing fossil fuel dependency, while sponsoring initiatives and incentives to promote less harmful technologies.

Government Orders

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to present a petition from people in my riding and neighbouring regions.

The petition pertains to employment insurance and workers who lose their jobs because of lack of work. It calls for the elimination of the waiting period. The signatories believe that the waiting period is unacceptable for people who need employment insurance benefits.

The signatories also ask Parliament to hire enough staff for the Service Canada centres to ensure that people who need employment insurance can either complete the form or apply on-line. Parliament also needs to make sure that people get what is coming to them.

Eliminating the waiting period is vital to people who need employment insurance at some point in their lives.

[English]

SENIORS

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table three petitions today that arise out of my national campaign to fight for fairness for ordinary Canadians, in particular for seniors who were shortchanged by their government as a result of an error in calculating the rate of inflation.

The government has acknowledged the mistake made by Statistics Canada, but is refusing to take any remedial action.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to take full responsibility for this error, which negatively impacted their incomes from 2001 to 2006, and take the required steps to repay every Canadian who has been shortchanged by a government program because of the miscalculation of the CPI.

The petitions are signed by hundreds of people in Nova Scotia and Quebec. The petitioners are people who have worked hard all their lives, played by the rules and now find it harder and harder to make ends meet. All the petitioners are asking for is a little fairness.

It is a privilege to table this petition on their behalf.

CANADA POST

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the honour to present the following petition from my constituents of Bramalea—Gore—Malton.

The petitioners call upon the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to review Canada Post's recent decision to locate community mailboxes along formerly designated rural roads and to restore home to home mail delivery and thus avoid threats to personal safety.

● (1520)

SPECIES AT RISK

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition signed by several hundred informed constituents in my riding who are sensitive about the environment and the habitat of the northern spotted owl in British Columbia.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to ensure the survival of the species, the northern spotted owl, and the protection of its habitat from logging or any kind of further development under the Species at Risk Act.

* * *

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.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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 notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SALES TAX AMENDMENTS ACT, 2006

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-40, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act, the Excise Act, 2001 and the Air Travellers Security Charge Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

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

Hon. Peter Van Loan (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill C-40 at third reading. This bill contains a number of amendments to Canada's sales tax system.

Government Orders

Although largely technical in nature, the bill reflects the goal of Canada's new government to improve fairness in our tax system and ensure it functions smoothly for individuals and businesses alike.

With that goal in mind, last November, along with the economic and fiscal update, we announced advantage Canada, an economic plan to give Canada and Canadians the key advantages needed to compete today and succeed for years to come.

Before getting to the specifics of Bill C-40, I think it prudent to remind the hon. members of the key elements of our plan, a plan put into action in budget 2007. The plan focuses on creating five key advantages, one of them being a tax advantage.

The government wants to create new opportunities and choices for people. Lowering taxes, creating a tax advantage for Canadians, will help do that. It will also help to keep our best and brightest here at home, while attracting the people our country will need to build a strong economy in the 21st century. It all starts with a lower tax burden.

Before coming to office, and practically every day since, we have said that Canadians simply pay too much tax compared to other countries we compete with for talent, skilled workers and foreign investment and so we did something about it.

In our first budget last May and the months that have followed, Canada's new government began to reduce taxes. We reduced the GST rate. We increased the amount Canadians can earn without paying federal income tax by permanently reducing the bottom rate. We introduced the Canada employment credit and brought in a host of targeted tax relief measures.

The tax fairness plan we announced on October 31 went even further for Canada's seniors. We increased the age credit amount by \$1,000 and introduced pension income splitting for pensions to increase the rewards from retirement saving.

Budget 2006 and our tax fairness plan took significant steps to get this country back on track and to begin to create a tax advantage for Canada.

We need to go further, and we did that in budget 2007. To create a greater tax advantage for Canada and Canadians over the coming years, we reduced taxes even further. In budget 2007, Canadians come out ahead through real tax relief that benefits working families.

Bill C-40 would help create a Canadian tax advantage. It would improve fairness and efficiency in the sales tax system and ease compliance and administration for businesses and government.

The bill consists of three parts, the first of which pertains to the goods and services tax and the harmonized sales tax. The second part of the bill relates to the application of taxation of wine, spirits and tobacco. Part three concerns the application of the air travellers security charge.

First, the GST-HST measures. These measures are principally aimed at improving the operation and fairness of the GST-HST in specific sectors of the economy.

It is important to point out that in some cases adjustments have been made over the course of time to the legislation as originally

proposed in response to representations from tax and business communities. We listened.

The principal GST-HST measures encompass important areas for Canadians. One such area is health care. Canadians know that our health system is one of the best in the world but we need to work to keep it so it continues to meet the needs of Canadians.

Bill C-40 contains a number of measures that would improve our health system. For example, the bill would cement in place the continued GST-HST exemption for speech-language pathology services. The bill also proposes to add the services of social workers to the list of health care services that are exempt from the GST-HST.

These amendments are consistent with the government's policy criteria for inclusion of a particular health care service on the list of those that are GST-HST exempt in all provinces.

● (1525)

The criteria is as follows. First, if a service is covered by the health care plan in a given province, it is exempt in that province. Second, if a service is covered by the health care plan of two or more provinces, it is exempt in all provinces. Finally, if a profession is regulated as a health profession by at least five provinces, the services of that profession are exempt in all provinces.

Canada's new government is also very aware of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Budget 2006 fully implemented and went beyond the policy recommendations put forward by the technical advisory committee on tax measures for persons with disabilities.

In the spirit of that action, Bill C-40 broadens the specially equipped vehicle GST-HST rebate for individuals with disabilities. This measure will help those individuals to participate as fully as possible in Canadian society. Moreover, this measure reflects the government's continuing commitment to ensure that all Canadians are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Also, on the health front, the bill proposes to make the sale and importation of a blood substitute, known as plasma expander, free from sales tax. It would also restore the tax free status of a group of drugs commonly used to treat a variety of conditions, such as seizure control, anxiety and alcohol withdrawal.

The measures in the bill illustrate the government's commitment to ensuring that Canadians continue to have access to timely and quality health care.

As I said at the outset, we have made it abundantly clear that Canada's new government is committed to reducing taxes for individual Canadians as well as for Canadian businesses.

Government Orders

High taxes not only discourage investment in Canada, they also impede businesses from prospering. However, there is more to it than that. Businesses do not need more government meddling. They need government to get out of the way and to free them to do what they do best: invest, expand and create jobs.

Budget 2007 proposes to reduce the federal paper burden on small businesses by 20% by November 2008. The budget also proposes to reduce the tax compliance burden on small business by decreasing the frequency of their tax remittance and filing requirements.

The measures in Bill C-40 reflect the intent of this action. These measures are technical in nature. I will not go into detail now but I will say that the measures contained in the bill would ease compliance for a wide range of businesses and other organizations by removing technical impediments and simplifying compliance with the GST-HST legislation. The bill also clarifies and confirms the government's policy intent.

The second part of Bill C-40 concerns excise measures; that is to say, measures related to tobacco and alcohol products. The measures in this part of the bill would amend the Excise Act, 2001 to implement minor refinements that would improve the operation of the act and more accurately reflect current industry and administrative practices.

The bill would also implement related and consequential amendments to the Access to Information Act, the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff and the Excise Tax Act.

The principal measures included in this bill, those related to the Excise Act, 2001 are as follows: First, with respect to tobacco, Bill C-40 would extend the requirement to identify the origin of tobacco products to all products, including those for sale at duty free shops or for export. This amendment is consistent with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, an international treaty on tobacco control.

The bill would also clarify which tobacco products may be supplied to the export market or the domestic duty free market. For example, cigarettes, tobacco sticks, fine cut tobacco or cigars may be supplied to those markets but not packaged raw leaf tobacco.

As the House may know, a spirits licence is required to produce alcoholic products using a still. There are some cases, however, where private laboratories, provincial liquor boards and vintners use a still to produce spirits for the purpose of analysing substances containing ethyl alcohol. Bill C-40 would authorize these entities to possess a still or similar equipment for testing purposes without holding a spirits licence.

•(1530)

To limit the possession of non-duty paid spirits, the bill would also require these parties to immediately destroy or dispose of those spirits once the analysis is complete.

Another proposed amendment to the act would defer payment of duty by certain small vintners selling wine on consignment in retail stores until the wine is sold.

The bill also contains a number of administration measures. One such measure has to do with the exchange of information between

Canada and foreign governments. Specifically, the bill would permit the Minister of National Revenue to exchange excise duty information with foreign governments that are signatories to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters.

One other measure relating to the exchange of information adds a discretionary power under the act for the chief statistician of Canada to provide statistical information concerning business activities to the provinces. This is similar to an existing provision in the Income Tax Act.

The third and final part of Bill C-40 relates to the air traveller security charge, or ATSC. One of the principal ATSC measures included in the motion relieves the charge in respect of air travel donated by an air carrier to a registered charity that arranges free flights for individuals as part of its charitable purposes. This means that certain charities that arrange free air transportation services for persons who otherwise cannot afford the cost of flights for medical care would not have to pay the air traveller security charge. This includes "flights of a lifetime", such as those provided by the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada and other similar charitable organizations that organize dream trips for physically, mentally and socially challenged children.

I said at the outset that tax legislation must be applied consistently. This proposed ATSC relief for charitable flights reflects that objective by being consistent with relief from other federal levies provided to registered charities. These measures are also consistent with other ATSC relief measures, such as that provided in respect of air ambulance services.

Summing up, Canada's new government understands that good government and good tax policy go hand in hand. Well-focused tax policies, such as those reflected in the bill, are a sign of a government with vision, which is what the government is all about.

We are looking ahead and planning the steps we need to take to build a stronger economy and a more confident Canada. In doing so, together we can make Canada a world leader with a long term, focused economic plan not just for today but for tomorrow.

•(1535)

Hon. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak once again in this great House of debate and innovative thought.

Our party is supporting Bill C-40. This bill is the natural evolution of a fiscal policy, the goods and services tax harmonized in certain parts of the country. It is a natural evolution as we gain experience with it. We find that it does not always cover every little contingency the way we would think is best.

I commend the government on coming forth with a number of amendments which harmonize and streamline, and deal with exigencies which could never have been envisaged from the very start. We must continue to always adopt this type of attitude to changes in the tax law because we can always learn from our experience as we move along, so that the tax code becomes a living organism, a living body of law.

Government Orders

There are some areas where I believe that the government could have gone farther in making changes to our goods and services tax. One is with respect to the exemption for housing. The original exemption was \$250,000, but we have seen how prices have skyrocketed in some cities across the country such as Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto.

The idea was that we would help new homebuyers overcome the difficulties of purchasing a home by exempting them on GST up to a certain level, and that level has never been changed. We should be adjusting it, not according to the ordinary inflation rules, which are around 2% a year or slightly higher, but according to the inflation rates for actual housing in particular markets across the country. I am sure the government will want to consider this type of change in the days and months ahead.

The hon. parliamentary secretary talked about a number of other tax measures. I have no hesitation in moving from Bill C-40 to the general fiscal policy of this government.

Let me just mention a few particular issues. The first is the government's treatment of the GST in general. The government has reduced the GST from 7% to 6%, costing about \$5 billion. That money could have been used to pay down the debt, to invest in new productivity measures in Canada, or to help those most in need in our country. What is worse, the government did so by increasing personal income tax by .5%.

There is not one economist in the country, let alone the world, who would say that the tax cuts given on the GST sales tax consumption level are preferable to overall tax cuts to the personal and corporate income tax rates, cuts which would make us more globally competitive.

We are in a global competition for capital. Capital knows no borders. It flows seamlessly around the world. We have to be able to be competitive unless we are prepared to introduce capital controls and barriers. No sane economist would advocate that as well. Therefore, in order to remain competitive, why did the government give up this great chance to lower personal income taxes as well as reducing our corporate income tax rates so that we could attract that capital?

Under the previous finance minister and previous Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, the Liberal government took a very important step. Even when we were dealing with the whole issue of the deficit, we were looking at what we had to do to attract new capital investment and the best jobs to this country. One of those was to reduce the corporate income tax, and we did it.

We were headed on a course down to 30% combined with the provinces. That would have compared with 35% in New York State, 41% in Michigan and 41% in California.

● (1540)

That was a responsible way to attract jobs to this country. We have seen how under our leadership the unemployment rate in this country fell to a 35 year low. This is great because we all remember back in 1990-91 when unemployment hit 11.4%. The toughest thing as an MP was to meet with constituents who had lost their job, who had used up all of their savings, had used up all their RRSPs, had lost their home, their car, their self-respect, and often their families.

We must never be content with a system which allows that level of high unemployment and this is why we must on an annual basis check our global competitiveness. The cut to the GST did not do that. It was stupid. It was obviously done for short term political gain, but Canadians are not stupid. They know when they are being had. The Canadian electorate is very smart and they recognize that the best politics is always the best policy.

Let me go on to a second area where I am very dismayed with the government in terms of its fiscal policy, income trusts. It is not just the broken promise where the Prime Minister said he would never touch income trusts, it is the fact that the measures taken were totally without tax foundation. They were totally without study. Did the government know it was going to cause a \$30 billion meltdown in capital of investors who had put their money in savings, a lot of them seniors, a lot of them retired, as a result of the measures that it took?

If the Conservatives knew that, then they have to be condemned. If they did not do the studies as to what the impact on the capital markets was going to be, then they must be condemned. Why can they not admit a mistake? We had numerous witnesses before the finance committee who showed that the tax leakage figures suggested by the government were totally exaggerated, totally out of sight. They did not have to go from a zero tax to a 31.5% tax on income trusts in order to kill them.

We listened to those witnesses. Some of them said the government was even making more money by having in place income trusts where the distributions were taxed usually at high personal rates rather than the same amount of money coming out of a corporation being taxed at about 6.2%. As members know, personal rates go up as high as about 45% in Canada and that is why the tax leakage was not there. It might have been there with respect to some non-residents, but if we take a 6.2% tax equivalent at the trust corporation and compare that with the withholding tax on dividends going to foreigners, often we would find there was no loss.

Then take the money going into the tax exempt such as the pension funds here in Canada. Granted that dividend going into the pension fund was not taxed at that time, or the trust distribution, but those pension funds were very quickly distributed to individuals in this country because retirement depended on them and were again taxed at the full corporate rate.

Our Liberal government looked at this after having talked to the experts and we were convinced there was a better way. We said leave the cap on no new income trusts being created for the moment. Put a 10% distribution tax on funds going to non-residents and it will more than make up for any tax leakage that there might have been, if there was any in fact.

Government Orders

●(1545)

Meanwhile, the issue should be studied. Do we really want to blow away investment instruments such as income trusts, which were providing a decent rate of return to our retired citizens? If they are investing in bank instruments or government bonds, what rate do we think they are getting, 4%? That is only 2% above inflation. How can retired people live on that and how can they live on it when the government caused a meltdown of some \$30 billion to the value of their savings?

Do the right thing. We are prepared to study it further. Why is the government afraid to study it further? My God, is it a sin to be wrong? We all make mistakes. The sin is in failing to admit that one is wrong and doing something about it. Everybody knows the government is wrong on this thing. Everybody knows that the emperor is wearing no clothes. Why does it not just admit what everybody knows and be prepared to look at this thing and give it a second thought?

Another area where I have great concern with what the government is doing in terms of fiscal policy is this issue of interest deductibility. It has said that if a Canadian investor or company borrows money to buy a company abroad in order to expand its global operations, in order to be globally competitive, it cannot deduct the interest on the money it borrows to acquire the shares in that foreign entity.

This last budget was not the first time that we in Canada have seen that particular measure. It was a measure brought in following the Carter commission many years ago, brought in by a Liberal government, where we said if the dividends coming back into Canada are not taxable, why should there be a deduction for the interest to acquire those tax free dividends? We established that measure and found out how stupid it was. We very quickly reversed that measure.

Why is it stupid to do this so-called type of non-interest deductibility? It is stupid because our foreign competitors can deduct the interest they pay on money borrowed to buy up our companies and foreign entities, to grow, to become powerful, to become Canadian and global champions in terms of the competition that we face. This measure was not thought out in terms of the practical realities of this world.

Again, why would the government want to handicap Canadian companies? Why would it want to handicap our competitiveness? Why would it want to divert jobs out of Canada? I can say from experience what will happen. This is what a government in Canada tried before and the result was that Canadian multinational corporations were not going to continue to exist. They would simply move their global operations and headquarters out of Canada.

This is what we need in order to have the high level, high paying, good jobs here in this country. We want Canadian head offices here. We want the global champions to be based in Canada because that is where the best jobs are.

If anyone needs an example of what has happened, let us take Hong Kong. In the early nineties it was going downhill because of the fear of what would happen when it would revert back to China. The cover of *Fortune* magazine said, "Hong Kong is dead". At that

time Hong Kong had an 80% manufacturing economy. Anything that anyone picked up had "Made in Hong Kong" on it.

●(1550)

Today Hong Kong is no longer manufacturing. It is an economy that is about 90% service, with all of its manufacturing operations in foreign affiliates in the Pearl River Delta in China. Hong Kong, by being the headquarters for the multinational corporations, is producing the great jobs and the great wealth. It is booming.

We cannot be afraid to change. We have to be open to change in this global economy or we are going to lose the best jobs here.

This is another blatant mistake in fiscal policy by the government. Again I say, my God, we are all human and we all make mistakes, but the government must admit it and do something about it. We will work with the government to do something about it. We will make it possible for us to have a strong, competitive economy here in Canada, producing the best jobs, with Canadian champions that are reaching out around the world.

Are we not proud of our Canadian banks and insurance companies that have offices in almost every other country in the world? They are showing the Canadian flag and the Canadian name. They are helping Canadians invest there, acquire things there and do business there.

We want more of these Canadian champions. The measures that the government has brought in are simply going to drive those Canadian champions out of this country.

I saw that back in the days of Carter, when we wanted to tax all dividends from foreign affiliates. For foreign entities, a buck earned in a low tax jurisdiction such as Singapore would be taxed at the same rate as a buck earned in an affiliate in a high tax jurisdiction such as France, the United States or even Canada. That may be great economics if one is an economist, but if one is a business person, one has to compete with other entities where they say that the rate of tax one pays globally is the rate set by the country in which one earns the income.

It is the host country where the activities are carried on that sets the tax rate. If a big corporation from the United States could do business in Hong Kong, for example, and pay a 12% tax rate, and a Canadian company had to pay a 50% tax rate, who was going to win? Who was going to get the jobs? It was going to be the American competitor of the Canadian company.

Therefore, that tax policy brought in by a government many years ago had to be reversed. It meant that we stemmed the flow of Canadian-based multinationals leaving this country. I beg of the government, which knows it is wrong, to just admit it. We will work with the government to fix this.

In closing, let me say that the tax fairness bill brought in by the government was not a tax fairness bill. It was a wealth-stealing bill. I am very pleased that our finance critic, the member for Markham—Unionville, has taken such a vigorous stand in taking the tax fairness bill to task right across this country. We will continue to do so until we get justice for all those people who lost their savings because of the idiocy of the government.

Government Orders

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my hon. Liberal colleague spoke a great deal about taxation and international rules. I would like to know his opinion on something that should be very familiar to the Liberals, that is, tax havens, and especially those in Barbados.

When his party was in power, the government established a series of measures intended to restrict the use of tax havens. However, they created a wide-open loophole for one country in particular, Barbados. Naturally, this offended many people in my riding, many people in Quebec and indeed many Canadians, I am sure.

While these people work hard to make a living and pay their taxes—and most citizens are willing to do so, because they know they must contribute to society—they are also disenchanted, and rightly so. The Liberal government of the day and its finance minister voted in favour of tax shelters for businesses, so that businesses could transfer home, tax free, the profits generated in tax havens.

Can my hon. colleague explain why his party never acted to put an end to this tax exemption, this gapping tax loophole?

Would the Liberals be willing today—now that they have had some time to reflect on this from the opposition standpoint—to put an end, once and for all, to all existing tax havens, tax agreements and tax treaties, especially Barbados, thereby truly respecting the people we are supposed to be representing?

When the Liberals signed this tax treaty with Barbados and retroactively changed the legislation, they were not doing their job as representatives of the people. It is about time for them to make amends, admit that they failed in their duties for 13 years and henceforth support the complete elimination of all tax havens.

Hon. Jim Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member. He seems to know a lot about the tax haven situation.

Let us take the example of a Canadian corporation that has direct operations in Europe, and the tax for the corporation is roughly 25%. If this income came directly to Canada, would it be taxed here, in Canada, or at the rate of 25%? If the European corporation had a corporation in Barbados and then the income came to Canada—from Europe, through Barbados on to Canada—would the tax rate be 25%, or the rate in effect in Canada?

If the hon. member can answer that question I will continue to discuss this with him.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my learned colleague's dissertation. One thing he mentioned was the GST cut. He described how it is a foolish reduction in taxes. I have long said that it is both dumb and mean. It does nothing to improve the productivity of the nation, whereas we could have invested that money in post-secondary education and in making sure that children from lower income families, disabled Canadians or aboriginal Canadians had a chance at education.

Instead, the government took \$5.5 billion, or whatever the number was, and did it so that supposedly it benefits all Canadians. One of

the fallacies that we often heard from the government was that it was a tax cut that would help all Canadians, including those with the lowest incomes who do not pay income tax.

However, there are all kinds of ways to help low income Canadians. The child tax benefit is an example. Even providing child care spaces that they otherwise would not get is a way to help. There is a whole host of ways to invest that money so that we could better help Canadians who actually need the help.

Saving a penny and a half or two cents on a double-double just does not make a big difference. I ask my colleague about the unfairness of that 1% cut, which took approximately \$5.5 billion out of the economy that could have been used to better help Canadians who could use the help. Would he agree with me on that?

• (1600)

Hon. Jim Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member has put it in a way that every Canadian can understand. I could not agree with him more. What is worse is that the government has pledged to another percentage point reduction in the GST. How the hell is it going to pay for that? It is going to be coming out of the pockets of those who need it most.

Could I just add to the eloquent words of my colleague? Looking around the world, we see that we have one of the lowest consumption tax rates of any nation in this world, and the government is bent on lowering it further. We have seen how other countries that are competing with us in the global marketplace have enhanced and raised their sales taxes, their consumption taxes, with some of them approaching 20%. This means they can lower their income taxes and be more globally competitive.

How do we protect the weak if we raise our sales taxes or consumption taxes? We do it through a tax credit. We already have that in place. We have a means, if sales taxes are raised, of compensating those least able to cope with increases at the consumption level.

In our global economy, this is the type of fiscal policy that is responsible. It is the one that allows us to deliver the services that are so critical for the least well off in our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Mr. Speaker, I have been in the House for just one year and this is the first time during a period of questions and comments that I have had to answer a question from a colleague who was supposed to answer my question. This is a funny situation.

Government Orders

Nevertheless, what is not so funny is that I did not get an answer to my question on tax havens. I do not see what the systems for taxing interest paid abroad have to do with the fact that, when they were in power, the Liberal Party and their Minister of Finance signed a tax treaty with Barbados. This was a tailor-made agreement to allow companies that were doing business in Barbados and generating profits there, to transfer their profits, exempt from taxation, to Canada.

This situation was denounced five times by the Office of the Auditor General. This was this case on February 22, 1994, and again in 1996. The Auditor General returned to the charge again in 1998, a fourth time in 2001, and finally a fifth time in 2002. Frankly, and I am not the only one to say so, I think we can trust the Auditor General.

Now that they are in the opposition, are the Liberals prepared to come their senses and support the end of tax treaties with Barbados?

Hon. Jim Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I will answer the question because the hon. member obviously does not know the answer.

In the event that a Canadian company has operations or does business in Europe and that the tax rate in Europe is 25%, then the applicable tax rate in Canada for any income returned directly to Canada is nil. Zero. The income tax paid is still 25%. If the same income goes to a subsidiary in Barbados, the tax rate in Canada is zero. The rate paid remains 25%. It is exactly the same. What is the problem with that?

• (1605)

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I heard my colleague start his remarks by saying, “I will answer the question”, I was pleased, thinking that he was actually going to answer my question. Instead, he answered his own. That is pretty strange in terms of transparency.

I would now like to speak briefly about the bill before us, namely Bill C-40. This is a very technical bill. I have already had the opportunity to go into the details at a previous reading of this bill. I will sum up our reasons for supporting it.

We believe that Bill C-40 addresses various shortcomings associated with the GST and the excise tax. Bill C-40 removes taxes from certain medical services, which will facilitate access to these services. Bill C-40 reduces the burden of taxation on charities, something we are very happy about. Bill C-40 provides for measures that will help small wine producers, which is worthwhile. It also contains legislative provisions surrounding the sale and production of tobacco, to counter smuggling. Finally, Bill C-40 adjusts the air travellers security charge to reflect the Quebec situation. For all these reasons, we will be supporting this bill.

Naturally, this bill deals with only one part of taxation in Canada. Recently, in the budget, there were a certain number of measures that changed the tax rules and I imagine we will soon see them before us. Some of them are already being examined through a ways and means motion. They will come before us again. They are not contained in Bill C-40, of course. However, the Bloc Québécois has been fighting for some of these measures for a long time. For example, there is the matter of refunding the GST to school boards. For quite some time, the Bloc Québécois has found that it was curious, to say the least, for

a level of government to impose a consumption tax on another level of administration—school boards—that provide such an essential service in our society as education.

Education represents the future of our entire society. We found it hard to understand why school boards should pay the GST. We have always believed that this tax should be reimbursed and that the federal government should not tax school board funds, which already come from taxes.

School board revenues consist of the monies received directly from the provinces for education as well as school taxes. Paying a tax with a tax was quite a unique situation. For some time, the Bloc Québécois fought to change this. Naturally, we were pleased to see that the Minister of Finance had made this correction in his last budget. In the past, there was a series of events where the Liberal government refused to follow court orders and amended the legislation. We are now in a situation where this is being sorted out. We are pleased and it motivates us, in the Bloc Québécois, to continue our work and to submit constructive proposals to the government, and often to apply the necessary political pressure because, unfortunately, things do not just happen if we do not exert constant pressure on the government. When we see such results, it shows the relevance and usefulness of our work even though sometimes, over a period of a few months, there are no immediate results. However, we see that, over time, this fundamental work produces results.

There is another area where we would have liked the government to take action. It did not, though, and we will continue to exert pressure on it to do so. I am talking about the GST on books.

• (1610)

In Quebec, books are exempt from provincial tax. Culture is one of the foundations of our society. Books should be considered our main source of knowledge, culture and imagination. Our societies are based largely on books, at least from a cultural standpoint. The production and sale of books should be encouraged. Quebec, which does not tax retail book sales, is a model in this regard. The Bloc Québécois will continue to call on the federal government to exempt books from the GST.

There is a connection with my previous remarks about education. Most books are consumed—this may not be the most appropriate word to use in referring to culture—or used for educational purposes. They include textbooks and other educational materials, and many students use these books for research in literature and other fields. We will continue to press the government, in the hope of convincing it that this is a good thing and that it should act quickly.

Abolishing the GST visitor rebate program is another blunder by the government. Last year, the government suddenly announced that it was doing away with the GST rebate for visitors to Canada. Previously, on leaving the country, visitors could obtain a refund of a portion of the tax they had paid. The Bloc Québécois immediately said that this made no sense, because it would hurt our tourism industry.

Government Orders

It makes no sense to tax tourism, which is an export industry. Although tourist activities take place in Canada, we are exporting products: Quebec, Canada, the Rockies, our culture, our knowledge, our cuisine, Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands. We are exporting all that to the rest of the world to show them the beauty our country has to offer. No country taxes consumption of its exports, including tourism.

It was absolutely necessary to backtrack because this measure was wrong and unjustified. The figures presented by the government meant nothing. At the time, we were told that only 3% of travellers asked for GST refunds when leaving Canada. This figure is biased. It does not take into account the fact that most people travel in groups, or family units. This can be two, three or four people. Let us take the example of a family of four returning to the United States. We can assume that mom, dad, junior and his sister will not make individual claims. One person from the family unit will make the claim. So clearly not everyone makes a claim, and that partly explains the figure of 3% of travellers.

Moreover, this figure was calculated based on all trips, including those shorter than 24 hours. It makes sense that many people did not make a claim for a one-day trip, simply because there was nothing to claim. The fact that a person who comes to a business meeting, eats and returns to the United States the same day does not use this service does not prove that the program is worthless. It only shows that this does not apply to that person.

• (1615)

Once again, the calculations were biased because they did not take into account the fact that the target clientele, the real tourists, are not business people who spend one day here or Americans who cross the border to have dinner with their in-laws.

That is not tourism. That was not the goal envisioned when this rebate program was created. The program targeted real travellers. For a clearer indication of this program's effectiveness, they should have compared the amount of money claimed to the amount of money that all travellers could have claimed. Before becoming a member of Parliament, I spent some time working on this kind of thing—measuring productivity and effectiveness—and I think this is a better way to evaluate the program's effectiveness. I was hardly surprised when I was told in the Standing Committee on Finance that this comparison was never made and that these numbers were unknown. This decision was made arbitrarily, with no thought of the consequences.

The government did not evaluate the impact of this measure on marketing, either. Offering tax reductions or rebates can encourage travellers to make Canada their tourism destination of choice even if they never claim rebates at the end of their trip. Companies that provide mail-in coupons and rebates for their products know this. Electronics companies do this all the time. Consumers are told that if they buy fantastic printer X, they will get \$20 or \$50 back in the mail.

Many of the people who buy such products do so because they are entitled to the mail-in rebate, but they never claim it because they forget, they lose their paperwork, or they lose their receipt. This is a good deal for retailers, because the promotion means they get another sale. If consumers do not claim what they are entitled to, the

retailers win in all respects. This kind of psychology also applies to tourism in Canada.

We, the Bloc Québécois, have worked very hard and I know that other opposition parties have also worked to urge the government to reconsider its decision. We now have a partial solution. For organized groups, the rebates will be maintained. However, the program will not be reinstated for individual travellers or for families who are travelling alone. Frankly, we find this unfortunate and we feel it is a mistake, especially since the tourism industry and the industry that deals with those rebate applications were willing to do so at their own expense, meaning at no cost to the government. We will continue to work on this.

Continuing in the same vein, the GST and fiscal policy, I would like to talk about the fiscal imbalance issue. When the Séguin commission completed its report on the fiscal imbalance, one of its recommendations was, in fact, to transfer the GST, currently collected by the federal government, to the governments of Quebec and the other provinces. It should come as no surprise that the fiscal imbalance must be corrected by a fiscal measure, something which is often forgotten here in the House. Before oral question period today, during members' statements, a Conservative colleague tried to cheerfully and naively insist that the fiscal imbalance has been corrected, while no party in the National Assembly would agree that the fiscal imbalance issue is completely resolved.

An hon. member: Not even their leader.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: There you have it. We must face the fact that even the Conservatives who claim to understand the fiscal imbalance, in reality, obviously do not.

• (1620)

When the Séguin commission introduced this concept of fiscal imbalance, it did not randomly pull these two words out of a hat. It did not open a dictionary and with eyes shut point at two words at random. It chose the words to mean something. It said there was an imbalance.

Government Orders

Obviously something is not right between all the money that is in Ottawa and its constitutional responsibilities, and all the money in Quebec City and the constitutional responsibilities there. There is an imbalance and it is a fiscal imbalance. It is a fiscal matter. Ottawa, the federal government, charges too much tax with respect to its responsibilities. The tax base is not unlimited—there is a limit to what they can take out of taxpayers' pockets—and the Government of Quebec is not able to raise enough tax money to meet all its obligations, especially since the cost of its obligations increases much faster than the cost of the federal government's obligations. We need only look at health and education, which involve the bulk of the expenses. These two sectors represent the biggest portion of the budget of the governments of Quebec and the provinces. Everyone knows that these budgetary items are increasing much faster than the cost of living, faster than inflation and so require revenue to increase much faster. That is why Quebec is calling for a transfer of tax fields, hence the name, fiscal imbalance.

Some progress was made in the recent budget on the monetary aspect. Monetary transfers exist; they are there. However, these transfers are not permanent. There is nothing stopping a future government from backtracking. I am not the only one saying so. The Conservatives say so in their advertisements. Who knows how much money they spent to remind Quebeckers that there was absolutely no guarantee that the money they gave could be available in the future? The Conservatives paid for advertisements to tell Quebeckers that if the Liberals returned to power, they could take away this money. If we read between the lines, even the Conservatives, in the next budget or in a possible majority government, could take away this money.

I posed that question to the Department of Finance officials just yesterday in the standing Committee on Finance. They confirmed what I already knew, what all experts already know, that there is nothing to stop this money from not being included in the next or future budgets. In short, the current solution, the monetary solution, keeps Quebec financially dependent. We continue to remain subject to the wishes and whims of the federal government. That is what we find unacceptable. That is what Quebeckers wish to leave behind. They want to have real revenues that their state, their government will control completely and that it can invest as it chooses, based on its priorities.

The second problem with a monetary transfer is that its value decreases over time because it is eroded by inflation. However, the value of tax revenues increases over time because, with the collection of GST or transfer of tax points, the value of these tax revenues increases as economic activity increases.

Remember what I said earlier. Because of its constitutional responsibilities, Quebec needs an increasing amount of money. A simple monetary transfer is only a very short-term solution to part of the problem; in the medium to long term, we find ourselves in the same pattern, the same situation. That is in the best-case scenario, if future governments do not backpedal and go at it again as the Liberals did in 1995 with the draconian and deep cuts to transfers for social programs and education.

• (1625)

Clearly, the Bloc Québécois must continue its efforts to explain to the Liberals, who have yet to acknowledge the fiscal imbalance, and to the Conservatives, who acknowledge it but still do not understand it, what we are talking about. We must continue our efforts to find a true solution to the fiscal imbalance through a tax transfer.

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate my colleague from Jeanne-Le Ber for his excellent speech. He covered a number of very interesting points, and I would like to comment on two of them in particular.

He talked about tourism. It stands to reason that I am interested in the subject, since I represent the Gaspé and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine region, which is a top tourist destination. There need to be incentives, points, something to improve the situation. The current government has not been listening. It is doing the same thing the previous Liberal government did with respect to aid for different issues. In particular, there is the issue of transportation in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. During a certain part of the year, the islands find themselves in a baffling situation. For 10 months, there is a maritime transportation service. However, for the other two months of the year, there are some problems and they are faced with inadequate service.

Nevertheless, I thought my colleague's presentation was very interesting in terms of tourism. There is a way of assisting tourist regions. And although the bill before us today is in some ways quite interesting, there are some things missing. Some parts need to be improved.

So it is important to remember the rigorous and responsible work that the members of the Bloc Québécois are doing as members of the opposition. These opposition members are people who, in a way, represent democracy. And the member for Jeanne-Le Ber covered a key point: rigour and responsibility generate positive and constructive elements to improve bills, such as the one we are debating today.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Mr. Speaker, this is indeed the work that we do. It is always a great satisfaction when, in committee, through our representations and the pressure that we put on the government, we succeed in getting results that serve the interests of Quebeckers and of our constituents. That is very satisfying.

It is all the more interesting for the Bloc Québécois, because its loyalty lies strictly with Quebeckers. Our hands are not bound by a Canada-wide caucus, or by a government which all too often, unfortunately, uses its Quebec members to target Quebeckers, to carry out its deeds and to get its message across. This is deplorable.

Our daily efforts are yielding results. Personally, I had evidence of that last week, in my riding. I have been working since the beginning of my mandate to have the land of the Canada Post's mail sorting facility located on Ottawa street, in Montreal's southwest end, transferred to the Canada Lands Company which, in turn, is prepared to cooperate with stakeholders to develop projects on this land. This is beautiful land along the Lachine canal. It has a high value, but it must be developed with the citizens' best interests in mind. I have been fighting for this. We sent letters to the minister, who told us that this matter was the responsibility of Canada Post, that it was not his business, and that he did not want to get involved.

I put questions to the minister in this House, and I got the same answer. We continued the fight in the media. I also introduced a bill in the House to force Canada Post to sell the land to the Canada Lands Company. At last, my representations, along with those of all the members of our community, are producing results.

Last Friday, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities finally decided to listen to reason and announced that these lands would be transferred to the Canada Lands Company, even though he had said in this House that he had no business getting involved in this. That is what can be achieved by a member of the Bloc Québécois who works hard to put pressure on the government without having to bow to the will of a national caucus or of a government caucus.

Of course the fight is not over yet because these lands always belonged to the government and they are heavily contaminated. They will have to be decontaminated, and stakeholders are asking that it be done by the government—the polluter for many years. If the Canada Lands Company was forced to decontaminate these lands itself and include this in its development costs, the project that the community is proposing would be neither economically viable nor feasible. They want to use this site to build affordable housing, family housing, private housing, businesses, light industries, tourist attractions, parks and green spaces. It is a fantastic project.

The next step is to ask the government to pay for the decontamination of this site. It polluted the site, therefore it is its responsibility to clean it up. However, following last Friday's announcement, I am very happy about what we gained through my work and that of the community that supports me. It motivates us to go further, to continue our work and to put pressure on the government for the decontamination of these lands.

• (1630)

Mr. Raynald Blais: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out another small aspect and ask the hon. member if he agrees with me. Regarding the fiscal imbalance, there are some recognized, known factors concerning the revenues of Quebec and the provinces, but there is another factor concerning a specific imbalance, which is ever increasing. Let me illustrate it this way.

The fisheries sector is going through a crisis that remains unresolved. I am referring specifically to the crisis in the shrimp industry. The federal government—the Department of Fisheries and Oceans—could manage this crisis, but it refuses to act. Its recent decision in this file involves only consultations.

However, there are things that could be done. For instance, the cost of licences could be reduced considerably. Currently, they cost

between \$24,000 and \$26,000 per business and per boat. Given the very particular situation facing the shrimp industry, there are things that could be done. The government has constitutional responsibilities and it refuses to act. Instead, another level of government—the Quebec government—has been forced to take action, for a second consecutive year, to help the shrimp industry and sort out the problem. The Government of Quebec just announced \$8.5 million in assistance.

This demonstrates once again that the fiscal imbalance does, in fact, have to do with revenues. I could give other examples from what is happening at the moment.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Mr. Speaker, the situation raised by my colleague does speak for itself. It demonstrates two things.

First, it demonstrates that the federal government is spending a great deal of money in areas of responsibility that are not federal. It interferes in areas under the purview of the governments of Quebec and the provinces. But when it comes to taking care of its own responsibilities, it is often nowhere to be found, as we have seen in fisheries and international issues. When asked to take action to protect the manufacturing industry, it is nowhere to be found. On aboriginal issues, it is nowhere to be found. It is somewhat odd to have a government meddle in the business of Quebec and the provinces, but not look after its own.

Second, it demonstrates how impotent this government and the members of its caucus are, particularly those from Quebec. This is a government that does not take action; it does nothing and is only spurred into action when it is up against the wall, after every pressure possible has been brought to bear. Any results delivered by this government—as we have seen in the last budget with the cash transfers to Quebec and the provinces—are due to the fact that a minority government has to cooperate.

This goes to show the important role played by the Bloc Québécois. If it were not for the Bloc pressuring the government, nothing would get done.

• (1635)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, St-Hubert Airport; the hon. member for Don Valley East, The Environment; the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Foreign Affairs.

[*Translation*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank my hon. colleague from Willowdale, who took the floor about an hour ago, because I was delayed. He spoke very well, and I thank him for his remarks. I was with visiting students from a school located in my riding.

*Government Orders**[English]*

It is a pleasure for me to rise a little later than originally planned to speak to Bill C-40. This is largely a housecleaning bill on which I do not think there will be any significant disagreement among members of the House.

The bill deals with measures relating to the GST in the first part. The second part has amendments to the Excise Tax Act. Finally, the bill has measures affecting the air travellers security charge.

I was thinking I would use my time, since there is not a great deal of controversy, to talk a bit about the GST, in particular the differences in fundamental economic policies between our party and the government. One of those differences involves the GST.

However, before I get into that, I will deal with one element of the bill, which is worth raising. It has to do with the GST rebate applying to motor vehicles that have been used subsequent to being specially equipped for use by individuals with disabilities. There is a GST rebate for large vehicles for individuals with disabilities.

My party certainly supports this measure. However, it reminds me of something else that was in the recent budget, and this is an item which consequences the government has maybe not thought about. I am talking about the green levy on gas-guzzling vehicles.

In general, this may not be a bad policy, but I wonder if the government has thought about the unintended consequences of this new tax, in particular the fact that many disabled families need to buy vehicles that are appropriate for their use and have no choice but to buy larger vehicles, which might be the gas-guzzling vehicles attracting this additional charge.

On the one hand, the government is giving a GST rebate. On the other hand, it is taking more than all of it back by imposing this gas-guzzling tax on vehicles that need to be large for the use of people with disabilities.

While the Jeep Patriot may be a fine vehicle, it is not big enough to move around the sort of equipment that these families need to help transport their disabled children. As a result, these people now have to pay a few thousand dollars more out of their own pockets to cover the increased costs of these larger vehicles. I do not see how it is fair that these families should be forced to pay a large tax levy on their vehicle simply because, in their circumstances, a larger vehicle is an essential need.

Could the government not have included something in the budget to acknowledge this set of circumstances?

Obviously the finance minister put some thought into the vehicle emission tax. He studied it enough to give the car manufacturing plant next to his own riding a break on the E85 ethanol vehicles it produces. He was willing to do this even though there is not a single gas station available to the Canadian public where they can buy the 15% ethanol content gasoline.

I hope, as the budget moves through the House, the point about large vehicles for people with disabilities will be given serious attention.

Let me now turn to perhaps the broader issue I want to address, which relates to the GST. It also reflects the fundamental difference in overall economic approach between the two sides of the House.

On our side of the House, we start with the premise that the world does not owe Canada a living, that Canada has to be competitive in this modern world. We have to compete not only against the emerging giants like China and India, but established giants like Europe, the United States and Japan. In this context of competitiveness and fairness, the last thing any country like Canada needs to do is raise income tax in order to pay for a reduction in GST.

I do not think there is an economist on the planet who would advocate such a policy. On the one hand, we have an aging population that needs to save for their retirement and the government is cutting the GST which encourages people to buy more and save less. At the same time, the government is raising income tax, partly to pay for the GST cut, and by raising the income tax, it is discouraging saving, investment and productivity.

• (1640)

While other countries with which we compete, such as Australia, have been cutting their income tax and company tax in broad based fashion, we, alone in the world, are cutting the GST and raising income tax. That is the opposite of what our party would do in government. This is an extraordinarily foolish policy, which I do not think commands the support of a single economist.

The other thing one has to understand is that to compete in the modern world, we will not compete with India and with China on the basis of our low wages. We would not want to do that. We really have only our people with whom to compete and we have to provide those people with ideas, education and research funding.

Fundamental to successful, internationally competitive economic policy is support for research, education and commercialization. This is the second area in which we part company. The government has actually slashed funding to research and has not given a penny to students in the most recent budget. Our plan would be to significantly increase research funding, including support for taking ideas from the lab to the market, commercialization, as well as putting substantial sums into the pockets of students.

The third difference, and the final difference that I will mention today, is that we are internationalist in our outlook. We believe Canada has to take on the world. We have to expand our investment and trade opportunities around the world, whereas the government is incredibly domestically inward looking. What is the evidence of that? If we take the world's biggest emerging economy, China, the government insults China. If we take the second biggest, and in some ways equally important, India, the government ignores India. A few weeks ago I could have said it had not sent a single minister there in more than a year in office. I think a week or two ago, the first minister went there. However, the government has insulted China and has ignored India. It is also closing consular positions in Europe, in Milan, in Japan and around the world.

Government Orders

This is not a sign of a government that wants to expand international trade, expand investment, take on the world. This is the policy of an inward looking government that seeks only to get votes to win the next election.

Our economic policies are fundamentally different. We see Canada as taking on the world. We would have lower income tax, not lower the GST. We would fund research, commercialization and students, not slash funding for these things. We would seriously take on trade and investment opportunities with the emerging and established world, contrary to the opposite direction in which the government is heading.

Let me now move on to a second theme, which is another extraordinarily foolish thing that the government has done, and it relates to the subject of income trusts.

We all know the government broke a solemn, serious election promise, an unconditional election promise, made to all Canadians. The Conservative government promised it would not increase the tax on income trusts. What did Canadians do? They put more and more money into income trusts, secure in the knowledge that their Prime Minister had promised to them that he would not tax them.

Canadians knew there were market risks in income trusts, but they thought the political risk had been removed because their newly elected Prime Minister had promised several times, and unequivocally, never to tax those income trusts. Therefore, the market grew because Canadians took the Prime Minister at his word.

Then what happened? On Halloween, the finance minister cut those Canadians off at the knees, broke that promise and imposed a draconian 31.5% tax on income trusts. What happened? The market collapsed the next day.

• (1645)

In a single day, Canadians who had taken the Prime Minister at his word lost \$25 billion of hard-earned savings. It went up in smoke. As if that were not bad enough, the manner in which the government executed this broken promise was extraordinarily further damaging to the Canadian economy, because the draconian 31.5% tax essentially destroys the income trust sector.

Income trusts are very valuable savings vehicles, particularly for seniors who need the proceeds from their savings to pay the bills. Seniors had been heavily invested in income trusts and now that vehicle has been taken away from them by the government's policy to destroy the income trust sector.

Not only that, Alberta in particular—but also elsewhere—had a thriving energy trust sector that, in the words of the Governor of the Bank of Canada, was contributing to productivity, to the repatriation of foreign capital and to financing other branches of the energy sector. That was before Halloween.

After Halloween, the sector has been decimated. It is sitting there at bargain basement prices. Instead of repatriating foreign capital, it is being gobbled up by foreign capital.

This policy has destroyed \$25 billion of Canadians' hard-earned savings. It has deprived all Canadians, especially seniors, of the valuable savings vehicle in the form of income trusts. It is

decimating an industry that was thriving before this highly inappropriate action by the government.

All of this is neither fair nor contributing to government revenue. This is why it is so particularly foolish. It is called the tax fairness plan, but it should be called the tax unfairness plan. It is supposed to tax corporations more so that individuals pay less tax. It does the opposite. Let me explain those two points.

On fairness, what does the government's so-called tax fairness plan do? It deprives ordinary Canadians of access to income trusts. They can no longer get the benefits of these income streams if they are ordinary Canadian investors, but what if it is a deep-pocketed Canadian pension plan or a deep-pocketed private equity foreign venture? Then it can still derive the benefits of an income trust because it can buy the underlying assets directly and receive that flow of money.

The income trust vehicle is still open to the deep-pocketed pension plans and the foreign private equity companies, but the government has disallowed that vehicle to ordinary Canadians. That is not tax fairness. That is tax unfairness.

To further compound that, instead of getting more tax revenue out of this policy, the government is getting less tax revenue, because the previous owners of the income trusts pay a lot of tax. It is personal tax, but it is still tax. What about the new owners? The pension plans pay no tax, except by the pensioners when the money is ultimately distributed, and the private equity companies pay little or no tax because they have ways of leveraging themselves so that they will end up paying no tax.

We have the irony here of the tax fairness plan being the tax unfairness plan, depriving ordinary Canadians of investing in income trusts and welcoming with open arms the investments in income trusts by the fat cats. In so doing, the government is in fact depriving itself of revenue because those fat cats, the Canadian pension plans and the private equity companies, pay little or no tax compared to the previous income trust holders.

It is a disastrous policy. It is an ill thought out policy. It is a policy to drop a nuclear bomb on a problem when what was needed was a more surgical approach. Indeed, the Liberal Party's approach is just that: the more surgical, sensible approach. We would immediately repeal this illogical, irrational, draconian 31.5% tax and replace it with a 10% tax which would be refundable to Canadian residents.

Government Orders

•(1650)

That would be enough to deal with the tax leakage. At the same time, according to experts, two-thirds of the value lost, the \$25 billion, would be returned to savers who had lost their money, the income trust savings vehicle would still be available, and the energy trust sector would be able to return to its thriving former self. This policy cannot entirely put the toothpaste back in the tube, but it would eliminate the worst features of the government's illogical and unfortunate income trust policy.

I will deal with one last issue, because it is the third foolishness of the government. The first is the whole economic thrust, particularly the GST cut and the income tax hike. The second is the income trust fiasco.

The third is the stupendously foolish proposal on which, thankfully, the minister is now flip-flopping, and which involves interest deductibility. He said this measure would give \$40 million a year in revenue. The experts say between \$1 billion and \$2 billion per year. That is only out by a factor of some 3,000%. That does not show great competence to begin with.

However, the real problem here is that we are forcing our own homegrown Canadian companies to compete with foreign companies with one hand tied behind their backs. If a company from Europe, the United States or Japan buys a foreign asset, it can tax deduct the interest that it has to pay on debt. Canadian companies, under the government's proposal, will not.

Let us take an example. It has been in the news. I do not know if it will happen, but it has been in the news. It is the idea that Magna might buy Chrysler. Let us say that Magna is in competition with a U.S. or European company to buy Chrysler. Purely as a consequence of the government's interest deductibility measure, those foreign companies would be able to pay 37% more for Chrysler than Magna would be able to pay. That is purely because of the government's measure. Obviously Magna or any other Canadian company bidding against a foreign company would be at a huge disadvantage in buying any foreign company. That particular number is based on a fifty-fifty debt equity ratio in the financing.

Why does that matter? That matters because companies grow beyond the Canadian borders. If companies are to continue to grow, they must grow beyond Canada. This foolish measure of the government is tying the hands of Canadian companies behind their backs and sending them out in the big wide world to compete against foreign companies at a huge disadvantage.

As a study by KPMG has said, this will result in weaker Canadian companies, a weaker ability to acquire assets and more foreign takeovers of Canadian companies.

The whole financial world, anyone who knows anything about these things, is up in arms. We have had an expert say that this is the worst tax policy in 35 years. The Conservatives are out on their revenue estimates by 3,000%. There was a Deloitte Touche conference of about 1,000 experts yesterday who were surveyed and 90% of them said it was a bad idea. It is a disaster.

Our party and our leader announced nine days ago that we would not do this. We would scrap this idea because it is so disastrous for Canadian competitiveness, Canadian jobs and Canadian prosperity.

Fortunately, the minister came to his senses. Perhaps he heard our leader speak nine days ago and understood the wisdom of our approach. The minister said yesterday that he is flip-flopping. He will not go ahead with this. He will go ahead in a much more minor, small way and he has admitted that he did not do his homework, he did not think it through, and now he is adopting the Liberal policy—

•(1655)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member that he says the Liberals would reverse it. There are some high-ranking Liberals who used to be in the party who have the same views as ours, and I am sure there are many who if they ever became government would as well.

Sheila Copps is one of them. She said that reversing the income trusts decision “would...run afoul of espoused Liberal principles, by promoting a tax loophole for a select few, financed by the rest of us”.

John Manley said, “It was the right thing to do...Any day that good public policy triumphs is a good day”.

I also want to ask the member, who is the Liberal finance critic, if he really did read the budget. This concerns his comments on the green levy for vans equipped for wheelchair access. If he did read the budget and the implementation bill, at page 46, in paragraphs 68.02 (1) (a) and (b), he would know that this provides a refund of the green levy for vans equipped for wheelchair access.

I also want to comment for member who used to be the revenue minister that if he thinks reducing the GST is inconsequential, then he should think back to when he was the revenue minister. He will remember the underground economy that was going on because of the GST. It was in the billions of dollars, I believe, but maybe he can correct me.

Maybe it was billions that they found in the scams in, I believe, Atlantic Canada at the time; there was a car scam. Maybe I am incorrect, but I do believe there was quite a scam and it uncovered about \$1.9 billion. It was done just between car dealerships in Atlantic Canada with the United States.

I would like to know if he realizes that people perhaps welcomed the percentage point reduction in the GST.

Hon. John McCallum: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, fighting GST fraud is a significant activity of government. I did some of that when I was revenue minister. Those things can be done whether the GST is 6%, 5% or 7%.

Government Orders

The more fundamental point is that this is not trivial at all. We are talking about \$5 billion or \$6 billion per year of revenue for every GST point cut. We can do huge amounts of income tax cuts and huge amounts of social programming with that amount of money.

It is a gross waste of the fiscal capacity of a government to spend it on a GST cut for a penny or two on a cup of coffee when we consider that for two points of the GST we could have \$10 billion, \$11 billion or \$12 billion per year, which would buy us a massive tax cut or a massive improvement in social programs.

I am not sure if the hon. member was listening to me, but the point is that the income trust policy results in less revenue for the government, not more revenue for the government. That is why I said it was a tax unfairness plan, not a tax fairness plan.

What I said earlier, and I will just repeat it very quickly, is that when these income trusts are bought out by pension plans and by private equity ventures, those pension plans and private equity ventures pay no tax or very little tax, whereas the previous owners of the income trusts paid a lot of tax.

Therefore, far from the government's policy adding to government revenues, as she said, it subtracts from government revenue to the tune of, with the last seven or eight acquisitions among income trusts, I think, those alone costing the government some \$130 million a year.

I am afraid that the hon. member has her direction wrong. It will result in less revenue for the government, not more, and that is one of the virtues of the Liberal plan.

● (1700)

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Mr. Speaker, would the member agree with Liberal John Manley that “it was the right thing to do” and that “any day that good public policy triumphs is a good day”? What about the policy part of income trusts? What about Sheila Copps' comment that reversing the income trusts decision “would...run afoul of espoused Liberal principles”?

Would the member agree or disagree that this goes against Liberal principles by promoting a tax loophole? In Sheila Copps' view, that is what it was, financed by the rest of us. I would like his answer on what he thought of those comments.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my comment a third time. Sheila Copps is wrong. It perhaps was not as evident at the time before all these private equity acquisitions occurred.

I am now telling the member for the third time that this policy results in less revenue for the government, not more revenue for the government. That might not have been apparent to Sheila Copps when she made the comment but it is eminently apparent right now to the experts in the field.

I am not saying that there is absolute unanimity on our policy but I am saying that the recent commentary of Jack Mintz, for example, who was previously in support of the government, has now turned against the government. I am not sure if Mr. Manley, if he observed the recent fiasco in terms of the new set of acquisitions, would hold to that comment or not. The circumstances have deteriorated since those two individuals made their comments.

I certainly stand by the fact that this is a disastrous policy and our Liberal plan would have been far superior.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Mr. Speaker, what about the refund on the green levy for vans equipped for wheelchair access? Did the member read that part of the budget? I read out the pages. It was in the implementation bill on page 46. If the member had read it, he would know that it provides a refund of the green levy for vans equipped for wheelchair access.

I just want to know if the member would like to correct the record as the finance critic so he will not be misunderstood?

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, I was correct on other points but I may be wrong on that one. It was my impression that such vehicles were, on the one hand, given the benefit of a GST rebate but, on the other hand, were subject to the gas guzzling levy.

I suggested that second point could be corrected. If the member is telling me that second point has been corrected, then I am pleased to hear that.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the three policies of interest deductibility, income trusts and the decision to waive withholding tax, would the member comment on the impact of those three policies when taken together as they relate to our economic sovereignty?

● (1705)

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, there is a certain combined effect or a mutually reinforcing effect of these things. All of them tend to make it easier for foreign companies to acquire Canadian companies and harder for Canadian companies to acquire foreign companies.

I am not an NDPer. I am not objecting to foreign ownership or Canadians buying foreign companies or foreigners buying Canadian companies. I do not want to build a huge wall around Canada like in Albania in the 1960s, which sometimes one suspects the NDP wants to do. All I want is that we not tilt the playing field in favour of foreign companies at the expense of Canadians and that is what these policies, which my hon. colleague has described, tend to do.

I want, if anything, to create a Canadian advantage, which is the government's stated policy, but by its actions it has created a Canadian disadvantage, favouring foreign companies at the expense of homegrown Canadian companies. That is bad policy but that is the consequence, whether intended or unintended, of the government's misguided economic policies.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I have already had an opportunity to speak to Bill C-40 at second reading. I find it to be a useful bill but, at the same time, it is so technical that we are sometimes not too motivated to participate in the debate. This bill amends the the Excise Tax Act, the Excise Act, 2001 and the Air Travellers Security Charge Act and other Acts. In the tales of Asterix, Obelix used to say that it did not matter whether menhirs were large or small—they were still menhirs. Similarly this bill, technical or not, must be debated and I am pleased to speak about the Bloc Québécois position on behalf of our party.

Government Orders

This fairly technical bill takes a very logical approach to dealing with a certain number of issues and that is why we will support this bill. First it addresses various shortcomings associated with the GST and excise tax. It removes taxes from certain medical services, which will facilitate access to these services. I will come back to that. It reduces the burden of taxation on charities, and I believe no will take issue with this point. It also provides for measures to help small wine producers. That is a positive measure for the wine producers in the Lanaudière region. It tightens legislative provisions with regard to the production and sale of tobacco in order to counter smuggling. Who would oppose that? It adjusts the air travellers security charge.

When in Ottawa, the Bloc Québécois, as a group, often feels somewhat like it is in the fictional Gaulish village to which I referred earlier, when talking about Asterix and Obelix. We must resist the federalist invaders and the invasions by the federal government. However, this time, I must say that this bill respects federal and provincial jurisdictions. As I said, the Bloc Québécois will support Bill C-40.

Bill C-40 is divided into three parts. The first part aims to institute corrective steps to improve and specify certain measures having to do with the collection of the GST. The second part amends the act in order to zero-rate particular products and services. It turns then to the excise tax, laying out certain measures related to the taxation of wine, beer and spirits. The third part amends the rules on the air travellers security charge collected at various airports.

Naturally, I will start with the first part of Bill C-40, which has to do with GST-HST-related measures. In Quebec's case, this means the Quebec sales tax.

As I said, the first of these measures has to do with health-related rules. The bill amends the act so that speech-language pathology services are henceforth effectively zero-rated. This seems, to me, a matter of common sense. A child, loved one or family member might need this type of service. In my opinion, it is somewhat immoral to tax something that is completely essential and necessary to a person's well-being. This change confirms the tax-exempt status of these services. It will make it easier for young people with language problems to access such services. This change will also help older people who have suffered strokes to access services to learn to speak again, thereby enabling them to continue living in dignity.

Then, in the area of health care again, the government will exempt services provided in the practice of the profession of social work. There are times when we need to seek the assistance of a social worker. This measure will make it easier to access such services. Nowadays, the professional duties of many social workers include acting as substitute psychologists, something which I am convinced the college of psychologists is not too thrilled about. In areas where the needs are huge, we often see shortages of specialists such as psychologists. Purchasing the services of a social worker may be a perfectly appropriate alternative. It seems totally normal to me that the government exempt from tax the services of social workers.

• (1710)

The government will also zero-rate the sales and importation of a product that can be used to some extent as a blood substitute. Again, it seems to me that everyone will understand that there was

something sick about taxing a product making possible crucial treatments for seriously injured patients.

Back to my analogy with the village of ancient Gauls and Getafix. Members will recall that Getafix is the druid who mixed the magic potion that gave that village the strength to resist the invading Roman army. In Bill C-40, the government removes the tax on a group of drugs like Valium, Ativan and others. These are drugs needed to treat anxiety, and drug and alcohol withdrawal or as a component in preanesthetic preparations. Again, there was something predatory about government taxing drugs that do not fall under the category of consumer purchases, but are simply something that members of our society who are often dealing with enormous difficulties buy because they need it for their well-being.

Finally, as I was saying, there is an aspect of the bill that is not directly related to health, but to the welfare of people with disabilities. I am talking about the GST rebate for motor vehicles that have been used subsequent to being specially equipped for use by individuals with disabilities.

As you can see, there are measures in this bill that are relatively modest, but they cannot be criticized because, quite frankly, they are just common sense.

As far as charities are concerned, again in the first part on the GST and HST, we see changes ensuring that the exemption of supplies by charities of real property under short-term leases and licences will extend to any goods supplied together with such real property. For example, someone leases a facility with a photocopier. The leased photocopier was then taxed. In the context, this measure is minimal, especially after the cuts the Conservative government made to certain agencies. I am thinking of women's groups and literacy groups. It probably would have been better not only to have this measure, which will very slightly alleviate financial pressure, but also to re-establish all the budgets of these community groups that were cut last September.

Nonetheless, there is something there that we cannot oppose. In other words, we will also support this measure.

There are other business arrangements that affect, in particular, foreign banks that restructure their Canadian subsidiary into a Canadian branch. This is a measure that affects consumer rights. We know that in Canada there is a very significant bank concentration problem. The five largest banks control most of the market, by far. Parliament, the House of Commons and the Standing Committee on Finance—I have taken part in this—have tried a number of times to find ways to improve competition on that market. I remember Bill C-8, which addressed this more or less successfully.

Government Orders

Having a measure that would facilitate the restructuring of a foreign bank's Canadian subsidiary into a Canadian branch seems conducive to improving competition in a very concentrated market, as I was saying. That is the first point. We also find in this bill some changes to simplify tax collection by small stores that deal with beverage container deposits that are refundable to the consumer. This simplifies life for small merchants and it seems to me that there a number of things here as well that just make sense.

There is one last measure in this first part that concerns governments. The bill will exempt a supply of a right to file or retrieve a document or information stored in an electronic official registry. This will mean, for example, that municipalities can provide information requested by taxpayers at a lower cost.

As hon. members can see, these are not sweeping measures. There is nothing to get upset about; these are small measures that make good sense.

• (1715)

The same is true of the second part, which pertains to excise tax. As I mentioned earlier, the measures in this part amend the Excise Act, 2001, to implement minor refinements that will improve the operation of the act and more accurately reflect current industry and administrative practices.

They also implement amendments to the Access to Information Act, the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff and the Excise Tax Act.

I want to summarize the tobacco-related measures in Bill C-40. To better defend against the smuggling of tobacco products and facilitate collection of the tax on tobacco, the bill extends the requirement to identify the origin of tobacco products to all products, including those for sale at duty-free shops.

In this case, there will be a small problem, because the government has decided to put an end to the GST visitor rebate, except in the case of conferences and tours. Although the government's intentions are good, this will have much less impact, because of what was announced in the budget regarding the GST visitor rebate.

However, the bill does extend the requirement to identify the origin of tobacco products to duty-free shops or products sold for export, consistent with international treaties including the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

The bill also clarifies that cigarettes, tobacco sticks, fine-cut tobacco or cigars, but not packaged raw leaf tobacco, may be supplied to the export market or the domestic duty-free market. These are relatively minor amendments, but they make a lot of sense.

As far as alcohol is concerned, Bill C-40 authorizes provincial liquor boards and vintners to possess a still or similar equipment and produce spirits for the purpose of analysing substances containing alcohol without holding a spirits licence. This measure will relieve provincial liquor boards and vintners of the entire administrative burden and cost involved in acquiring a licence for such equipment, stills or similar equipment.

Furthermore, in order to promote growth in Canada's wine industry, the government will allow the deferral of payment of duty

by small vintners selling wine on consignment in retail stores operated by an association of vintners until the wine is sold. Something did not seem right, particularly asking small vintners to pay tax in advance before the product is even sold. These are often small-scale businesses that do not have enough liquid assets to assume this type of responsibility without putting the very survival of the business at risk. This is a welcome measure. The federal government has finally understood that this sector plays an important role in economic development, especially in the regions.

I remember the battle the Bloc Québécois had to wage for the reduction of excise tax on microbreweries. We finally won that battle, not in the last budget, but in the previous year's budget. This is another measure that will simplify life for small producers. When they supply their products to retail stores operated by their association of vintners, they will only have to pay GST once the product is sold—as I already mentioned. This new measure will help market local products. There are now specialty markets scattered throughout Quebec where these wine products are available.

By the way, I just want to say that the industry in Quebec is doing quite well. Wine producers have banded together in the Association des vignerons du Québec. This would not necessarily please Obelix, who does not drink alcohol since he fell into a cauldron of magic potion when he was young. In some of the books, we see that this had a rather disastrous effect on his behaviour. However, Gérard Depardieu, who played the role of Obelix in the *Asterix and Obelix* films, is a great fan of wine. He would be extremely interested in what I am saying.

In 2006, the Quebec vintners association had 42 members in many of the province's regions. I already mentioned Lanaudière and Île Ronde, where there are tens of thousands of vines, as well as the Eastern Townships, Montérégie and the Lower Laurentians.

• (1720)

Over 100 hectares of vines are cultivated annually, producing 300,000 bottles every year, primarily white wine, ice wine and fortified wine. I would invite all of my colleagues to enjoy Quebec's homegrown wines—in moderation, of course.

In both the second part and the previous part, the new legislation will authorize the Minister of National Revenue to exchange information on excise tax with foreign governments that are signatories to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. The bill also adds a discretionary power for the Chief Statistician of Canada to provide statistical information concerning business activities to the provinces similar to an existing provision in the Income Tax Act.

Government Orders

Like the measures in the first part, these minor measures are neither very revolutionary nor very impressive, but they are very sensible. We think that these minor measures deserve to be supported, even though—as in the example I gave about charities—they do not eliminate the negative and damaging effects of the Conservative government's cuts to literacy organizations, women's groups and the aboriginal tobacco control strategy.

With respect to the air travellers security charge, I have to say that ever since the previous government brought this tax in, we have tried to find out what good it was doing, but we never really got an answer. I got the impression from various witnesses—especially when I was a member of the Standing Committee on Finance—that the money from this tax was used for a lot of things other than passenger security.

In our opinion, the costs of air travellers security should be borne by all taxpayers, and not just by those who are often required to travel by air. I remember that, at the beginning, a tax was imposed on people flying out of regional airports. I am thinking of the member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine who, unfortunately, cannot always take his car to get here. Because of time constraints, he must fly. This means that he was forced to pay that tax, which was totally unacceptable. There have been reductions over time, and we are told that another one is coming. However, as regards this bill, we are not given any explanation as to why this tax is imposed, its purpose and its link with air safety. The government remains vague on this issue.

Still, a tax relief is included. First, the bill relieves, in particular circumstances, the applicable charge in respect of air travel sold by resellers or donated by air carriers. As we can see, this affects relatively few people. The bill also provides authority for the governor in council to add, delete or vary by regulation the schedule of listed airports.

The bill will change the status of three airports in Quebec, to ensure that the standards meet market demand. So, the bill removes La Grande-3 and La Grande-4 from the list of airports subjected to the surtax under the Air Travellers Security Charge Act. I can say that 95%, if not 99% of those who fly in to La Grande-3 and La Grande-4 are workers involved in the construction or maintenance of the facilities there. They definitely do not go there for a vacation. Some may, but it is not the majority.

Finally, this measure simply makes sense. I will conclude by saying that this series of small measures, of small menhirs, as I said at the beginning, deserve the Bloc Québécois' attention and support and, indeed, we do support them.

● (1725)

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I noticed the member talked about how the measures seemed small. In a way, he showed a great deal of responsibility when he said that even if the measures seem insignificant or small, they are important.

We were talking about what happened with microbreweries. I could say the same thing about the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. There is a beer made by a microbrewery in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine called À l'abri de la tempête. This is one of the ways to help small businesses. Together, these measures ensure that economies can keep going and

be helped. These seemingly small measures produce big results. This company in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine has been in business for a few years. In addition, it creates a sense of belonging within a certain culture. At the same time, it also shows that, economically, it is possible to do great things in a region like ours. This beer, which is quite good, is exported to other areas.

The same goes for wine producers with respect to Bill C-40. It is an interesting analogy, and I might like to hear more about it, since he is quite familiar with this issue in his own area. Maybe this could bring us back to the fact that Obelix obviously fell into the magic potion, but others, who did not have the same luck as Obelix, still had the chance to get a good taste. I think it is worth looking at what our parliamentary leader said about microbreweries and small wine producers.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question because it gives me the opportunity to mention something that I feel is important to bear in mind. We too, in the Lanaudière region, have several microbreweries. In Joliette, we have L'Alchimiste, of which we are very proud. This measure announced in the previous budget, as I mentioned, has greatly benefited that company.

I want to point out, because it is quite remarkable, that the microbreweries are the ones that fought for an excise tax reduction on the first 700,000 hectolitres produced. The major breweries opposed such a reduction for many years, and their lobby was unfortunately tied in large part to the Liberal government at the time.

It is fascinating to see how the Conservative government has gone about getting this passed. By granting the same reduction to both microbreweries and major breweries, it has bought the silence of the major breweries in order to help the microbreweries. This is really twisting things. Obviously, the competition for microbreweries comes first and foremost from imported beers, cottage brewery beers from abroad. In a rather unsubtle way, the meaning of the measure the Bloc Québécois had been calling for in recent years got twisted. I think that it will nonetheless help our microbreweries grow and further define part of our heritage identity.

● (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I regret to have to interrupt the hon. member. The next time Bill C-40 is before the House, he will have six minutes remaining in the time allotted for questions and comments.

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 bill, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

Bill S-205, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (clean drinking water).

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The House resumed from April 18 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 5:31 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Call in the members.

● (1755)

And the bells having rung:

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, I think if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent to pass this extension motion unanimously.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

HUMAN RESOURCES, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The House resumed from April 18 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion for concurrence in the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

[English]

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, once again, as with the previous motion, I think if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent of the chamber to pass the motion that is presently before the House to allow for this extension of time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Private Members' Business

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The House resumed from April 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-377, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-377 under private members' business.

● (1805)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 163)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Asselin
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bell (North Vancouver)	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brison
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Byrne	Cardin
Carrier	Chamberlain
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies
Demers	Deschamps
Dewar	Dhaliwal
Dhalla	Dion
Dosanjh	Duceppe
Eyking	Faille
Freeman	Fry
Gagnon	Gaudet
Gauthier	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Gravel
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Holland
Ignatieff	Jennings
Julian	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Kotto	Laforest
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Lessard
Lévesque	Lussier
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloney
Marleau	Marston

Private Members' Business

Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Masse	Mathysen
Matthews	McCallum
McDonough	McGuinty
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Merasty
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau
Nash	Neville
Ouellet	Owen
Pacetti	Paquette
Patry	Pearson
Perron	Peterson
Picard	Plamondon
Priddy	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Russell	Savage
Savoie	Sgro
Siksay	Silva
Simard	Simms
St-Cyr	St-Hilaire
St. Amand	St. Denis
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks
Turner	Valley
Vincent	Wappel
Wasylcia-Leis	Wilfert
Wilson	Wrzesnewskyj- — 152

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Baird	Batters
Benoit	Bernier
Blackburn	Boucher
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannon (Pontiac)	Carrie
Casey	Casson
Chong	Clement
Cummins	Davidson
Day	Del Mastro
Doyle	Dykstra
Emerson	Epp
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Gallant
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Hanger
Harris	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Hinton	Jaffer
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Khan	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lemieux
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunnay	MacKenzie
Manning	Mayes
Menzies	Merrifield
Mills	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Pallister	Paradis
Petit	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Richardson	Ritz
Scheer	Schellenberger

Shipleigh	Skelton
Smith	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Williams
Yelich- — 115	

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I declare the motion carried. Consequently, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from April 19 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded on the motion at report stage of Bill C-278 under private members' business.

● (1815)

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

(Division No. 164)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	André
Angus	Asselin
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bell (North Vancouver)	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brisson
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Byrne	Cardin
Carrier	Chamberlain
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies
Demers	Deschamps
Dewar	Dhalwal
Dhalla	Dion
Dosanjh	Duceppe
Eyking	Faillie
Freeman	Fry
Gagnon	Gaudet
Gauthier	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Gravel
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Holland
Ignatieff	Jennings
Julian	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Kotto	Laforest
Laframboise	Lalonde

Lavallée
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lévesque
MacAulay
Malo
Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Masse
Matthews
McDonough
McGuire
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nash
Ouellet
Pacetti
Patry
Perron
Picard
Priddy
Ratansi
Regan
Rodriguez
Russell
Savoie
Siksay
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Amand
Szabo
Temelkovski
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Turner
Vincent
Wasylcia-Leis
Wilson

Layton
Lee
Lessard
Lussier
Malhi
Maloney
Marston
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen
McCallum
McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Merasty
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Nadeau
Neville
Owen
Paquette
Pearson
Peterson
Plamondon
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Savage
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St-Hilaire
St. Denis
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Valley
Wappel
Wilfert
Wrzesnewskyj— 152

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Arthur
Batters
Bernier
Boucher
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie
Casson
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dykstra
Epp
Finley
Flaherty
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal
Hanger
Harvey
Heam
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lemieux
Lunn
MacKenzie
Mayes
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)

Ablonczy
Allen
Ambrose
Anderson
Baird
Benoit
Blackburn
Breitkreuz
Brown (Barrie)
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casey
Chong
Cummins
Day
Doyle
Emerson
Fast
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan
Kram (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lukiwski
Lunney
Manning
Menzies
Mills

Private Members' Business

Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Paradis
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Schellenberger
Skelton
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Verner
Warawa
Watson
Yelich— 117

Norlock
Obhrai
Pallister
Petit
Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Scheer
Shipley
Smith
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Wallace
Warkentin
Williams

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BROADCASTING ACT

The House resumed from April 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-327, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act (reduction of violence in television broadcasts), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion.

● (1825)

[*English*]

And the Clerk having announced the result of the vote:

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I thought we were calling the vote for those opposed so I voted twice. I vote in opposition to the motion.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to register my vote as opposed.

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, I apologize, but for five seconds I was confused, as the Liberals have been about Afghanistan for five years. I wish to register my vote in opposition as well.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, I would like it to be very clear that I am voting against this motion.

[*English*]

Hon. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, while I see that four members were of two minds on this vote, and I appreciate them clarifying it, the Minister of Natural Resources has left and I see another member who is now resuming his seat. Therefore, I would ask that the vote then reflect the absence of the Minister of Natural Resources.

Private Members' Business

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): After having heard these points of order, I will ask the Clerk to announce the corrected vote.

And the Clerk having announced the corrected vote:

• (1830)

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

(Division No. 165)

YEAS

Members

Albrecht	Alghabra
Allen	Anders
André	Angus
Asselin	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bennett	Benoit
Bevilacqua	Bevington
Bigras	Black
Blaikie	Blais
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Breitreuz
Brisson	Brown (Oakville)
Brunelle	Byrne
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cardin
Carrier	Casey
Chamberlain	Chan
Charlton	Chong
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies
Demers	Deschamps
Dewar	Dhaliwal
Dhalla	Dion
Dosanjh	Doyle
Duceppe	Epp
Eyking	Faillie
Freeman	Fry
Gagnon	Gaudet
Gauthier	Godfrey
Godin	Goldring
Goodale	Graham
Gravel	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Harris	Holland
Ignatieff	Jennings
Julian	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Khan
Kotto	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
Layton	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemay
Lessard	Lévesque
Lunney	Lussier
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloney
Marleau	Marston
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Masse	Mathysen
Matthews	Mayes
McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Merasty
Merrifield	Mills
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau
Nash	Neville
Norlock	Ouellet
Owen	Pacetti

Paquette	Patry
Pearson	Perron
Peterson	Petit
Picard	Plamondon
Priddy	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Russell	Savage
Savoie	Sgro
Shiely	Siksas
Simard	Simms
Smith	St-Cyr
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Szabo
Telegdi	Temelkovski
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Tonks	Turner
Valley	Vincet
Wappel	Wasylcyia-Leis
Wilfert	Williams
Wilson	Wrzesnewskyj — 176

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Allison	Ambrose
Anderson	Arthur
Baird	Batters
Bernier	Blackburn
Boucher	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Cannon (Pontiac)	Carrie
Casson	Clement
Cummins	Davidson
Day	Del Mastro
Dykstra	Emerson
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Gallant
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Hinton	Jaffer
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Komarnicki
Lake	Lauzon
Lemieux	Lukiwski
Lunn	MacKenzie
Manning	Menzies
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Paradis	Poillievre
Prentice	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Richardson	Ritz
Scheer	Schellenberger
Skelton	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Toews
Trost	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Verner
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Yelich — 87	

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 6:31 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 February 26 consideration of the motion that Bill S-213, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The member for Wild Rose has five minutes remaining.

The hon. member for Wild Rose.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I encourage the House to support getting Bill S-213 to the committee.

I need to get a couple of items down that I was getting to before my time ran out the last time I was speaking to this.

First, I want to remind the House of the 110,000-plus signatures I tabled in the form of a petition. They are calling for harsher penalties for individuals who abuse, just for the heck of it, animals for whatever motive they may have. The petitioners want animals to be protected.

On these petitions, a great majority of people were opposed to Bill S-213. Because of that and because of the fact that numerous other individuals have contacted me by way of email and other sources and are highly supportive of Bill S-213, it is necessary to move the bill forward to committee to have a close look at it to see if there are things that can be done to make it better and that will satisfy all parties that are concerned.

In regard to the number of signatures on the petition, two young ladies from my riding worked hard to get these signatures. I appreciate their efforts. They did that in memory of a dog in Didsbury, Alberta, called Daisy Duke. The dog died a horrific death for whatever reason. At this point we are not too certain because it is still before the courts.

Because a great chunk of the petition was formulated in my riding, I was able to talk to a great number of people who signed the petition. They really are not aware of the intent of Bill S-213. This is why it is so important, if this is going to go before the public, if we are going to have a debate, that we have witnesses, like the two young ladies who started this bill and the idea, before the committee to give them an opportunity to express their opposition to the bill and where they feel it can be altered, or amended and fixed.

I also believe we need the opportunity to hear from others who are quite concerned about our treatment of animals. They want a good bill. They want to make certain that ranchers, farmers, hunters, trappers and those people who have legitimate animal businesses are protected from arrest for normal practices that deal with animals.

I think of rodeos, which are big events in my part of the country. Thousands of people participate. It would be a great opportunity at committee to take a close look at the bill and decide what we can do with it in terms of amending it or making it better, if that is possible.

I want to once again commend the people who signed the petition, who got the petition together. It is not often that we table petitions with that many signatures, and I was pleased to do so. However, we need to be very cautious about where we move on this. Whatever we

decide could have an impact on a great number of people who deal with animals in one way or another.

Thousands of people in my riding have horses, dogs, pets and anything we can name. Unfortunately, the very few decide that they want to do something really stupid when it comes to the abuse of animals, and I will not tolerate that. I do not think any of us should, but at the same time I do not want to see what I saw with one farmer in my riding. He took a cow that had cancer eye to auction and he was charged by the SPCA. The only reason he took the cow in was to cull it out. Nothing can be done for cancer eye. It is due to normal causes, yet he was fined for abuse to an animal.

That kind of thing happened to my friend, Dave, and the cost to him was very unfortunate. We have to make certain that we look after people who I know love what they do and will do their utmost to look after the care and welfare of their animals.

● (1835)

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate at second reading of Bill S-213, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals).

I think that we are touching here on a problem that worries not only parliamentarians, but also my fellow citizens, given the number of letters we have received. People love animals. These creatures are part of their lives, give affection and, for some, are sources of income. People clearly want us to create legislation that provides adequate protection for our animals and that fairly punishes people who have little respect for them.

As I was saying, this problem has undoubtedly been of concern to my current and former colleagues. Six bills have been brought before the House in recent years. Bill S-213 is the seventh. Not to mention Bill C-373, which is an eighth bill that has been introduced and is in progress. Our concern about animal welfare is clear.

Bill S-213 attempts to update the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with cruelty to animals, which have essentially remained unchanged since 1892. Just imagine: that is 115 years with no review of penalties.

That means that no one found guilty of mistreatment, negligence, abuse, mutilation or killing of an animal can be sentenced to more than six months' imprisonment or a maximum \$2,000 fine, with the exception of wilfully killing livestock. These are sanctions from another era.

The Senate bill updates the legislation in three areas. First, it makes it possible for the courts to impose harsher penalties on those who commit offences involving animals, including such reprehensible conduct as mutilation, killing, negligence, abandonment, and failure to provide food to animals.

Private Members' Business

Bill S-213 creates two categories of offences: Bill S-213 would then separate offences into two categories: first, for injuring animals intentionally and, second, for injuring animals by criminal neglect.

Under traditional criminal law principles, knowingly or intentionally doing something is more blameworthy than doing the same thing by gross negligence. Accordingly, the maximum available penalties are normally much higher for crimes that involve deliberate action than for crimes committed by negligence. Bill S-213 would address this by distinguishing between the two types of cruelty. Bill S-213 would assign different maximum penalties to each, according to the different degree of seriousness.

Consequently, the maximum term of imprisonment would be increased to 5 years on indictment and 18 months on summary conviction. The new five-year penalty would also cover the offence of causing pain, suffering or injury by a failure to exercise reasonable care or supervision. In addition, the penalty is accompanied by a fine of up to \$10,000 or up to \$5,000 in the case of negligence.

For the other offences, such as abandoning an animal in distress or failing to provide suitable water, food or shelter, the maximum penalty on indictment would be raised from six months in prison to two years.

Second, Bill S-213 frees the court from the maximum period of two years when making an order prohibiting an animal owner from having an animal in his possession. The bill gives the court the possibility of making a prohibition order for life regarding the offending owner.

Third, the bill provides for restitution mechanisms whereby the court may order an individual to pay for medical expenses if an animal has been cared for by an animal welfare agency. As a result, individuals found guilty of negligence or intentional cruelty may be required to compensate agencies that have cared for mistreated animals. This measure would also help animal welfare societies recover their costs.

I firmly believe that these proposals represent a definite improvement over the current animal protection legislation. But protecting animals against cruelty raises concerns with respect to the measures that would penalize some people, especially aboriginal people with ancestral rights under section 35 of the Constitution and people who engage in legitimate sport hunting and fishing or legitimate research activities that may involve animal testing.

• (1840)

That reminds me of the letters I receive nearly every day. Some contend that Bill S-213 does not afford animals enough rights, but what those critics may not so readily admit is that the reason many of the previous bills did not pass is that they potentially violated the rights of those who depend on animals for their livelihood. Farmers, university and scientific researchers, aboriginal peoples, and fishers and hunters have all expressed serious concerns.

For example, in my riding, Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, there are sport fishers and farmers. In talking with these people, I have discovered that most of them have a well-developed environmental conscience that often extends to animal welfare.

There are also aboriginal people in my riding. I have the privilege of representing the Mohawks of Kahnawake in this House. They have a long tradition of using animals for perfectly legitimate purposes that do not constitute cruelty to animals.

In response to this problem, my colleagues and I are looking to strike a difficult balance between our desire to protect animals against cruelty and the rights of hunters, fishers and first nations to continue engaging in legally sanctioned activities.

For these reasons, we will support Bill S-213 so that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights can study it more closely. By not proposing amendments beyond the penalty provisions, Bill S-213 ensures that everything that is now legal will remain so. More importantly, Bill S-213 protects animal rights and offers better tools of prosecution, yet it does not offer new grounds on which to challenge legal animal use practices. It will be interesting to see how we can work constructively in committee to maintain this balance.

In conclusion, my party considers animal cruelty to be unacceptable and despicable. That is why we are seeking to denounce animal abuse by amending the legislation, and Bill S-213 is a step in the right direction. That being said, this bill is incomplete. It will not solve all of the problems.

My colleague from Ajax—Pickering also introduced a bill concerning animal cruelty. Bill C-373 is interesting and has attracted the attention of many groups and individuals concerned about animal welfare and protection. Unless something unexpected comes up, I hope that the House's legislative process will make it possible for us to debate and perhaps support Bill C-373, which was introduced by the member for Ajax-Pickering.

I wanted to mention this particular bill because it improves on Bill S-213: not only does Bill C-373 increase the penalties, as recommended in Bill S-213, its clause 3 also ensures that the difficult balance I mentioned earlier is maintained by guaranteeing that legitimate hunters and fishers, including those exercising their aboriginal rights to practice such activities, will not be charged.

That being said, by sending Bill S-213 to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, I believe the House will also be sending a clear message to prosecutors, judges and police officers that this Parliament believes in protecting animals and that it is against all forms of animal cruelty.

Private Members' Business

•(1845)

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak on the issue of animal cruelty.

Canada's animal cruelty laws desperately need to be updated. The current law has remained essentially unchanged since 1892. That is 115 years. The world, of course, has changed in that period. Women are now considered people, racism is outlawed, and the world is no longer flat. Yet, we live with a law that, in practice, still treats animals as property and does not recognize them as feeling creatures.

Anyone who has any contact with animals knows that they are breathing, thinking, feeling, sentient beings. I keep thinking about a line from the film *Pulp Fiction* by Quentin Tarantino, when a two-bit criminal in a discussion around vegetarians says, "But a dog's got personality", and lots of animals have personality. Anyone who spends time with animals knows they have personality. They are not objects and should not be treated as though they are objects by our laws.

I think we could all agree in this House that the 115 year old law dealing with animal cruelty needs to be updated. However, Bill S-213 does not do it and I will not be supporting this bill.

One thing the bill does is provide greater flexibility around sentencing and somewhat tougher penalties. This is a positive step. However, that is about the only positive thing that I could say about this bill.

As I mentioned earlier, the current law basically says that crimes against animals are considered property offences and does not treat animals as feeling, sentient beings. However, Bill S-213 has the same concept entrenched in it. There is essentially no change. Animals are worthy of protection only as they are property belonging to someone. Clearly, what we need in this country is legislation that removes animal cruelty from the property section of the Criminal Code and more properly reflects modern Canadian values.

Essentially, the problem relates back to the definition of animal. In the current legislation there is no definition of animal and that does not change under Bill S-213. What is clearly needed is a definition of animal as a vertebrate other than a human being. Under that definition then animals are protected. It does not separate out certain kinds of animals with differing offences.

That is the case under the current law. Offences to cattle are different than treatment of other animals and there is no justification for that. All animals should be protected and would be under this broader definition of a vertebrate other than a human being.

The current legislation does not address brutal or vicious treatment of an animal. We all know of examples. We have heard of examples in our communities where a person has terribly mistreated an animal, in essence tortured an animal. This kind of wilful, brutal viciousness toward an animal needs to be dealt with.

The current legislation does not even consider this kind of treatment as a form of violence. The proposed bill, Bill S-213, would not change the current situation. For those terrible high profile cases

of which we have all heard that appear periodically in the media, these terrible tortures and brutalities would not be addressed.

•(1850)

What we need is legislation that makes it an offence to kill an animal with brutal or vicious intent and whether the animal dies immediately or whether it dies a horrible lingering death, that violence needs to be addressed.

It is also an issue and a concern how an animal is killed. Currently, it is an offence to kill an owned animal without a lawful excuse. However, wild or stray animals can be killed for any reason. Under Bill S-213 there is no change to that.

While clearly there needs to be protection for lawful killing of animals, whether it is through hunting, fishing, farming, et cetera, there needs to be effective legislation to make it an offence to kill any animal without a lawful excuse. That is missing under the current legislation and under the proposed legislation.

We also need to deal with neglect. Again, periodically we hear about terrible situations where a person, through some kind of wilful neglect, tortures and in many cases kills animals through that neglect. Whether it is on a farm or whether it is a person who is keeping animals in their home, we have all heard about situations of terrible conditions in which animals are kept. They are not properly fed. They end up emaciated and they die. These kinds of situations need to be addressed.

The current legislation has the notion of wilful neglect as an offence, but the bar is set too high. The test to actually prove that someone is culpable in such a situation is extremely difficult and people are rarely convicted in such situations.

Under Bill S-213 there is no change and that will mean that in these terrible cases where animals are starved or otherwise neglected, people will walk away scot-free and they will not be punished.

We need legislation that defines this negligence in a way that would allow for easier conviction and it would be a better definition. Rather than wilful neglect, we should define the neglect as something that is departing markedly from the reasonable care of animals, whether they be domestic animals or livestock. These are some of the deficiencies in the bill that need to be addressed in effective legislation.

This debate has gone on for many years between those who want to protect animals from cruel treatment and those who make their livelihoods by, in essence, killing animals. I believe there is a balance that can be struck to protect these activities while preventing cruel treatment.

Many of my constituents have contacted me about the issue of animal cruelty. They have urged me to work to modernize archaic animal cruelty laws. We need to urgently do this, but the bill is not a step forward. It is a failed attempt which does not merit our support and I will be opposing it.

Private Members' Business

•(1855)

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise to speak on this bill. When I first came to Parliament nearly three years ago, animal cruelty was an issue that was indeed top of mind for me, something I was very concerned about. That concern was driven by what I had seen as a municipal councillor with both the city of Pickering and the Region of Durham, where again and again animal abuses were not prosecuted, where we saw that the laws that existed in Canada were completely ineffective and did nothing to deter animal abuse.

Of course when I came here to Ottawa and learned that it had been 1892 since last our legislation with respect to animal cruelty was changed, I wanted to embark on trying to modernize it, on trying to work with Parliament to get to a point where we could get those who are involved in the animal use industry and those supporting animal welfare to meet in the middle, to find a compromise and to find effective legislation.

Before we even got to that point, Parliament had already dealt with Bill C-17, Bill C-15, Bill C-15B and Bill C-10, then getting to Bill C-50 in the last term of Parliament. So for nearly 10 years Parliament had been wrestling with this issue.

The problem with the existing law rests in a number of different places.

One is that it treats animals as property, essentially affording as much protection to an animal as would be given to a chair in our house. For most Canadians that is not acceptable. It is a Victorian notion we have grown out of. It also did nothing to protect stray or wild animals that could be viciously killed for any reason. It gave no protection against brutally or viciously killing even domesticated animals. It did nothing to stop training animals to fight one another or receiving money from those fights.

It was clear that we needed to take action. Bill C-50 at that point came forward. It was an opportunity to bring the different groups together to look at why legislation had failed in the past. In fact, by the fall of 2004, shortly after that June election, as many as 30 animal industry groups came together representing a broad range from agriculture to fur and to animal research. They sent a letter to the then justice minister urging a quick passage of the reintroduced government bill.

That was Bill C-50. It represented compromise. It represented an acknowledgement that in the animal use industry there were legitimate uses that should be permitted, whether or not for agriculture or whether or not in hunting, but on the other side it recognized that we have a lot of work to do to better protect animals and to provide animal welfare.

Unfortunately, we did not get the opportunity, because of the brevity of the last Parliament, to pass Bill C-50. It had broad support, not only from industry groups and animal welfare groups but from this Parliament. I expect it would have passed, but we ran out of time.

In this Parliament I have put forward a private member's bill, Bill C-373, and we also have a bill that moved more quickly through the Senate, Bill S-213, which is before us right now and which we are talking about this evening.

Let us talk for a moment about Bill S-213 and the deep concerns I have with this legislation. First of all, the main thing the bill does, and in fact really the only thing it does, is deal with sentencing. This is a huge problem, because sentencing represents only a very small fraction of the real problem.

In fact, when we look at it, we see that less than one-quarter of one per cent of animal abuse complaints lead to a successful conviction. That is what this bill deals with: one-quarter of one per cent. If we hold Bill S-213 out as some kind of solution for animal cruelty, we are being dishonest. The only thing it deals with is that enormously small percentage of successful convictions. If we are serious about animal cruelty, certainly we must do more.

We also know that Bill S-213 will not make it easier to convict perpetrators of crimes toward animals. It will not make it easier to punish the people who commit crimes against animals or neglect animals. It will not offer protection against torture for stray or wild animals. It will not make it a crime to train animals to fight one another. In short, Bill S-213 just does not get it done.

If it were just a placebo, if we could just pass it and move on and hopefully get to my bill or some other version of what Bill C-50 was in order to pass effective animal cruelty legislation, then that would be one thing. My fear is that it will do more than that. My fear is that if we pass this placebo bill that does nothing, that addresses only one-quarter of one per cent of the problem we are dealing with in regard to animal cruelty, it will be held out as if we have done something.

I have listened to many speakers talk about animal cruelty. They talk about what happened in Didsbury. They talk about the terrible abuses that occur in our country today and go unpunished and they hold this out as some kind of solution. It is not.

•(1900)

If we do that, if we turn to Canadians and say that we have a solution for animal cruelty and it is Bill S-213, we are misleading them. Worse yet, it may destroy the ability to actually bring forward effective legislation. So if this does not do anything, why move forward?

I would like to talk for a second about some of the things my Bill C-373 should be able to do, or I would encourage the government to bring in a bill in the same vein.

An effective bill on animal cruelty should allow for the prosecution of negligent animal owners. It should protect the rights of those who work and must kill animals for their livelihood, such as anglers, hunters, trappers, farmers and biomedical scientists, et cetera, but it must prosecute individuals who harm animals without lawful excuse or who do so in a malicious way.

Private Members' Business

An effective bill must offer protection to pets and farm animals as well as stray and wild animals. It must make it illegal to train animals to fight one another. It must make it a crime to kill an animal with brutal or vicious intent, whether or not the animal dies immediately. This is one of the problems with our current law.

This would ensure that the perpetrators of grievous crimes, those who make the headlines, are actually brought to justice. We need to take that one-quarter of 1% into a figure we can be proud of and demonstrate that we are actually doing something.

Why do something about animal cruelty? The first thing that would come to mind, obviously, is hopefully because we would care, because we would have some compassion toward animals, because we would feel they deserve dignity and our protection. One would hope that this argument would be enough reason to protect animals.

However, there are other reasons. Certainly as Parliamentarians we have to consider the will of the Canadian electorate. We have to consider the will of those we represent. Anecdotally, we would all say, Canadians by a large measure want to see effective animal cruelty legislation, but SES also conducted a poll on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies in which 85% of respondents said they supported legislation that would make it easier for law enforcement agencies to prosecute perpetrators who commit crimes against animals, including wild and stray animals.

This means that 85% of Canadians said that existing legislation does not cut it. And Bill S-213 does not cut it. In fact, a petition was before the House with nearly 120,000 signatures, an enormous number, and it said that Bill S-213 did not do it, that it was placebo policy and it was essentially entrenching all of the same problems that we have today. The petition said that we needed to modernize our laws and, whether or not that is Bill C-373 or some other bill that accomplishes those aims, we should move forward with it.

The third reason we should care about animal cruelty, if those first two are not compelling enough, is that it is a precursor to violent behaviour against human beings.

In fact, Dr. Randall Lockwood, a Washington, D.C. psychologist who is also the vice-president of the Humane Society of the United States and one of the world's leading experts in the field of animal cruelty, states, "While not everyone who abuses animals will become a serial killer, virtually every serial killer first abused animals". Of course this has been brought to the attention of the justice minister. He has been talked to about it and is made sick by this, it is said. It will continue to be brought to his attention until something is done.

We have every reason in the world to take action and yet we have not. In fact, we are still arguing about dealing with a non-measure that we are going to try to hold out as action. That is why groups like the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and so many others oppose Bill S-213 and urge the passage of Bill C-373 or other such effective legislation.

It is time that we listen to those voices, that we listen to voices of reason. It is time that we pass something that, frankly, should be motherhood. It is time to take effective action on animal cruelty and stop playing games or trying to pretend we are taking action. We

need to stand up and either vote for Bill C-373 or have the government bring forward effective animal cruelty legislation.

● (1905)

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the presentation of the member for Ajax—Pickering. He certainly made some excellent points.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise to speak to Bill S-213 today. It is a private member's bill that emanated from the Senate. Actually the Liberals have another bill, one on Senate reform, that is sitting over at the Senate. It has been there for over 330 days, I think, and counting, but perhaps I will save that for another speech.

Bill S-213 has one aim and that is to increase the penalties for existing animal cruelty offences in the Criminal Code. I am pleased that the government is supporting Bill S-213.

There are a number of offences in the Criminal Code, some of which, as previous speakers have indicated, are over 100 years old, and others that were enacted in the 1950s, and which together prohibit a range of different kinds of conduct that injure animals.

I understand that the most frequently charged offence is the offence of causing unnecessary pain, suffering or injury to an animal. This offence has been in the code for over 50 years now. Described in general terms, it is the essence of what we think about when we consider animal cruelty.

There is a body of case law that interprets what causing unnecessary pain actually means and how it is assessed in relation to a given case. The first thing to note is that the determination is made taking into account all of the circumstances. The court essentially engages in a two-part test. First, it looks at the purpose of the act. Second, it looks at the means used.

Let me expand. First, the courts look to whether there was a lawful purpose for whatever action caused the pain. If there was not a lawful purpose, then right off the bat we know that the pain caused was certainly unnecessary. So if we kick a dog out of anger or to punish the dog's behaviour or if an owner or someone who loves the dog is being cruel to it, it is cruelty, plain and simple.

However, there may be a lawful purpose behind other actions, such as the rearing of animals for food or the handling of animals for the purpose of administering veterinary medicine. If there is such a lawful purpose, the court would then have to look at whether the means used by the person to achieve a legitimate purpose were reasonable.

This again requires looking at all of the circumstances. These circumstances would normally include whether there were any means capable of achieving the same result with the infliction of less or no pain. Whether such means were known to and reasonably available to the accused is what needs to be looked at.

Private Members' Business

So if we consider this analysis in its totality, the result is a law of animal cruelty that holds a person responsible for causing pain or suffering for no reason or for an invalid one.

On the other side, where people are actually engaged in restraining and handling animals for valid and lawful purposes, they are also obliged to ensure that they do not use techniques that cause pain when they are aware of other techniques that cause less pain or, quite frankly, no pain at all.

This makes sense. Even in the course of lawful activity, we want our fellow citizens to minimize the pain they cause to animals, wherever this is feasible.

So what is the problem that Bill S-213 seeks to address? The problem is the maximum range of penalties upon conviction.

With the exception of certain offences which are only in relation to cattle, all of the animal cruelty offences are pure summary conviction offences. In plain English, this means that they carry a maximum sentence of six months or a \$2,000 fine or perhaps both, no matter how outrageous or horrible the action or the consequence is.

The rationale behind Bill S-213 is very straightforward. It aims to enhance the sentencing provisions for these crimes. One way in which our society traditionally recognizes the seriousness of particular conduct is by assessing a penalty for that conduct. The more serious the conduct, the higher the penalty, and vice versa.

● (1910)

Canadians have made it very clear that the current animal cruelty sentencing provisions do not adequately reflect society's abhorrence of these crimes. The member for Ajax—Pickering quoted the recent poll by SES that was completed to prove and show that is the case.

A maximum of six months and a \$2,000 fine is simply inadequate to declare our distaste and our disapproval of animal cruelty. If our members of this House do as the Senate did and pass Bill S-213, then the maximum penalties for animal cruelty would be raised to at least a more appropriate level.

I believe that we as parliamentarians would be reflecting the will of the public in declaring that animal cruelty is and always will be a serious crime. My constituents in St. Catharines have told me over and over again that we must recognize the seriousness of this crime of cruelty to animals. In fact, we should also take into account what many see as a relationship between animal cruelty and many other forms of violence.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the justice system does not treat animal cruelty cases as seriously as they might or certainly as seriously as they should and inadequate penalty provisions provide little incentive. In fact, many argue that they actually trivialize the conduct.

The maximum penalties we set for an offence have traditionally been an expression of how seriously we as a society view the behaviour. Thus far, we have obviously given little value to animal cruelty and this belies the true nature of this crime. Bill S-213 would remedy this deficiency in the law and would signal to potential

abusers that they had better think twice before deciding to inflict pain and suffering on animals.

The government also hopes that by supporting Bill S-213, a message will be sent to the courts, to the crown and to the police that animal cruelty offences should be treated as serious criminal offences.

I would like to give an example. Recently in the Niagara region, an older female German shepherd was found shivering near Chippewa Creek. Many may say that does not sound that bad but this beautiful animal had dumbbells and weights tied to its neck. The owner was attempting to drown the dog and, fortunately, she managed to save herself. The police and the Humane Society are still looking for the owner. That beautiful German shepherd and many other animals are the reason that I support the bill.

Some may ask whether we they can do more, whether the Senate can do more or whether this House can do more? The answer to that question may be yes but for over 100 years the previous bill that was in place has been the only one that has served this country. It is obvious that this is a step that has already been passed, a step that is before us here in the House, and a step that will, at the very least, begin the important process of ensuring that we as politicians, as people who represent our communities, actually attest to the fact that we need to do more.

This would do more. It would set in place a process that would deem that animals in this country are to be treated fairly, are not to be abused and, if people do, there is a price to pay. After 100 years, it is about time that those who want to inflict this type of pain do pay the price.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this evening in support of Bill S-213, which has come from the Senate.

● (1915)

[*English*]

It is a bill that has been sponsored by Senator Bryden. I have had occasion to discuss this matter with Senator Bryden many times over the years, something that he is very passionate about.

Senator Bryden comes from rural Canada. That whole world after the last subway stop, which is rural Canada, which has many people concerned on both sides of the issue, people are not in favour of cruelty to animals, no farmer, no rancher and no researcher.

However, a lot of people earn their living from the managing and husbandry of animals and that includes many aspects including the final slaughter in most instances.

I think seven attempts have been made in the House to put animal cruelty legislation through and each time the member has brought forward serious concerns. At the end of the day, however, what do we have, by very well-meaning members of Parliament bringing these bills forward? None of the bills have been passed. Therefore, we have ended up with a 100 year old piece of legislation that does not meet the needs of anyone.

Private Members' Business

I am sure Senator Bryden, like any member of the House, will tell us that this is not the perfect bill. However, I do not think we should let perfect be the enemy of the good. What the bill would provide is an improvement in the conditions for law enforcement officers dealing with cruelty cases in the interim, while Parliament continues to discuss this matter and, hopefully, bring a bill forward that better responds to some of the elements that perhaps are lacking in this bill but that will be understandable and acceptable to the wider community.

By the wider community, I am talking about many people in the country, such as aboriginal groups who participate in hunting, trapping and fishing as part of their cultural heritage. I know of no group of people out there who take more care to administer their craft more carefully, causing less harm than trappers.

It is a difficult craft. It means bringing an end to the life of a fur-bearing animal and not being able to get to that animal for some time. A lot of research is done within Canada and we are foremost in the world. The most able participants, the ones who are the fastest to put in place that research and those new technologies, are the trappers themselves.

I have many craftsmen trappers in my riding. They do not do that as their primary source of revenue but it is part of their annual income and it is part of the traditions. They would no more want to cause unnecessary harm to an animal than anyone else.

However, in our rural areas like in urban areas, we know the horror stories of people who, for differing reasons, have more animals than they can care for that cause them harm by not being able to give them proper lodging, proper nutrition, proper veterinary care and end up putting those animals in undue stress and undue pain.

Those are the cases we want to take care of. We also want our judiciary to be able to look at persons, students, young people, who sometimes we hear for pure amusement put an animal through unbearable pain.

With this legislation, the judge would be able to look at those two cases and say that in both cases it is unacceptable behaviour and that we do not want that behaviour to continue in our society, but each case might not require the same penalty. One case of cruelty could have been brought about by poverty, by mental illness or other reasons, and the other case could have been brought about by pure malicious amusement. We have seen examples of cats being doused with gasoline and lit on fire. I will not go through too many because they are gory and not appealing to people. However, the judges need to have the ability to deal with those cases.

The bill would take care of that by increasing the fines and increasing the potential of imprisonment. Under the old statute, no matter what crime a person is found guilty of in cruelty to animals, the most a judge can do is keep the person from having animals for two years. This bill would take care of that in this instance. It would ensure that the judge at the time can decide what is appropriate. In many cases, these people should never have animals again.

However, at the same time, we must also recognize why it is that we are where we are and have not been able to move forward.

Universities conduct medical research with animals. I met with a lot of people from the sector when we were considering this bill the last time and I understand their point. They are good practitioners. They do not want to cause unnecessary pain to animals. However, if we move this law to fall under the Criminal Code and give them new standards, they will have a lot more expenses to do exactly the same thing they are doing now because they will need to protect themselves legally and document things differently due to the tests, standards and the risks being different when at the end of the day the practice will be the same.

We all agreed in this country a long time ago when the market decided that we did not want animals used for research on cosmetics. I do not want to see cats, dogs or any kind of animal suffer so that I can know the face cream used by the Prime Minister before question period is safe and appropriate. I think his image consultant can use her own judgment without having to harm animals.

I have a lot of fur farmers in my riding. It must be some 30 years ago when the anti-sealing and anti-fur movements started in Europe and those industries were at huge risk. I can say that their practices now are different than they were then, not by legislation but by research, by wanting to improve and by having different capabilities.

It has always been a tradition in my community that if tourists wanted to visit one of those farms they were given a tour. Nobody hid what they were doing. They would guide the families and show them how they operated. I remember that when Brigitte Bardot started her craze, people got nervous about showing their farms to people because they were afraid that people would report that things were not right or whatever.

After one of the farms gave a tour to a family, a young child asked the rancher, "How often do you take the fur from these animals?" The farmer did not know how to answer the child but he said, "Once a year. It makes them nervous". He figured that was maybe the best way of answering the child.

I can say that if that child went back to the same farm now in my riding, he would see hundreds of people working in that industry and that practices have changed 100%. The farmers did their best with the technology and information they had at that time. Now they operate differently.

These animals now have better conditions, which is quite appropriate, but farmers get nervous when they think that Parliament will start regulating how they will manage their farms without ever knowing it or that we will put rules and regulations forward in animal cruelty that some judge, 10 years down the road, will interpret without understanding the sector or having participated in it.

For that reason, there is nervousness out there. It is not malicious. It is not that people are pro cruelty. However, there was a lot of resistance and reluctance to approve animal cruelty legislation that was presented in the House.

Adjournment Proceedings

What we are doing is very good. It is a good interim measure. It would send the signal that unnecessary cruelty to animals is not tolerated by society. It would provide penalty possibilities to the judiciary that can send a serious message.

When people are looking at five years in prison for cruelty, it is a great deterrent. When people are looking at fines of \$10,000, it is a great deterrent. However, we must realize that in some instances this unnecessary cruelty is not done purposely but due to feeble-mindedness, which the judge can take into consideration. It can also happen in cases of poverty, as I mentioned earlier.

The senator had another thing to look at when he was looking at this legislation. If we want to have a comprehensive piece of legislation that most would prefer we have, it should be brought forward by government. However, the government has already stated or made it clear that such legislation would not be forthcoming during this session of Parliament.

It would be very difficult in a private member's bill to make all the changes one would like to do without having the financial resources and legal resources, all the tools that government has to do the consultations with the public, industry, professionals and all the people concerned, aboriginal organizations primarily, and bring about a proper and good piece of legislation.

• (1920)

While we wait for a change of government and the opportunity again to bring forward a proper piece of cruelty to animal legislation, I am pleased to support this effort, Bill S-213, sponsored in the Senate by Senator Bryden.

• (1925)

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.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[Translation]

SAINT HUBERT AIRPORT

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, DASH-L, the operator of the Saint-Hubert de Longueuil airport, is promoting a major partnership project with Pratt & Whitney Canada, which will require public funding in order to proceed.

The plan is to redevelop the current landing strip in order to allow Pratt & Whitney to continue its flight testing with a new higher-performance engine and therefore new heavier planes, since the focus of Pratt & Whitney's research and development is on larger turbine engines.

Pratt & Whitney is currently at a crossroads: either the company moves its flight testing abroad, to a factory that already has all the airport facilities to accommodate its activities; or it concentrates its flight testing in Saint-Hubert, where it is nonetheless essential to proceed with major improvements; restoration, widening and lengthening of the main runway, upgrading the tarmac and building a hangar and terminal.

In light of its affordable operating cost, Saint-Hubert is the preferred location. Pratt & Whitney's deadline is May 2007.

These new facilities and this new economic activity by Pratt & Whitney—in fact, it is not new activity, but renewed activity since Pratt & Whitney already has facilities at the Saint-Hubert airport, currently employing several hundred people—would have a very significant economic impact on the south shore of Montreal.

Partner investments would be in the range of \$25 million from the City of Longueuil for work related to infrastructure, \$130 million from Pratt & Whitney Canada, \$27 million from a Saint-Hubert consortium made up of DEV-YHU/DASH-L and other investors, \$18 million from the Government of Quebec, and \$70 million from the Government of Canada, and that is what we have been asking for from the federal government for some time.

Of course, all the other investors, besides the Government of Canada, are waiting only for Ottawa's commitment before the project can get started. Additionally, other subcontractors, which I have not mentioned, and other financial stakeholders are also looking into how they can become involved in this project.

It is clear that the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec has an envelope of only \$220 million to allocate in total, to this project as well as all the other requests for funding that are coming in from across the country.

Furthermore, another program, the infrastructure program under the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, is not ideal to carry out an airport development project because an airport clearly falls under federal jurisdiction, while the Bloc Québécois has always believed that it should be the Quebec government that decides how money from that program will be allocated.

Adjournment Proceedings

I also know that the airport capital assistance program, ACAP, cannot cover the full cost. There is only \$38 million in this fund for this year and the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities recently announced that \$33 million has already been paid out to 28 different airports.

And yet, this is the program that the Conservative government should use to provide the funding to help this outstanding project, which has no equal in Quebec or Canada. I must say that I would not be able to understand it if the government did not wish this project to proceed.

The runway has to be rebuilt, in any case. It must be restored because the subgrade is not solid enough to support the weight of larger aircraft. It will take years. It is an exceptional aeronautical project. There are many investors, including Pratt & Whitney, which has committed \$130 million. The economic spinoffs are estimated at \$200 million in the first year. The annual recurring investment by Pratt & Whitney Canada will be about \$28.5 million.

• (1930)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to address this question.

I confirm that on March 22, 2007 the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities did meet with representatives of the City of Longueuil, the City of Longueuil Saint Hubert Airport Development Corporation, DASH-L, and indeed Pratt & Whitney that presented a proposal for the runway enlargement and expansion, as well as other improvements for the Saint Hubert Airport.

The planned investments are in the order of \$140 million, as has been confirmed by my colleague, which includes rebuilding and enlarging the main runways and increasing the bearing capacity. The proposal also includes construction of an air terminal and a hangar for Pratt & Whitney aircraft.

In 2004 when the airport was transferred, Transport Canada allocated \$3.2 million to cover the operating deficit and the cost of major maintenance projects.

The Saint Hubert Airport has met the eligibility criteria under the airports capital assistance program since June 2006. The purpose of ACAP is to assist eligible applicants in financing capital projects related to first, safety; second, asset protection; and third, operation cost reduction.

Eligible projects must meet the following evaluation criteria. They must be essential to maintain or improve safety, protect the asset, or significantly reduce operating costs. They must meet acceptable engineering practices. They must be justified on the basis of current demand. Projects which result in an expansion of the facilities will only be considered where it is demonstrated that the current facilities negatively impact safety.

The funding available under ACAP is \$190 million from April 2005 to March 2010, or an average of \$38 million per year. Because of the limited budget envelope for this program, projects submitted for funding are prioritized on an annual basis.

There is a large demand for these projects from all across the country. That is why we have to be fair. Priority for funding is established on the basis of first, safety related airside projects; second, for heavy airside mobile equipment; third, for air terminal building ground side safety related projects; and fourth, asset protection, refurbishing, refilling, relifting or operating cost reduction projects.

In this context it is currently impossible for Transport Canada to fund under ACAP the entire project submitted by Pratt & Whitney and the City of Longueuil. The purpose of ACAP is to improve the safety and security of our regional airport facilities for Canadians and travellers. Economic projects are not eligible.

The member may rest assured that our department will carefully review all eligible components of this project and refer to other components that the member has spoken about to other departments and/or programs which may make them eligible. Let me reassure the member that there is high demand for these funds. We have to be fair to all Canadians across Canada from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Mr. Speaker, I would say that the parliamentary secretary provided an intelligent answer to my questions. However, the main question, and the key point is as follows: does this government truly have the political will to see this project go ahead and to help it go ahead?

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I can assure the member that this is a very important project, as are all development projects of this nature. This in particular helps the greater Montreal area and as such, the government would assess such a request as part of other funding arrangements that can be made. We are hopeful that the project will go ahead and she will be successful in that.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this House this evening on behalf of my constituents of Don Valley East and debate on one of the most pressing issues facing the planet today, global warming and climate change.

A short time ago during question period I asked the environment minister if the federal government had a plan to develop a competitive and truly global marketplace for carbon emissions. I asked this question because Canadians and Canada committed to such a trading system when it signed the Kyoto protocol in order to reduce our country's greenhouse gas emissions.

Adjournment Proceedings

Canadians are well aware, however, that when the current Prime Minister was the leader of the Canadian Alliance party, he publicly scoffed at the Kyoto agreement by calling it "a socialist plot to suck money out of developed countries". It is therefore difficult to accept the Prime Minister's sudden conversion to the environment, especially when his clean air act was soundly rejected by Canadians when it was first introduced last fall and he was eventually forced to fire his environment minister.

Since that time, the clean air act was sent to a special all-party committee to develop a bill that would at least partially meet our international obligations under the Kyoto protocol.

Although all members in this minority Parliament have committed to work together for the benefit of Canadians, the Conservatives have thus far refused to reintroduce the bill as amended by opposition parties. In fact we are hearing rumblings from the environment minister that the bill aimed at reducing greenhouse gases is dead in the water. If so, the Conservatives risk being caught on the wrong side of history, science, and most of all, the wrong side of Canadian businesses.

Despite the doomsday prediction by the environment minister, many businesses see a great deal of profit in going green. In fact the head of the Toronto Stock Exchange, Mr. Richard Nesbitt, recently informed the government that the TSX would welcome a competitive global marketplace environment for emissions trading. According to Mr. Nesbitt:

TSX is in a unique position to work with Canadian companies to offer trading solutions for the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

He went on to say:

TSX believes that the market-based mechanisms can significantly help society achieve its emissions reduction goals through more efficient resource allocation... TSX can support absolute caps or intensity-based caps, with or without sector-based adjustments...TSX can support markets that are domestic-only or those that are linked within North America or globally.

Certainly with that kind of support from the private sector, plus the overwhelming support from the general public, why on earth is the Conservative government not taking action on global warming?

I am aware that the parliamentary secretary will have some notes prepared after the minister's speech was accidentally leaked last night, but aside from spin control, perhaps the hon. member could answer one simple question. Will the government take up the offer from the head of the Toronto Stock Exchange to create a truly global marketplace for emissions trading?

• (1935)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate every opportunity I have to share with the House and with Canadians the incredible job this government is now doing on the environmental file, and I look forward to answering the member's question.

Tomorrow our government will release the details of our short term regulatory targets for greenhouse emissions and air pollutants. These targets will drive real action on climate change and air pollution. We will see emission reduction projects in Canada, including the deployment of innovative cutting edge Canadian environmental technologies. This will result in the emergence of a

green economy in Canada and will allow us to export our experience and technology around the world.

We believe Canada needs to turn the corner on our greenhouse gas emissions. We need to do a U-turn because of 13 years of inaction and empty promises by the previous Liberal government. Canada has been going the wrong way on the environment.

In the October notice of intent the government indicated that we would explore emission trading systems as part of the regulatory framework for both air pollutants and greenhouse gases.

There is certainly much interest among the various exchanges across Canada in emissions trading, including Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg. For the details of the plan, I encourage the hon. member for Don Valley East and all members of the House to wait for the announcement tomorrow to hear all the good news about our plan on the environment.

Our government has already taken many steps to combat climate change. We are providing financial and tax incentives to encourage Canadians to buy and drive eco-friendly vehicles. We are supporting the growth of renewable energy sources such as wind and tidal power. We are providing incentives to Canadians to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Through budget 2007, we are investing \$4.5 billion to clean Canada's air and water, to manage chemical substances, to protect our natural environment and to reduce Canada's emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants. This investment, when combined with over \$4.7 billion in the previous investments, adds up to over \$9 billion that is being invested in the environment.

We are excited about our plan to turn the corner for real greenhouse gas reductions across Canada. Our government is already taking action. The Liberals failed, but we will get the job done.

• (1940)

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Speaker, I asked a very simple question, which would have been of interest to the business community in Canada and to all Canadians. I simply asked if the Conservative government had a plan that would meet the Kyoto targets in conjunction and with the cooperation of the companies belonging to the Toronto Stock Exchange. All I heard was nothing but the repetition of the minister's diatribe.

Yesterday, the Conservative voted on the absolute reduction as provided by the Kyoto protocol. How can Canadians take them seriously when they keep on flip-flopping every time?

The fact is the Liberal Party is way ahead of the government and has already published a plan. Let me ask the question another way.

After pledging to work with the opposition parties to make this minority government work for Canadians, when will the Conservative government reintroduce the newly amended clean air and climate change act?

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, the government is taking real action on climate change and clean air. As I stated, we will be the first Canadian government to introduce national regulations on greenhouse gases and air pollutants. The short term targets, that is, the targets that will come into force during the 2010 to 2015 timeframe, will be included in the regulatory framework to be officially released tomorrow.

As the government indicated in the notice of intent, we are exploring self-supporting market mechanisms such as domestic emissions trading systems for both air pollutants and greenhouse gases as part of the regulatory framework.

Where the Liberal Party did not get it done, we are getting it done.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in true testimony to the innocence of Dr. Cheryl Everall and Ms. Kimberley Kim, they trusted in the Canadian government to act in their defence. This for a full eight months before coming to me for help.

They had been suffering horribly with malicious accusations in the Mexican media, all the while believing that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was being active in clearing their names.

After meeting with the minister last fall, they truly felt his reassurances were sincere. Can members imagine their despair and disillusionment when they discovered that absolutely nothing had been done to help them?

In a series of documented evidence, I have step-by-step undertaken to ask the questions the minister has failed to even attempt. These are clear and would be what each and every one of us would expect from a government whose duty is to care and protect its citizens.

I ask everyone watching this telecast or reading this in print: “Do you not expect your government to go to bat for you with sincerity and using the full weight of the law especially if you are falsely accused in a foreign country?”

These women are innocent. So, I ask very clearly: Why have their names not been cleared?

Why has the Prime Minister not spoken in their defence to counterbalance the Mexican president's accusations? Why has the minister not verified their innocence? Why has the minister not ensured their names are removed from any international watch list? Why does the minister have to be subpoenaed to appear as a witness at the foreign affairs committee?

These innocent victims came to me for help. One would think the minister would have told them that the government would do everything possible to help. Canadians need the reassurance the government will protect the innocent.

Why must these women continue to be forced to live in fear and uncertainty? Why will the minister not tell Canadians that a priority for him is to help the innocent?

• (1945)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows,

this case has been a priority for the Government of Canada since the Ianieros' brutal murders in February 2006.

On March 3, the Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke to Anthony Ianiero to offer his condolences and to reassure the Ianiero family that we would continue to monitor developments closely. We have kept that promise.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Trade has also spoken to Anthony Ianiero on three different occasions and has reassured him that this case continues to be a priority.

The foreign affairs minister met with Ms. Everall and Ms. Kim in December 2006 to hear their concerns. These concerns included issuing a travel warning for the Mayan Riviera region of Mexico. I can assure the hon. member that our travel reports, including our report concerning Mexico, are reviewed regularly to provide Canadians with the most current and accurate advice to ensure safe and secure travel.

Ms. Everall and Ms. Kim have also asked the minister for his assistance in clearing their names. The minister reassured them at that time, and I can assure the member again today, that we have not been made aware of any arrest warrants issued by the Mexican authorities for either Ms. Everall or Ms. Kim.

As the hon. member knows, we cannot control what the media chooses to report, nor can we control statements by foreign authorities. It would be inappropriate for the Government of Canada to comment on any ongoing police investigation, particularly one that is not in our jurisdiction.

We do not take crimes against Canadians lightly whenever they occur, but Canada cannot investigate these crimes abroad. Investigations must be done by the responsible local authority.

In the Ianieros' case, the Mexican authorities did request technical assistance from the RCMP and this assistance is being provided. That being said, this request for assistance does not give the Canadian government the right to intervene in that investigation.

The Prime Minister and senior officials have on many occasions raised this case with the most senior levels of the Mexican government, including the Mexican president. We have reiterated that we expect a full, thorough and fair investigation, and we have received those assurances from the same Mexican authorities.

If there are no charges laid against Ms. Kim and Ms. Everall, there should be no reason for their names to appear on a no fly list of any country.

Mr. Ken Boshcoff: Mr. Speaker, if that were so, then the minister should announce in this House that they are no longer prime suspects in Mexico and that they are truly innocent.

How seriously can Canadians take the response when the parliamentary secretary does not even have an office in the Department of Foreign Affairs?

When we asked the parliamentary secretary to list the accomplishments, these women still remain prime suspects and the facts confirm that there has been no follow-up from the minister's office since December. If they are not on a no fly list or a watch list, why has nothing been told to them in the past year?

Adjournment Proceedings

The hon. member mentioned that Mr. Ianiero was contacted. The record will show very clearly that he was only contacted the day before *W-FIVE* aired its show.

So, when I ask what has been done, I ask very specifically: What questions were asked of the Mexican government; what pressure has been put on it; and who was approached and talked to? This is what these innocent women need to know and what has to be clarified.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, as I have stated in my speech, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State have all contacted the Mexican authorities, including the Mexican president, who have assured us they are investigating this case according to their laws.

As no arrest warrants have been issued for these ladies, there is nothing we can do. We cannot control whatever speculation is in the

media. The Government of Canada will continue to monitor this situation. Should anything occur or if they are charged, we will then stand up to ensure they are protected under Canadian law.

I want to reassure the member, again, that they have not been charged. We have taken this matter to the highest authorities, including the president of Mexico.

• (1950)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:50 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, April 25, 2007

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Seventh Annual Non-Violence Week			Mr. Harper	8665
	Mrs. Boucher	8661	Mr. Duceppe	8666
Africa Malaria Day			Mr. Harper	8666
	Mr. McKay	8661	Mrs. Barbot	8666
Quebec Manufacturers			Mr. MacKay	8666
	Mr. Malo	8661	Mrs. Barbot	8666
International Aid			Mr. MacKay	8666
	Ms. Bell (Vancouver Island North)	8662	Mr. Layton	8666
Canada Foundation for Innovation			Mr. Harper	8666
	Mr. Rajotte	8662	Mr. Layton	8666
Aboriginal Affairs			Mr. Harper	8666
	Ms. Neville	8662	Ms. Robillard	8666
Tibet			Mr. MacKay	8667
	Mr. Sweet	8662	Ms. Robillard	8667
Catherine Manginckx-Tahan			Mr. O'Connor	8667
	Ms. Picard	8662	Mr. Coderre	8667
World War II Veterans			Mr. MacKay	8667
	Mr. Jean	8663	Mr. Coderre	8667
Africa Malaria Day			Mr. O'Connor	8667
	Mr. Silva	8663	Mr. Bachand	8667
Canadian Gas Association			Mr. MacKay	8667
	Mr. Storseth	8663	Mr. Bachand	8668
Security Certificates			Mr. MacKay	8668
	Mr. Siksay	8663	Ms. St-Hilaire	8668
College Mother House			Mr. MacKay	8668
	Ms. Robillard	8664	Ms. St-Hilaire	8668
Quebec Mining Week			Mr. MacKay	8668
	Mr. Lévesque	8664	Mr. Cotler	8668
Jack Wiebe			Mr. MacKay	8668
	Mr. Goodale	8664	Mr. Cotler	8668
The Bloc Québécois			Mr. Harper	8669
	Mr. Harvey	8664	Mrs. Redman	8669
			Mr. MacKay	8669

ORAL QUESTIONS

Afghanistan			Arts and Culture	
	Mr. Dion	8664	Mr. Petit	8669
	Mr. Harper	8664	Ms. Oda	8669
	Mr. Dion	8665	The Environment	
	Mr. Harper	8665	Mr. Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	8669
	Mr. Dion	8665	Mr. Baird	8669
	Mr. Harper	8665	Mr. Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	8670
	Mr. Ignatieff	8665	Mr. Baird	8670
	Mr. Harper	8665	Mr. McGuinty	8670
	Mr. Ignatieff	8665	Mr. Baird	8670
	Mr. Harper	8665	Mr. McGuinty	8670
	Mr. Duceppe	8665	Mr. Baird	8670
			Mr. Rodriguez	8670
			Mr. Baird	8670
			Mr. Rodriguez	8670
			Mr. Baird	8670
			Mr. Bigras	8671

Mr. Baird	8671
Mr. Bigras	8671
Mr. Baird	8671
Mr. Regan	8671
Mr. Baird	8671
Mr. Batters	8671
Mr. Lunn	8671

Canadian Heritage

Mr. Angus	8671
Ms. Oda	8672
Mr. Angus	8672
Ms. Oda	8672

The Environment

Mrs. Jennings	8672
Mr. Baird	8672

Democratic Reform

Mr. Cannan	8672
Mr. Van Loan	8672

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lukiwski	8672
--------------------	------

Interparliamentary Delegations

Mrs. Barbot	8672
-------------------	------

Committees of the House

Veterans Affairs

Mr. Anders	8673
Motion for concurrence	8673
The Speaker	8673
Division deemed demanded and deferred	8673

Procedure and House Affairs

Mr. Goodyear	8673
--------------------	------

Finance

Mr. Pallister	8673
---------------------	------

Petitions

Falun Dafa

Mr. Peterson	8673
--------------------	------

Lumber Industry

Mr. Lunney	8673
------------------	------

Natural Health Products

Mr. Lunney	8673
------------------	------

War Objectors

Ms. Faille	8673
------------------	------

The Environment

Ms. Crowder	8673
-------------------	------

Employment Insurance

Mr. D'Amours	8674
--------------------	------

Seniors

Ms. Charlton	8674
--------------------	------

Canada Post

Mr. Malhi	8674
-----------------	------

Species at Risk

Mr. St. Amand	8674
---------------------	------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lukiwski	8674
--------------------	------

Motions for Papers

Mr. Lukiwski	8674
--------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Sales Tax Amendments Act, 2006

Bill C-40. Report stage	8674
Mr. Van Loan (for the Minister of Finance)	8674
Motion for Concurrence	8674
(Motion agreed to)	8674
Mr. Van Loan (for the Minister of Finance)	8674
Third reading	8674
Ms. Ablonczy	8674
Mr. Peterson	8676
Mr. St-Cyr	8679
Mr. Savage	8679
Mr. St-Cyr	8680
Mr. Blais	8682
Mr. McCallum (Markham—Unionville)	8683
Mrs. Yelich	8686
Mr. McKay	8687
Mr. Paquette	8687
Mr. Blais	8690

Message from the Senate

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Galipeau)	8691
---	------

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Motion for concurrence	8691
(Motion agreed to)	8691

Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Motion for concurrence	8691
(Motion agreed to)	8691

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Climate Change Accountability Act

Bill C-377. Second reading	8691
Motion agreed to	8692
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)	8692

Employment Insurance Act

Bill C-278. Motion for concurrence	8692
Motion agreed to	8693

Broadcasting Act

Bill C-327. Second reading	8693
----------------------------------	------

Criminal Code

Bill S-213. Second reading	8695
Mr. Thompson (Wild Rose)	8695
Mrs. Freeman	8695
Ms. Nash	8697
Mr. Holland	8698
Mr. Dykstra	8699

Mr. Thibault (West Nova).....	8700
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee).....	8702

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Saint Hubert Airport	
Mrs. Lavallée.....	8702

Mr. Jean	8703
----------------	------

The Environment

Ms. Ratansi	8703
Mr. Warawa	8704

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Boshcoff	8705
Mr. Obhrai	8705

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :**
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

**Additional copies may be obtained from Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: (613) 941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: (613) 954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@pwgsc.gc.ca
<http://publications.gc.ca>**

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.

**On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires ou la version française de cette publication en écrivant à : Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : (613) 941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : (613) 954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc.gc.ca
<http://publications.gc.ca>**